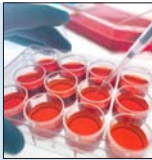




Iran to involve private sector in space projects **2**



Clinical trials may bring hope for CP patients **9**



Iran's participation at AFC Asian Cup at risk **15**



Resistance festival unveils doc lineup **16**

Leader lauds displaying of cultural power by Para athletes



© khamenei.ir

See page 15

Sadistic Bolton enjoys harassing Iran, Foreign Ministry says

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Tuesday that John Bolton, the national security advisor to President Trump, suffers from sadism of causing pain for Iran. “He has a deep grudge against the Iranians. He has an abnormal behavior and is suffering from sadism of harassing Iran,” Qassemi remarked.

Talking to reporters in Singapore on Tuesday, Bolton said, “We think the (Iranian) government is under real pressure and it’s our intention to squeeze them very hard. As the British say, squeeze them until the pips squeak.” Qassemi said Bolton’s “disgraceful remarks” are not something new and shows his aggressive attitude towards the Iranians. **→2**

Saudi, Israeli agents killed in Iran’s missile attack: general

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Agents with Saudi Arabia and the Zionist regime were killed in Iran’s September 9 missile attacks against the Kurdistan Democratic Party – Iran (KDP-I) terrorist group in the Iraqi Kurdistan region, commander of the IRGC aerospace division announced on Wednesday. Hailing Iran’s missile power in targeting the terrorists, Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said, “Today, instead of sending

fighter jets to locations of the operations, we target the meeting room of the leaders of Daesh (ISIS) with precision from 700 kilometers away.” “All of these show our intelligence and military might,” Hajizadeh added, Tasnim reported. The general also said since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year about 80 operations plotted by terrorist groups to destabilize Iran have been neutralized. The Iranian year started on March 21, 2018.

Lieberman resigns over Gaza deal

Israeli minister of military affairs Avigdor Lieberman has resigned from his post less than a day after Hamas and other resistance factions agreed to an Egypt-brokered ceasefire with Israel in Gaza Strip as the recent wave of Israeli aggression against the enclave had threatened to descend into full-blown war. Announcing his decision in a news

conference, the hawkish Israeli official described Tuesday’s Gaza truce as “a capitulation to terror”. Lieberman added that he also vehemently objected to Israel’s allowing Qatar to deliver \$15 million to the financially-crippled Gaza Strip to pay the salaries of government workers and civil servants last week. **→13**



ARTICLE
Hanif Ghaffari
Political analyst

UN rejected again!

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) met behind closed doors over the escalation of violence in the Gaza Strip, but the diplomats said that there was no agreement on how to deal with a fresh wave of deadly Israeli attacks against the Palestinian territory. This emergency session which lasted 50 minutes, was requested by Kuwait as the representative of Arab countries, and Bolivia, after Gaza witnessed the worst flare-up of violence since the 2014 war. However, there was no statement from the council on the violence, and the members failed to reach to an agreement on the crisis. The Palestinian Ambassador, Riyad Masour, talked to the reporters after the meeting and announced that the council was “paralyzed” and had “failed to shoulder its responsibility” to take action to end the violence. “There is one country that is not allowing discussion at the council,” Mansour told reporters, referring to the United States, which once again took a pro-Israeli stance in this session. “We want the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility with regard to this situation threatening international peace and security, and it is unfortunately, the Security Council is paralyzed,” the Palestinian envoy added. Mansour also complained that the “immoral, illegal, and ... inhumane” Israeli siege on Gaza has led to a “miserable situation” in this region. However, there was no statement from the 15 council members on the crisis at the end. This was while many of UNSC member states emphasized that the body “should do something,” in this regard! Some even suggested a visit to the region, but no decision was taken. The occupying regime carries out regular attacks on the Gaza strip claiming that it intends to hit positions belonging to Hamas. This is while according to Ahmed Abu Saif, the owner of a five-storey building which had been flattened by Israelis’ jets, “Everything in Gaza is a target, regardless of who it belongs to”. The civilians confirmed that there was “nothing” in the building that would have been considered a threat to the Israeli army. Abu Saif added: “I expected to see my building burned to the ground one day, simply because I live in Gaza ... The occupation does not differentiate. To them, a Palestinian is a Palestinian.” **→13**

India, Iran have potential to strengthen ties in current situation: ambassador

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Mohammad Ghaderi

TEHRAN — New Delhi’s top diplomat to Tehran is of the opinion that under the current circumstances that the Islamic Republic has come under sanctions by Trump’s White House, India and Iran can use their capacities in a positive way to strengthen ties. “We have, I think, good potential to strengthen bilateral cooperation in different areas,” Saurabh Kumar tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview. Following is the text of the interview: ■ What stance has India taken on the re-imposed US sanctions on Iran?



A. External Affairs Minister of India had during her annual press conference in May stated very categorically India’s consistent political position

that we do not recognize unilateral sanctions. Foreign Minister Zarif had visited India in May, and this press conference, in fact, happened to take place when Dr. Zarif was there. So, this is as far as our political position is concerned. As far as Iran’s nuclear program is concerned, we again have a principled and long-standing position, which is to recognize Iran’s right to nuclear energy, as well as, the interest of the international community to see that Iran’s nuclear program is entirely for peaceful purpose. India is not a party to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action [JCPOA]. We have seen the developments which have taken place regarding the JCPOA, and it is our hope and desire that these issues would be resolved in a constructive manner. **→7**

Pakistan, China urge Afghanistan to join CPEC, Belt & Road Initiative

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Pakistan and China have urged neighboring country Afghanistan to join the Belt & Road Initiative as well as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), according to reports. Addressing the opening session of the 4th Trilateral Dialogue between China, Pakistan and Afghanistan in Islamabad on Monday, the Chinese envoy to Pakistan Yao Jing said Kabul can also act as a “bridge” to help expand connectivity between East, South and Central Asian regions. Jing said that all partners of peace would use their influence on fighting groups to join negotiating table for a peaceful solution to the conflict. “China would also push the development process in war-torn Afghanistan as it is a facilitator of better dialogue and connection between Pakistan and Afghanistan.”

He added that CPEC is not against any country, but it is purely an economic initiative aimed at the peaceful development of its neighborhood, which includes Afghanistan. Underscoring Pakistan’s efforts for stability and peace in the region, the envoy said Islamabad is doing a lot to bring peace back in its neighboring country, adding that peace in Afghanistan was China’s objective. “The Pakistani government is working hard for a political settlement of the Afghan issue and China would cooperate with both Pakistan and Afghanistan to achieve peace,” he added. “Under the BRI, China wants peaceful development of all its neighbors,” he said. Pakistani senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said 21st century was the Asian Century with a decline of the West. “The Greater South Asia has

emerged as a geo-economic concept, driven by economy and energy, roads and railways and ports and pipeline, and Pakistan is the hub of this connectivity due to CPEC.” He added that Afghanistan was a natural partner in CPEC’s expansion. He further stressed that the focus should be culture, corridors and connectivity rather than conflict or confrontation. Afghan envoy to Pakistan Hazrat Omar Zakhilwal said Kabul supports CPEC and its expansion into Afghanistan as it would further develop the country internally as well as strengthen its international relations within the region. “As an economist by profession, I believe that a line must be drawn between economics and politics in order for all partners to integrate in regional connectivity.” **→6**



© Tehran Times / Mohammad Moheimeini

Canada’s “Fauve” named best at Tehran short film festival

ART **TEHRAN** — “Fauve”, Canadian director Jérémy Comte’s drama about a childhood game of one-upmanship between two boys, was picked as best fiction film at the 35th Tehran International Short Film Festival (TISFF), the organizers announced on Tuesday. Co-produced by Maria Gracia Turgeon and Evren Boisjol, the story is set in a surface mine where two boys sink into a seemingly innocent power game with Mother Nature as the sole observer. The Iranian Youth Cinema Society (IYCS) organizes the festival every year in collaboration with the Cinema Organization of Iran (COD). **→16**



ARTICLE
Mahdi Garba
Journalist from Nigeria

Nigeria, persecution of Shia Muslims and the continued quest for justice

Come December 12, people of conscience around the globe would be joining members of the Islamic Movement in Nigeria to commemorate the third anniversary of the premeditated attack on armless citizens using armed-to-the-teeth security operatives while bracing up to hoist a flag on the dome of the Hussainiyya Baqiyatullah, Zaria. Few hours after the first attack that left the some people injured, the Nigerian soldiers invaded the residence of Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky, some kilometers from the Hussainiyya. The pretext given for the attack, according to the Nigerian army spokesperson Sani Usman Kukashaka was that the Shia Muslims replacing the flag of Hussainiyya’s dome barricaded the road which stops the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. Gen. Tukur Yusuf Buratai from passing. However the events that unfolded afterwards had proved the Nigerian Army wrong. It was then that pundits within and without the country start to pose questions for the President Muhammadu Buhari-led Federal Government and Governor Nasir Ahmad El-Rufai’s led Kaduna State Government. The questions have succeeded in making the governments at both Federal and State level culpable of genocide among the Shia minority. Prior to the questions like: what led the military advancing to Sheikh Zakzaky’s house to kill over 705 people? Why does the Nigerian government continue to crackdown on any supporter of Sheikh Zakzaky that is lending a voice to put a stop to his continued illegal detention? The list of the questions goes on. During the attack on Hussainiyya Baqiyatullah and Sheikh Zakzaky’s house between 12 and 15 December 2015, over 705 have been killed in cold blood. Hundreds of bodies were desecrated while others were given mass burial secretly by the Nasir El-Rufai-led Kaduna State Government in a bid to bury their crimes. There are families that lost more than three persons in that attack. **→6**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Sanctions doomed to failure, Rouhani says

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Wednesday denounced the U.S. sanctions against Tehran as “ineffective”, saying Washington’s approach toward Iran is “wrong” that will definitely end in “failure”.

Today, the whole world has realized that the Americans once again made false claims and unfounded propaganda, Rouhani said during a cabinet session in Tehran, Tasnim reported.

“They thought they would completely cut off Iran’s oil (exports)... but finally, they realized that this was neither practical nor possible,” he stated.

No matter what they do, there are many options for Iran to sell its oil and their sanctions are ineffective, the president added.



Zarif to attend Majlis committee meeting on CFT

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee will review the CFT — a legislation to combat financing of terrorism — in a meeting on Sunday with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

The parliamentary committee spokesman Ali Najafi Khoshroudi said the Guardian Council’s representative and other relevant authorities will attend the meeting as well, IRNA reported.

The parliament voted in favor of the CFT on October 7. However, the oversight Guardian Council announced earlier this month that it had found 20 faults with the bill, sending it back to the parliament for revisions.



Iran to send naval vessels to Italy

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Navy Chief Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi announced on Wednesday that Iran will send a naval fleet to Italy in the near future, Mehr reported.

He made the remarks in a meeting with the second-in-command of the Italian navy on the sidelines of 10th anniversary of IONS establishment in Kochi, a major port city on the southwest coast of India.

Khanzadi stressed that the naval forces of Iran and Italy should cooperate in all marine-related areas, such as exchanging university students and armed forces officers.

The Italian navy commander, for his part, said his country’s naval forces are fully ready to host the Iranian naval fleet.



Four new provincial governors appointed

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The governors of Hamedan, Kerman, Zanjan and Sistan-Baluchestan provinces were appointed during a cabinet session on Wednesday.

According to ISNA, Saeid Shahrokhi, Mohammad Javad Fadaei, Fathollah Haghighi and Ahmad Ali Muhebbati were appointed as governors of Hamedan, Kerman, Zanjan and Sistan-Baluchestan provinces respectively.

Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said on Saturday that 14 provincial governors would be replaced due to the law banning employment of retirees.

Banning employment of retirees is part of the plan to employ the younger generation in top state jobs.



Iran to involve private sector in space projects

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Head of the Iranian Space Agency (ISA) Morteza Barari on Wednesday underscored the importance of the space sector for boosting Iran’s economy, saying ISA aims to involve the private sector in space projects.

Pointing out that 76% of the economic activities in space industry throughout the world are carried out by the private sector, Barari said ISA is seeking to attract investment to develop Iran’s space infrastructure, IRNA reported.

“We are seeking to break the government’s monopoly of the space sector and open up the field for the private sector,” he said, adding that progressing in space industry is a top priority of the agency.



Ex-congressman: U.S. genuinely wants to ‘starve’ Iranians

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo’s recent threat to “starve” Iranian people through economic pressure was a rare instance of truthfulness in America’s foreign policy, former U.S. Congressman Ron Paul said on Monday.

In the latest episode of his online show “Liberty Report,” Paul said the top U.S. diplomat’s remarks were important because not often American leaders tend to reveal Washington’s true intentions.

Last week, the U.S. secretary of state told BBC Persian that Iranian officials must listen to Washington “if they want their people to eat”.

Kharrazi: We have no choice but to resist sanctions

‘Despite claims, U.S. sanctioning the Iranian people not the government’



POLITICS **TEHRAN** —The U.S. claims that it has sanctioned Iran’s government, but in fact the people of Iran are being sanctioned, said Kamal Kharrazi, head of Iran’s Strategic Council on Foreign Relations, in an interview with France24 broadcast on Wednesday.

Commenting on the latest round of sanctions unleashed on Iran, Kharrazi said the U.S. withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear agreement has been condemned by everyone, including the Iranian people who are suffering from these sanctions.

“The U.S. has actually sanctioned the people, elderly, children, women, and certainly we have no choice but to resist,” said Kharrazi who also acts foreign policy adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

Asked about why Iran still maintains some level of trust in the Europeans despite their failure to deliver on their promises including securing a channel for conducting trades with Iran to date, Kharrazi said, “The other side has to be questioned that why they are hesitating.”

“Others should be questioned that they do not expedite the operation of this instruments. So far, Iran has shown its patience and continued to be part of the deal. Therefore, Iran should not be questioned why [it] still stands [in the deal]” Kharrazi said, adding that the EU, nonetheless, has been promising that the financial instruments will be in place in near future.

Addressing Denmark and France’s recent diplomatic rifts with Iran and the possible impacts they can have on the EU’s support for the JCPOA, Kharrazi noted, “Certainly, there are enemies against the relations between Iran and Europe. We

believe that this is premeditated, and it is a plot against the normal relations between Iran and European countries.”

Kharrazi added, “The question here is to the French government... that why a terrorist organization [Mojahedin-e Khalq], which has been killing Iranians —seven thousand Iranians— are present here, and the government is hosting the organization.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, Kharrazi underlined that Iran is present in Syria and Iraq with the invitation of their governments and because of its national security concerns, among other reasons.

“Daesh (ISIL) was very close to capture Damascus and Baghdad, and they could come to the Iranian border. Therefore, not only in supporting the status quo and the governments in Iraq and Syria, but it was for the national security of Iran.”

Kharrazi, who served as foreign minister in the reformist government of Mohammad Khatami from 1997 to 2005, referred to Iranians’ “friendly and spiritual” relations with the Lebanese, Syrian and Iraqi people, saying, “It’s for centuries that Iranians and those people have been very close to each other.”

As an example, Kharrazi pointed to the

massive Arbreen trek in which two million Iranians annually participate and they are hosted by the Iraqi people.

■ ‘Nonsense war in Yemen’

Elsewhere, Kharrazi pointed to the miserable humanitarian situation in Yemen, questioning the European countries’ arms deals with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. “This is a nonsense war which has not led to any victory for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, but just killing people, (including) women and children, and destruction of the whole country.”

He said Houthi fighters just want a share in their future government, and Iran will certainly expresses political support for them. He added that Iran will also support Yemen’s peace negotiations, and it has been cooperating with some European countries to resolve the Yemeni crisis. However, he said, the Saudi Arabian government is not willing to cooperate.

Addressing the so-called Saudi “Iran plan” in which Riyadh has been plotting assassination attempts on the lives of Iranian officials, financing opposition groups like the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization, and even attempting to sabotage Iran’s economy, Kharrazi said the plan is not very strange to Iranians as this is Saudi Arabia’s mentality and its nature.

“Saudi Arabia has always been supporting terrorism and supporting those who have been trying to kill Iranians,” he said.

Nonetheless, Kharrazi, did not shut the door for possible negotiation between Tehran and Riyadh, suggesting that it is only through negotiation between the key states in the Middle East that the “volatile” situation in the region can be ameliorated.

Washington seeks to institutionalize discourse of compromise, Velayati says

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Velayati, a top foreign policy adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said on Wednesday that the U.S. is seeking to institutionalize the discourse of compromise.

“The U.S. policy against the resistance movement is aimed at institutionalizing the discourse of compromise to stop growth of the Islamic resistance movement in the region and provide the Zionist regime of Israel with security through waging proxy wars,” Velayati said during a conference.

The veteran politician said that the U.S. prioritizes security of Israel which is the main pivot of its policies in



the West Asia region.

“The policy of the Western-Arab-Hebrew coalition is annihilating capacities of the resistance front and weaken and disintegrate the Islamic countries to provide the Zionist regime with security,” added Velayati who served as Iran’s foreign minister in the 1980 and 1990s.

However, he said that wise strategies adopted by the resistance front leaders, especially the one by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, have foiled the enemies’ plots.

“Today, the resistance front is more powerful, competent and deterrent than ever, and it is essential to introduce achievements of the front,” he noted.

Diplomat: U.S. officials’ language against Iran is ‘disastrous’

Trump administration has failed to create consensus against Iran, Baedinejad says

By Negar Asadi

TEHRAN — Iran’s ambassador to London said on Tuesday that the Trump administration has failed to create a consensus against Iran in order to exert more pressure against the country.

“As you see, the exemptions that they have been providing for many states around the globe means that the United States has failed to create a kind of consensus among the countries to have unified sanctions against Iran,” Hamid Baedinejad told the CNN.

He said that the U.S. has started psychological warfare to frighten the Iranian people and to sabotage the country’s economy.

“But gradually we can manage to find ways and means to guarantee and continue to export oil,” he said.

The ambassador added, “We have a lot of alternatives. We have some experiences from the past and we know the difference of this time from the previous time that the

countries are not ready to comply with the U.S. request. So, we have enough leverages to continue our exports.”

Iran’s senior diplomat to London went on to say that there are many medium-sized and small-sized companies which are interested in working in Iran.

“We are in close contacts with the European Union about how we can ensure continuation of medium-sized and small-sized companies’ work in Iran,” he explained.

U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the Washington out of the 2015 nuclear agreement in May and reintroduced sanctions on Iran. The first batch

of sanctions were enacted in August. The second wave of sanctions, which targets Iran’s oil exports and central bank, were snapped back on November 5.

However, the U.S. has agreed to let eight countries, including Japan, India and South Korea, keep buying Iran’s oil after it re-imposes sanctions.

■ ‘U.S. officials’ language against Iran is disastrous’

Baedinejad also said that the U.S. officials’ language against Iran is “disastrous”.

Talking to media in Singapore on Tuesday, U.S. national security advisor John Bolton said, “We think the government is under real

Ambassador Baedinejad says the U.S. has started psychological warfare to frighten the Iranian people and to sabotage the country’s economy.

‘Sultan of coin’ and accomplice executed

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Vahid Mazloumin, a notorious man who got the nickname of the “sultan of coin”, and his accomplice Mohammad Esmail Qassemi were executed on Wednesday morning.

They were sent to gallows for hoarding gold coins and other hard currency, manipulating the gold market and a following price rises in other commodities.

They were put to death after the Supreme Court upheld their death sentences and the legal processes were completed, Tasnim reported.

Mazloumin, 58, who was arrested in July had collected about two tons of coin over a ten-month period.

Mazloumin and his accomplices started to abuse the volatile situation in the market by amassing gold coins after Donald Trump illegally withdrew the United States from the nuclear deal and ordered sanctions against Iran, a move



which by itself led to the rise of foreign currencies against the national currency rial.

Sadistic Bolton enjoys harassing Iran, Foreign Ministry says

1→ “Use of such disgraceful words by this official of the United States, who has been communicating with certain terrorist groups and receives money from them, is not something to wonder about,” he stated.

The ministry spokesman was referring to the participation of Bolton in the annual gatherings of the terrorist Mojahedin Khalq Organization (MK), also called MEK, in Paris.

Qassemi also said, “He talks about imposing more pressure and sanctions against Iran with a shameful and abnormal pleasure.”

He added Bolton has failed to get a true understanding of Iran. However, Qassemi

The Foreign Ministry official tells Bolton that time, history and the Iranian culture have succeeded to tame the “idiot”, “stubborn” and “rebellious” individuals easily.

predicted that Bolton will soon realize about Iran, the Iranian people and their culture.

The Foreign Ministry official told Bolton that time, history and the Iranian culture have succeeded to tame the “idiot”, “stubborn” and “rebellious” individuals easily.

The Iranian people will stand against the enemies through exercising “strategic patience” and “vigilance”, Qassemi remarked.

predicted that Bolton will soon realize about Iran, the Iranian people and their culture.

The Foreign Ministry official told Bolton that time, history and the Iranian culture have succeeded to tame the “idiot”, “stubborn” and “rebellious” individuals easily.

The Iranian people will stand against the enemies through exercising “strategic patience” and “vigilance”, Qassemi remarked.

UNSC fails to take action against Israel over fresh Gaza aggression

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has met behind closed doors over the situation in the Gaza Strip, but failed to reach an agreement on how to deal with a fresh wave of deadly Israeli attacks against the blockaded Palestinian territory.

Requested by Kuwait and Bolivia, the 50-minute emergency session was held on Tuesday after Gaza witnessed the worst flare-up of violence since the 2014 war.

The meeting however ended inconclusively, with no statement from the council on the violence, which broke out when the Israeli military launched a commando raid against Gaza on the weekend and killed seven members of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas.

The sting operation was followed by a wave of deadly air raids against residential areas throughout the Gaza Strip.

Israel's acts of aggression, however, drew an angry reaction from Hamas -- which governs Gaza -- and other Palestinian resistance factions, which fired an intense barrage of rockets into the southern parts of the occupied territories.

At least seven Palestinians were killed in Israeli air raids and over 30 others wounded. Two Israelis also died in Ashkelon, while around 20 others sustained injuries in counterattacks from Gaza.

On Tuesday, however, the Gaza-based resistance groups agreed to an Egypt-brokered ceasefire with Israel.

Speaking after the Security Council meeting, Kuwaiti Ambassador Mansour al-Otaibi told reporters that "we were not able to find a solution to the situation in Gaza" because of divisions at the 15-member council.

The majority of UNSC member states said the body "should do something," with some suggesting a visit to the region, but no decision was taken.



■ UNSC stands 'paralyzed'

In turn, Palestinian Ambassador to the UN Riyad Mansour criticized the council for failing to "shoulder its responsibility" to take action on the Gaza crisis, saying the world body's most powerful organ was in fact "paralyzed."

"There is one country that is not allowing discussion at the council," said Mansour, referring to the U.S., Israel's staunch ally.

The senior Palestinian diplomat further condemned "in the strongest possible terms this aggression by Israel."

"We want the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility with regard to this situation threatening international peace and security, and it is unfortunately, the Security Council is paralyzed. It did not shoulder its responsibility," the official added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Mansour expressed hope that the Gaza ceasefire -- which took effect on Tuesday -- would hold.

The Palestinian envoy also complained

that the "immoral, illegal, and ... inhumane" Israeli siege on Gaza has led to a "miserable situation" in the coastal sliver.

"That blockade needs to be lifted so that the people in the Gaza Strip can begin the process of returning to a normal situation, as much as 'normal' could be under occupation," he added.

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

The Tel Aviv regime carries out regular attacks on the coastal enclave under the pretext of hitting positions belonging to Hamas.

Separately on Tuesday, the Hamas spokesman stressed that the resistance movement had "taught Israel a serious lesson."

"This is a message to Israel," Sami Abu Zuhri said in a speech in Algeria. "The attitude of the resistance groups will be determined according to the behavior of Israel."

■ Palestinians hail decisive response to Israel

Meanwhile, people took to the streets in different cities across Gaza, including Khan Yunis, Gaza City, Jabalia and Rafah to celebrate the victory of the resistance over Israel.

The demonstrators carried Palestinian and Hamas flags.

Hamas official Ismail Radwan addressed the protesters in Gaza City in front of the rubble of the Hamas-run Al-Aqsa TV headquarters -- which was razed to the ground in an Israeli raid on Monday.

