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Rouhani: Iran won't yield to economic war

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that Iranians will not surrender to those who have started economic war on the country. "We will not raise our hands [for surrender] to those who have imposed economic war on us. We will fulfil our national duty and continue our path," he told thousands of well-wishers in Khoy, West Azerbaijan Province.

He noted that the enemies have started economic and psychological war against Iran. "They think we will surrender under the pressure. Our great people should know that we have been committed to our obligations under the agreements. We have been committed based on the Islamic culture. We did not initiate the economic war. They have done this [economic war] because of defeats in the region," the president remarked. **→2**

Iran, EU joint conference on agro-food co-op running in Tehran

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — A Joint development of agricultural cooperation, standards and agro-food trade between Iran and the European Union kicked off in Tehran on Monday, IRNA reported. Attended by over 300 officials from both the European Union and Iranian ministries of agriculture; health and medical education; as well as industry, mines and

trade, the two-day conference is focusing on developing standards for agricultural and food products, removing barriers in the way of exports and strengthening trade relations between the two sides. Speaking in the event, the Director General of the Office of International Affairs at Iran's Ministry of Agriculture, Houman Fathi, mentioned the country's potentials and capabilities in agro-food sector saying. **→4**

Europeans still unable to announce SPV, diplomat laments

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said on Monday that the Europeans are not still able to announce the so-called special purpose vehicle (SPV) because of the U.S. pressure. SPV is a European Union's initiative intended to protect trade with Iran against newly reimposed U.S. sanctions.

"The U.S. exerts pressure to prevent formation of the SPV and to cut cooperation between Iran and Europe," the senior diplomat said during a speech at Allameh Tabataba'i University. He noted that no European country has so far accepted to host the SPV for fear of U.S. punishment. **→2**

Trump seems to have no concept of a multipolar world: Jahanpour

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Farhang Jahanpour, part-time tutor on Middle Eastern affairs in the Department of Continuing Education, University of Oxford, and a member of Kellogg College says that The main reason for the idea of forming a joint European army "has been President Trump's unilateral and ultra-nationalist approach that puts America first and, by implication, ignores the interests of other countries and tries to impose his views on them."

Former Senior Research Scholar at Harvard adds that "He seems to have no concept of a multipolar world and he wishes to rule other countries like a global hegemon, in the same

way that he is trying to establish an imperial presidency at home."

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ The idea of forming a joint European army is not a new idea, but in recent days, with the comments of French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel and the reaction of Trump, it has assumed a new dimension. What are the reasons for the progress of this project by countries such as France and Germany?

A: The main reason for the European unease about the latest developments has been President Trump's unilateral and ultra-nationalist approach that puts America first and, by implication, ignores the interests of other countries and tries to impose his views on them. He seems to have

no concept of a multipolar world and he wishes to rule other countries like a global hegemon, in the same way that he is trying to establish an imperial presidency at home. However, most countries of the world are reacting to that arrogant attitude and want to move towards a multipolar world based on the rule of law and respect for international treaties.

Trump has withdrawn the United States from the landmark Paris Climate Accord that, in view of the rapid pace of global warming, many countries take very seriously. He withdrew the United States from the nuclear agreement with Iran, despite the fact that it was the result of two years of intense negotiations between seven countries, and was unanimously approved by the EU and the Security Council Resolution 2231. **→7**

'Popular sentiment in Pakistan remains sympathetic to Tehran'

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

TEHRAN — Imran Khan led government in Pakistan has been in talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to tide over an economic crisis. It has also approached its allies China and Saudi Arabia for funds, which has however raised a few eyebrows at home. It remains to be seen whether Khan will be able to resuscitate the flailing economy without compromising on country's independent foreign policy and whether he will be able to strike a delicate balance in relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran.

Farrukh K Pitafi is an Islamabad based senior journalist, political analyst and talk show host. With over 20 years of television and print journalism, he is known for his distinct voice on global and local policy issues. In an interview to Tehran Times, Mr. Pitafi speaks about Pa-

kistan's economic crisis, and Imran Khan-led government's foreign policy issues.

Following are the excerpts:

■ Imran Khan has inherited a flailing economy that needs to be revived with funds. Do you believe Khan will be able to tide through this economic crisis?