"We come out today, celebrating the victory of the resistance, the victory of the Qassam (the Hamas military wing) and the victory of the Palestinian resistance here on the mighty land of Gaza," he said.

"You will not commit a crime without being held accountable for it," he noted. "The resistance's missiles were launched from here and hit the Zionist depth. The message was clear: bombardment for bombardment, killing for killing, blood for blood."

Similar rallies were held in the West Bank cities of Ramallah and al-Khalil to protest the Israeli aggression in Gaza.

■ 'Israel won't respect truce'

In an interview with Press TV, Paul Larudee, with the Free Palestine Movement, cast doubt on Israel's commitment to the new Egypt-brokered ceasefire.

He said the regime in Tel Aviv regime is after clearing the Palestinian land of its native people and replacing them with its own citizens. They see such a truce as an obstacle to their "ethnic cleansing" campaign against the Palestinian people.

"They are not going to respect it," he said. "They have never respected anything that the United Nations has ever asked of them, at least for long."

(Source: Press TV)

'Bangladesh deploys armed forces to force out Rohingya'

Bangladesh is reportedly using heavy-handed tactics in an attempt to force Rohingya Muslim refugees -- who have taken shelter in the country after fleeing state violence in neighboring Myanmar -- back across the border.

The Guardian reported on Wednesday that Bangladeshi paramilitary troops, police, and army have been deployed in southeast Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar district, where the Rohingya are cramped in refugee camps, to make final preparations to start sending back the first group of the minority Muslim refugees to Myanmar on Thursday.

The British daily said it had seen and could verify a video in which a Rohingya leader in Chakmarkul Camp is seen saying he was beaten in the office of Bangladeshi camp officials, known as CICs, "with a large stick" when he refused to provide them with a list of Rohingya in his camp on Monday.

"They stepped on my neck, I could not stand it," Ullah said in the footage. "You can see from my face how I was beaten."

It also quoted other refugees as saying they were reluctant to go back and afraid of the military presence.

"The army is in every corner of the Jamtoli and Hakimpura camps, sitting and checking people and not letting them move between camps," one Rohingya refugee in the Jamtoli camp said. "People are too afraid to leave their houses or eat. Some left our block at midnight using secret paths for other camps, especially Kutupalong, where there is not so much fear about repatriation," the refugee added.

Myanmar and Bangladesh announced earlier this month that they were going to start implementing a previous repatriation agreement in mid-November.

The announcement prompted human rights groups, aid agencies, and many governments to raise concern about safety issues for Rohingya back in Myanmar.

More than 700,000 Rohingya refugees have fled to Bangladesh since last year, when Myanmar's armed forces, backed by Buddhist extremist mobs, intensified a crackdown that had already been underway against the Muslim community in Myanmar's Rakhine State.

Thousands of Rohingya Muslims were killed, and others only survived by fleeing to Bangladesh, where they now face potential violence as well. This is while Bangladesh's foreign secretary and refugee commissioner have several



times offered assurances that they would not send the Rohingya back against their will. Dozens of Rohingya families, who were placed on a list of 2,200 refugees "approved" for return by Myanmar, told The Guardian that they did not want to return under the current conditions.

Many had already fled the camps and gone into hiding, while others had attempted suicide over fears of going back to Myanmar.

The United Nations (UN) has repeatedly warned that the repatriation of the Rohingya could be dangerous, given that they still faced violence in Myanmar. Last week, UN Special Envoy for Myanmar Yanghee Lee said the people were still facing a "high risk of persecution."

■ UN demands halt to repatriation

UN human rights chief Michelle Bachelet has, meanwhile, called on Dhaka to halt the repatriation, warning that the Muslims' lives would be at "serious risk."

"Forcibly expelling or returning refugees... would be a clear violation of the core legal principle of non-refoulement," Bachelet said on Tuesday.

She explained that the legal principle "forbids repatriation

where there are threats of persecution or serious risks to the life and physical integrity or liberty of the individuals."

■ Suu Kyi once again refuses to shoulder responsibility over Rohingya

Meanwhile, Myanmar's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been blamed by the international community for inaction over the plight of the Rohingya, has once again refused to take responsibility.

US Vice President Mike Pence told her on the sidelines of a summit in Singapore on Wednesday that the violence against and the persecution of the Rohingya was "without excuse."

Suu Kyi responded by saying, "Of course people have different points of view."

She has already taken the side of the military in the violence against the Rohingya.

Amnesty International on Monday stripped Suu Kyi of its most prestigious human rights prize over her failure to speak out about violence against the Rohingya, calling her posture a "shameful betrayal."

(Source: agencies)

British PM hails Brexit deal but must sell it to doubtful ministers

British Prime Minister Theresa May hailed her draft European Union divorce deal Wednesday but must convince ministers to back her plan amid open hostility from some of her own members of Parliament who say it threatens the United Kingdom's unity.

Her minority government means May is the weakest British leader in a generation, yet she must try to get her Brexit deal, struck after months of negotiations with the EU, approved by Parliament before leaving the bloc on March 29, 2019.

The deal has been denounced by both supporters and opponents of Brexit.

"I'm confident that this takes us significantly closer to delivering on what the British people voted for in the referendum," May told Parliament. Britons voted 52-48 percent in favor of leaving the EU in 2016.

"We will take back control of our borders, our laws and our money, leave the Common Fisheries Policy and the Common Agricultural Policy, while protecting jobs, security and the integrity of the United Kingdom."

Brexit campaigners in May's Conservative Party said her deal was a surrender to the EU and said they would vote it down.

The Northern Irish Democratic Unionist



Party which props up May's government, said it would not back any deal that treated the British province differently from the rest of the United Kingdom.

Opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn called it a "botched deal".

The British cabinet will meet at 1400 GMT and a number of senior ministers were expected to push back against the deal.

Brexit-supporting Conservative members

of Parliament have made their unhappiness clear. "If the media reports about the EU agreement are in any way accurate, you are not delivering the Brexit people voted for, and today you will lose the support of many Conservative MPs and millions of voters across the country," lawmaker Peter Bone said.

EU leaders could meet on Nov. 25 for a summit to seal the Brexit deal if May's cabinet approves the text, Irish Prime Minister Leo

Varadkar said.

For the EU, reeling from successive crises over debt and immigration, the loss of Britain is the biggest blow yet to 60 years of efforts to forge European unity in the wake of two world wars. The U.K. government gave no immediate details on the Brexit deal text, which runs to hundreds of pages, although a statement to Parliament was likely Thursday.

Supporters argue while the divorce might bring some short-term instability, in the longer term it will allow the United Kingdom to thrive and strike global trade deals.

Some business chiefs, who have repeatedly warned about the damage exiting with no deal would cause, were positive about May's deal.

"My gut feeling is we need to get behind it and we need to make this deal work. What we need is certainty," said Juergen Maier, the UK CEO of German engineering giant Siemens.

However, James Stewart, head of Brexit at accounting firm KPMG said: "Until there is broader political alignment and fewer risks, business leaders have little option but to continue to assume that the quest for a deal could yet be derailed."

(Source: Reuters)

Ex-Daesh hostages thank Assad for liberation



A group of Syrians, who have been freed by army forces from Daesh's captivity, have expressed their gratitude to President Bashar al-Assad, whose government has been leading the nation's fight against terrorism.

The Syrians, from the Druze minority community, were taken hostage by Daesh in southern Suwayda Province in late July, but they were freed last week following a counter-terrorism operation by the Syrian army there. During a meeting in Damascus on Tuesday, the liberated abductees and their families lifted Assad into the air, with one man lifting up the Syrian president on his shoulders, as shown in a video clip released by the al-Watan media outlet.

They also chanted slogans in support of Assad and Syria, appreciating the sacrifices of "army heroes" in their fight against terrorists. Assad, for his part, thanked the army and stressed that without them "the abducted people would not have been freed."

Over the past few months, Syrian troops, backed by the Russian air force and Iranian military advisors, have made sweeping gains against foreign-sponsored Takfiri elements who have been wreaking havoc in the Arab country since 2011.

The pro-government forces have managed to regain control over most parts of Syria. They managed to rid Daesh of its territorial rule last December.

Now, Daesh only holds a small area in the far east of Syria and a patch of desert in the country's south.

(Source: Press TV)

U.S. Senate considers legislation to punish Saudi Arabia

The U.S. Senate is expected to vote on legislation aimed at punishing Saudi Arabia over its brutal war on Yemen as well as the murder of a dissident journalist at its consulate in Istanbul, Turkey.

Senator Bob Corker, the Republican chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said Tuesday that the upper chamber could vote on the resolution within weeks prior to the end of the year.

Corker said that the legislation seeks to stop all assistance to the Kingdom, adding measures to end arms sales to Riyadh would also be discussed at the Senate.

"Senators are looking for some way to show Saudi Arabia the disdain they have for what has happened, with the journalist, but also concerns about the way Yemen has gone," Corker (pictured below) told Reuters.

"It would be very hard, if a weapons sale came up, to keep it from being undone, at least in the Senate," Corker said.

Saudi Arabia has come under fierce criticism after journalist Jamal Khashoggi was killed inside its consulate on October 2.

Khashoggi, a prominent commentator on Saudi affairs who wrote for The Washington Post's Global Opinions section, had lived in self-imposed exile in the U.S. since September 2017, when he left Saudi Arabia over fears of the Riyadh regime's crackdown on critical voices.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is a prime suspect in the murder plot.

Bin Salman has also been leading a devastating war on Yemen since 2015 in an attempt to reinstall Yemen's former Riyadh-allied regime and crush the Houthi Ansarullah movement, which has been running state affairs in the absence of an effective government.

(Source: Reuters)

Retired U.S. general picked for ambassador to Saudi Arabia

U.S. President Donald Trump has named a former army general with long experience in the Middle East as ambassador to Saudi Arabia, a post that has been vacant since Joseph Westphal left in January 2017.

John Abizaid, a retired four-star army general of Lebanese Christian descent, is prominent for his stint as the longest-chief of U.S. Central Command - of which the Middle East is part - starting shortly after the Iraq war in 2003 all the way through to 2007.

He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, after which he earned a scholarship to go study Arabic in Jordan, a language he did not speak as a child.

Abizaid also attended Harvard University where he obtained a Master of Arts in Middle Eastern Studies. His thesis focused on Saudi Arabia's weapons procurement policy.

The 67-year-old's appointment, which will have to be approved by the Senate, comes at a time when relations between the longstanding allies are being put to the test following the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

Khashoggi was killed shortly after entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2.

He has gone back and forth between demanding full accountability for the journalist's murder and emphasizing the strategic importance of the U.S.-Saudi alliance, going so far as to say any punishment imposed on Riyadh will not include a halt to U.S. arms sales.

Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, has been acting as de facto U.S. ambassador to Riyadh by forging a bond with Prince Mohammed. In 2017, Kushner took an unannounced trip to Saudi Arabia to pay a visit to MBS.

The two men have since reportedly been exchanging text messages and speaking frequently on the telephone.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	181994.3
IFX	1957.16

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	48,494 rials
GBP	55,053 rials
AED	11,379 rials

Source: iribnews.ir

COMMODITIES

WTI	\$55.74/b
Brent	\$66.25/b
OPEC Basket	\$69.82/b
Gold	\$1,201.90/oz
Silver	\$14.04/oz
Platinum	\$838.95/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

NEWS IN BRIEF



Intl. oil, gas, petrochemicals conference held in Bushehr

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — The second edition of Iran’s biennial Oil, Gas and Petrochemicals Conference (OGPC) was held in the southwestern Bushehr Province on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

According to Arash Khosravi, the conference’s executive secretary, over 150 papers from seven different countries have been submitted to this conference.

Scholars and authors from Iran, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Iraq, Austria, Norway, Canada, United States, United Kingdom, Morocco, Malaysia and India also participated in this event.

The conference was focused on two main sectors of energy and environment.



Shiraz hosting intl. installation exhibit

E C O N O M Y **TEHRAN**— Shiraz is hosting 15th International Exhibition of Cooling, Heating, Installations and Equipment until Friday, IRNA reported.

The exhibit, which kicked off at the permanent international fairground of Fars Province on Tuesday, is hosting 40 Iranian companies besides some from other countries.

Flourishing construction industry will lead to the flourishing in some other industries and creation of many jobs; and this exhibit plays significant role in this due, Enayatollah Rahimi, the deputy governor of Fars Province, noted in the inaugural ceremony of the exhibition.



Turkmenistan to host exclusive expo of Iranian goods in Mar. 2019

E C O N O M Y **TEHRAN** — Ashgabat, the capital city of Turkmenistan, will host an exclusive exhibition of Iranian goods from March 4 to 6, 2019, the portal of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) published on Wednesday.

The Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture of Iran’s North Khorasan Province will organize the event.

The Turkmen city hosted the 14th exclusive exhibition of Iranian goods and services from March 1 to 3, 2018.

German central bank warns of risks to growth and banks

Vulnerabilities in the German financial system are building up and risks to growth have increased substantially, the country’s central bank said on Wednesday, warning that banks may have insufficient buffers.

Germany has enjoyed its longest expansion since unification but growth is now slowing and the economy contracted in the third quarter, raising questions about the readiness of the euro zone’s biggest economy for the next downturn.

“The risks to future economic activity are today skewed to the downside,” Bundesbank Vice President Claudia Buch said as the bank presented a regular stability report.

The lengthy expansion has pushed up asset prices, particularly for real estate, which are now 15 to 30 percent overvalued, the Bundesbank added.

While there is no acute need for measures to address the real estate market per se, banks may be overestimating some collateral values and underestimating credit risk.

Banks may also have insufficient buffers if an economic downturn is exacerbated by simultaneous credit defaults, asset repricing and interest rate changes, the Bundesbank added.

“The German banking system has become more vulnerable to an abrupt increase in risk premia and thus in interest rates,” Buch said.

“We have evidence to suggest that market participants are tending to underestimate the risks they incur and that they are tending to not charge enough for them,” Buch added.

(Source: euronews)

7,800km of new roads, freeways under construction in Iran

E C O N O M Y **TEHRAN**— Some 7,800 kilometers of highways, freeways and main roads are under construction throughout the country, Iran’s Deputy Transport Minister Kheirollah Khademi announced on Tuesday.

The official said: “It is unfortunate that the major part of transportation is still made through roads in the country; while railway development has witnessed some significant growth over the recent years and also some 3,300 kilometers of new railroads are currently under construction in Iran. But the statistics show that there is still low interest for transport via railway”, IRIB reported.

Khademi, who is also the managing director of Iran’s Construction and Development

of Transportation Infrastructures Company (CDTIC), further announced that road account for 90 percent while railway account for 10 percent of transportation in Iran.

Last month, Managing Director of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) Saeed Mohammadzadeh said that some €20 billion is needed to supply the required infrastructure for development of national railway network by March 2021.

“According to the set programs, 54 percent of the needed investments will be made by the private sector and the rest will be supplied by the government,” he added.

“RAI intends to have a 20 percent stake in Iran’s freight transport and a 30 percent one in passenger transport by 2021,” Mohammadzadeh underlined.



Iran, India review trade co-op under sanctions

E C O N O M Y **TEHRAN**— In a meeting between Head of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) Masoud Khansari and Indian Ambassador to Iran Saurabh Kumar the two sides investigated the prepared mechanisms for doing mutual trade transactions under the unilateral U.S. sanctions imposed on Iran, the portal of TCCIMA reported on Wednesday.

During the meeting held at the place of TCCIMA, Khansari referred to the sanctions as a chance for Iran and India to have a better focus on bilateral economic cooperation and in specific banking ties.

“India has received waivers over Iran sanctions for purchasing oil and it is vital to create mechanisms for easing and clarifying ways of exchanging goods, doing investments, transferring oil revenues into Iran and etc.,” he added.

The TICCIMA head announced that the chamber is study-



ing under sanctions trade with regional countries, including India, as well as exports of Iranian goods to their markets.

The Indian ambassador, for his turn, announced that according to a report prepared by the Indian embassy, there

are up to 1,000 types of goods among the ones exported from India to Iran.

Expressing content about using rial and rupee in trade transactions between the two countries, he added that Iran can enjoy exports of oil and non-oil products to India besides importing its requirements from India.

He added that to benefit from the sanctions waivers, India can import 300,000 bpd of Iran’s oil within the next six months.

According to him, India will pay half of the oil price in Rupee to Iranian banks’ accounts in Indian ones, which lets Iran to supply its basic goods such as food and medicine from India.

The rest of the purchased oil price can be exchange into euro or other currencies and be transferred to accounts out of India, however, the act needs new mechanisms and business channels to be defined, he said.

OPEC puts Iran’s Oct. oil output at 3.296m bpd

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN**— Iran produced 3.296 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil in October, a 156,000 bpd decrease from 3.452 million bpd in August, according to OPEC’s latest monthly report published on Tuesday citing the secondary sources.

Meanwhile, the country’s average heavy oil price was \$77.04 in October, up \$1.76 or 2.3 percent from \$75.28 in September.

The report also put average Iranian heavy crude price at \$69.59 since beginning of 2018 up to the report’s publishing day.

“During the first eight months of 2018, oil demand growth was negative in Iran, with a mixed picture among petroleum

product categories. Gasoline accounted for the bulk of additional volumes, but this was more than offset by shrinking residual fuel oil and jet/kerosene requirements”, the OPEC report read.

Iranian oil industry has been under pressure from the U.S. efforts to isolate the country by reimposing sanctions.

The new round of sanctions targeting Iran’s oil sector were put in action on November 4.

However, earlier this month, the U.S. government agreed to let eight countries, including close allies South Korea and Japan, as well as India, keep buying Iranian oil after it reimposed sanctions on Tehran.



European stocks fall as oil slumps; UK, EU agree on Brexit divorce draft

European stocks opened lower on Wednesday after Italy defied the European Union’s call to revise its spending targets and oil prices dived further into bear market territory.

The pan-European Stoxx 600 was down 0.67 percent with all major indexes in negative territory.

In terms of sectors, real estate was at the top of the list, up 0.10 percent, while technology continued to make losses, finding itself at the bottom of the list, down 1.5 percent.

Traders will be keeping a close eye on moves in oil prices on Wednesday after crude plunged as much as 7 percent in the previous session on the back of fears around oversupply and weakening global demand.

As of 1 a.m. ET, Brent crude was seen trading half a percent lower to \$65.15 a barrel while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude fell 0.74 percent to \$55.28. The rout will likely put pressure on oil firms’ share price during the trading session Wednesday.

The oil and gas sector and miners were down 1.9 percent and 2.1 percent respectively.

On the earnings front, Danish shipping group A.P. Moller-Maersk beat third-quarter operating profit forecasts on Wednesday, but said a trade war be-

tween the United States and China had hit demand for container shipping. Shares in the company were up nearly 1 percent.

The Italian government on Wednesday stuck to its contested 2019 deficit target of 2.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), defying the European Union’s call for Rome to revise fiscal targets. Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini warned the EU against issuing fines against Italy over its budgetary plans.

Brexit will likely be another area of focus for investors Wednesday after news of a key breakthrough between Britain and the EU on a divorce deal. Negotiators on neither side have reportedly agreed to a draft deal late Tuesday; British Prime Minister Theresa May will meet with her cabinet on Wednesday to get her ministers on side.

In corporate news, the European Commission sent a statement of objections to Siemens and Alstom over their proposed rail merger on Tuesday. The two firms confirmed the news to CNBC and said they would respond to the objections from EU’s executive body. Alstom is set to report its first-half results on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, in data, key German gross domestic product (GDP) growth figures will be released Wednesday, amid fears of a slowdown in the country’s economy.

(Source: CNBC)

Italy’s populist government defies the EU, sticking to its 2019 budget targets

Italy’s populist government said it would stick with its high-spending budget plan, in a rejection of calls by the European Union to revise its fiscal targets.

Rome clung onto its contested budget deficit figure of 2.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), a move which is likely to send tremors into domestic and European capital markets Wednesday.

The 2.4 percent proposed deficit dwarfs the previous Italian administration’s deficit goal of 0.8 percent of GDP.

Italy also kept its growth assumptions for 2019, 2020 and 2021 unchanged, despite both the EU and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) claiming those assumptions are too high.

Matteo Salvini, Italy’s deputy prime minister, said overnight that the government would stick to its budget targets for 2019, but would up asset sales and keep spending in check.

Tuesday was the official deadline for the Italian government to submit a revised draft budget to the EU’s executive body, the European Commission.

The Commission made the unprecedented move last month to reject Italy’s draft budget proposal, stating the country’s spending targets went against European rules.

Salvini reportedly said Wednesday that it would be “wrong” if the EU fined his country for breaching fiscal rules. “They’ve got it wrong if they are even just thinking of imposing fines on the Italian people,” he told Italy’s state-owned radio station RAI, according to Reuters.

Italian stocks were the worst performers in Europe on the back of the government’s rebuff of Europe’s call for a revision to the 2019 budget plans. The FTSE MIB fell more than 1.8 percent on Wednesday morning.

The yield on Italy’s benchmark 10-year bond ticked 9

basis points (bps) higher to a three-week high of 3.54 percent following the news, amid increasing fears of an escalating standoff between Rome and Brussels.

The euro meanwhile came under pressure on the back of the news, shedding gains from earlier in the morning. The single currency had initially jumped after news that a draft divorce agreement had been reached by the U.K. and the EU. It was just a touch below the flatline in early morning trade.

Italy’s government did however say in its resubmitted budgetary plan that it expected public debt to fall to 129.2 percent of GDP in 2019.

“I hope that the Italian government will recognize that the best way out of the difficult economic situation in Italy with the low growth and with lack of expectations is to moderate the deficit in the present budget.”

(Source: CNBC)

Oil jumps towards \$67 as OPEC, partners discuss supply cut

Oil rose towards \$67 a barrel on Wednesday, recouping some of the previous session's slide, on the growing prospect of OPEC and allied producers cutting output at a meeting next month to prop up the market.

Crude rallied after three sources familiar with the issue said OPEC and its partners are discussing a proposal to cut output by up to 1.4 million barrels per day (bpd), a larger figure than officials have mentioned previously.

International benchmark Brent crude rose \$1.18 a barrel to \$66.65 as of 0955 GMT, having fallen as low as \$65.02 earlier. U.S. crude was up 60 cents at \$56.29.

Since mid-October, the price of Brent has fallen by 17.5 percent as concern grew about excess supply and slowing demand, which has become one of the biggest declines since a price collapse in 2014.

"Crude oil futures succumbed to overwhelmingly bearish pressure," said Benjamin Lu, analyst at brokerage Phillip



jamin Lu, analyst at brokerage Phillip Futures in Singapore.

Oil markets are being pressured from two sides: a surge in supply from OPEC,

Russia and other producers, and increasing concerns about a global economic slowdown that would hit demand.

U.S. crude oil output from its seven major shale basins is expected to hit a record 7.94 million barrels per day (bpd) in December, the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration (EIA) said on Tuesday.

That surge in onshore output has helped overall U.S. crude production hit a record 11.6 million bpd, making the United States the world's biggest oil producer ahead of Russia and Saudi Arabia.

Most analysts expect U.S. output to climb above 12 million bpd within the first half of 2019.

The rise in U.S. production is contributing to higher stockpiles.

Official storage data is due on Wednesday from the Energy Information Administration, with analysts expecting a 3 million barrel rise in crude inventories.

(Source: Reuters)

OPEC knocks down oil demand forecast for the 4th consecutive month

OPEC continued to reduce its forecast for oil demand in its latest monthly report, issuing its fourth consecutive downward revision to consumption growth for 2019.

The 15-member oil cartel forecasts the world's appetite for crude will grow by 1.29 million barrels per day in 2019, down 70,000 bpd from its projection last month. The group has revised its outlook lower every month since July, when it initially forecast growth of 1.45 million bpd for next year.

Meanwhile, the cartel now sees output from non-member nations increasing by 2.23 million bpd next year, up 120,000 bpd from its last forecast.

"Although the oil market has reached a balance now, the forecasts for 2019 for non-OPEC supply growth indicate higher volumes outpacing the expansion in world oil demand, leading to widening excess supply in the market," OPEC said. "The recent downward revision to the global economic growth forecast and associated uncertainties confirms the emerging pressure on oil demand observed in recent months."

The warning adds further evidence that OPEC and a group of allied oil exporters could launch a fresh round of supply cuts when they meet in a few weeks.