A: Pakistan is no stranger to economic crises. We have endured many in the past and have always survived them. This too will pass. But history is no excuse for the lack of progress on the economic front. Two economic powerhouses that sit next to Pakistan, China and India, achieved their success in past few decades right before our eyes. So the country has to take a serious look at what ails its economy.

Immediately after assuming the office of

Prime Minister Imran Khan constituted a set of taskforces meant to fix the country's ailing economy. These taskforces include a taskforce on restructuring of civil service, one on austerity and restructuring of government, another on telecommunication. As the country's priority is macroeconomic stabilization this is a good call to cut wasteful expenditures. Once that is achieved government can look at long term measures.

So far PM Khan's cabinet choices, team building and list of priorities gives me hope that he can deliver on economy.

■ After his second visit to Riyadh since taking over as the PM, Khan said he was sad about the Jamal Khashoggi incident but Pakistan was 'desperate' for funds. How would you decode these words? **→6**



PERSPECTIVE

Mahmood Monshipouri
Francisco State University
and the University of
California, Berkeley

A real European army: A naive or prudent idea?

A new strategic debate has engulfed not only the European continent but also other great powers across the globe. The idea of an EU collective defense, now dubbed as "an integrated EU military" is not new—as it has in the past been briefly mentioned by Silvio Berlusconi when he was the Italian prime minister, but more recently, by Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker.

Today, however, the idea of European Army has been resurrected in response to the Trump administration's decision to double down on its criticism of the EU members that have failed to adequately fulfill their burden sharing obligations insofar as their financial contributions to NATO are concerned. Trump's decision to withdraw from the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty has also provoked such a reaction from both France and Germany.

Considering the old Franco-German competition and the upcoming European elections, it should come as no surprise that this idea, considered "naïve" by some and "prudent" by others, has defied a strong and persistent consensus among the EU members. The lack of consensus springs from differing threat perceptions (terrorism, the refugee crisis, failed states, border security, a resurgent Russia, etc.) among the EU member states. Yet, the timing of revisiting this idea has to do with the fact that the EU political elite feel that Europe can no longer count on the United States to fulfill its mutual defense obligations.

The EU member states have often found themselves on the opposite side of the United States, China, and Russia on several issues. Most notably, the EU countries' decision to support the Iran nuclear deal pitted them against the U.S. position to withdraw from it. French President Emmanuel Macron has recently noted that Europe needed "a real European Army" to protect itself from China, Russia and the United States amid growing dangers from cyber-hacking, meddling in various countries' electoral processes, and the U.S. decision to withdraw from a missile treaty. **→7**



ARTICLE

Syed Zafar Mehdi
Journalist
from New Delhi

Why no global outcry over Saudi war in Yemen?

On Sunday, the U.S. intelligence agency confirmed that the brazen killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was ordered by the Saudi crown prince Mohammad Bin Salman, which must have finally given some comfort to his restless soul. The truth was not hidden from the world, as it was already established by the Turkish authorities, but now we have the word straight from the horse's mouth.

Khashoggi's killing led to unprecedented global outcry against the Saudi regime because of its wanton disregard for human rights. It dominated newspaper headlines and primetime TV discussions for weeks as the mystery surrounding the dissident journalist's killing grew.

To their credit, Turkish government authorities left no stone unturned to unravel the murder mystery and expose the masterstrokes of the most diabolical crime. The whole world waited with bated breath because suddenly something had stirred people's conscience.

Today everyone knows about Khashoggi and everyone knows his murderer. Everyone is talking about it and tweeting about it. But, hold on, this is not the only crime his murderer has committed. His murderer has the blood of thousands of Yemenis on his hands and he is directly responsible for the starvation of millions of people in Yemen. Does the world know about it? Does it care?

A much-anticipated UN Security Council resolution calling for a cessation of Saudi-led war in Yemen and for the humanitarian aid to be allowed to reach millions of starving people was reportedly "stalled" this week after British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, who had moved the resolution, met the Saudi crown prince in Riyadh.