OPEC, along with Russia and several other nations, began cutting output in January 2017 to drain global crude stockpiles and end a punishing oil price downturn. The



alliance agreed in June to restore some of that production after it took more barrels off the market than it intended.

With oil prices plunging into a bear market in recent weeks, the group is now considering reversing course. On Monday, Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said the producers may need to cut nearly 1 million bpd from October levels.

OPEC's total output increased by 127,000 bpd in October to 32.9 million bpd, according to independent sources cited by the group in its monthly report.

Saudi Arabia raised its output by 127,000 bpd to 10.6 million bpd in October, according to both independent figures and data provided by the kingdom.

Why oil prices went from four-year highs to a bear market in just six weeks

The oil market is undergoing a stunning reversal as crude futures wipe out this year's gains after hitting their highest levels since 2014 just six weeks ago.

The slump reflects a fundamental change in the outlook for the oil prices. A month ago, traders were concerned that a looming shortage of oil would push crude futures to \$100 a barrel. Now, supply is expected to swamp demand at the start of 2019.

As a result, oil prices have plunged more than \$20 a barrel since the start of October, when Brent crude rose to nearly \$87 a barrel and U.S. crude traded just shy of \$77. Both benchmarks are now trading firmly in bear market territory, having fallen more than 20 percent from their 52-week highs.

Along the way, U.S. crude has posted its longest losing streak since it began trading in New York more than three decades ago. The contract has now fallen for 12 consecutive sessions. It settled at \$55.69 on Tuesday, its lowest closing price since Nov. 16, 2017.

The roots of the pullback can be traced back to the most recent rally itself. At the peak of the run-up, many energy analysts said oil prices never should have risen so far so fast.

Crude futures rose to four-year highs on Oct. 3 as the market braced for renewed U.S. sanctions on Iran, OPEC's third biggest producer. Through September, the threat of sanctions wiped about 800,000 barrels a day off the market, fueling speculation that some oil importers would struggle to

find supplies.

■ Stock market sell-off

That left oil prices vulnerable to a pullback just as the stock market was about to sell off. One week after crude futures struck their highs, two-thirds of the stocks in the S&P 500 plunged into correction territory.

That kicked off a broad market rout that saw investors shed risk assets, including crude futures. Oil and stocks do not always move in tandem, but the assets were closely correlated during last month's sell-off.

Right around the same time that investors started dumping stocks and commodities, concerns about faltering oil demand sharpened.

■ Weaker consumption outlook

In October, both OPEC and the International Energy Agency said oil consumption would grow less than previously forecast, pointing to signs of slowing global economic growth due to trade tensions, rising interest rates and weak emerging market currencies. Forecasters grew particularly concerned about oil demand deteriorating in places like India, Turkey and Indonesia as oil prices hit new highs in October.

"For many developing countries, higher international prices coincide with currencies depreciating against the U.S. dollar, so the threat of economic damage is more acute," the International Energy Agency said last month.

The U.S. dollar has risen nearly 3 percent against a basket of currencies over the last two months. That makes crude oil, which is



sold in dollars, more expensive to holders of other currencies.

■ Rising output

Meanwhile, the world's top three oil producers are pumping at or near all-time highs and the 15-member OPEC cartel is in the middle of a coordinated production increase.

U.S. output has topped 11 million barrels per day in recent months, while Russia is pumping at post-Soviet era highs at roughly the same level. Saudi Arabia has trailed just behind at 10.6 million bpd in October.

OPEC, along with Russia and several other producers, began capping their output in January 2017 to drain a global crude glut and end a punishing oil price downturn. However, they agreed to reverse course and hike output in June after cutting output more than they intended.

The rising production and weakening demand outlook now has much of the market convinced that supply will outstrip the world's appetite for oil early next year.

■ Iran waivers

The Trump administration's decision to allow eight countries to continue importing Iranian crude for the next six months has also relieved upward pressure on oil prices.

"That really messed up the calculus" for OPEC and its oil market allies, said John Kilduff, founding partner at energy hedge fund Again Capital. The group was pumping more oil to offset the anticipated drop in Iranian exports, but "the waivers really undercut that," Kilduff said.

"They worked so hard over the last few years to balance the market. They sort of tripped into an oversupply situation," he told CNBC.

With demand growth looking shaky and oil prices collapsing, OPEC and its allies are now considering a fresh round of output cuts.

Last month, a committee representing the group said the alliance may have to once again throttle back production to prevent oversupply. The group essentially reiterated that position at its latest meeting on Sunday. The following day, Saudi Arabia's energy minister said the group believes an output cut approaching 1 million bpd may be in order.

Still, oil prices continued to move lower on Tuesday, after President Donald Trump urged OPEC and Saudi Arabia to stay the course and as Russia's energy minister continues to express skepticism about the wisdom of supply cuts.

(Source: CNBC)

Asia's weakening economies, record supply threaten to create oil glut

Oil traders' worries over record supplies arriving in Asia just as the outlook for its key growth economies weakens have pulled down global crude benchmarks by a quarter since early October.

Ship-tracking data shows a record of more than 22 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil hitting Asia's main markets in November, up around 15 percent since January 2017, and an increase of nearly 5 percent since the start of this year.

Much of this oil was ordered ahead of U.S. sanctions against Iran that were imposed this month, as refiners prepared for a sudden drop in supply.

But with unexpectedly broad exemptions granted by Washington that allow Asia's main oil consumers to continue buying crude from Iran, the overall supply drop has not materialized.

Global supply has instead surged, led by soaring output from the world's three-biggest producers - the United States, Russia and Saudi Arabia - who in October broke through joint output of 33 million bpd for the first time, meeting more than a third of total oil consumption.

That surge has so far been met by healthy demand, not only in Asia's main emerging economies of China and India, but also in the mature markets of Japan and South Korea.

Now, though, the rising supplies are threatening to turn into a glut, triggering a 25 percent sell-off in spot crude contracts since early October as financial traders pulled money out of oil markets.

Analysts warn the situation may get worse, with increasing signs of a slowdown across Asia's biggest economies.

"Momentum still appears to be slowing across the region, reflecting a combination of tighter financial conditions and slowing global trade," said Frederic Neumann, co-head of economic research for Asia at HSBC in Hong Kong.

■ Economic U-turn

China, Asia's biggest economy, may see its first fall in car sales on record in 2018 as consumption is stifled amid a trade war between Washington and Beijing.

In Japan, the economy contracted in the third quarter, hit by natural disasters but also by a decline in exports amid the rising protectionism that is starting to take its toll on global trade.

And in India, a plunging rupee has resulted in surging import costs, including for oil, stifling purchases in one of Asia's biggest emerging markets. India's car sales are also set to register a fall this year.

"While over the past few months, the focus was on the Iran embargo and Venezuela's output struggles, i.e. the risks of too little supply, the market now increasingly looks concerned about the prospects of too much supply," said Norbert Ruecker, head of commodity research at Swiss bank Julius Baer.

"Hedge funds and other speculative money have swiftly changed from the long to the short side," he said.

As recently as September and October, leading oil traders and analysts were forecasting oil prices of \$90 or even \$100 a barrel by year-end.

Since then, there has been a dramatic shift in sentiment that has turned the entire forward curve for crude oil upside down.

Spot prices in September were significantly higher than those for forward deliveries, a structure known as backwardation that implies a tight market as it is unattractive to put oil into storage.

(Source: Reuters)

Spain sets out plan for 100% renewable electricity by 2050

Spain has set out plans to switch entirely to renewable electricity by 2050, with goals that go further than current European Union plans.

Under the new strategy, greenhouse gas emissions from Spain would be cut by 90 percent compared to 1990 levels by the middle of the century.

The nation intends to invest massively in wind and solar power over the next decade, while banning new licenses for fossil fuel drilling and fracking wells.

It is also planning to source 70 percent of electricity from renewables by 2030, and 100 percent by 2050. In 2017 Spain got roughly a third of its power from renewable sources such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves, and geothermal heat.

Experts have welcomed the move as evidence Spain is "deadly serious" about fighting climate change, and an example to other nations in setting ambitious targets.

The country's socialist government set out this strategy ahead of other European nations in a draft law.

"It is exciting to see Spain setting the pace in its commitment to a 100 percent renewable powered future," said James Watson, CEO of SolarPower Europe. "Spain's energy ambition is a wake-up call to all the other states across the world, as it demonstrates what we know - it is possible to power large economies by renewables in the very near future."

The country intends to go beyond the current EU target of 32 percent and install 35 percent overall renewable energy by 2030, with at least 70 per cent renewable electricity.

It is also aiming to improve energy efficiency by 35 percent, once again going beyond the EU target of 32.5 percent.

In their announcement, the Spanish authorities have emphasized a "just transition", shutting down coal mines but ensuring that there are sufficient retirement packages and retraining to ensure no one is left behind in the transition.

"The draft Spanish climate law is an excellent example of the implementation of the Paris agreement: it sets a long-term goal, provides incentives on scaling up zero emission technologies and cares about a good transition for the workforce," said Christiana Figueres, former executive secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. "As an early mover Spain will gain economically and create new jobs in the renewables sector."

Laurence Tubiana, CEO of the European Climate Foundation, described the Spanish government's action as "groundbreaking".

He said: "By planning on going carbon neutral Spain shows that the battle against climate change is deadly serious, that they are ready to step up, and plan to reap the rewards of decarbonization."

He added that Spain was showing the European Commission the way before it presented its long-term climate strategy at the end of November.

The UK is currently aiming to reduce emissions by 80 percent by 2050, but experts have warned that stricter targets will be required to avoid the worst effects of global warming.

The government has asked its advisers to look into the measures required to implement stricter targets, but it has also faced criticism for its failure to support renewable sources like onshore wind, and its continued support for fracking.

(Source: The Independent)

Fuel shortages the new normal in Venezuela as oil industry unravels

With chronic shortages of basic goods afflicting her native Venezuela, Veronica Perez used to drive from supermarket to supermarket in her gray Chevrolet Aveo searching for food.

But the 54-year-old engineer has abandoned the practice because of shortages of something that should be abundant in a country with the world's largest oil reserves: gasoline.

"I only do what is absolutely necessary, nothing else," said Perez, who lives in the industrial city of Valencia. She said she had stopped going to Venezuela's Caribbean coast, just 20 miles (32 km) away.

Snaking, hours-long lines and gas station closures have long afflicted Venezuela's border regions. Fuel smuggling to neighboring countries is common, the result of generous subsidies from state-run oil company PDVSA that allow Venezuelans to fill their tank 20,000 times for the price of one kilo (2.2 pounds) of cheese.

But in late October and early November, cities in the populous central region of the country like Valencia and the capital Caracas were hit by a rare

wave of shortages, due to plunging crude production and a dramatic drop in refineries' fuel output as the socialist-run economy suffers its fifth year of recession.

Venezuela produced more than 2 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude last year but by September output had fallen to just 1.4 million bpd. So far in 2018, Venezuela produced an average of 1.53 million bpd, the lowest in nearly seven decades, according to figures reported to OPEC.

Bottlenecks for transporting fuel from refineries, distribution centers and ports to gas stations have also worsened, exacerbating the shortages.

PDVSA did not respond to a request for comment. Neither did Venezuela's oil and communications ministries.

Relatively normal supply has since been restored in Caracas and Valencia after unusually long outages but the episode has forced Venezuelans to alter their daily habits.

That could hit an economy seen shrinking by double digits in 2018. For Venezuelans coping with a lack of food and medicine, blackouts and hyperinflation,



the gasoline shortages could also increase frustration with already-unpopular President Nicolas Maduro. "My new headache is fearing I might run out of gasoline," said Elena Bustamante, a 34-year-old English teacher in Valencia. "It has changed my life enormously."

(Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF



India, EU to cooperate in counter terrorism

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — India and European Union (EU) have vowed to step up cooperation in effectively dealing with terrorism, extremism and radicalization. The issue figured prominently during India-EU annual counter terrorism and political dialogue in Brussels on Monday.

The statement said both sides agreed to find ways to enhance cooperation to counter violent extremism and radicalization as well as to deal with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats.

“Exchanges further touched on tackling terrorist use of the Internet and countering terrorism financing,” the statement said.

Although global terrorist organizations have failed to gain foothold in India, some homegrown militant organizations have been active in some parts of India, including Kashmir and northeast. There have been reports about the presence of ISIS in some parts of India, but security agencies have dismissed the reports.

India has signed agreements with many countries in countering the threat of terrorism and extremism. The co-operation with EU, experts believe, will prove significant in counter terrorism efforts.



Russia hits back at U.S. over Afghan statement

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Russian Foreign Ministry has denounced a senior U.S. official’s claim about Russia’s interference in negotiations on Afghanistan as Washington’s attempts to shift the blame for its own policy failures in the country.

The meeting also marked the first time that representatives of both the Afghan government and the Taliban participated, the ministry noted.

Russia reacted sharply to the U.S. statement. “We regard Hale’s statement as a clumsy attempt to shift responsibility to the Russian side for U.S. own failures in Afghanistan and the lack of achievements in Washington’s efforts to find a solution to the Afghan issue,” a ministry statement said.

The ministry said the accusation could only cause “bewilderment” as Moscow is making consistent efforts to facilitate the intra-Afghan reconciliation process, citing the recently held second meeting of the Moscow format of consultations on Afghanistan. Russia’s increased involvement in Afghanistan has caused an alarm in the power corridors of Washington, as U.S. government sees it as a direct challenge to its presence in the war-ravaged country. The war has stretched into its 18th year without any substantial results.



200 militants killed in Kashmir this year

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — Security situation in Indian controlled Kashmir continues to be volatile with increase in armed fights between Indian security forces and militants.

In its ongoing crackdown on terror activities in Jammu and Kashmir, security forces have killed 200 Pakistan-bred terrorists and militants so far, the report stated. While most of the slain terrorists/militants belonged to the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the highest number were gunned down in south Kashmir, with killings of 109 militants while in north Kashmir it was 45.

Among the major operations was the killing of Abu Mateen and Abu Hamaas in March 2018, which was followed by that of Sameer Ahmad Bhat alias Sameer Tiger in Shopian on April 1. Over the next few months, top militant commanders like Saddam Paddar, Abu Qasim and Abu Maviya were killed in May, June and July respectively, the report said.

Last month witnessed the deaths of 27 militants, which included Mannan Wani, Mehrajudin Bangroo and Sabzar Ahmad Sofi. In addition, 50 terrorists were apprehended while five terrorists surrendered before the forces, it added.

Last year the figure was 200 as on November 30, and security analysts believe the toll might jump this year if the situation is not controlled.



TAPI project makes headway

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — The TAPI pipeline project, designed to diversify Turkmenistan’s gas exports, could deliver its first gas to Pakistan in two years, the company’s chief executive officer (CEO) said on Tuesday.

The pipeline is expected to link the energy-rich Central Asian nation of Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan and India, said a report by Reuters.

Muhammetmyrat Amanov, CEO of TAPI pipeline company, speaking at an industry conference in Abu Dhabi said the primary cost of the pipeline was \$5 billion and the total cost was expected to be around \$7 billion.

“We are planning to make a final investment decision in the first half of next year and then stage by stage finalize construction in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India,” he said.

Last week, a delegation of Turkmenistan government led by Deputy Prime Minister was on a working visit to Afghanistan during which they held extensive talks on TAPI project with the Afghan political leadership.

The two sides exchanged views on key areas of cooperation and implementation of humanitarian and economic projects were also considered in accordance with the agreements reached earlier, said a report. The TAPI pipeline will run from Galkynysh – the largest gas field in Turkmenistan through the Afghan cities of Herat and Kandahar and finally reach the Fazilka settlement located near Indo-Pak border.

Despite global outcry, Rohingya repatriation from Bangladesh to begin this week

INTERNATIONAL **TEHRAN** — With the long-planned repatriation of Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh set to begin this week, international aid groups have warned that deportation, given current conditions in Myanmar, cannot possibly be voluntary, safe and dignified.

Bangladeshi authorities plan to begin repatriating Rohingya refugees from Thursday, who have fled what the United Nations has called ‘ethnic cleansing’ at the hands of radical Buddhist groups in Myanmar.

Notwithstanding the refugees repeatedly saying they do not wish to return under the current conditions, some 2,260 of them are scheduled to enter Myanmar from Bangladesh’s southeastern Cox’s Bazar district starting Thursday.

It has created panic in the camps, with refugees unsure about their future in Myanmar. According to reports, to avoid being deported to their home country, refugees are fleeing the camps in Cox’s Bazar, fearing for their lives.

A group of 42 aid agencies have said the planned return of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar is ‘premature’ and ‘dangerous’.

“They are terrified about what will happen to them if they are returned to Myanmar now, and distressed by the lack of information they have received,” the group said in a statement. “They fled to Bangladesh to seek safety and they are very grateful to the Government of Bangladesh for giving them a safe haven.”

Oxfam, World Vision and Save the Children were among the groups working in Myanmar and Bangladesh that signed the statement.

The UN rights chief on Tuesday urged Bangladesh to halt plans to repatriate Rohingya Muslims to Myanmar, amid reports of continued violations against the minority.



“We are witnessing terror and panic among those Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar who are at imminent risk of being returned to Myanmar against their will,” UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet said in a statement.

“Forcibly expelling or returning refugees and asylum seekers to their home country would be a clear violation of the core legal principle of non-refoulement, which forbids repatriation where there are threats of persecution or serious risks to the life and physical integrity or liberty of

the individuals,” she said.

More than 725,000 Rohingya Muslims had to flee Myanmar’s western Rakhine state following a military crackdown in August last year which resulted in murders, rapes and torture. They joined some 300,000 Rohingya who were already living in dilapidated camps in Bangladesh’s southeast for years.

The imminent planned repatriation of Rohingya from Bangladesh to Myanmar could risk triggering violence on both sides of the border and should not proceed, the International Crisis Group has warned.

“Bangladesh and Myanmar should immediately halt the plan” to begin repatriating 485 Rohingya families, totalling 2,260 people, from November 15, the Brussels-based think-tank said. “These people were not consulted in advance and how they were selected is unclear; they are terrified at the prospect of being returned to Myanmar,” the ICG said.

UN special envoy on human rights, Yanghee Lee, has also urged a halt to the ‘rushed plans’ to repatriate Rohingya refugees to Myanmar.

Pakistan, China urge Afghanistan to join CPEC, Belt & Road Initiative

1 → CPEC is a multi-billion dollar project under Belt and Road initiative that is likely to transform the regional economy and bring China and Pakistan closer to each other and to the world. It has raised few eyebrows in the Western world, and hampered Pakistan’s ties with the U.S. but that has not dampened the spirits in Islamabad or Beijing.

Last week, during his visit to China, Pakistan’s Prime Minister Imran Khan said the ambitious project would serve as a vital link for Pakistan and China to the Middle East and Central Asia and open fresh investment avenue, new markets and vistas. He further said it will cut distances and bring much-needed resources to producers and new producers to consumers.

Under Imran Khan, relations between Islamabad and Kabul have shown a marked improvement from the previous government. Khan has reaffirmed his interest in burying the hatchet and opening channels of engagement with the Afghan government. The invitation to Pakistan to be part of CPEC, experts believe, will go a long way in strengthening ties between the two neighbors.



Nigeria, persecution of Shia Muslims and the continued quest for justice

1 → Hamid, Humaid and Ali were Sheikh Zakzaky’s three sons who were killed in the presence of their doting Dad, Sheikh Zakzaky and their beloved mother, Malama Zeenah. We have many families like that of Malam Abdullahi Abbas, Dr. Waziri Gwantu, Dr. Mustapha Sa’id among too numerous to mention that lost more than 3 among their family members, including breadwinners in some instances.

Prominent disciples of Sheikh Zakzaky like Sheikh Muhammad Mahmud Turi, Mukhtar Sahabi, Sayyid Mustapha Nasidi are still at large since the clampdown.

After whisking away with Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife, Malama Zeenah amidst gun injuries, the Kaduna State Government demolished every property relating to the Sheikh, including Jannatu Darur Rahma (the cemetery where martyrs of the movement are buried), Hussainiyya Baqiyatullah (where the Sheikh holds classes on Nahjul Balagha, Quranic exegesis, mourning the martyrdom of Imam Hussain and other events), Fudiyya Islamic Centre and the cemetery Sheikh Zakzaky’s mother was buried.

He and his wife were kept incommunicado for more than six months. When a his family gained access to him in a Department of State Services (DSS) detention facility, he asked his lawyers to file a case against the Federal Government for illegal detention. After several sittings, the presiding judge, Justice Gabriel Kolawole of the Federal High Court 6 Abuja on 2nd December, 2016 declared the continued detention as illegal. Justice Kolawole ordered the immediate release of Sheikh Zakzaky and his wife, Malama Zeenah within 45 day. The judgement did not stopped there, the Judge also awarded a 50 million naira (137, 174, 20 USD at the prevailing exchange rate) with a house anywhere within Kaduna State.

Although Nigeria’s President, General Muhammadu Buhari an erstwhile military dictator that toppled the democratically



elected government of Shehu Shagari in 1982 is assumed to be a repentant dictator when he was contesting for elections under the platform of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in 2015, he has been known for flagrant violation of court orders.

Even as a democratically elected now, the trait of abusing court orders and flagrant abuse of human rights are still embedded in Mr.Buhari. This is further known with the way his government continue to handle Sheikh Zakzaky and his disciple. Since the pronouncement of the judgment two years ago, Nigerians and the international community have continue to await when Buhari’s led Federal Government will release, the Sheikh and his wife despite failing health but that don’t seem to be coming.

In what looks like a bombshell, earlier this year Saudi Crown Prince and Minister of Defense, Muhammad Bin Salman in an interview by US Times Newspaper as reported by Ahlul Bayt News Agency said they have

succeeded in curtailing Iran’s influence in Nigeria. The Prince also said his country is behind the continued illegal detention of Sheikh Zakzaky.

The proxy nature of the crisis is not alien to the Islamic Movement and its close allies because times unnumbered, the leader Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky in phone calls has accused the Nigerian authorities for acting on the scripts of Saudi Arabia of plotting to truncate his life using the court like that Sheikh Baqir Nimr since their guns have failed.

Moreover, Saudi Arabian owned Wisal TV known for its anti-Shia polemics had raised alarm on the rise of Shiism in Nigeria prior to the attack through its documentaries.

This was further corroborated from the encomiums President Buhari receives from Nigerian Wahabi clerics whenever Shia Muslims are attacked in the country. Radical Sunni scholars have used their pulpits to support what they describe as “the good work he has started”. As President Buhari

has been scored poor in good governance, poverty alleviation, infrastructural development, human development and economic reforms since his emergence as President in March 2015, pundits are of the notion that the “good work” he has started may not be far from his war against the Shia minority, which these Wahabi clerics see as danger to their own version of Islam.

Recently, while commemorating the Arba’een of Imam Husain with a symbolic trek from outskirts of Abuja, Nigeria’s capital to the Central Business District more than 47 mourners have been killed with over 200 sustaining various degrees of gun injuries in 3 days. Over 400 have been detained; out of which 142 minors have been released, 156 have been charged to court while the whereabouts of 102 is still best known to the Nigerian security operatives.

Media blackout has also contributed immensely in the continued persecution of the Shia minority in Nigeria. The domestic media have been fair in their reportage, while the mainstream has continued to respond with a loud silence. This deafening silence compounds the issue of lack of awareness among the international community. No mainstream media has reported that since 2015 more than 2000 followers of Sheikh Zakzaky have been killed by Nigerian authorities.

Despite these series of persecution by the Nigerian state, members of the Islamic Movement have shown resilience through constant peaceful protests amidst security threat without resorting to violence, even with government’s undying efforts to blacklist the movement.

Mahdi Garba is a Nigerian journalist, human rights activist, social commentator and writer. He covers the activities of the Nigeria’s Islamic movement for Rasa News Agency, Iran. He is working on his forthcoming book ‘Tears of 12 December’ a memoir on the Zaria massacre

India, Iran have potential to strengthen ties in the current situation: ambassador

➡ ■ What strategy has India designed to continue economic relations with Iran after the imposition of the second round of brutal sanctions on Iran which went into effect on November 5?

A. The two countries have a historical relationship. We have been working to expand our economic and trade ties. When Iran was subjected to sanctions last time, we continued our cooperation to the extent we could. We are heading into a difficult phase again, but we have been talking, and have revived the Rupee mechanism, which in fact, was put in place last time. It has been made more robust. Our expectation is that it would be utilized to continue our bilateral relations in the area of trade and economy.

■ What is India's latest plan on importing oil from Iran? What percentage of Iran's oil will be going to Indian companies after November 5?

A. I can tell you about the last two months' figures that I am aware of; for the months of October and November India placed orders for around 1.25 million metric tons each. This works to roughly 300,000 barrels per day. There are some Indian companies, particularly in the private sector, which have exposure to the American financial system, and have stopped buying Iranian crude; that is to be expected.

The U.S. has also announced exemptions to eight jurisdictions/countries and India is one of them. We expect to continue buying Iranian crude around the above figure.



“My expectation is that the circumstances under which we are, could be utilized in a positive manner.”

■ Except for oil and gas, what other parts of the economic spectrum can Iran and India share in their bilateral relations?

A. As I said, we have a bilateral Rupee mechanism which can be utilized for trade. We can do more than bilateral trade. I think the challenge

is for both countries to start doing more and utilize the mechanism. We have, I think, good potential to strengthen bilateral cooperation in different areas. My expectation is that the circumstances under which we are, could be utilized in a positive manner.

The future of the American left

By Rachel Gilmer

Two weeks before the November 6 midterm elections, the White House released a special report by the Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) on the opportunity costs of socialism in response to what they call its “comeback” in American political discourse.

The timing of the report was no coincidence. Left-wing ideas such as universal healthcare, fully funded public education and the abolishment of ICE were at the forefront of midterm debates. And indeed, on November 6, American voters elected two socialist women of colour, Rashida Tlaib and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, to Congress. Their historic wins are a true sign of shifting political terrains in the United States. Everyday people are now embracing real left-wing politics, and this has the capitalist class shaking in their boots.

The CEA report is one of the many examples of the far-right red-baiting aimed to scare people away from socialist politics. Resources are scant, they argue, so fascism, not equality, is the way out of poverty. Meanwhile, Wall Street Democrats are clinging to a moderate agenda rooted in corporate interests. Giving millions to big business owners, they say, is the best way to get everyday Americans back on their feet.

Still, in the face of these powerful forces of opposition, the American people elected some of the most progressive politicians we've seen in decades. With Tlaib and Ocasio-Cortez set to enter the House of Representatives, alongside Bernie Sanders in Senate, we now have three openly socialist politicians in Congress - the most in U.S. history - and even more socialist politicians in local offices across the country.

But the ability of these elected officials to realize the progressive platforms on which they ran will ultimately come down to what we, ordinary citizens, do. It is on us to continue to organize - to march, knock on doors and fight for a political agenda that puts the needs of working-class people over big corporations.

It is very clear that Americans across the political spectrum are ready for something different. In fact, neoliberal policies are less popular than ever before. Seventy percent of Americans support a single-payer healthcare system. More Americans disapprove of the controversial GOP tax-reduction package than approve of it. Among young people, socialism is now more popular than capitalism. The right's ideas are unpopular. So unpopular that, in many places this election cycle (and around the world), far right candidates didn't even campaign on them. Fully aware that the support for their political demands is waning, they instead chose to lie, incite racism and rig the election to assume or maintain power.

Here in Florida, GOP gubernatorial candidate, Ron DeSantis, followed this playbook to a T. Instead of presenting policy proposals to win over voters, he turned his campaign into a race war, using racist dog whistles against black people, Jews, Muslims and immigrants in order to lure white voters to his side, and away from the progressive agenda of Mayor Andrew Gillum.

DeSantis called Gillum “too radical” for associating with groups like ours, the Dream Defenders. Our political platform, the Freedom Papers, which outlines a plan for quality healthcare, shelter, food, education and safety for all, became the center of his attacks.



Ordinary Americans, not elected officials, will determine the future of progressive politics in the U.S.

But DeSantis didn't debate the substance of the agenda itself - perhaps because he couldn't find a way to argue against a proposal to meet people's most basic needs, especially when so many are struggling to get by. So instead, he used lies and scare tactics, stirring up a racist frenzy promoting white nationalist violence, to steer people away from what's best for everyone, in favor of a right-wing, pro-corporate and anti-people agenda.

In addition to using fear and racism, the political right also uses methods like gerrymandering, purging voter rolls, shutting down polling sites and confusing voters to suppress progressive votes and maintain their power globally as political minorities.

Following such right-wing attempts to suppress votes, Florida and Georgia experienced razor-thin margins between the GOP and progressive candidates for governor. As a result, both states are now in the middle of recounts. In Florida, incumbent Republican Governor Rick Scott has equated calls to count every vote with voter fraud and an attempt by Democrats to steal the elections.

While many progressive candidates scored landmark victories in the election, many others, mainly as a result of the aforementioned voter suppression methods, either narrowly lost to their right-wing opponents or are still facing a real possibility of a loss. However, rather than doubling down on a left-wing agenda that already proved its popularity among voters, and fighting against the GOP's voter suppression methods, many within the Democratic establishment are already arguing that, perhaps, some candidates were just too progressive to win. The path to defeating Trumpism and the far right in 2020, they say, is to move further to the center.

We are already seeing the Democratic establishment's attempts to take down the left-wing flank that Tlaib and Ocasio-Cortez have the potential to build within the party. Right after Democrats took back the House of Representatives,

criticizing the Saudis, and calling on the U.S. to end its complicity in Saudi war crimes which has gotten well out of hand.

One of the most visible aspects of such complicity is midair refueling of Saudi warplanes bombing the country. Washington claims this has come to an end which should be good news. But that's not enough. The U.S. needs to do the next best thing which is ending its diplomatic and military support, including arms sales.

After all, U.S. officials say this is part of a “limited punishment” that the Trump administration intends to impose over the grisly murder of reporter Jamal Khashoggi in Saudi consulate in Istanbul on October 2!

Worse still, Defense Secretary James Mattis says the U.S. will continue to support the Saudi war on Yemen, and “collaborate on building up legitimate Yemeni forces.”

The policy is telling. When we remember that the U.S. has provided the Saudi coalition with arms, refueling, intelligence, and diplomatic cover so that they can wage their war on Yemen for more than three years, it is remarkable that U.S. officials try to keep up the pretense that they are not involved and complicit in the failed invasion. However, the U.S. is the reason why the Saudis and their partners invaded Yemen in the first place and why the bloodshed and the humanitarian disaster continue. This kind of unconditional support and complicity in crimes is in no way “limited” and “non-combat” in nature. It is direct and in full-scale, as it is getting out of hand.

When they are adamant that their support must never be cut off, they clearly admit that they are directly involved in Saudi atrocities against the civilians of that unfortunate nation

■ What is India's newest development plans in Chabahar port? How can India use the capacity of the port to improve trade and economic relations with Iran and regional countries?

A. We have been working closely with Iran on Chabahar-related matters. Last month we had an important meeting between India, Iran, and Afghanistan at the deputy minister level to start moving towards operationalizing the trilateral transit agreement or the Chabahar agreement. This was an important development.

The Iranian side has proposed the dates for the meeting of the follow up group which will go into details and technicalities of transit and transport-related matters. The Americans have provided exemption under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act as far as Chabahar port is concerned. We still need to know details of this exemption, but we look to it as a positive development.

As far as the port itself is concerned, India's engagement is known. There is a component of investment, a credit line, the body of contracts - main contract and contract for interim operations, both of which have been signed. We are having some banking difficulties, and it remains to be seen that with the provisions that have been announced, how things related to banking, shipping, and other relevant issues will ease, so that we can move ahead. So, overall, the cooperation has been good, and we look forward to moving ahead.

Nancy Pelosi announced that she believes “Democrats have a responsibility to seek common ground” with Republicans in Congress, implying that she will focus on making compromises rather than impeaching Trump. This is unacceptable and irresponsible. Our lives are on the line. And clearly, Nancy Pelosi's interests don't align with ours. It is because of political stances like hers and the Democratic establishment's overall neglect of the interests of working-class people that we've ended up with Trump in the first place.

We cannot defeat fascism by moving towards the center. Unfortunately, all too often, politicians who run on left-wing platforms opportunistically move towards the center for the sake of their “career” once they are elected. But ultimately, whether or not the progressives we fought to elect will be able to realize the platforms they ran on is not so much a matter of what they do once in office, but a matter of what we do. For progressive politics to succeed, we - as the people - need to change our attitude towards electoral politics. We need to understand that electing a candidate is not a matter of choosing a champion or a supreme leader. It's a matter of choosing our best opponent. At times, we will organize with these elected officials to bring about real change, but at other times, we will organize against them to achieve the same. It is our responsibility to build the necessary power to hold them accountable to the needs of working people and not corporate interests.

Midterm voter turnout hit a 50-year high in 2018, with more than 47 percent of the voting-eligible population casting a ballot. However, more than half of Americans still did not go to the polls, likely because of how disillusioned they are by the entire political system. Grassroots movements should seize this opportunity and work tirelessly to convince these disillusioned Americans that they, and no one else, have the power to change our world.

We cannot fight fascism with neoliberalism or by entrusting our fate in the hands of a few politicians. Our only fighting chance is to build power.

In the face of rising violence and efforts to make everyday people turn their back on one another, so we don't rise up against the one percent, we must bring people together across race, religion and borders to struggle towards long-term political unity. In the spirit of Fred Hampton and the Black Panther Party, we must reignite the Rainbow Coalition, a 1960s Chicago-based alliance between young people in Black, poor white and Puerto Rican communities. The Rainbow Coalition was a real threat to the established powers in Chicago and across the country because it helped people find common fate and move a shared agenda across difference.

Solidarity among working people in the U.S. and around the world is our only way out.

Together, we need to organize our neighbors, plan marches and use boycotts and direct actions to advance a shared, progressive agenda that would benefit us all. We must be clear and unapologetic in what it means to be leftist - universal healthcare, fully funded public education, an end to war and a redistribution of wealth. Ultimately, the most important takeaway from the midterm election is that we can't wait for politicians to lead. Our power lies in realizing that the progressive agenda is ours to set.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

The significance of open relations between the Persian Gulf Arab states and Israel



Simple logic dictates that the Arab regimes associated with the U.S. are engaged in an objective alliance with Israel given Israel's close relationship with Washington.

Anwar Sadat realized this obvious fact and therefore decided to establish a direct and open relationship with Israel to complement his decision to sever Egyptian ties with the Soviet Union and move the country to the American camp. This is because he knew that trying to establish secret relations between Cairo and Tel Aviv and to keep this relationship under wraps is almost impossible, as Egypt is a country that cannot establish such relations without news of this being leaks and causing it great political embarrassment.

As for Saudi Arabia, the nature of its governance is based on hypocrisy in all its forms. This has made it easy for the country to keep its decades-long relationship with Israel secret. This relationship emerged as a result of the aforementioned simple logic when the U.S. decided to rely on Israel as a major ally in confronting the rise of the Arab nationalist movement and its establishment under Abdel Nasser's Egypt.

This occurred in the mid-1960's, not with the birth of Israel, as many who are accustomed to the special strategic relationship between the U.S. and Israel believe. They do not know that this relationship only became what it is today over 20 years after the establishment of Israel. For its first 20 years, Israel relied on West Germany and France for funding and arms more than on the U.S.

Washington condemned the tripartite attack against Egypt following Gamal Abdel Nasser's declaration of the nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956, and ordered the three countries, Israel, Britain and France, to withdraw from Egyptian territory. However, the rise of the Nasserite influence and the deep-rooted establishment of the Arab Nationalist Movement in the 1960's, despite the separation between Egypt and Syria at the beginning of the era, led to a severe decline in America's regional presence. This forced Washington to withdraw from its air base in Dhahran, thus weakening Washington's ability to protect its interests in the region, particularly protecting the regime that embodied those interests at their highest levels, i.e. the Saudi regime.

Therefore, Israel became a valuable ally of Washington, which relied on it as a “guard dog” for its regional interests (as was commonly said during the Nasserist era). The 1967 war was the first war waged by Israel, with America's support, which targeted the U.S. and Saudi Arabia's archenemies Abdel Nasser's Egypt and Salah Jadid's Syria. The Israeli aggression came to fruition three years later, in 1970, when Abdel Nasser died, and Anwar Sadat succeeded him and when Hafez Al-Assad overthrew Salah Jadid.

The new Crown Prince's recklessness and conviction that he is politically immune to everything has allowed him to go farther than any other Saudi ruler in his relationship with Israel.

A secret relationship between the Saudi kingdom and Israel has been established since the mid-1960's. On the Saudi side, it was initially handled by Kamal Adham, the founder of the Saudi General Intelligence and its first president, and the special adviser to King Faisal bin Abdul Aziz. None of the successive men who ascended to the Saudi throne dared to declare their relations with Israel out of fear of what would result from such an announcement, including extreme hostility towards the Saudi monarchy, whose dependency on Washington became a major source of resentment towards it. The situation remained the same until Mohammad Bin Salman was officially declared Crown Prince to his father and began to manage the Kingdom's affairs practically.

The new Crown Prince's recklessness and conviction that he is politically immune to everything has allowed him to go farther than any other Saudi ruler in his relationship with Israel.

In addition to this, he is also preparing to announce this relationship as soon as U.S. President Donald Trump's Zionist son-in-law, Jared Kushner, completes planning his plot against the Palestinian people and moves to the implementation stage.

It is certainly no coincidence that we see an escalation in the exchange of open relations between Saudi Arabia's Persian Gulf allies, including the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the Sultanate of Oman and Israel.

It is also no coincidence that it is occurring at this particular point in time, while the Saudi Crown Prince is being subjected to an intense campaign led by the American media to remove him from power as punishment for his responsibility for the death of Jamal Khashoggi. Mohammed bin Salman's fate is currently dependent on the success of Kushner's vehement quest to save him, which I have already mentioned before.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is enthusiastically supporting this effort. With the acceleration of Persian Gulf normalization with the State of Israel, the Saudi Crown Prince wants to emphasize his willingness to engage in the Zionist scheme and achieve the objective of the Trump administration in establishing an open Arab-Israeli alliance in the face of Iran. He thought that the more he showed his willingness to go into that policy, the higher his value and uniqueness in the eyes of Kushner and Netanyahu and increased their pressure on Trump to keep him in office.

By hastening the pace of Persian Gulf normalization with Israel, MBS wants to stress his willingness to be involved in the Israeli plots and to achieve the Trump administration's wish to establish an open Arab-Israeli alliance to confront Iran. He believes that the more he displays his willingness to adopt this policy, the more his value and distinction in the eyes of Kushner and Netanyahu grows, and therefore they will pressure Trump, even more, to keep him in his position.

(Source: Middle East Monitor)

Who is to blame for death and destruction in Yemen?

TEHRAN (FNA) — Washington - during both the Obama and Trump administrations - has been a co-belligerent with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in the failed war on Yemen.

Of course, that hasn't stopped Washington from blaming Iran for the death and destruction there!

Discussing the U.S.-backed Saudi invasion of Yemen, Pompeo has just declared Iran to be to blame for the death and destruction in the country!

Pompeo's silly narrative blaming Iran is built around Saudi allegations that Iran is secretly in league with the Houthis (Ansarullah popular movement) who are resisting their criminal invasion. In practice, Ansarullah has never had more than nominal ties with Iran, and Iranian statements of public support is mostly built on

Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

Apartment

Apt in Zafaranih
2th floor, 200 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.
unfurn, equipped kitchen, spj
billiard table, squash court
parking spot, **\$2000**
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apartment in Velenjak
brand new, 6th floor, 360 sq.m 3
Bdrs. with a suit, 3 bath rooms
unfurn, balcony
fire place, spj, gym, lobby
elevator, laundry, storage
2 parking spots
\$5000 negotiable
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Duplex Penthouse in Jordan
600 sq.m, fully furn, equipped
kitchen, modern balcony, spj 3
parking spots, **\$6000**
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Elahieh
400 sq.m, 5 Bdrs., fully furn
2 kitchens, servant
swimming pool, parking spot
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Super luxury Apt in Mahmoodieh
230 sq.m to 250 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.
new, fully furn, nice balcony
luxury lobby, spj, high security
parking spot, **\$5000**
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Jordan
90 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., furn, **\$1200**
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Villa

Villa in Shahrak Qarb
duplex, 300 sq.m, 4 Bdrs.
semi furnished/unfurnished
green yard, parking spot
storage, large terrace
backyard with good privacy
outdoor swimming pool
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa in Zafaranih
1000 sq.m, 2500 sq.m land
6Bdrs. duplex, renovated
garden, best location
parking spot
Price Negotiable
Suitable for
Residency & Embassy
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Villa in Niavaran
900 sq.m land, 1000 sq.m built up
8 Bdrs., 7 bath rooms
3 kitchens, 3 big reception saloons
with one suit for servant, Jacuzzi
swimming pool
outdoor / indoor parking spots
\$12000
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Villa in Ajudaniye
2 floors, 315 sq.m & 300 sq.m
furn, equipped kitchen swimming
pool, sauna
parking spot, gym, **\$4000**
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa in Darous
3 floors, 640 sq.m, swimming pool
6 parking spots, yard
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156



Holder of

ISO 9001:2008

ISO 10004:2012

ISO 10002:2014

From Oxford Cert Universal

Best Consultation

Best Services, Best Result

Intl. Department Manager "Tina 09128103205"

Tel: 22662452-8, Fax: 22667173

Hot Line: 28141

info@parsdiplomatic.com

www.parsdiplomatic.com

Building & Office

Office in Jordan
administrative office, 1375 sq.m
totally, parking spot, good access
Price negotiable
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Best Office in Valiasr
several administrative offices from
105 sq.m to 350 sq.m
nice lobby, could be flat or office
lots parking spots, guest parking
spots, full of foreign companies
good access to highway
near to Mellat Park
Price negotiable
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Office in Shariati - Soheil
brand new, 2 administrative
offices, balcony, elevator
storage, parking spot
Price negotiable
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

New Whole Building in
Jordan_Elahieh
2 block, 10 apts total, 25 rooms
Tehran view, roof garden, outdoor
pool located in roof, cozy place
parking spot lobby
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Whole Building in Soheil
2 floors, 600 sq.m totally
8 Bdrs., 6 bath rooms
one 40 sq.m suit, renovated
12 parking spots, 3 storages
3-side entrances
\$6000
Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Ideal Offers

Apt in Pasdaran
5th floor, 76 sq.m, 2 Bdrs
fully furn, elevator
parking spot
\$800
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Kamranieh
270 sq.m, 4 Bdrs., luxury furn
nice balcony, green space view
swimming pool
\$3500
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Fereshteh
almost new, 89 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
fully furn, parking spot
nice area
\$1400
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Qeytarieh
4th floor 120 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.
fully furn, parking spot
near to Qeytarieh Park
\$1500
Ms.Diba: 09128103206

Apt in Jordan
brand new, 1th floor 150 sq.m
3 Bdr, furn, spj, roof garden
parking spot
\$2500
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Mirdamad
6th floor, 86 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., fully
furn, elevator, parking spot
\$1000
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

مالکین محترم

ملک های فروش و اجاره ای خود را (آپارتمان،
ویلا، مستغلات، اداری و تجاری) به ما بسپارید.

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سروس، بالاترین رضایت

مالکین محترم املاک مبله و غیرمبله، مسکونی، اداری و تجاری، ویلا و مستغلات
شما را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه ها و شرکت های خارجی نیازمندیم.

مالکین محترم

ویلاهای شما را جهت اجاره به منزل سفیر و مدیران
شرکت های بین المللی در مناطق شمالی تهران
نیازمندیم.

PARSIAN Real Estate

SHANON
Shanon_zt@yahoo.com
+989121907875
Tel : 88510081

Darrous Apts (\$1500) 2bdrs (\$2200) 3bdrs (\$2800) 4bdrs with S/p, S, & J	Velenjak (\$2500) 200sq.m, 3bdrs, F.F	Elahieh (\$6000) 1200sq.m, 5bdrs
Jordan (\$1200) 2bdrs, & F.F	Elahieh (\$2800) 3bdrs, S/p, S, J, F.F	Mahmoodieh (\$10000) 3storey bldg S/pool, S, J yard, pkgs
Zaferanih (\$3000) 250sq.m, 4bdrs, F.F		

Don't Waste Your Time

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

www.DeltaHOME.ir
The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

HOME
Real Estate
Member of DELTA Real Estate Group
(021) 88888865

NIK TEBRID PARS Co.
Commissioner of
rebuilding and renovating
administrative and residential
places, installation of HVAC
& Cryogenics, Electricity,
Water, Gas and Sewage
Facilities

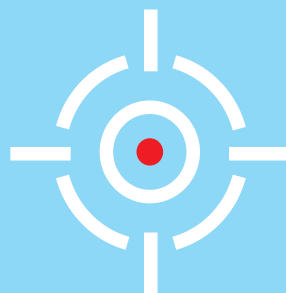
PER 02188073853
ENG 09025892818

Niloufar Housing Agency
Niavaran, requests kind Attn. of
Embassies, Banks, Organizations
etc., Offering a Brand New
Building in Farmaniyeh, High
Quality Material used, 6 Floors,
12 Apartments, 3 & 4 bdrms, 20
Parking Spaces.

Kindly Call Ms. Sonia
on: **09035755145 / 09195341598**
Off: **02122809083, 02122809084**
Email: **mahnaz1214@gmail.com**

TEHRAN TIMES

Iran's Leading
International Daily
Advertising Dept



Tel:

021 - 430 51 450

Number one Real Estate in Iran

www.DELTA HOME.ir

TEL: 88 88 88 65 FAX: 88 88 93 35

HOME
Real Estate

Fereshteh 120sqm, 2 bdrs, FF, SP, parking \$ 1600 USD Davood: (+98) 9123488513	Zafar 120sqm, 3 bdrs, FF, parking, balcony \$ 700 USD Davood: (+98) 9123488513	Shahrak-e-Gharb 150sqm, 2 bdrs, nicely FF, best view Full facilities, Lobby, balcony \$ 1900 USD Davood: (+98) 9123488513
Elahiyeh 240 Sqm, 3 bdrs, 3 baths, brand new Full facilities (spa, gym, coffee room,...) 24hrs lobbyman & seprate guard, mountain view € 4300 USD Adrian: (+98) 921 71 76 740	Zaferaniyeh, Velenjak 350 Sqm, 3 Master bdrs, 7th floor, brand new Full facilities (spa, gym, roof garden,...) Green view, balcony \$ 7000 USD Adrian: (+98) 921 71 76 740	Niavaran 250Sqm, 3 bdrs, 2.5 baths, brand new Full facilities (spa, gym, roof garden, small private cinema,...) \$ 3600 USD Adrian: (+98) 921 71 76 740
Elahiyeh 260sqm, 7th floor, 3 bdrs, SPJ, lobby, ,Guard Garden, amazing view Linda: (+98) 9351721171	Farmaniyeh 270sqm, 7th floor, SPJ, sauna, Garden Gym, Brand new Linda: (+98) 9351721171	Elahiyeh 205sqm, 3 bdrs, 4th floor, SPJ, sauna Gym, coffee shop, roof garden, Lobby \$ 3500 USD Linda: (+98) 9351721171
Farmaniyeh, villa 900sqm, 2500 sqm yard, 5 bdrs \$ 8000 USD Kaveh: (+98) 9128944169	Jordan, Office 1100sqm, Flat \$ 10000 USD Kaveh: (+98) 9128944169	Argantin, Guest house A whole building of 4 floors, totally 16 rooms plus one small suit, F.F Price negotiable Farshid: (+98) 9125540877
Must to see Elahiyeh 290sqm, 3 bdrs, 3 baths .gym, brand new, green view Furn or unfurn Farshid: (+98) 9125540877	Guest House 1- Jordan, 5 fl, 5 Units, 14 bdrs .FF 2- Gandi, 5 fl, 19 Units, 38 bdrs, FF 3- Jordan, 5 fl, 20 Units, 55 bdrs, FF Farshid: (+98) 9125540877	Zaferaniyeh, Velenjak ,Office, 300 sqm and 350 sqm Negotiable Hojati: (+98) 9309701169
Velenjak, Villa 1500 sqm, 5bdrs, SPJ Negotiable Hojati: (+98) 9309701169	Jordan 275 sqm, 4 bdrs, full facilities \$ 2000 USD Erik: (+98) 9372371391	Argantin 115sqm, 2 bdrs \$ 1000 USD Erik: (+98) 9372371391

Iran, 2nd biggest consumer of antibiotics among 65 countries: WHO

HEALTH DESK TEHRAN — Iran's antibiotics consumption was the second highest among 65 countries, according to World Health Organization (WHO) report on Surveillance of Antibiotic Consumption published in November 2018.