The prince, reports say, 'threw a fit' about the resolution. He didn't like the idea of food reaching the starving Yemenis because he wishes to see them killed either through bombardment or with starvation. Hunt surrendered tamely because U.K. happens to have arms trade with the Saudi regime. **→6**



© IRNA/ Saeed Kazem Younesi

Presidential advisor meets minority representatives in Urmia

TEHRAN — Ali Younesi, President Hassan Rouhani's advisor on minority affairs, met with the representatives of religious minorities in Urmia, West Azarbaijan province, on Sunday evening. Besides the majority Shias, West Azarbaijan is home to Sunni Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians. Iran is internationally famous for peaceful coexistence of religious minorities, a legacy dating back to ancient Iran.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Nasirzadeh, Gheibparvar seek to boost IRIAF-Basij ties

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Chief of the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) Aziz Nasirzadeh met on Monday with commander of the Basij Organization Qolamhossein Gheibparvar to boost cooperation between the organizations under their leadership.

Nasirzadeh lauded Basij for its role in defending the ideals and values of the Islamic Revolution, saying his meeting was aimed to boost cooperation and establish synergy between the two forces, Mehr reported.

Gheibparvar, for his part, expressed satisfaction about the meeting, saying his forces are ready to achieve the goals set by the two sides.



Tehran backs UN peace efforts in Afghanistan

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Monday voiced Iran's readiness to help the UN efforts to establish peace in Afghanistan, Fars reported.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to cooperate with the UN in all areas on Afghanistan and it strongly supports peace initiatives in the country," Zarif said in a meeting with Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN special representative for Afghanistan, in Tehran on Monday afternoon.

Tadamichi, for his part, appreciated Iran for its supports for peace and stability in Afghanistan, urging Iran to continue its constructive role by participating in the Geneva conference on Afghanistan.



Pirouz Hanachi named caretaker Tehran mayor

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — On Sunday, the Tehran city council named Pirouz Hanachi as the caretaker mayor of Tehran, Mehr news agency reported.

The 21-member council elected Pirouz Hanachi as Tehran's new mayor on November 13, however, he can officially take office once the Interior Ministry approves his appointment.

Until the time comes he will serve as the acting mayor of Tehran.

Hanachi replaced Mohammad Ali Afshani, who had to give up office as per a newly adopted law bans employment of the retired.



Official calls for Iran-Turkey co-op in combatting smuggling

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Deputy Interior Minister Hossein Zolfagari on Monday underlined the need for intelligence sharing between Iran and Turkey to combat smuggling and terrorism.

Zolfagari made the remarks in a meeting with his Turkish counterpart Muhterem Ince, who arrived in Tehran earlier on Monday.

"Iran and Turkey had very good achievements in fighting terrorism. The two countries have acted well in the face of security threats and a good regional progress has been made that if the trend continues, there will be more stability and peace in the region," he said, IRNA reported.



'Fighting narcotics is a global responsibility'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Kazem Gharib Abadi, Iran's representative to the Vienna-based international organizations, has expressed regret over the lack of international cooperation in fighting narcotics, saying the fight against drugs is a global responsibility.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran has so far paid a heavy financial and human price in this path, including the martyrdom of more than 4,000 of its police forces," Gharib Abadi, Mehr reported on Monday.

He further said Iran is at the forefront of fighting narcotics, adding that the Islamic Republic will not tolerate moves by certain countries to undermine the international conventions on fighting narcotics.



Despite Iran sanctions, China stays loyal: Al Jazeera

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Business might have slowed in Iran due to the U.S.-imposed sanctions, but many Chinese businesses are taking the long view and are determined to weather the storm, Al Jazeera reported on Sunday.

With commercial ties dating back to the ancient Silk Road, many Chinese companies have said that they will still find a way to do business in Iran, despite the threat of U.S. punitive actions.

According to the network, Chinese businesses still see Iran as a resource-rich country with a large population.

Aggressive U.S. actions may actually be strengthening Sino-Persian relations; the two ancient civilizations seem set to endure the hardships together.

European banking mechanism not progressing well, Tehran complains

By Mohammad Homaeefar

TEHRAN — Tehran says the European Union's efforts to establish a banking channel with Iran is not progressing well, calling on the three European parties to the 2015 nuclear agreement to honor their commitments to salvage the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"We hope Europe will deliver on what it had promised. This is an internal issue of Europe and we still hope these three European countries will show their true power and find their rightful place," Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said at a press conference on Monday.