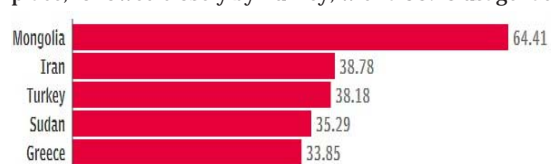
The report presents 2015 data on the consumption of systemic antibiotics from 65 countries and areas: four from the African Region, six from the Region of the Americas, 46 from the European Region, three from the Eastern Mediterranean Region and six from the Western Pacific Region.

Three Eastern Mediterranean countries included Iran, Jordan and Sudan; they provided WHO with their data on national consumption of antimicrobials for the years 2014–2016.

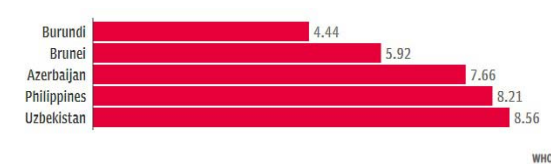
WHO uses a measurement called a defined daily dose (DDD) — the average dose a patient needs every day — to compare drug consumption rates between countries.

According to the report, Mongolia had the highest rate of antibiotic use with 64 DDD, per 1,000 inhabitants per day.

Iran, with a consumption rate of 38.78 DDD stood at second place, followed closely by Turkey, with a 38.18 usage rate.



The country with the lowest rate of antibiotic use was Burundi in east Africa whose consumption amounted to only four DDD per 1,000 inhabitants per day. Azerbaijan was also among the countries with the lowest rate of antibiotic use at around seven DDD.



Clinical trials may bring hope for CP patients



HEALTH DESK TEHRAN — Clinical trials for using stem

cells in treatment of cerebral palsy (CP) have started at Royan Research Institute, its managing director told Fars news agency on Wednesday.

According to Morteza Zarrabi, stem cells have already been injected to around 120 patients who participated in the trial, he said, adding that if the program ends in success, it will improve the condition of patients

with neurological disorders such as CP and autism.

Stem cell technology is a rapidly developing field, which combines the efforts of cell biologists, geneticists, and clinicians and offers hope of effective treatment for a variety of malignant and non-malignant diseases.

Stem cells survive well and show stable division in culture, making them ideal targets for in vitro manipulation.

New antibacterial defense mechanism discovered in the nose

The human body has several built-in defenses that protect against illness, but some of these processes are still a mystery. Recent research reveals new insight into how the nasal airway works to protect us from bacteria.

A team from Massachusetts Eye and Ear developed and reported the research, publishing it in the Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology.

Researchers discovered that cells secrete small fluid-filled sacs called exosomes when we inhale bacteria. Once secreted, exosomes promptly attack the bacteria and also send antimicrobial molecules to nearby areas in the nose.

A team led by Dr. Benjamin Bleier, a sinus surgeon at Massachusetts Eye and Ear and associate professor of otolaryngology at Harvard Medical School, wanted to expand on previous findings where they discovered that proteins found in the cells of the nasal cavity were also present in a person's nasal mucus.

How exosomes work

The researchers were interested in finding out how exosomes were moving from the cells into the mucus.

To do this, they collected the mucus of participants and grew their cells out in laboratory culture. To determine what happened when these cells came into contact with germs, they simulated exposure to bacteria and then calculated the number of released exosomes.

The results showed that exosome numbers "swarmed" — they doubled after bacterial exposure, as did antibacterial molecules.

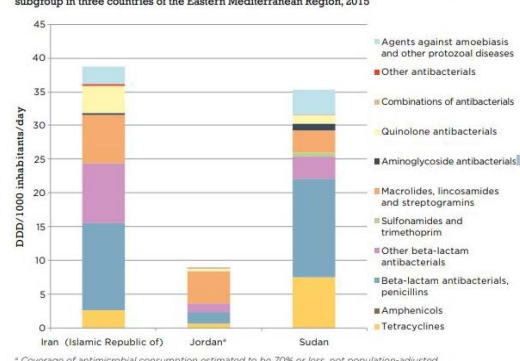
"Similar to kicking a hornets' nest, the nose releases billions of exosomes into the mucus at the first sign [of] bacteria, killing the bacteria and arming cells throughout the airway with a natural, potent defense," Dr. Bleier said.

The team then conducted experiments using patients and discovered that the resulting exosomes successfully killed the bacteria — as effectively as antibiotics, even.

First in Eastern Mediterranean Region

With 38 DDD per 1000 inhabitants per day, Iran's consumption of antibiotics exceeded other monitored Mediterranean countries, as the total consumption in Jordan and Sudan was 8 DDD and 35 DDD, respectively.

Fig. 4.8 Consumption of antibiotics (DDD per 1000 inhabitants per day) by pharmacological subgroup in three countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2015



The report revealed that penicillins were the most frequently used antibiotic subgroup in Iran, accounting for 33% of total consumption

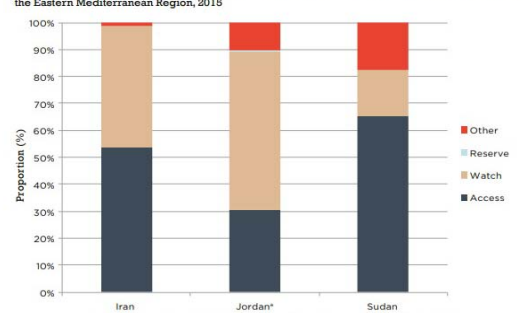
Other frequently used antibiotic groups in Iran were other beta-lactam antibacterials (23%) and macrolides/lincosamides/streptogramins (19%) followed by quinolones (11%).

The results also showed that oral antibiotics accounted for 95% of total antibiotic consumption in Iran; the most commonly consumed orally administered antibiotic substances were amoxicillin, azithromycin and cefixime. Narrow-spectrum penicillins (benzathine benzylpenicillin, procaine benzylpenicillin) were the most frequently consumed parenteral antibiotics.

Zero consumption of "Reserve" antibiotics

"Reserve" Group antibiotics, used for situations when all alternative antibiotics have failed, was not used in Iran during 2015.

Fig. 4.9 Proportional consumption of antibiotics (%) by AwaRe categorisation in three countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, 2015



According to the report, "Reserve" antibiotics only accounted for less than two percent of total consumption in most high-income countries and were not reported by most low- and middle-income countries.

According to WHO classification for antibiotics called AwaRe (Access, Watch and Reserve), "Access" antibiotics should be widely available, affordable and quality-assured; "Watch" Group antibiotics should be recommended only for specific, limited indications; "Reserve" antibiotics should only be used as a last resort for treatment of specific infections caused by multidrug-resistant bacteria.

In Iran, around 50 percent of the antibiotics were in the Access group and 45 percent were in the watch group; in Sudan, access group antibiotics consumption was around 60 percent, but watch group antibiotics only amounted to 17 percent of the usage.

The report was published by WHO during World Antibiotic Awareness Week (November 12-18) which aims to increase global awareness of antibiotic resistance (AMR) and to encourage best practices among the general public, health workers and policy makers to avoid the further emergence and spread of antibiotic resistance. Its slogan is "the misuse of antibiotic is putting us all at risk."

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is the ability of a microorganism (like bacteria, viruses, and some parasites) to stop an antimicrobial (such as antibiotics, antivirals and antimalarials) from working against it. As a result, standard treatments become ineffective, infections persist and may spread to others.

Congress to put Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine into practice



HEALTH DESK TEHRAN — The 4th

Iranian congress on Progress in Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine will be held in Tehran on November 17-19, Mehr news agency reported on Wednesday.

The congress aims to expand practical aspects of tissue engineering as well as Cellular and Molecular science.

Regeneration and repair of nervous system, heart and blood vessels, respiratory system, skin, bones and cartilage, oral and

maxillofacial region, liver, kidneys, digestive and urinary systems are among the topics of discussion. Other subjects covered are nanotechnology in tissue engineering, studies in biogenic substance and ethics in regenerative medicine.

The congress will give an opportunity to the professors, scientists, medical practitioners, students, politicians, producers and companies in clinical, engineering and biological realms to link their findings and plan for putting them into practice.

Heart attacks increasingly common in young women

New research finds a worrying trend in the incidence of heart attacks in recent decades. The results indicate that young women are more likely than young men to need hospitalization for heart attacks, as well as to develop other cardiometabolic conditions.

More and more young women develop heart disease, and doctors should pay more attention to women, say the authors of a new study.

Cardiovascular disease — an umbrella term that covers different types of conditions that affect the heart or blood vessels, including coronary heart disease, stroke, congenital heart defects, and peripheral artery disease causes about 1 in 3 deaths in the United States.



Also, cardiovascular disease accounts for almost 836,546 deaths each year, making it the "leading killer of both women and men" in the U.S.

However, there are sex differences in the prevalence of some cardiovascular events, such as coronary heart disease — a cardiovascular condition that can ultimately lead to heart attacks.

An established body of research has shown that coronary heart disease is more prevalent among men at any age, which may have led to the common perception that "heart disease is a man's disease."

However, more recent studies have started to point out an "alarming" trend, which is a steady increase in the number of young women who die of coronary heart disease.

Now, new research, presented at the American Heart Association's Scientific Sessions meeting in Chicago and subsequently published in the journal Circulation, adds to the mounting evidence that heart attacks are increasingly common among young women.

Dr. Sameer Arora, a cardiology fellow at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine, Chapel Hill, is the lead author of the study.

Heart attacks no longer an old man's disease

Dr. Arora and colleagues examined data on almost 29,000 people aged 35–74 years old who doctors admitted to hospital for acute myocardial infarction between 1995 and 2014.

The researchers found that the proportion of young patients who doctors admitted to the hospital for a heart attack "steadily increased, from 27 [percent] in 1995–1999 to 32 [percent] in 2010–2014."

The study also found that this increase was even more substantial in women. Namely, 21 percent of the heart attack hospital admissions were of young women at the beginning of the study, but this proportion jumped to 31 percent by the end.

Additionally, the research revealed that young women were less likely than young men to receive cardiovascular treatments, such as antiplatelet drugs, beta blockers, coronary angiography, or coronary revascularization.

Finally, young women were at a higher risk of hypertension, diabetes, and chronic kidney disease compared with young men.

The study's lead author comments on the findings, saying, "Cardiac disease is sometimes considered an old man's disease, but the trajectory of heart attacks among young people is going the wrong way [...] It's actually going up for young women."

"This is concerning," continues Dr. Arora. "It tells us we need to focus more attention on this population."

A 'wake-up call to male physicians'

Dr. Arora explains why cardiologists and other healthcare professionals need to pay more attention to women's cardiovascular health.

"Traditionally, coronary artery disease is seen as a man's disease, so women who come to the emergency department with chest pain might not be seen as high-risk," he says.

"Also, the presentation of heart attack is different in men and women. Women are more likely to present with atypical symptoms compared to men, and their heart attack is more likely to be missed."

Dr. Ileana L. Piña, a cardiologist and professor of medicine and epidemiology at the Montefiore Medical Center in New York City, also chimes in on the findings.

She says that the results are "another wake-up call to physicians, especially male physicians" to take better care of women's heart health.

"The number one killer of women is not breast cancer or uterine cancer; the number one killer of women is heart disease [...] And, until we pay attention to this, these kinds of figures are going to keep coming up."

Dr. Piña, who was not involved in the research, says that traditional gender roles, which continue to prevail, may stop women from looking after their health.

"It's hard when a woman is working two jobs and taking care of the family, too," Dr. Piña says.

"[Women will] do anything for their families, but they often leave themselves for last. We need to teach women to change their health attitude and take care of themselves," she warns.

(Source: Medical News Today)

Also, cardiovascular disease accounts for almost 836,546 deaths each year, making it the "leading killer of both women and men" in the U.S.

Iran’s H1 foreign arrivals at six million



TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Some six million foreign travelers visited Iran in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21), a tourism official said on Wednesday.

The number shows 51 percent year-on-year growth in comparison with the same period last year, Mohammad Khayatan said.

The Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization Director Ali-Asghar Mounesan had previously referred to the growth, without mentioning specific figures.

Teemed from corner to corner with ancient bazaars, museums, mosques, monuments, gardens, historical sites, rich natural and rural landscapes, Iran hosts some of the world’s oldest cultural monuments, including 22 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

5500-year-old human skeleton on show



HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A human skeleton, which dates from some 5,500 years ago, has been put on show at the museum of archaeology in the city of Neyshabur, northeast Iran. A team of archaeologist discovered the skeleton in 2004 while surveying a trench in Tapeh Borj, an archaeological site, near Neyshabur, IRNA reported.

Tapeh Borj has yielded remains and artifacts dated from the 4th millennium BC to Parthian era (247 BC–224 CE), the report added. Neyshabur, situated 74 km west of Mashhad, has shifted its position repeatedly in historical times. American excavations in 1934–40 disclosed rich remains of both the Seljuq and pre-Seljuq periods in the locality.

Tourism gains momentum in West Azarbaijan province

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Some one million people stayed at tourist accommodations across northwestern West Azarbaijan province during the first seven months of the current Iranian calendar year (starred March 21), which shows 10 percent year-on-year growth, provincial tourism chief said on Monday.

Also, visits to tourist attractions and recreation centers of the province increased by 18% over the same period, Jalil Jabbari added. According to Iran’s Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, international arrivals in Iran rose by more than 51 percent in the first half of the current Iranian year from a year earlier.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Harar Jugol, the fortified historic town

The fortified historic town of Harar is located in the eastern part of Ethiopia, 525 km from the capital of Addis Ababa, on a plateau with deep gorges surrounded by deserts and savannah.

The walls surrounding this sacred city, considered “the fourth holy city” of Islam, were built between the 13th and 16th centuries and served as a protective barrier. There were five historic gates, which corresponded to the main roads to the town and also served to divide the city into five neighborhoods, but this division is not functional anymore. The



Harar gate, from where the main streets lead to the center, is of recent construction.

Harar Jugol numbers 82 mosques, three of which date from the 10th century, 102 shrines and a number of traditional, Indian and combined townhouses with unique interior designs, which constitute a spectacular part of Harar’s cultural heritage.

Harar functioned as the capital of the Harari Kingdom from 1520 to 1568, became an independent emirate in the 17th century and was integrated into Ethiopia in 1887. From the late 16th century to the 19th century Harar was an important trade centre between the coast and the interior highlands and a location for Islamic learning.

(Source: UNESCO)

Hamedan talks raise awareness of high-techs in support of tourism

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The city of Hamedan hosted a United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) session this week, which highlighted harnessing cultural tourism by the means of cutting-edge technologies.

International representatives, scholars and academia from across the globe met on November 12-14 during the 40th UNWTO Affiliate Members Plenary Session to discuss how new technologies can guide tourism development.

Quality of tourist experiments, accessibility of attractions, wellbeing of residents and guest populations were amongst examples that speakers at the conference referred to.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili’s talked on the issue, defining that innovations are to preserve intangible and tangible heritage resources, UNWTO website reported.

“Technology and innovation, including ICT, can improve the quality of the tourist experience. It can improve governance, profits and the wellbeing of residents. And it can preserve intangible and tangible heritage resources for the sustainable development of cultural tourism,” Pololikashvili said.

Vice-President Ali-Asghar Mounesan reminded attendees of links between host and guest populations.

“The world’s diverse range of culture and heritage form the best means and ways to connect peoples of the world – but only if the rights and privileges of both host and guest populations are respected and responded to. And innovation and technology can help,” said Mounesan who also heads Iran’s Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

The seminar agreed that informed governance and policies surrounding uptake of



UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili addresses the opening ceremony of the 40th UNWTO Affiliate Members Plenary Session on November 12, 2018.

new technologies and innovative practices can guide tourism development and open doors for the sector, with conservation and revitalization of cultural heritage one of its main benefits.

It also stressed that innovation and technology should empower, rather than disenfranchise, host populations and communities and can assist them in retaining

their authenticity, while cultural heritage development and preservation should be a part of local and national plans for socioeconomic development through tourism and technology.

The event was co-organized by the UNWTO, CHHTO and Alisadr Tourism Company, concluding that cultural and heritage attractions are key to tourism development

in many countries around the world, and innovation and technology can make these attractions more accessible while preserving their essence.

Hamedan is currently taken on appearance of the “capital of Asian tourism in 2018”, a privilege which was approved in the second ACD Tourism Ministers Meeting held in Cambodia, June 2017.

300 eco-lodges running across Kerman province



TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — A total of 300 eco-lodges have so far been inaugurated across southeastern Kerman province, of which 108 were launched during the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21), the provincial tourism chief has said.

The major benefit of setting up these residences is lengthening traveler stays in rural areas, which caters to sustainable employment and development of the countryside, Gholamreza Farrokhi said, ISNA reported. Talking on quality of services, the official stated, “Fortunately, over 40 hours of training courses have been

offered to managers of these residences, which has had a significant impact on providing services to tourists, especially foreign travelers.”

More eco-lodges can compensate for accommodation shortages that the province is still facing, the official added.

The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with subcontinental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

Ancient qanat found in southern Iran



HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Residents of Rostaq, a rural district in Iran’s southern Fars province, have discovered an ancient qanat, which is estimated to date from some 2,000 years ago.

A piece of orange-colored pottery with a diameter of 2 centimeters was found next within the aqueduct, which is probably related to the Parthian era (247 BC–224 CE), IRNA reported on Wednesday.

“The aqueduct is probably associated with a mother well and several shaft friction structures. Inside the aqueduct was

completely flawless and there were only some sedimentary material created over time at the bottom of the canals,” a local official stated.

According to the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization, some 120,000 qanats have so far been recognized across Iran, of which some 37,000 are still in use in arid and semi-arid regions.

The concept of Persian Qanat, which provides exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas, was registered on UNESCO World Heritage list in 2016.

Brexit: UK visitors to Europe will not need visas – for now

The College of Commissioners – the political leadership of the European Commission, effectively the EU’s cabinet – has announced how British visitors to the EU will be treated in the event of a “no-deal” Brexit. These are the key aspects.

■ What were the options?

The default position for a third country is that it joins the “visa required” list, along with people from China, Russia, India, Thailand, and all of Africa. This would have required travelers to apply between three months and 15 days before the intended journey, to provide evidence of travel insurance, and to pay €60 euros for adults and €35 for children.

But the commissioners decided that the UK could be placed on the visa-free list, along with people from the Americas, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand and several dozen other countries.

The decision is contingent upon the UK allowing Europeans to visit without visas, which the British government has already indicated will happen.

■ Does that mean things stay the same?

No. At present a British passport allows the holder to travel and stay in any EU country. The only check border officials may make is to ensure that the passport belongs to the person.

But third-country visa-free status means there is no automatic right of entry. After 29 March 2019, British visitors will be limited to a stay of 90 days in any 180-day period. In addition, the passport must have at least three months’ validity remaining.

Border officials may ask for evidence of “sufficient means of subsistence” for the intended stay and return – such as return ticket, accommodation reservations or an invitation letter to a conference.

■ What about working in the European Union?

That will no longer be an automatic right. The EU says: “You can come as a tourist, to visit friends or family, to



attend cultural or sports events or exchanges, business meetings, for journalistic or media purposes, medical treatment, for short-term studies or training and any similar activities.

“However, the visa waiver does not apply to persons travelling for the purpose of carrying out a paid activity in the Member States, i.e. for those who come to work in the EU.”

■ And British people living but not working abroad?

UK citizens living in the European Union, including those who have retired, will encounter much more tangled red tape. National governments will specify their own rules.

This is all assuming there is no deal. But assuming an agreement is reached, will things remain the same?

No. The freedom of movement will be curtailed.

The European Commission says: “EU rules on non-EU nationals travelling to the EU, such as those on border con-

trol, would of course apply to UK citizens once they are no longer EU citizens.”

Several years down the line, British travelers will face more bureaucracy when the EU’s new ETIAS (European Travel Information and Authorisation System) system comes in.

All UK travelers will have to apply in advance and pay a fee to have their journey authorized.

■ What will the rules be for European visitors to the UK?

While visas will not be required, it will be more difficult for many Europeans to come to the UK on holiday. As stated in a leaked Home Office document: “We intend to require all EU citizens to travel on a passport.”

Currently EU citizens with national ID cards can visit more than 30 foreign nations: the other members of the union, geo-political oddities such as Andorra, assorted Balkan states and the former Soviet Republic of Georgia.

As a result levels of passport ownership in countries with ID cards are lower than in Britain. After the UK leaves, the number of possible destinations for ID card holders will drop by one, but there will still be plenty of choice.

Although some European citizens will go through the hassle of getting a passport just to visit the UK, many may not bother. This is a cause for concern for Britain’s inbound tourism industry.

■ Does this apply to the Republic of Ireland?

No. Relations are governed by the Common Travel Area (CTA) agreement. Free movement will continue. The UK government says: “The CTA was developed to facilitate the principle of free movement for British and Irish citizens between the UK, Ireland and the islands. It ensured that British and Irish citizens continued to benefit from a mutual enjoyment of rights.

“There are no routine passport controls on routes from within the CTA to the UK.”

(Source: Independent)

Study sheds light on how plants evolved to take advantage of ants

Some plants have specific structures that serve as habitat for ants. A new study revealed that, in turn, plants have evolved to use ants to spread seeds and attack predators.

Plants have been using ants to spread seeds and sometimes act as bodyguards against predators, a new study suggests.

While plants have been providing ants with nectar to eat, researchers found that plants have also evolved to take advantage of its relationship with ants.

In the study published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, researchers looked at the genetic history of about 1,700 species of ants and 10,000 genera of plants.

The goal was to find out how the relationship between plants and ants came to be, and how it has affected their respective evolutionary histories.

■ A threat to the plant

Plants have certain characteristics that purposely attract the ants. Some plants have hollow thorns for ants to live inside and excess nectar to bribe them into staying. While ants can just run off with the nectar, some will stay, and attack anything that poses as a threat to the plant.

Some plants, meanwhile, trick ants into spreading seeds by attaching them into food packets. The ants will then move away, eat



Some plants, meanwhile, trick ants into spreading seeds by attaching them into food packets. The ants will then move away, eat the food packet, and discard the seeds called elaiosomes in an area where it will grow better.

the food packet, and discard the seeds called elaiosomes in an area where it will grow better.

The question, however, was how exact-

plants and ants have started.

"It was a chicken-and-egg question, whether things started with ants developing behaviors to take advantage of plants, or plants evolving structures to take advantage of ants," said Rick Ree, co-author of the study and a curator at the Field Museum.

■ Ecological data of plants

To trace back how this relationship started, the researchers analyzed DNA and ecological data of plants and ants. They linked the behavioral characteristics and physical features to the family trees of both ants and plants to study when plants began giving ants food and when ants started helping out plants.

The researchers found that ants have long been relying on plants before plants figured out they can use ants to spread seeds and as a defense against predators. Plants did not evolve certain characteristics, such as specialized structures, until long after ants have depended on plants for food and habitat.

In an evolutionary standpoint, however, the study added that species of ants nesting in plants do not seem better off than those that do not. Matt Nelsen, also an author of the study, added that these ants do not grow faster nor diversify because of the interaction. (Source: Tech Times)

Humans have changed the course of evolution in ways we never predicted, scientist warns

By now, most of us can list a variety of ways our species is making a mess of this planet.

Canadian zoologist Sarah Otto reports in detail how humans have made a mess of things, with the aim of asking how it affects evolution overall. The answer isn't academic, either – it could show us just how bad things really are. The "speed with which the biotic and abiotic environment of species has changed has already altered the evolutionary trajectory of species, a trend that promises to escalate," Otto says in her recent article. A change in course for ecosystems is nothing new. Around 90 percent of all species that have lived on Earth have gone the way of the dodo, making extinction an inevitable feature of the biosphere. But the forces that have seen the rise and fall of species in times gone by tend to be rather slow compared to what's been happening over the past century or so.

■ Individual imprints

A hundred years ago, we humans numbered roughly 1.8 billion. Now our population is closer to 7.6 billion, having grown on average around 1 percent every year. If having more mouths to feed isn't bad enough, individual imprints on the landscape

have grown by half a percent per year.

Having more people with a greater effect on the environment has led to an exponential growth in devastation, driving up the global extinction rate and seeing an end to a significant number of species in the space of a single human lifetime.

On average, we've stripped 8 percent of the carbon from the top 2 meters (6 feet) of topsoil, raised the temperature of the atmosphere by nearly 1 degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit), and lowered the pH of the oceans by about 0.1 units. This impact isn't just monumental in scale. It's unprecedented in speed. Meaning we have little to tell us how biology responds to this new spin on 'natural' selection. "Beyond the numbers, the world's biological diversity is changing, through evolutionary change at both the within and between species levels," says Otto.

The pressures affecting this shift in biodiversity can be categorized in various ways. Otto puts aside intentional selection pressures – those we deliberately enact by cross-breeding new varieties or genetic engineering – and focuses on those we affect incidentally. For example, simply by physically modifying the landscape with new structures, we influence how animals move,

plants grow, and how microbes proliferate.

This can have a drastic effect on whether a species survives or vanishes, or subtly influence its functions and morphology.

■ Cliff swallows

The "wing span of cliff swallows has evolved to be shorter near roads, with road-killed swallows having longer wings, consistent with selection for increased maneuverability in the face of traffic," says Otto.

We've also modified the living environment, rapidly transplanting species through boundaries that once would have impeded their spread. And then there is the obvious pressure imposed by our predatory and gathering demands, hunting animals of the right size or culling weeds or pests that might affect our crop yields. There's no shortage of examples of lost species and remarkable adaptations to human presence. But the rate at which new species appear is still a bit of a mystery.

There are plenty of estimates, with some of the less optimistic suggesting it could take millions of years for some aspects of biodiversity to spring back to pre-modern vigor. (Source: sciencealert.com)

Chinese scientists building 62-mile-long 'supercollider'

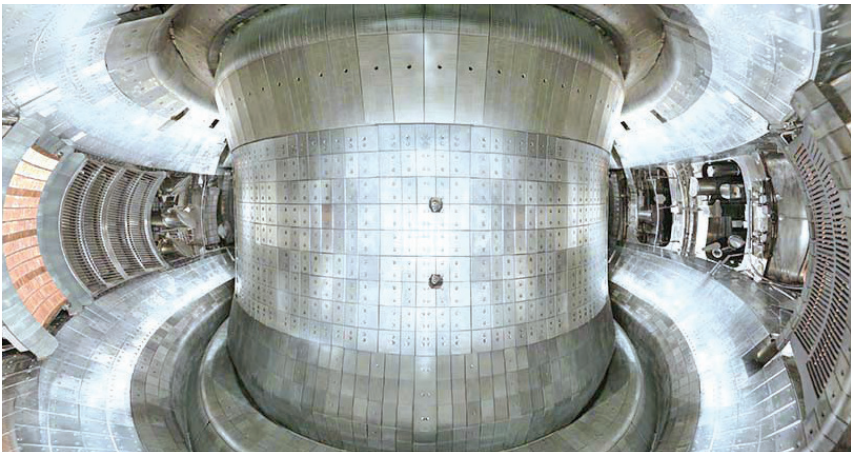
Researchers in China are building a particle collider almost four times bigger than the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) and it is expected to produce over one million Higgs boson particles in its first decade of operation.

Plans for the Circular Electron Positron Collider (CEPC) – a 62 mile long collider – were first announced in 2012, a few months after the Higgs boson particle was discovered at the LHC. Now, researchers working on the project have released two new design reports to show what they have been working on over the last six years, and what they are planning to do over the coming decades.

The report shows how the CEPC dwarfs the LHC, which has a circumference of just under 17 miles. It outlines how it can go beyond the LHC's capabilities in terms of the physics experiments that can be carried out – over 10 years, scientists say it will be able to produce one million Higgs bosons, 100 million W bosons and a trillion Z bosons.

■ Electron and positron beams

Like the LHC, the CEPC is circular in shape. It will be located in an underground tunnel and consists of a linear accelerator, a damping ring, a booster, transport lines and a collider. It will be a double ring collider, with electron and positron beams circulating in



opposite directions in separate pipes.

The tunnel it sits in could also be used to host a Super Proton Proton Collider (SPPC) – a proposal for which is currently under consideration. This 'supercollider' would reach energies far beyond the LHC – the LHC was designed to have a maximum collision energy of 14 TeV, while the SPPC would operate with an energy of 70 TeV.

The "Conceptual Design Report signifies

that we have completed the basic design of the accelerator, detector and civil engineering for the whole project," Professor Gao Yuanning, chair of the CEPC Institutional Board, said in a statement. "Our next step will focus on the research and development of key technologies and prototypes for the CEPC."

Geoffrey Taylor of the University of Melbourne, chairman of the International Committee for Future Accelerators (ICFA) and

the Asian Committee for Future Accelerators (ACFA), said: "This is a significant milestone along the road to such an important facility for fundamental physics."

■ The basic constituents of matter

I have no doubt the international community looks forward to partnering in the development and operation of the CEPC and in the quest to better understand the basic constituents of matter."

Over the next five years, scientists will carry out extensive research, building prototypes of key technical components for the CEPC. The infrastructure for the collider will also be built. Construction of the CEPC is expected to begin in 2022 and it will be completed in 2030. Should the CEPC prove successful, scientists are hoping the SPPC supercollider could be operational at some point in the 2030s. "As an energy frontier machine, the SPPC could discover an entirely new set of particles," the new report says. "Dark matter remains one of the most puzzling issues in particle physics and cosmology."

The SPPC, the researchers say, could be used to "substantially extend" the search for WIMPs, potentially providing answers to one of the biggest mysteries in the universe. (Source: Newsweek)

Fish recognize their prey by electric colors, research says

The elephantnose fish produces brief electric pulses which it uses to perceive its environment. Different objects have different 'electrical colors'. In this artistic illustration, aquatic plants are for instance shown red, fish blue, members of the same species and other weakly electric fish yellow and insect larvae green. The mosquito larvae in the soil (orange) -- the favorite food of the elephantnose fish -- stand out from the background and other insect larvae due to their individual electric color.

The African elephantnose fish generates weak electrical pulses to navigate its environment. This localization sense apparently shows an astonishing similarity to vision, as a study by the University of Bonn now shows. The study demonstrates that different objects have different electrical "colors." Fish use these colors for instance to distinguish their favorite food -- mosquito larvae -- from other small animals or plants. The study is published in the journal Current Biology.

Elephantnose fish are nocturnal, which means they cannot rely on their eyes when hunting for prey. But they don't need to: They carry a kind of "electric flashlight" in their tail, which they use to generate short electrical pulses up to 80 times per second. Their skin, especially their trunk-like chin, is covered with electroreceptors: small sensors with which they can measure how these pulses are reflected by the environment.



■ Distinguish forms and materials

And in this they have become champions: With their electro-sense they can estimate distances, distinguish forms and materials, differentiate between dead and living objects. And more than that: Within fractions of a second, they can recognize whether mosquito larvae, their favorite food, are hiding in the gravel or sand at the bottom of their habitat. They can do this with considerable accuracy, largely ignoring the larvae of other insects. How they do this was uncertain for a long time. Objects certainly change the intensity of the electrical signal in a characteristic way -- some reduce it significantly, others reflect it better. "However, this is not enough to clearly identify prey animals," explains Martin Gottwald of the Institute of

Zoology at the University of Bonn. "For example, the signal strength also decreases as the distance increases." But there is another characteristic of living organisms: They also modify the shape of the electric pulses. But even this signal change depends on distance, size and position.

■ Calculating the color of the object

The combination of the two signal characteristics could solve these problems. The human eye works in a similar fashion: Its retina contains receptors for red, green and blue light. Our brain then uses the "mixing ratio" to calculate the color of the object we see. And this remains largely constant, no matter how large or far away the object in question is.

However, until now there was no proof that a similar process occurs in elephantnose fish. Nevertheless, it is clear that the animals have two different types of electric receptors.

At first, the scientists determined how intensity and shape of the localization signal behave in relation to each other depending on the type of object. "We found that this ratio is always constant for the same objects," says von der Emde. "And this applies regardless of their distance or other environmental parameters." A "mosquito larva therefore actually has a constant 'electrical color', which is clearly different from that of other larvae, plant parts, members of the same species or other fish," adds Gottwald. (Source: Science Daily)

Structure of fossil-fuel source rocks is finally decoded

Using a high-resolution system called electron tomography, researchers probed a tiny sample of kerogen to determine its internal structure.

The fossil fuels that provide much of the world's energy originate in a type of rock known as kerogen, and the potential for recovering these fuels depends crucially on the size and connectedness of the rocks' internal pore spaces.

Now, for the first time, a team of researchers at MIT and elsewhere has captured three-dimensional images of kerogen's internal structure, with a level of detail more than 50 times greater than has been previously achieved. These images should allow more accurate predictions of how much oil or gas can be recovered from any given formation. This wouldn't change the capability for recovering these fuels, but it could, for example, lead to better estimates of the recoverable reserves of natural gas, which is seen as an important transition fuel as the world tries to curb the use of coal and oil.

The findings are reported this week in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, in a paper by MIT Senior Research Scientist Roland Pellenq, MIT Professor Franz-Josef Ulm, and others at MIT, CNRS and Aix-Marseille Université (AMU) in France, and Shell Technology Center in Houston.

The team, which published results two years ago on an investigation of kerogen pore structure based on computer simulations, used a relatively new method called electron tomography to produce the new 3-D images, which have a resolution of less than 1 nanometer, or billionth of a meter. Previous attempts to study kerogen structure had never imaged the material below 50 nanometers resolution, Pellenq says.

Fossil fuels, as their name suggests, form when organic matter such as dead plants gets buried and mixed with fine-grained silt. As these materials get buried deeper, over millions of years the mix gets cooked into a mineral matrix interspersed with a mix of carbon-based molecules. Over time, with more heat and pressure, the nature of that complex structure changes. (Source: phys.org)

Streamside forests store tons of carbon, team finds

Restoring degraded forests is a critical strategy for addressing climate change given the potential for forests to store significant amounts of carbon, both in the trees and the soil. However, despite extensive efforts to restore streamside forests globally, the carbon storage potential of these forests is often overlooked. In a new effort from Point Blue Conservation Science and Santa Clara University, researchers led by Dr. Kristen Dybala compiled carbon storage data from 117 publications, reports, and other data sets on streamside forests around the world. This inquiry is the first of its kind to evaluate global results on the potential carbon storage benefits of streamside forests.



Researchers found that the average amount of carbon stored in mature streamside forest rivals the highest estimates for any other forest type around the world, such as tropical or boreal forests. These estimates vary depending on climate, but the average values for mature streamside forests range from 168 to 390 tons of carbon per acre in the trees alone. Researchers also found that, on average, soil carbon can be expected to more than triple when converting from an unforested site to a mature streamside forest. However, as with other forest types, it can take decades for these changes to go into full effect, on the order of 40-90 years for the carbon stored in trees (depending on climate) and more than 115 years for soil carbon.

"One of the most important things we found was that actively restoring forests by planting trees jump-starts this process," said Dr. Dybala. "If you look at two forests, one planted and one regenerating naturally, the restored forest gains carbon in the trees at more than twice the rate of the naturally regenerating forests over the first ten years. Streamside ecosystems around the world have been severely degraded, and their large-scale restoration is a priority in many places, including California's Central Valley and Brazil. Restoring these ecosystems is known to benefit water quality, habitat for fish and wildlife, and recreational opportunities like fishing and wildlife watching that help support local economies. (Source: eurekalert.org)

'Quantum accelerometer' tracks location without GPS

GPS technology is so ubiquitous now that it can be hard to remember a day when you couldn't just take out your phone and find out exactly where you are in the world. However, that's actually a very recent development and one that could be denied to us in the future.

GPS relies on a network of satellites that could be damaged, blocked, or destroyed. You also can't get a good GPS lock when you're underground or around tall buildings. There may be an alternative, though. Imperial College London and engineering firm M Squared have developed a new "quantum accelerometer" that can provide precise locations without any external system.

Imperial College London used a powerful laser system from M Squared to cool a cloud of atoms to very low temperatures until the wave aspect is visible. As the atoms fall through the accelerometer chamber, the wave property is affected by movement. The researchers used a laser interferometer to monitor the perturbations in quantum waves, allowing the system to track movement with high precision. (Source: extremetech.com)

‘Recent heavy rainfall not to compensate for water scarcity’

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Since the beginning of autumn, the country has been poured with rain, experiencing a 14 millimeters increase compared to the long-term average, nevertheless the water scarcity or the severe drop in groundwater resources are not compensated, director for drought and crisis management department at Iran’s Meteorological Organization has said.



Since the beginning of the current water year (September 23) up to November 12, the whole country has received some 35.5 millimeters of precipitation which demonstrates a 14 mm increase compared to its long term mean of 21.6 mm, ISNA quoted Sadeq Ziaeian as saying.

“It also exceeded the last year’s autumn rainfall rate of 11.2 millimeters by 24 millimeters,” he added.

The capital also has experienced 44.7 millimeters rainfall while the long-term averages are 29 millimeters which indicates a 15.7 millimeter increase in mean precipitation, Ziaeian explained.

He went on to say that during the aforesaid period last year, Tehran precipitation rate has been recorded 9.2 millimeters, so it increased by 35.5 mm this year, which was unprecedented.

Pointing out that since the beginning of autumn, most provinces of the country has faced an increase in rainfall compared to the long-term averages, he highlighted that the provinces of Ilam, Bushehr, Khuzestan and Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad have experienced significant precipitation raise.

On the other hand, the provinces of Ardebil, East Azarbaijan, Sistan and Baluchestan, Zanjan and Qazvin has met lower than the long-term rainfall averages, he lamented.

Referring to the impact of recent rainfall on water shortages, Ziaeian said that “initially we need to know how much the autumn rainfall normally contributes to rainfall of the entire current crop year (September 23, 2018-June 20, 2019).”

Autumn rainfall constitutes 25 percent of the total rainfall in a crop year, so that 3 percent of the country’s total precipitation must be received in the Iranian calendar month of Mehr (September 23-October 22), 8 percent in the Iranian calendar month of Aban (October 23-November 22), and 14 percent in the Iranian calendar month of Azar (November 23-December 22).

Since two first months of the current crop year constitute 11 percent of the country’s total precipitation amount, so far, some 11 percent share of the two months has been provided and even the country got 6 percent above normal rainfall over the aforesaid period, he stated.

He further noted that it is anticipated that by the end of the autumn, most provinces of the country will meet normal or above normal rainfall rates.

While precipitation rate in the country has exceeded by 14 millimeters, it is not satisfactory enough to compensate for severe water shortages, since in the last 11 water years, the precipitation rates was below normal or, eventually, normal, as a result of which the groundwater resources and water stored behind the dams had fallen sharply, he regretted.

So, at least 11 years of normal precipitation average is needed to compensate for the current situation, he concluded.

LEARN ENGLISH

Volleyball

A: It’s a beautiful day here in New Zealand at the Men’s Volleyball world championship. My name is Rick Fields and I’m joined by the man with the plan, Bob Copeland.

B: Thank you, Rick. We’ve got a very exciting **encounter ahead of us** today as two **powerhouse** teams, Brazil and China, face off against each other and try to **qualify** for the next round. Without a doubt, both teams are **in top shape** and this will prove to be a competitive match.

A: The ref signals the start of the game and here we go. Ribeiro **serves** and China quickly receives the ball. Chen **bumps** it to the setter, and... a very nice **set** by Chen!

B: Xu **spikes** it! Wow, what a great hit! The Brazilian blockers **anticipated** the play and tried to block him but he managed to get the ball in! Great play.

A: It’s China’s service now. What a superb **jump serve** by Li, oh, and we have a **let serve**. The ball was coming in fast and almost made it over the net.

B: Brazil calls for a **time out** and we’ll be right back, after a short commercial break.

■ **Key vocabulary**
encounter: meet for a game or battle
ahead of (someone): in the future
powerhouse: a highly energetic, strong team
qualify: to reach the later stages of a selection process or contest by competing successfully in earlier rounds
in top shape: in their best condition
serve: hits the ball to start a set of the game
bump: to pass (a volleyball) by redirecting it with the forearms
set: the action of putting ball in the air so as to be driven to opponents’ court
spike: strongly hit the ball to opponents’ court using the palm of the hand
anticipate: to foresee and act in advance of
jump serve: a serve with the ball firstly thrown overhead and then the player jumping to hit it
let serve: the ball touches the net in a serve but still crosses into the opponents’ court
time out: a pause during a game
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**
side out: when the team that served the ball loses the rally, causing the other team to serve the next point
whiff: a mishit when a player attempts to hit (or spike) the ball with the open hand and nearly misses the ball
dig: the ability to prevent the ball from touching one’s court after a spike or attack, particularly
coin toss: the practice of throwing a coin in the air to resolve a dispute between two parties

JICA grants \$300,000 of air pollution analysis equipment to Iran

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has provided air pollution analysis equipment worth \$300,000 to Iran within the framework of a project for Improvement of Equipment for Air Pollution Analysis in Tehran, Fars reported on Monday.

JICA and Tehran Municipality signed a grant agreement on February 12, to provide grant aid of up to 1.242 billion yen (nearly \$11.5 million) in order to improve the environment of Tehran, and air pollution analysis equipment is the first phase of aid planned to be granted to the country.

As per the agreement, JICA will provide air pollution analysis equipment needed to measure emission gases, carry out chemical analysis on particulate matter and implement other related activities in the capital, so that the sources of air pollution substances, emission volumes and the generation mechanisms can be evaluated and analyzed with higher precision, contributing to a mitigation of the air pollution.

In addition, JICA is combining technical cooperation to help create an air pollution countermeasure system and train human resources for the operation of the air pollution analysis equipment and calculation of measurement and analysis results.

Although, the concentration of carbon monoxide reduced to below the standards set in Iran, but observing the levels of other particles, such as PM10, PM2.5, sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide, which are sources of air pollution, is therefore a priority, Yukiharu Kobayashi chief representative of JICA in Iran has said.



JICA will provide air pollution analysis equipment needed to measure emission gases, carry out chemical analysis on particulate matter and implement other related activities in the capital, so that the sources of air pollution substances, emission volumes and the generation mechanisms can be evaluated and analyzed with higher precision, contributing to a mitigation of the air pollution.

Due to the many types of pollutants and the complexity of pollutant sources and measurement methods, the ability to monitor such

stances has been extremely limited, so that equipment measuring emission gases and chemically analyzing air pollution sub-

stances with a total value of \$300,000 has been granted to Iran to reduce air pollution in its capital, he concluded.

Intl. Congress on Health for Peace opens in Shiraz

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The International Congress on Health for Peace (ICHP) kicked off in the city of Shiraz on Tuesday in association with the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Role of governments and national health systems in peace building, role of health professionals in the peace building, international cooperation on health for peace, and medical research and peace through health are being discussed over the course of the 3-day congress.

Human rights medical ethics and peace, networking of NGOs for health for peace, complex emergencies and health for peace, effects of wars and conflicts on health, health for peace in the Middle East, and medical education and peace are also among the topics of the event, IRNA reported.

According to ICHP official website, in order to prevent or at least limit the adverse effects of wars, conflicts and violence which are strongly impacting the structure of communities involve and threatened, efforts must be exerted to reach out to parties who are involved and resolve disputes through



transferring the sides’ views.

Some individuals who can be trusted by the leaders of the parties are required to initiate contact with the parties involved at high levels. The medical community and the

Tehran air quality improves compared to last year

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Air quality in Tehran has improved in the current [Iranian calendar] year (started on March 21) so far compared to the last year, Masoud Zandi, head of the national center for air quality and climate change affiliated with the Department of Environment, has said.

Last year, over the same period, Tehraners breathed foul air for 37 days, while this year only 28 days were reported to be polluted,

IRIB quoted Zandi as saying on Tuesday.

Out of the 28 days reported to be slightly polluted for sensitive groups, ozone pollution were to blame for messy air for 15 days, he added.

In the Earth’s lower atmosphere, near ground level, ozone is formed when pollutants emitted by cars, power plants, industrial boilers, refineries, chemical plants, and other sources react chemically in the presence of sunlight. Ozone at ground level

is a harmful air pollutant.

Zandi further explained that measures taken to reduce air pollution and also recent rainfalls have played a role in the mitigation of air pollution in the metropolis of Tehran.

According to World Health Organization, 4.2 million deaths every year as a result of exposure to ambient (outdoor) air pollution and 91% of the world’s population lives in places where air quality exceeds WHO guideline limits.



NASA spots new iceberg three times size of Manhattan in Antarctica

Nasa has spotted an enormous new Antarctic iceberg while on a mission to survey the region’s shifting sea ice and glaciers.

It marked the first time anyone had laid eyes on the massive expanse of ice, which the agency said had broken off from Pine Island Glacier in late October and was first observed by satellites.

The U.S. National Ice Centre estimates the iceberg, dubbed B-46, was 66 square nautical miles (87 square miles) in size, around three times the size of Manhattan.

However, satellite images have revealed that since it was first observed, the mass has already begun to break up into smaller chunks. The iceberg’s discovery comes shortly after Nasa released images of two separate “tabular icebergs” — ones with completely rectangular shapes and smooth edges.

Ice shelves regularly “calve” icebergs, but scientists are monitoring this activity closely to determine whether the frequency of such events is changing.

As part of Nasa’s Operation IceBridge, a fleet of research

aircraft fly across the polar regions to measure the impact that climate is having on the ice.

The new iceberg was spotted by the crew on board one of the planes.

Based on Nasa’s information, the Pine Island Glacier now appears to be calving with increased regularity. Icebergs broke off in 2013, 2015, 2017, and now this year, while prior to this such major events only took place around once every six years.

(Source: The Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

‘Joblessness causes 60% of migrations from rural to urban areas’

While some 60 percent of migrations from rural to urban areas are caused by the lack of appropriate jobs and sufficient income for educated people, so the government is intent on reversing migration through offering facilities and creating sustainable jobs in rural areas, deputy vice-president for rural development and deprived areas has said.

A total of 180,000 sustainable jobs have been created in rural areas last year (March 2017-March 2018), and also some 100,000 jobs in the current year, Abolfazl Razavi said, ISNA reported on Friday.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-ling”

■ **Meaning:** young, small or specified quality
■ **For example:** Keep the **hatchlings** in separate containers so as to avoid having two animals grab the same food item.

PHRASAL VERB

Leave somebody alone

■ **Meaning:** to stop annoying or upsetting someone
■ **For example:** Leave the boy alone, he can make up his own mind.

IDIOM

Clean bill of health

■ **Explanation:** to have a report or certificate declaring that your health is satisfactory
■ **For example:** “All candidates for the position must present a clean bill of health.”

نبود شغل مناسب، علت ۶۰ درصد مهاجرت‌ها از روستاها به شهر

معاون توسعه روستایی و مناطق محروم ریاست جمهوری با اشاره به اینکه با پرداخت تسهیلات برای ایجاد شغل پایدار در برخی روستاها شاهد مهاجرت معکوس هستیم، افزود: با بررسی‌های میدانی مشخص شد ۶۰ درصد علل مهاجرت روستاییان به شهرها، نبود شغل مناسب برای فرزندان تحصیل کرده دانشگاهی و عدم درآمد کافی برای خوار است. ابوالفضل رضوی در گفت‌وگو با ایسنا، گفت: در سال گذشته ۱۸۰ هزار شغل پایدار روستایی توسط دستگاه‌های اجرایی از پروژه ارتقای تولید ملی و اشتغال پایدار در مناطق روستایی ایجاد شد و حدود ۱۰۰ هزار شغل هم امسال از محل همین پروژه ایجاد شده است.

Lieberman resigns over Gaza deal

➔ "It is no secret that there were differences between the prime minister and I," Lieberman said. "I did not agree to allow entry of Qatari money [into Gaza], and I had to allow it only after the prime minister announced it."

Lieberman, who heads Yisrael Beiteinu, will retake his Knesset seat following his resignation. Lieberman also said all of the members of his party will quit Israel's ruling coalition in the 120-member parliament. Yisrael Beiteinu's departure means Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu only holds a slender Knesset majority (61-59) seats to maintain the coalition.

Another key coalition partner in Netanyahu's government, Habayit Hayehudi (headed by Education Minister Naftali Bennett), said that unless the defense portfolio goes to Bennett, the party will also quit the coalition.