Qassemi said there are still ambiguities with regard to the implementation of the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), which has been designed to conduct banking transactions with Iran, but "none of the issues indicate that it won't be achievable."

"As the Leader of Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei rightly put it, we will negotiate with the Europeans, but we will not wait [long] for them, and we will pursue the economic issues of the country with proper domestic planning and relying on internal capacity," he remarked.

"If we realize that the European side



is not capable of establishing a financial mechanism, we have our own instruments, but for the time being, we hope that the issue will be resolved soon,"

Qassemi added.

What is important, he continued, is that "we proved to the world that we are committed to our obligations and that

Iran has made due decisions to return to pre-JCPOA status: Shamkhani

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, announced on Monday Iran has made due decisions to return to the pre-JCPOA status.

Shamkhani made the remarks in a meeting with the visiting British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt in Tehran.

Shamkhani said the decisions have been made in response to the inactivity of the remaining parties to the nuclear deal after the U.S. withdrew from it.

"In view of the passiveness of the other parties in the face of the unseemly language and behavior of the United States, the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on its own national interests and responsibilities, has adopted necessary decisions to return to the pre-agreement status," Shamkhani asserted.



Jeremy Hunt (L) meets Ali Shamkhani in Tehran (IRNA photo).

Hunt meets Zarif amid Trump spat

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — In what appears to be the UK's turning a cold shoulder to U.S. President Donald Trump, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt on Monday traveled to Tehran for talks with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Last Friday, Trump lashed out at Prime Minister Theresa May over the UK's Iran ties after she phoned him to congratulate him on the Republican Party's showing in the midterm elections.

According to IRNA, Hunt and Zarif sat down for talks on a special payment system devised by the EU to keep Iran paid for

trade as Trump has reimposed sanctions on Tehran in defiance of the 2015 deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Secretary Hunt is the first Western official of his rank to visit Iran since the United States — formerly a party to the Iran nuclear deal — unilaterally withdrew from the agreement in May.

The Trump administration had been hoping to get the other parties to the deal with Iran to likewise scrap the deal. Instead, they have stressed that not only will they stick to the agreement but that they will also work to sustain it in the face

of increased U.S. pressure.

As Trump intensified his sanctions on Iran on November 4, the EU introduced the payment system, known as the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), to bypass the sanctions and ensure Iran is compensated for the U.S. withdrawal.

In a statement ahead of his visit to Tehran, Hunt called the nuclear deal "a vital component of stability in the Middle East."

"It (the nuclear deal) needs 100 percent compliance though to survive," the British foreign secretary stressed, according to Reuters. "We will stick to our side of the

bargain as long as Iran does."

According to IRNA, the chief Iranian and British diplomats also discussed the ongoing war in Yemen as well as a range of other security issues in the Middle East.

In the meantime, the Guardian reported that Hunt had an agenda to make a personal appeal for the release of the Iranian-British dual-national Nazanin Zaghari-Ratliffe on humanitarian grounds.

Zaghari-Ratliffe is in custody in Iran on espionage charges. She was arrested in April 2016 and found guilty of spying and given a five-year jail sentence.

Rouhani: Iran won't yield to economic war

1 → Rouhani was openly referring to Iran's commitment to the 2015 nuclear deal according to which Iran accepted to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

The deal went into effect in January 2016.

The International Atomic Energy Agency, which is tasked to monitor Iran's adherence to the nuclear agreement, has issued 13 reports each time confirming Iran's commitment to the agreement.

■ Iran will sell its oil: Rouhani

Elsewhere, Rouhani said that Iran will sell its oil and will also strengthen relations its neighbors.

"The U.S. is not able to weaken the Iranians' relations with Iraq and Turkey. We are all Muslims and stand beside each other," he added.

He also said that the whole world, except for two or three countries, are against the U.S. "cruel pressure"



against Iranians.

"Even the Europeans, who are dependent on the U.S.

in security and economy, has stood against the U.S. and condemned the White House. All our neighbors, except for one or two, have condemned the U.S. This is the first time in the history of the U.S. that the whole world has stood against this country. This country is now isolated and alone," he said.

In May, U.S. President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew Washington from the multilateral 2015 nuclear deal and ordered sanctions on Iran. The first round of sanctions went into force on August 6 and the second round, which targets Iran's oil exports and banks, were announced on November 4.

Writing an article in The Guardian on Friday, Richard Dalton, the former British ambassador to Tehran, said Trump's "economic war on Iran is doomed to failure".

He said, "With demand for Iranian oil holding firm and no international support for sanctions, the U.S. harsh approach has no future."

Europeans still unable to announce SPV, diplomat laments

1 → "The Europeans negotiated with Austria for 20 days and the country did not accept. Luxembourgish heads have said that they have not talked about the issue. Even if they talk, they will not accept the mechanisms and in this situation, Europe is unable to announce the SPV," he stated.

■ 'Six months have been enough time for Europeans to prepare mechanism to trade with Iran'

Araqchi went on to say that six months have passed since the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the 2015 nuclear agreement but since that time Europeans have not been able to find a practical way to save the agreement.

However, he said, the Europeans have adopted a good political position in this regard.

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

"The Europeans should keep the JCPOA and be ready to pay the price," Araqchi says.

doing "legitimate" business with Tehran.

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

Araqchi said, "The European countries and remaining members to the JCPOA [the official name for the nuclear agreement] have the consensus to keep the agreement, but the current situation cannot continue. In this situation, the Europeans should keep the JCPOA and be ready to pay the price. In fact, if they think that the JCPOA

is important for their sovereignty, they should be ready to pay the price."

He noted that Europe will be discredited if it does not counter the U.S. unilateralism.

"Europe should not forget that the JCPOA is a security deal and not just an economic one. Europe can give it a try if it thinks that West Asia is safer without the JCPOA," the top diplomat warned.

■ 'Iran will not give in to sanctions'

Araqchi also said that Iran will not give in to the U.S. sanctions and pressure.

"Europe should not forget that the JCPOA is a security deal and not just an economic one. Europe can give it a try if it thinks that West Asia is safer without the JCPOA," the top diplomat warns.



"Nobody in Iran will raise hands [in surrender] because of sanctions," he asserted.

The U.S. re-imposed the first round of sanctions on August 6 and the second round, which targets Iran's oil exports and banks, were snapped back on November 4.

President Hassan Rouhani also told a large group of people in West Azarbaijan Province that Iran will not submit to the United States' economic and psychological pressure.

17 years into Afghanistan War, U.S. admits 'Taliban not losing'

Taliban say no pact struck with U.S. over deadline to end Afghan war

The top U.S. military officer has admitted that the Taliban "are not losing" in Afghanistan and much more needs to be done to bring peace to the war-torn country 17 years into the longest war in American history.

"They are not losing right now, I think that is fair to say," General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said of the Taliban during a discussion at a security forum in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on Sunday. "We used the term stalemate a year ago and, relatively speaking, it has not changed much."

The top U.S. military officer said while there was no "military solution" to peace in Afghanistan, Washington and its allies in the NATO military alliance were trying to use all their military, political and economic potentials in a bid to convince the Taliban that it was time to come to the negotiation table.

"Without going into detail here, we do believe the Taliban know that at some point they do have to reconcile," he said. "The key to success is to combine all that pressure to incentivize the Taliban" to negotiate.

The commander said reconciliation was still too far-fetched, conceding that "we are a long way" from that stage.

Despite Dunford's claims that Washington sees no military solution, U.S. President Donald Trump's strategy for the long-running war revolves around bringing more troops and use them to force a political resolution to militant groups. The new strategy, unveiled last year, announced an increase in U.S. troop levels, bringing the total number of foreign foot soldiers in the country to about 14,000.

The U.S. State Department has named former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad as its special representative for Afghanistan reconciliation process.

Khalilzad has traveled to the region to meet national government officials and the Taliban to try and jump-start a dialogue. But progress has proven elusive.

No pact struck with U.S. over deadline to end Afghan war

A three-day meeting between the Taliban and the U.S. special envoy for Afghanistan



to pave the way for peace talks ended with no agreement, the militant group said a day after the diplomat declared a deadline of April 2019 to end a 17-year-long war.

Afghanistan's security situation has worsened since NATO formally ended combat operations in 2014, as Taliban insurgents battle to reimpose strict Islamic law following their overthrow in 2001 at the hands of U.S.-led troops. Leaders of the hardline Islamist group met U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad at their political headquarters in Qatar last week for the second time in the past month, said spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid.