He also called for elections to be held as soon as possible, saying he hopes a date will be set by Sunday.

Born in the former Soviet Union, Lieberman's voter base is made up of fellow Russian-speaking immigrants, and rightists and secularists who share his hostility to Palestinians.

'Political victory for Gaza'

Hamas Spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said in a post published on his official Twitter page that the move is an Israeli "recognition of its defeat at the hands of the Palestinian resistance."

Abu Zuhri further noted that Lieberman's resignation constitutes a "political victory



for Gaza" after it managed to "stand up to the Occupation (Israel)."

Gaza-based resistance groups announced a ceasefire with Israel in a joint statement on Tuesday evening, saying they would abide by the ceasefire as long as Israel did the same.

"Egypt's efforts have been able to achieve a ceasefire between the resistance and the Zionist enemy," the statement read.

It added, "The resistance will respect this declaration as long as the Zionist enemy respects it."

The latest spate of Israeli military aggression against the Gaza Strip saw 14 Palestinian killed and several others injured in 48 hours

as the Israeli airstrikes and shells reduced buildings to rubble and sent fireballs and plumes of smoke into the sky.

In early July 2014, Israel waged a war on the Gaza Strip. The 50-day military aggression, which ended on August 26, 2014, killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians, including 577 children. Over 11,100 others – including 3,374 children, 2,088 women and 410 elderly people – were also wounded in the war.

The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli siege since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in the standards of living as well as unprecedented levels of unem-

ployment and unrelenting poverty.

Tensions have been running high near the fence separating the Gaza Strip from the occupied territories ever since anti-occupation protest rallies began in the coastal enclave on March 30. More than 230 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces. Nearly 23,000 Palestinians have also sustained injuries.

The Gaza clashes reached their peak on May 14, on the eve of the 70th anniversary of Nakba Day (Day of Catastrophe), which coincided this year with the U.S. embassy relocation from Tel Aviv to occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds.

On June 13, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, sponsored by Turkey and Algeria, condemning Israel for Palestinian civilian deaths in the Gaza Strip.

The resolution, which had been put forward on behalf of Arab and Muslim countries, garnered a strong majority of 120 votes in the 193-member assembly, with eight votes against and 45 abstentions.

The resolution called on UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to make proposals within 60 days "on ways and means for ensuring the safety, protection, and well-being of the Palestinian civilian population under Israeli occupation," including "recommendations regarding an international protection mechanism."

It also called for "immediate steps towards ending the closure and the restrictions imposed by Israel on movement and access into and out of the Gaza Strip."

(Source: agencies)

Bin Salman 'tried to persuade Netanyahu to go to war in Gaza'

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman attempted to persuade Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to start a conflict with Hamas in Gaza as part of a plan to divert attention from the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, sources inside Saudi Arabia have told Middle East Eye.



A war in Gaza was among a range of measures and scenarios proposed by an emergency task force set up to counter increasingly damaging leaks about Khashoggi's murder coming from Turkish authorities, according to sources with knowledge of the group's activities.

The task force, which is composed of officials from the royal court, the foreign and defense ministries, and the intelligence service, briefs the crown prince every six hours, MEE was told.

It advised bin Salman that a war in Gaza would distract Trump's attention and refocus Washington's attention on the role Saudi Arabia plays in bolstering Israeli strategic interests.

It also advised bin Salman to "neutralize Turkey by all means" - including attempts to bribe Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan with offers to buy Turkish arms and statements by the crown prince attempting to shore up relations between Riyadh and Ankara.

In comments made at last month's Future Investment Initiative, bin Salman claimed Khashoggi's murder was being used to drive a wedge between Saudi Arabia and Turkey. He said that would not happen "as long as there is a king called King Salman bin Abdulaziz and a crown prince called Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia".

Khashoggi was brutally killed in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul on 2 October, in an operation which Turkish authorities believe was carried out by a hit squad whose suspected members contained several members of bin Salman's personal bodyguards.

Saudi officials have denied that the crown prince has "any knowledge whatsoever" of Khashoggi's killing.

Some of the task force's other recommendations were leaked to a close confidant of bin Salman, Turki Aldakhil, the general manager of the Al Arabiya news channel. He revealed "more than 30 potential measures" that Riyadh could take if Washington imposed sanctions.

He said the kingdom was capable of doubling or tripling the price of oil, of offering Russia a military base in the north of the country, and of turning to both Russia and China as its main arms suppliers.

Aldakhil later dismissed these threats "as his ideas only", but his original article on the Al Arabiya website sources these threats to "decision-making circles within the kingdom". This, MEE can reveal, is the task force set up to advise bin Salman.

Secret ties

Saudi Arabia and Israel are considered to have increasingly close secret ties, driven by their shared hostility to Iran, and bin Salman has been a key player in efforts to sell Trump's "deal of the century" peace plan for Israel and Palestine to regional leaders.

Speaking to the BBC earlier this year, Netanyahu said that Israel and some Arab nations were going through a process of "subterranean normalization".

And while Khashoggi's killing has been widely condemned by world leaders, Netanyahu said earlier this month: "It is very important for the stability of the region and the world that Saudi Arabia remains stable."

Two weeks after the murder, Saudis government sources also noted an abrupt change of tone in Netanyahu's remarks about Hamas during negotiations with Qatar aimed at easing the blockade on the Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu told his cabinet meeting on 14 October: "We are very close to a different kind of activity, an activity that will include very powerful blows. If it has sense, Hamas will stop firing and stop these violent disturbances, now."

(Source: Middle East Eye)

CNN sues Trump, demands return of Acosta to White House

CNN sued the Trump administration Tuesday, demanding that correspondent Jim Acosta's credentials to cover the White House be returned because their revocation violates the constitutional right of freedom of the press. The administration stripped Acosta of his pass to enter the White House following President Donald Trump's contentious news conference last week, where Acosta refused to give up a microphone when the president said he didn't want to hear anything more from him.

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders later said "this is just more grandstanding from CNN, and we will vigorously defend against his lawsuit."

Trump has made CNN and its reporters a particular target of his denunciation of "fake news" and characterization of the media as an enemy of the people.

CNN CEO Jeff Zucker, in a letter to White House chief of staff John Kelly, called it a "pattern of targeted harassment."

The White House initially contended it was Acosta's refusal to give up the microphone that led to his banishment; CNN said it's apparent the president didn't like his questions.

"Mr. Acosta's press credentials must be restored so that all members of the press know they will remain free to ask

tough questions, challenge government officials and report the business of the nation to the American people," said Theodore Olson, former U.S. solicitor general and one of CNN's lawyers on the case.

The White House Correspondents' Association backed the lawsuit, filed in Washington, D.C., district court.

"The president of the United States should not be in the business of arbitrarily picking the men and women who cover him," said Olivier Knox, president of the correspondents' group.

CNN said Acosta was given no warning of the action, and no recourse to appeal it. Acosta traveled to Paris to cover Trump's visit there this weekend and, although given permission by the French government to cover a news event, the Secret Service denied him entrance, the company said.

CNN asked for an injunction to immediately reinstate Acosta, as well as a hearing on the larger issue of barring a reporter.

In an effort to prove the administration's case last week, Sanders distributed via Twitter a doctored video sped up to make Acosta's physical actions toward the intern seem more threatening.



That wasn't mentioned by Sanders in a statement Tuesday. She cited his refusal to yield to other reporters after he asked Trump two questions.

Trump told Acosta at the news conference that "CNN should be ashamed of itself, having you work for them. You are a rude, terrible person."

(Source: AP)

Merkel calls for a European Union military

German Chancellor Angela Merkel called Tuesday for an integrated European Union military, echoing language used by French President Emmanuel Macron last week which irritated U.S. President Donald Trump.

"We should work on a vision of one day establishing a real European army," Merkel told the European Parliament during a

keynote speech in which she consciously backed Macron's call for European defense planning, operations and weapons development.

Macron's call, which reflects a broad trend of EU thinking but is not universally accepted, was meant to show European willingness to meet U.S. demands that Europe do more for

its own security and rely less on America's security umbrella.

Merkel said such armed forces would not undermine the U.S.-led military alliance NATO but could be complementary to it. Her remarks drew loud applause in the legislature but also boos from nationalist members.

First proposed in the 1950s and taken up four years ago by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker as a response to fraying EU unity, an EU armed forces is seen as strengthening the global power of the bloc, which is an economic giant but a geopolitical minnow.

(Source: Daily Star)

ASEAN and China tout progress over South China Sea

Leaders from Southeast Asia and China say they're making progress in keeping the peace in the disputed South China Sea as they work towards a "code of conduct" to govern navigation routes and other activities in the area.

Speaking at the annual summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Singapore on Wednesday, Chinese Premier Li Keqiang said the region has set a good example of managing territorial disputes and keeping the peace as it works towards an agreement.

"We have found the way to properly manage and defuse differences, for example, on the issue of the South China Sea in the past years," Li said.

He added the situation was moving towards "greater stability" with progress on a single draft text on a code of conduct and hopes of having a final agreement within three years.

'Serious miscalculation'

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said he wanted at "all cost" to set rules governing behavior in the disputed seas. Duterte told reporters relations between China and its



neighbors in Southeast Asia were "excellent" and friction was between Western nations and China. But he said a code of conduct was needed to avoid any "serious miscalculation".

The United States has recently sent destroyers through

the South China Sea on what it calls "freedom of navigation" operations - manoeuvres that have riled Beijing and nearly led to ship collisions.

The 10 members of ASEAN agreed to start negotiations on a code of conduct in the South China Sea in 2002, but little progress has been made amid rising tensions in the area, which is a crucial trade route for international shipping and thought to be rich in natural resources.

China claims almost the entire sea for itself and has built substantial structures on disputed outcrops and reefs in recent years.

The Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Vietnam also claim parts of the sea, as does Taiwan.

Tensions over the maritime region have boiled over at previous ASEAN summits.

In 2012, at the meeting in Cambodia, discussions ended without a joint statement for the first time in the organization's history amid differences over the South China Sea.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

France says Trump should have shown "decency" on Paris attacks anniversary

U.S. President Donald Trump, who attacked his French counterpart in a series of tweets Tuesday, should have shown "common decency" instead since the country was mourning the anniversary of deadly attacks in Paris, a French government spokesman said. In five posts sent on the same day France marked the anniversary of the 2015 attacks that killed

130 people, Trump blasted the key U.S. ally over its near defeat to Germany in two world wars, its wine industry and President Emmanuel Macron's approval ratings.

When asked on Wednesday about the U.S. leader's Twitter posts, French government spokesman Benjamin Griveaux was critical. "Yesterday was November 13, we were

marking the murder of 130 of our people," Griveaux said. "So I'll reply in English: 'common decency' would have been appropriate."

Trump posted the tweets after returning to Washington from a weekend in Paris to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One where strained relations between the

U.S. president and European allies were on full display.

On Tuesday, he rejected Macron's warnings against the threat of nationalism, made during an emotional ceremony in the French capital on Sunday attended by scores of world leaders.

(Source: Reuters)

Kremlin laments U.S. 'unpredictability' under Trump

The Kremlin hit out Wednesday at the "unpredictability" of the United States under the Trump administration, saying it was causing "deep global concern."

"The fact that America has become unpredictable lately is no secret to anyone," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told Dozhd TV during a visit by President Vladimir Putin to a regional summit in Singapore.

"Such unpredictability from the largest country, the most

powerful economy in the world, is the subject of deep global concern," he added.

Peskov's comments come two weeks ahead of a slated face-to-face between President Donald Trump and Putin at a G20 summit in Argentina.

Relations between the two countries have hit new lows with American officials planning to roll out fresh sanctions against Moscow in response to the botched poisoning of

former Russian spy Sergei Skripal in Britain.

Western governments have accused Russia of being behind the plot which saw Skripal and his daughter poisoned with a nerve agent. Two British citizens were also poisoned, one of whom died.

Moscow has denied being behind the brazen hit and has condemned efforts to sanction it over the incident.

(Source: AFP)

Fulham appoint Ranieri as manager after sacking Jokanovic

Italian Claudio Ranieri has been appointed the new manager of Fulham, replacing Slavisa Jokanovic, the struggling Premier League club said on Wednesday.

Serb Jokanovic led Fulham into the top flight from the second-tier Championship via the playoffs last season but the London club have made a poor start and are bottom of the league with one win in 12 games.

Fulham chairman Shahid Khan said he had taken the decision reluctantly but felt a change was needed.

"I wasn't anticipating having to make this announcement related to Slavisa and wish the circumstances were such that I didn't have to," Khan said in a statement.

"But our path this season has led me to make what I know is the correct decision, at the right time, for our players, the club and our supporters."

The much-travelled Ranieri won the Premier League title with unfancied Leicester City in 2016 and most recently coached French side Nantes.

The 67-year-old has worked with Valencia and Atletico Madrid in Spain, Juventus, AS Roma and Inter Milan in Italy and also had a four-year spell in England with Fulham's neighbours Chelsea.

"Making a change without having the right answer or succession plan was not an option, so having someone of Claudio's calibre ready to accept our challenge was comforting but, most of all, essential," Khan said.

"Claudio is risk-free and ready-made for the Premier League, and particularly so for what we need at this moment at Fulham.

"His recent body of work with Leicester City is literally legendary, and then you look at Claudio's experience with Chelsea and big clubs throughout Europe, and it's pretty evident we are welcoming an extraordinary football man to Fulham Football Club."

(Source: Mirror)

Referee banned by FA after rock, paper, scissors blunder

Referee David McNamara has been handed a three-week ban by the English FA for asking two captains to play rock, paper, scissors to decide the kick-off before a Women's Super League (WSL) match after forgetting his coin, British media reported on Tuesday.

The incident took place ahead of Manchester City's home game with Reading on Oct. 26 and involved their England skipper Steph Houghton and visiting captain Kirsty Pearce.

A coin toss to decide who kicks off is a requirement under the Laws of the Game but McNamara left his coin in the dressing room and allowed the captains to play rock, paper, scissors to determine kick off and playing ends, the BBC reported.

"The FA can confirm that referee David McNamara has been suspended for 21 days, starting from Monday 26 November, after accepting a charge of 'not acting in the best interests of the game', a FA spokesman was quoted as saying.

"This follows an incident in the FA WSL match between Manchester City and Reading on Friday 26th October when he failed to determine which team would kick off the match by the toss of a coin, as required by the Laws of the game.

McNamara, who has the right to appeal against the FA suspension will be able to return to duty from Dec. 17.

(Source: Reuters)

Dembele faces his last chance

It appears as though the plan for the Barcelona board is to count to ten before any decision is made and thanks to that they didn't sack Ernesto Valverde after the defeat by Roma last season and Ousmane Dembele will have another chance.

That the Frenchman has exhausted the patience of the Barcelona hierarchy is no mystery. His lateness and general lack of discipline has not been taken well especially considering his cost having been brought in to try and smooth over the loss of Neymar.

The past week has been particularly troublesome with Dembele missing Thursday's training session and not giving sufficient warning that he would do so. It saw him left out of Sunday's game with Real Sociedad and he also turned up late for that game.

Along with this have come the public reprimands, first from Valverde who left him out of the squad and then after the Betis game said that he needs help but he has not given up on him.

"I have not lost patience with him, he has a special talent and we have to help him," he said.

Then Pique, a dressing room heavyweight, added: "We have to help him so that he realizes that football is a 24 hour day job."

France coach Didier Deschamps also joined in the debate.

"He is used to turning up late, I already know about him and his excuses," he explained.

(Source: Marca)

Report: Vidal back to Juve?

Juventus are reportedly considering a shock deal to bring back Barcelona midfielder Arturo Vidal.

According to Corriere dello Sport, Juve could be forced to bolster their midfield in January as there is 'uncertainty' over when Emre Can will return from a thyroid problem.

Consequently, the newspaper believes the Bianconeri's possible desire for a 'readymade' signing could lead them to Vidal.

The Chilean rejected Inter to join Barca over the summer, but he has seen just 367 minutes of action at Camp Nou this season.

He won four Scudetti and reached a Champions League Final with the Old Lady before joining Bayern Munich in 2015.

(Source: Football Italia)

Santiago Solari appointed Real Madrid permanent coach

Real Madrid has announced that Santiago Hernan Solari will take over as the club's permanent coach, after a record-setting start in the job.

"The Board of Directors of Real Madrid CF, meeting today November 13, 2018, has agreed to the appointment of Santiago Solari as coach of the first team until June 30, 2021," said a Real statement on Tuesday.

The 42-year-old Solari took over on a temporary basis when Julen Lopetegui was sacked on October 29 and has won all four of his games in charge -- the best start of any manager in the club's history.

Real was forced to make a quick decision on Solari's future because the Spanish league prevents interim coaches from staying in the position for more than two weeks, meaning the club had to either appoint him or find someone else by Tuesday. Previously the Real Madrid B coach, Solari's side has scored 15 goals in four victories and has closed the gap on La Liga leaders Barcelona to just four points.

'El Indiecito'

Real president Florentino Perez has form when it comes to promoting a Real Madrid B coach to the top job.

Zinedine Zidane left his role as Real boss in May this year having led his former club to nine trophies in a two-and-a-half year spell, including three consecutive European titles. He too had coached the Real Madrid B team.

Born in Rosario, Argentina -- also the birthplace of Lionel Messi -- Solari was educated at New Jersey's Richard Stockton College in the US, which partly explains why the 42-year-old's English is so good. He likes to read in English to retain his ability to speak the language.

Solari's father Eduardo played professionally in Argentina while his brothers David and Esteban also pursued football careers, as did his cousin Augusto.

Solari was nicknamed "El Indiecito" -- "the Little Indian" -- which is a nod to his uncle, Jorge Solari, who played in Mexico and was nicknamed "El Indio."

Intensely private

In 2005, Solari joined Inter Milan and was part of teams that won three successive Serie A titles, before he headed back to South America and played for San Lorenzo, Atlante



and Peñarol. Solari has been described as "highly educated, articulate, philosophical and a lover of books." After retiring he wrote a column for leading Spanish newspaper El Pais.

Married with three children, Solari is intensely private and has no visible social media profile.

Back in Europe, he started his coaching career by working with Real Madrid's junior teams, before taking charge of Castilla -- the club's B team -- in 2016.

Under Solari, Castilla's results have been mixed -- in his three seasons in charge, the team finished 11th and eighth and is currently fifth in their group.

What type of coach will Solari be at Real? Perhaps an interview he gave to El Gráfico magazine provides a clue.

"First you have to see what skills and what characteristics the players have -- who are and will always be the owners of football -- and afterwards know how I want to play, the style.

"Later, the football culture of each country, the competition, the opponent, the pitch, the tactics, etc. all influence. All of this is more important than the tactical formation. You can play with a 4-4-1-1 that's very attacking or a 3-4-3 that's very defensive and vice versa."

(Source: CNN)

Australian Open director Tiley defends Federer scheduling



Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley has defended giving Roger Federer "prime time" treatment at the year's first grand slam, saying it was a matter of meeting fans and broadcasters' demands for the "box office" athlete. Frenchman Julien Benneteau caused a stir during a radio interview on Sunday, in which he said referees were often kinder to the Swiss great when it came to scheduling.

Benneteau also criticised Federer's Laver Cup project, saying the exhibition team event, in which Tiley is also involved, represented a conflict of interest.

In a statement issued by Tennis Australia on Wednesday, Tiley said players and fans were "obviously at the forefront" when scheduling matches but added that there was no way of pleasing everyone all the time. "In terms of players and their appeal, it needs to be said that Roger Federer is a once-in-a-generation player widely regarded as one of the biggest 'box office' athletes in the world," Tiley said.

"He has been regularly voted Austral-

ia's favourite athlete. The fans demand his appearance in the big stadiums and our broadcasters naturally want his matches to air in prime time.

"And I don't think there's a tournament director in the world who's not going to take those factors into account when setting the schedule. This is the case with all the big names in tennis, and in sport in general."

Federer, playing at the season-ending ATP Tour Finals in London, attempted to avoid getting dragged into a row with Benneteau but said "a lot of the facts (were) not right" about his scheduling.

"Sometimes I get help, sometimes I don't," he said. Tiley also hit back at Benneteau's criticism of the Laver Cup's integrity.

"I'd say the success of the Laver Cup has been seen as somewhat of a 'disruptor' to the men's game," he said.

"We run our events to the highest standards and reject as well as challenge any claims to the contrary."

(Source: Eurosport)

Hamilton questions taking F1 to new venues



Lewis Hamilton has questioned taking Formula 1 to new countries and would like to see more races in places with "real racing history" such as Britain.

The newest addition to the F1 calendar is Vietnam, which is due to host its first race in 2020.

"On the racing side, I don't know how important it is to go to new countries as such," the five-time champion said.

"If you had the Silverstone Grand Prix and a London Grand Prix, it would be pretty cool."

In an interview with BBC Sport, Hamilton also spoke about his future in F1, his quest for self-improvement, and his dream of space travel.

F1 bosses have agreed a "multi-year" deal to stage a race on the streets of Vietnam's capital Hanoi from April 2020.

It is the first new addition to the calendar under the ownership of Liberty Media, which took over the management of F1 in 2017 and has promised to take the sport

to "new destination cities".

Liberty Media's plans are an evolution of the general trend seen in F1 over the past two decades, with races in Bahrain, China, Turkey, Singapore, Abu Dhabi, South Korea, India, Russia and Azerbaijan added to the calendar since 2004.

The rise of new venues has come at the same time as historic grands prix in Great Britain, Germany, Italy, France and Belgium have struggled to retain their places on the calendar amid mounting hosting costs.

"We've got a lot of real racing history in England, Germany, Italy and now in the States it is starting to grow," said Hamilton. "But you only have one event per year in those places."

"I've been to Vietnam before and it is beautiful. I've been to India before to a race which was strange because India was such a poor place yet we had this massive, beautiful grand prix track made in the middle of nowhere."

(Source: BBC)

Maradona: I don't think Solari will stay for very long, he doesn't have the support

Diego Maradona spoke to MARCA after training with his Mexican side Dorados and he talked about many topics from Argentina, Messi, Ronaldo to the current situation at Real Madrid.

Would you like to train in Spain?

A. Yes but it needs to be a long-term project and not if it is a case of bringing in a coach for the sake of it. Also it is healthy to have a break after winning all the time (probably in reference to Real Madrid). It is the time now to correct mistakes, to be thinking if the fullbacks close down the space, if the centre-halves link up, if the two central midfielders help each other out, this is the time to do it. Myself as a coach I need to learn a lot and for that reason I think I will go to Manchester and Mourinho to ask him a lot of things.

Why Mourinho?

A. Because he is the best without doubt.

Better than Pep?

A. For me yes, Mou is the best. I would give Pep the merit of taking advantage of the launch that Johan Cruyff gave him. I have said on more than one occasion that tiki-taka was not invented by Guardiola. It was 'flaco' Cruyff. At the moment Pep is able to choose any player in the world that he wants. That way tiki-taka is easier.

Why do you think it had so much impact what you said about Messi?

A. What are you talking about?

About saying it is no point making Messi a leader when he goes to the toilet 20 times before a game.

A. All lies.



You didn't want to cause conflict with Messi?

A. Leo is a friend of mine and I never talk badly about a friend in public. I would say it to the face, and not through an interview. About Leo all I would say is that he is a phenomenon and nothing more. There are players that go to the bathroom 20 times but I never referred to Messi. Quite the opposite what I wanted from Leo (referring to the 2010 World Cup) was to get changed, go on the pitch, look for the ball and something that many others don't do, they hide from the ball. I want to say that what I have with Leo is unconditional.

Have you spoken since this issue?

A. Since Messi joined Barcelona they want us to be always fighting.

Who? Why?

A. I don't know why there is this obsession with him and

me. Leo could be compared with Ronaldinho for example. Dinho had a massive impact at Barcelona and for some reason no one remembers him. This is typical of Barcelona, they forget their idols very quickly. Ask about Rivaldo there after the goal from the half-way line against Atletico or the overhead kick against Valencia. Nobody remembers him, you know how the Barcelona press are, they want that we are fighting but I will eat a meal with Leo, we play football-tennis and we are happy.

You criticized the appointment of Scoloni as Argentina coach because of his lack of experience. Do you think the situation with Solari at Madrid is similar?