"These were preliminary talks and no agreement was reached on any issue," he said in a statement on Monday.

Taliban leaders had not accepted any deadline set by the U.S. to wrap up talks, three Taliban officials added.

The U.S. embassy in Kabul declined to comment.

Khalilzad, an Afghan-born US diplomat authorized by U.S. President Donald Trump's government to lead peace negotiations with the Taliban, on Sunday said he hoped to cut

a peace deal with the group by April 20.

That deadline coincides with the date set for presidential elections in Afghanistan.

Two senior U.S. officials confirmed that the second round of peace talks ended last week and the Taliban expected Khalilzad to visit Qatar for a meeting before the end of 2018.

"The second round of talks went on for three days. This clearly proves that both sides are exercising patience and caution during their diplomatic engagement," a U.S. official said on condition of anonymity.

But Khalilzad's public statement that the Taliban believe they will "not win militarily" angered senior members of the group, who warned U.S. officials against mixed messages that could muddle the peace process.

"We were astonished to see Khalilzad's statement in Kabul on Sunday. He wrongly quoted us, saying that the Taliban admitted that militarily we would not succeed," said a senior Taliban member in Afghanistan.

Another senior member said Khalilzad's strategy to declare a deadline showed how desperate the U.S. was to withdraw foreign forces. "Taliban leaders have not agreed to

any deadline because we are winning on all fronts," he added. The Taliban "are not losing" in Afghanistan, Gen. Joseph Dunford, the top U.S. military officer, said last week.

"We used the term stalemate a year ago and, relatively speaking, it has not changed much," he told a security forum.

The NATO-led Resolute Support mission involves 41 nations contributing more than 12,000 soldiers, equipment and training for Afghan forces. The Taliban have strengthened their grip over the past three years, with the government in Kabul controlling just 56 percent of the country, down from 72 percent in 2015, a U.S. government report showed this month.

Diplomats and political analysts in Kabul have labeled Khalilzad a man "in hurry" who must include Afghan politicians and officials from neighboring countries such as Pakistan and Iran before the third round of talks.

"Khalilzad's hasty approach could lead to an epic disaster," said a senior Western diplomat in Kabul. "The Taliban would trust him only if he did not speak on their behalf."

(Source: agencies)

Germany bars 18 Saudis over Khashoggi murder

Germany will bar 18 Saudis from entering its territory and Europe's passport-free Schengen zone over their alleged links to the murder of Jamal Khashoggi, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said Monday.

Maas said the move was "coordinated very closely with" states France and Britain and the broader European Union as they seek more information about Khashoggi's death last month in the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul.

Berlin has "decided that Germany should impose an entry ban on 18 Saudi citizens who are presumed to be in connection with this deed, in the Schengen information system," Maas told reporters. "We are in close coordination on this issue within the European Union," he said, speaking on the sidelines of a meeting of EU ministers in Brussels.

"Over the weekend, we stated that we expected further steps to be taken to clarify the situation. We will follow [up] on this closely and reserve further steps for ourselves."

The Schengen zone is composed of 22 EU nations and four non-EU countries. EU member Britain is not part of the zone but shares intelligence through Shengen Information



System (SIS) for law enforcement purposes.

Germany called last month for EU countries to follow its lead and suspend arms sales for the moment to Saudi Arabia, prompting a dismissive response from French President Emmanuel Macron. France is the kingdom's second-big-

gest customer, after India. Khashoggi, a columnist for The Washington Post who was critical of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman, was killed after going to the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul to retrieve documents necessary to marry his Turkish fiancée. According to Turkish officials, an audio recording proves that Khashoggi was deliberately killed and dismembered soon after entering the consulate.

Saudi Arabia has offered shifting accounts of what happened, initially saying Khashoggi left the embassy after receiving his documents and later that he was killed when an argument degenerated into a fistfight.

In the latest version, the Saudi prosecutor said a 15-member team went to Istanbul to bring Khashoggi back to the kingdom but killed him instead in a rogue operation.

The prosecutor exonerated the crown prince, after indicting 11 Saudis and sacking five officials, including two members of Prince Mohammad's inner circle.

The United States, traditionally Riyadh's closest ally, has sanctioned 17 Saudis for the crime.