A. I would only say that in both cases that they don't have enough backing for both teams. However, if they were put there then it was because they had the backing of the Argentina federation president and the Real Madrid president, but I don't think they will be around for long. Coaches have a life span and and theirs will not be too long.

But it was the same with Zidane?

A. It is different when you talk about lifespans if you are called Zidane compared to Scaloni or Solari.

And being called Maradona. Would you have liked a chance at Madrid?

A. I would have loved it. I have big enough shoulders for it but things didn't work out that way. Now I am at Dorados and I am happy. I will see Benja (his grandson and Kun Aguero's son) at some point and I have a good relationship with Kun. He is good father and a great guy.

(Source: Marca)

Leader lauds displaying of cultural power by Para athletes

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday praised the Iranian medal winners in the Asian Para Games by displaying of cultural power.

At this meeting Ayatollah Khamenei praised the differently-abled athletes representing Iran at the Asian Para Games 2018 and described them stimulation of mankind's hidden potentials.

"That disabled war veterans and differently-abled athletes play sports represents stimulating hidden potentials in mankind. All humans have some talents which are sometimes ignored. You have won medals, and have become champions; so you are manifestations of activating capacities," he asserted.

Ayatollah Khamenei declared that everyone regardless of their age should follow the disabled athletes for they are epitomes of determination and willpower, Khamenei. ir wrote.

"All of us-- regardless of age, but particularly the youth-- should follow in your footsteps. You shined at this field despite physical challenges. That is why I say achievements by you the disabled war veterans and differently-abled athletes are worth twice as the championship of those without physical problems. Your championship represents firm, manifold determination," the leader said.

The Leader of the Islamic Revolution hailed the athletes from among disabled war veterans and differently-abled individuals in their power to inspire the public and added, "You are doubly influential in inspiring the people to do sports. The motivation you arouse in them is two-fold."

Ayatollah Khamenei also appreciated the display of cultural power by a female athlete who bore the flag of Iran's sports delegation to the Asian Para Games while dressing in Iranian chador.

"Your self confidence in fortifying your cultural heritage was extremely important. One example of it was that the Iranian flag was held by a lady in chador. This signifies that you are uniquely standing against the world's increased lewdness and indecency. Indeed, by doing so, you fortified your religion, your national values and notions and your



national clothing—that is chador—in an international arena. This requires courage and bravery; many of the people are not strong enough to resist in face of non-stop demands thrust upon the world by the front of Paganism. I am cordially grateful to you, ladies; this was a display of cultural power," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei stated.

The Supreme Leader went on to uphold athletes'

manifestations of their gratitude towards God for their achievements and said, "After victory, you thank God and sometimes you prostrate before him. This signifies that you consider your victory coming from God. By thanking Him, you indicate you are not ignorant. This is an important level of gratitude before God and it leads to more achievements for you."

I am proud of my Iranian origin: Afshin Ghotbi

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Ex-Iran and Persepolis football teams head coach Afshin Ghotbi says he is proud of his Persian origin, his history and his past.

The 54-year-old coach led Iranian giants Persepolis to win the domestic title, however, Ghotbi believes it's not his biggest achievement in football.

Finishing fourth with South Korea in the 2002 World Cup as assistant of Dutchman Guus Hiddink and winning the championship with LA Galaxy are very important success in his career, the Iranian coach asserted.

Ghotbi has already worked in seven different countries, but he also likes to coach a German football team. Fortuna Dusseldorf, Hannover 96 and Prussia Münster has reportedly negotiated with Ghotbi, transfermarkt.at reported.

"I'm very disappointed that it did not work out. But I think it has more to do with the fact that I'm not German than with my quality as a coach. I've been interested in German football all my life. As a small boy, I stayed up late at night to watch Bundesliga matches. As a 10-year-old, I was in



Germany during the 1974 World Cup. It is one of my dreams to be able to work in German football," he emphasized.

Ghotbi must be a special coach, you could see the reaction of the fans and players of

the Chinese second division Shijiazhuang Ever Bright after his departure in early September. You could see tears in their eyes after they found out their coach would leave their team.

"Football is an international game. Working abroad and living in different parts of the world has always fascinated me. I have worked in seven countries in my career because I like the sporting, social and cultural challenges. Each country offers different challenges and growth opportunities. I have been able to inspire, educate and make people happy. I'm fortunate to have this opportunity," Ghotbi said.

"I am proud of my origin, my history and my past. It helped me develop a diverse cultural understanding and tolerance. With a non-traditional football background, I had to prove myself every day and become a better person and coach," explains the Iranian-born, who grew up in the U.S. and had to do more work and time because of his origin than others.

Ghotbi also calls himself a sympathetic, passionate and open-minded coach.

"Football is my religion, the club is my home and players are my family. There is no perfect coach, but it challenges us to get better every day. New ideas are all around us. We can learn from everyone, the key is to listen with an open mind and an open heart," he stated.

Calgary 2026 Winter Olympics bid dead after 'no' vote

Calgary's hopes of hosting the 2026 Winter Olympics were dashed on Tuesday after citizens voted resoundingly against the western Canadian city's plan to bid for the Games.

More than 56 percent of voters said 'No' in the plebiscite, a surprisingly lopsided margin after both sides had expected a close call in the city which hosted the 1988 Winter Games.

After witnessing a high turnout, with more than 304,000 ballots cast in a reflection of the interest in the poll, the unofficial results had 132,832 opting 'For' and 171,750 'Against' Calgary making a bid to host the Games.

The outcome was another blow for the International Olympic Committee (IOC), which has seen interest in hosting Games fall dramatically as the size and cost of staging the multi-sport event has sky-rocketed.

The Calgary vote leaves Sweden's Stockholm and an Italian bid involving Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo as the only candidates left in the race.

Swiss city Sion, Japan's Sapporo and Graz in Austria all withdrew earlier this year, while Turkey's Erzurum was last month eliminated from the bidding process by the IOC, which will elect the winning bid in June 2019.

"It (result) comes as no surprise following the political discussions and uncertainties right up until the last few

days," the IOC said in a statement.

"We understand the disappointment of all those involved in the candidature... who fought so hard for the Olympic project.

"It is disappointing that the arguments about the sporting, social and long-term benefits of hosting the Olympic Games did not sway the vote.

"We will continue our cooperation with Milan/Cortina d'Ampezzo and Stockholm in order to ensure the best possible host for the Olympic Winter Games 2026."

BID FINISHED While the Calgary vote was non-binding, the 15-member city council is expected to respect the outcome when it meets on Monday to decide whether to move the bid process forward.

Calgary 2026 and Canada Olympic Committee (COC) acknowledged the people had spoken, with the former saying it would wrap up operations in the next few weeks.

"We know that this was very divisive, but it's time to put that behind us," Calgary bid chief Mary Moran told supporters.

"This all began with great promise: a chance to bring the Olympics and Paralympics home to Calgary and Canada.

"A chance to re-establish our city on the world stage — put us back on the map... It all made sense, and it still

makes sense."

The Calgary 2026 Bid Corporation spent a reported C\$10 million (\$7.56 million) on the campaign for a yes vote but could not overcome a low budget grassroots effort to stop the bid.

With high unemployment and an oil boom gone bust, residents were anxious about the cost of hosting the Games which the Calgary 2026 Olympic bid corporation estimated at C\$5.1 billion.

The Canadian city, which also hosted the 1988 Winter Olympics, has some 85 percent of venues in place, but opponents have argued that the cost far exceed the benefits the Games might bring.

"I think that people had enough of the establishment, telling us what to do, what to think," local councillor Sean Chu said. "They tell you to spend millions, billions, it's good for you."

The COC, meanwhile, said the vote represented a missed "unique opportunity" to bring a renewed vision to the Games. "The Canadian Olympic Committee respects the results of tonight's plebiscite in Calgary, but we are disappointed with the outcome," COC said in the statement.

Beijing is hosting the next Winter Games in 2022.

(Source: Reuters)

Trinidad and Tobago captain Hyland expects tough match against Iran



Trinidad and Tobago football team captain Khaleem Hyland is expecting a tough game against hosts Iran, on Thursday, when both teams meet in a friendly encounter at the Azadi Stadium, Tehran.

"We know the quality that Iran has. They have a huge coach (Carlos Queiroz) and they are just coming off a strong showing at the World Cup," Hyland said.

The 29-year-old midfielder, who plays for Al-Faisaly in Saudi Arabia, continued, "We played against them before the 2014 World Cup in Brazil and I think this is a huge game for us to see what level we are at and where have to go. I expect a tough game and the conditions changes just the same as Saudi Arabia.

"One minute it can be very humid and

then very cold. We are over here to get a job done and we'll try to stay focused and go out and do what we are here for and try to get a positive result on Thursday," Hyland added.

With TT preparing for the 2019 CONCACAF Gold Cup and CONCACAF Nations League, Hyland stated, "These are important games and you can only get better playing teams like these because they play in World Cup every four years and I think it's a great opportunity to finally get ready for the Gold Cup and Nations League next year by playing teams of this high quality.

"We knew when (TT coach Dennis Lawrence) took over the team it was a very difficult period. He was trying to patch up things and it was not the easiest of positions for any coach to come in under. Right now

we are at a great level since then. We had to take it step by step since to fix things and so far we are getting there. Everyone has taken Dennis on board and he is trying to implement what he wants us to do and how he wants us to carry out ourselves.

"I think he is a role model for a lot of the guys. He scored to take us to the 2006 World Cup and he has a lot of experience coaching under huge coaches. I think he can only help us and hopefully we can put every puzzle together and get ready for the (forthcoming) tournaments," Hyland added.

The TT team had an hour-long training session, in wet and chilly conditions, at the Iran Football Federation headquarters' training pitch in Tehran.

(Source: News Day)

Iran's participation at AFC Asian Cup at risk

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team could miss the 2019 AFC Asian Cup in January over a law interfering in the national soccer federation's independence.

The AFC said in a statement issued late Tuesday that they were "closely monitoring the current issues" and that the Iranian Football Federation (FFIRI) stressed that it was a non-governmental organization.



"All Member Associations must fulfil their duties without any third party interference either from the Government or the Parliament," said the statement.

"The AFC has a zero tolerance policy towards any third party interference in their Member Associations and hopes that, with less than two months to the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019, the FFIRI can maintain its independence and avoid any sanctions."

Football world governing body FIFA suspended Iran in November 2006 from participation in international football on the grounds of governmental interference in the national football association. The ban was lifted after less than a month.

The AFC says it hopes Iran's soccer body "can maintain its independence and avoid any sanctions" less than two months before the Asian Cup starts in the United Arab Emirates.

Iran, the best Asian team at No. 30 in FIFA's rankings, have been drawn with Yemen, Iraq and Vietnam.

Team Melli will open their campaign with a match against Yemen on Jan. 7 in Abu Dhabi.

Ex-Esteghlal defender Omranzadeh hangs up his boots

TASNIM — Former Esteghlal and Iran national football team defender Hanif Omranzadeh announced his retirement from football on Wednesday.

He has retired at the age of 33.

Omranzadeh made 299 professional appearances, scoring 31 goals. He played for six Iranian clubs.

He won Iran's Hazfi Cup with Esteghlal in 2012 and claimed the title of Iran Professional League with the same team one year later.

Hanif Omranzadeh played four times for Iran national football team from 2010 to 2011.

He was called up by Afshin Ghotbi for the final three matches in 2010 FIFA World Cup qualification but did not play any match. He made his debut on September 7, 2010 against Korea Republic.

Iran to build football camps in Kish to prepare for co-hosting 2022 World Cup

MNA — The project of building football camps in Kish Island will start soon as a step to prepare the region for a probable co-hosting of 2022 Qatar World Cup, said sports director of Kish Free Zone Organization Bahram Afsharzadeh.

The project of building football camps will soon begin, he told Mehr News Agency, adding that such camps should be standard and equipped enough to gain verification of FIFA.

"We have reached agreements with sponsors regarding the required constructions in Kish Island. Contracts will be signed next week to officially start our measures for cooperation with Qatar."

Five or six fully equipped football training camps will be built on the island and their spaces have been determined, he added.

Asked about the possibility of holding World Cup matches in the island, Afsharzadeh said that this will certainly not happen, adding, "we can cooperate with Qatar in areas except the official World Cup matches."

Qatar is considering offers from other countries to host teams during the 2022 World Cup, but no decision has been taken yet, the head of the organizing committee Hassan Al Thawadi told AFP on Monday, Tehran Times reported.

It seems that if FIFA verifies the plan to increase the number of participating team in the World Cup from 32 to 48, the co-hosting of other countries in the event will be more probable.

The close distance between Kish Island and Qatar, recent political disagreements between Qatar and other Persian Gulf states, and identical weather conditions of the two regions are among main reasons which increase the chance of Kish's partnership in 2022 World Cup.

Iran wrestler grabs bronze at U23 Greco-Roman World Champs

IRNA — Iranian wrestler Ali Akbar Yousefi received a bronze medal in the 2018 U23 Rosters Greco-Roman World Championships which is underway in Romania.

The event will be underway until November 19 in Bucharest. Yousefi in the weight category of 130kg was overpowered by Georgian rival in the second round.

He hit Belarusian wrestler 9-0 and advanced to qualifiers match.

In qualifiers stage, he overshadowed Finnish representative and snatched a bronze medal.

This will be the second such event; 2017's running of the U23 Worlds was the first, and while a good number of athletes who performed well last year have "aged out", there are still plenty of others coming back for more.

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Ali Asgari

■ Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com

» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450

» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807

» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603

» www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433

» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com

» Printed at: Rooztab - ISSN: 1017-94

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.o. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713

Abbas Salehi to attend St. Petersburg Intl. Cultural Forum

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Embassy of Iran in Moscow announced on Wednesday that the Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Abbas Salehi, will attend the 7th edition of the St. Petersburg International Cultural Forum.



Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Abbas Salehi.

He will also pay a visit to the State Hermitage Museum and hold meetings with a number of Russian cultural officials, including Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky.

The forum is organized by the government of St. Petersburg with the support of Russia's Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Foreign Affairs to preserve and develop Russian culture, support cultural initiatives at the regional, federal and international levels, and develop international cooperation in the field of culture.

Several thousand cultural experts, actors, filmmakers, musicians, public figures, representatives of government and business, and academics from all over the world will attend the forum, which will be held in the Russian city from November 15 to 17.

“Reza” to compete in Belfort Entrevues filmfest

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Alireza Motamedi's film "Reza" will be screened in the official competition of the 33rd Belfort Entrevues International Film Festival in France.



Alireza Motamedi and Sahar Dowlatshahi act in a scene from "Reza".

The film tells the story of a divorced man named Reza who is trying to adapt to his new life after a divorce while he finds a new romance.

The festival will be held in Belfort from November 17 to 25.

Spotify launches in the Middle East and North Africa

DUBAI (Reuters) — Spotify, the world's most popular paid music streaming service, officially launched in the Middle East and North Africa on Tuesday.

The company said services would now be available in 13 Arab markets, including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Morocco but not Libya, Iraq, Syria, or Yemen.

Spotify has been unofficially available in the Middle East for several years via accounts usually registered in other markets such as Europe.

Claudius Boller, who previously worked in the region with Universal Music Group, is Spotify's managing director for the Middle East and Africa.

Boller told Reuters Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Egypt, and Morocco were expected to drive regional growth, pointing to the Middle East's youthful population and high smartphone penetration.

Spotify will charge per month for its premium service 19.99 riyals (\$5.33) in Saudi Arabia, 19.99 dirhams (\$5.44) in the UAE, 49.99 Egyptian pounds (\$2.8) in Egypt, and \$4.99 elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa. Its free service is also now available in the region.

Spotify also added the Palestinian territories on Tuesday. Its services have been available in Israel since March.

Spotify also launched its 'Arab hub' collection of playlists of Arab music on Wednesday.

The Swedish company, founded in 2008, listed on the New York Stock Exchange in April. Before the launch in the Middle East and North Africa, Spotify's music streaming services were available in 65 markets, according to its website.

Canada’s “Fauve” named best at Tehran short film festival

1 → Speaking during the awards ceremony of the event, IYCS director Sadeq Musavi called the TISFF the most important festival in the Middle East and said, "The festival derives its prestige from its art and technical capability."

COI director Mohammad-Mehdi Heidarian also attended the ceremony. In an address to Iranian filmmakers, he said, "With you there would be no concern about the cultural life of this society."

"With you, there will be good days for Iran and no one can isolate Iran," he added.

The award for best experimental film in the international competition went to "Edge of Alchemy" by American director Stacey Steers.

"And What Is the Summer Saying" by Indian director Payal Kapadia won the award for best documentary, while "Agouro", a co-production between Portugal and France directed by David Doutel and Vasco Sá was named best animated film.

"Weekends", an animated movie by Trevor Jimenez from America, received an honorable mention, and "Dolly" by Iranian director Ali Delkari won the UNICEF Award.

In the national completion, the Grand Prix was presented to "In Between" by Aliyar Rasti. The film is about Rana, a woman who is under investigation for a crime.

"Dissect" by Siavash Shahabi about a police investigation into the sudden death of a schoolchild won the special jury award.

The jury also honored directors in four



Canadian director J  r  my Comte's drama "Fauve" won the award for best fiction at the 35th Tehran International Short Film Festival.

categories: animation, fiction, experimental and documentary.

The award for best director in the fiction section was presented to Sogol Rezvani for "Reverence", about a relationship between

Rana and Bahram, two thespians who are working on a theatrical project.

Puya Razi was named best director for his experimental short "Not Being" and Sadeq Javadi was selected as best director

for his animated movie, "The Fox".

Sajjad Imani and Mostafa Fakhari shared the award for best director in the documentary competition for "Joker" and "Dolls Story" respectively.

Resistance festival unveils doc lineup

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — The 15th International Resistance Film Festival (IRFF) announced the lineup for the documentary competition on Wednesday.

Twenty-two films, 13 of which are from foreign filmmakers, will be screened in the category.

Among the highlights is "Khashoggi Is Not Alone" from a Saudi Arabian filmmaker who did not reveal his/her name to the organizers of the festival for security reasons.

The film is about the adverse condition facing journalists in Saudi Arabia.

"I Am Rohingya: A Genocide in Four Acts" by Yusuf Zine from Canada will also be screened. The documentary is about refugee youths who take to the stage to depict their families' harrowing experiences during the Burmese genocide of Rohingya Muslims.

"The Occupation of the American Mind" by Loretta Alper and Jeremy Earp from America is also in the lineup. Israel's ongoing military occupation of Palestinian territory and repeated



"The Occupation of the American Mind" by Loretta Alper and Jeremy Earp from America will be screened in 15th International Resistance Film Festival in Tehran.

invasions of the Gaza strip have triggered a fierce backlash against Israeli policies virtually everywhere in the world — except the United States. "The Occupation of the American Mind" takes an eye-opening look at this critical exception, zeroing in on pro-Israel public relations efforts within the US.

Australian filmmaker John Pilger's "The Coming War on China" and American documentarian Jeremy Williams' "On a Knife Edge" will also compete in the festival, which will take place in Tehran from November 26 to December 1.

Some documentaries by Iranian filmmakers will also be screened in this section.

Among the films is "Fire and Pomegranates", Heidar Bani-Hamzeh's documentary about the Azerbaijani Shia center of Nardaran.

Reza Farahmand's acclaimed documentary "Women with Gunpowder Earrings" about Nur, a female journalist who covers stories about Syrian and Iraqi women and children in the war against the ISIS terrorists will also be screened.

Aretha Franklin’s “Amazing Grace” concert film finally debuts



BET honoree singer Aretha Franklin performs onstage at BET Honors 2014 at Warner Theatre in Washington on February 8, 2014. (Reuters/Jose Luis Magana)

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Three months after her death and 46 years after she first recorded it, Aretha Franklin's live gospel concert is coming to the big screen.

"Amazing Grace", filmed in January 1972 when the Queen of Soul was just 29 years old, follows Franklin over two nights giving a concert at the New Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles.

Belted out gospel songs like "What a Friend We Have in Jesus", "Climbing Higher Mountains" and an 11-minute version of "Amazing Grace", Franklin brought churchgoers and guests (including Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger) to their feet.

But Franklin herself stands still, saying little in the 90-minute film.

"It's a church service. It's basically just our aunt standing there singing," Sabrina Owens, Franklin's niece and executor of her estate, told Reuters Television.

"She doesn't have much conversation with anybody beyond some of the technical crews that's around her. At some point she asked about a key and other point she asked about water, but she's just basically standing there singing, giving her all, doing

what she does best," said Owens, who is also a producer on the film.

The service was released as an album in 1972, becoming a bestseller for Franklin. But the film languished for years over problems with synchronizing the visuals and the audio. Advances in technology made it possible to fix that issue and producer Alan Elliott, who took over the project some 10 years ago, got agreement from Franklin's estate following the singer's death in August to finally release the film.

Owens said Elliott told her about the film some three years ago. "I had never even heard about it and he sent me the link, and I was like, 'Oh wow! This is really good.'"

"Amazing Grace" got its world premiere in New York on Monday, winning warm reviews, and will get a limited release in the city and in Los Angeles in late November and early December, making it eligible for Hollywood's awards season.

Britain's Guardian newspaper said the film is "a spine-tingling sensation" while the Hollywood Reporter called it "somewhat shapeless as a movie... But it does contain moments of bliss."

Harry Winston jeweler buys “Pink Legacy” diamond for record \$50 million: Christie’s



A Christie's staff holds a 18.96 carat Fancy Vivid Pink Diamond during a preview in Geneva, November 8, 2018. (Reuters/Denis Balibouse)

GENEVA (Reuters) — The "Pink Legacy", a diamond weighing just under 19 carats, fetched a record 50.375 million Swiss francs (\$50 million), purchased by U.S.-based luxury jeweler Harry Winston, Christie's said on Tuesday.

Harry Winston, owned by Swatch whose CEO is Nayla Hayek, daughter of the late Swatch founder Nicolas Hayek, promptly renamed it "The Winston Pink Legacy", adding it to its collection of rare jewels, the auction house said.

The semi-annual Geneva jewelry sale netted \$110 million, with 86 percent of lots finding new owners, including 11 that brought more than \$1 million, Francois Curiel, chairman of Christie's luxury group told reporters.

"The Pink Legacy brought this extremely high price of \$50 million, so \$2.6 million per carat which is a world record price for a pink diamond," Curiel, who is also a jewel expert, said. "This stone for me is the Leonardo Da Vinci of diamonds, I don't think there is anything better."

Graded "vivid", the highest rating for a pink diamond's color, the gem is internally pure with a rectangular cut, and mounted

on a platinum ring.

Once owned by the Oppenheimer Family, who built De Beers into the world's biggest diamond trader, the diamond had a pre-sale estimate of \$30 to \$50 million. The identity of the seller was not disclosed.

Vivid colored diamonds are the most strongly saturated gems, displaying the optimum hue of the stone. Most pink diamonds of this color weigh less than one carat, the auction house said.

There were at least five people bidding by phone for the pink stone, but the winning bidder was a Harry Winston representative sitting in the front row, Curiel said.

An important Asian collector was the direct under-bidder, Rahul Kadakia, international head of Jewelry at Christie's told reporters.

"The stone is now going to be known as Pink Legacy Diamond which Mrs. Hayek is thrilled to own. In 2013 they made their first important purchase after acquiring Winston, which was the 101 carat 'D' flawless diamond, which they named the Winston Legacy. With that stone they started the Legacy collection," he said.

Final season of “Game of Thrones” to premiere in April

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — HBO's hit Emmy-winning drama "Game of Thrones" will debut its eighth and final season starting in April, the network announced in a trailer released online on Tuesday.

The video featured footage from previous seasons of the costly battles that preceded the coming showdown for control of the fictional kingdom of Westeros. The network did not reveal a specific date for the final season's premiere,

which will run for six episodes.

"Game of Thrones", which has won multiple Emmy awards, is HBO's biggest hit ever with some 30 million viewers in the United States and an army of devoted fans worldwide.

The series is based on novels by George R.R. Martin in a series called "A Song of Ice and Fire".

HBO, the premium cable network owned by AT&T Inc (T.N), plans to put a large physical and social-media

marketing effort behind the upcoming season. Starting Nov. 27, promotions will be spread throughout New York's Grand Central Station, and 250,000 "Game of Thrones" mass transit MetroCards will be issued.

Several spinoffs of the series are in the works. HBO said in June that it had given a pilot order to a prequel that will take place thousands of years before the events of the current series.