(Source: AFP)

Rain could hinder search for victims of California wildfire

The search for remains of victims of the devastating Northern California wildfire has taken on new urgency as rain in the forecast could complicate those efforts while also bringing relief to firefighters on the front lines.

Up to 400 people fanned out Sunday to search the ash and rubble where homes once stood before flames roared through the Sierra foothills town of Paradise and surrounding communities, killing at least 77 people in the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century.

Wearing white coveralls, hard hats and masks, teams of volunteers and search and rescue crews poked through the smoky debris for fragments of bone before rains can wash them away or turn loose, dry ash into a thick paste. The so-called Camp Fire has destroyed more than 10,500 homes.

A team of 10 volunteers, accompanied by a cadaver dog, went from house to house in the charred landscape. They scrutinized the rubble in five-minute sweeps, using sticks to move aside debris and focused on vehicles, bathtubs and what was left of mattresses.

When no remains were found, they spray-painted a large, orange "0" near the house and moved on.

Robert Panak, a volunteer on a team from Napa County, said he tried to picture the house before it burned and think where people might have hidden. His morning search was fruitless, but he wasn't deterred.

"I just think about the positives, bringing relief to the families, closure," Panak said.

Sheriff Kory Honea said it was within the "realm of possibility" that officials would never know the exact death toll from the blaze.



He also questioned whether the search for remains could be completed by midweek when rain is forecast.

"As much as I wish that we could get through all of this before the rains come, I don't know if that's possible," Honea said.

About 1,000 names remain on a list of people unaccounted for more than a week after the fire began in Butte County about 140 miles (225 kilometers) north of San Francisco, authorities said.

Authorities don't believe all those on the list are missing and the roster dropped by 300 on Sunday as more people were located

or got in touch to say they weren't missing.

On Sunday afternoon, more than 50 people gathered at a memorial for the victims at First Christian Church in Chico, where a banner on the altar read, "We will rise from the ashes."

People hugged and shed tears as Pastor Jesse Kearns recited a prayer for first firefighters, rescuers and search teams: "We ask for continued strength as they are growing weary right now."

Paul Stavish, who retired three months ago from a Silicon Valley computer job and moved to Paradise, placed a battery-powered

votive candle on the altar as a woman played piano and sang "Amazing Grace."

Stavish, his wife and three dogs managed to escape the fire, but the house is gone. He said he was thinking of the dead and also mourning the warm, tight-knit community.

"This is not just a few houses getting burned," he said. "The whole town is gone."

Hundreds of search and recovery personnel are involved in the effort, going to homes where they received tips that someone might have died.

But they are also doing a more comprehensive, "door-to-door" and "car-to-car" search of areas, said Joe Moses, a commander with the Monterey County Sheriff's Office, who is helping oversee the search and rescue effort.

The search area is huge, Moses said, with many structures that need to be checked.

The fire also burned many places to the ground, creating a landscape unique to many search-and-rescue personnel, he said.

"Here we're looking for very small parts and pieces, and so we have to be very diligent and systematic in how we do your searches," he said Friday.

The death count only grew by one Sunday and firefighters managed to expand containment to 65 percent of the 234 square mile (606 sq. kilometers) burn zone.

Rain was forecast for midweek in the Paradise area. The National Weather Service said the area could get 20 mph (32 kph) sustained winds and 40 mph (64 kph) gusts, which could make it hard for crews to keep making progress against the blaze.

(Source: AP)

Erdogan-Putin mark completion of offshore section of Turkish Stream



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Nov. 19 attended the completion ceremony of the offshore section of the Turkish Stream Project (TurkStream).

"For us, Russia is a friend we can have long term cooperation with and is an important natural gas supplier," the president said, speaking at the ceremony.

He identified that this project is one of the outcomes of a "tested friendship" throughout many years and said Turkey has never judged its relations with Russia over "impositions of other countries."

"Countries' decisions as to how to obtain natural gas in accordance with their own circumstances must be respected. Pressure, which will violate states' sovereign rights and prevent them from serving their citizens, will benefit no one," said Erdogan.

"I believe our solidarity with Putin and the Russian people will be foreshadowing of bigger projects," the president said.

The project has many advantages not only for Turkey, but also for the region and neighboring countries, he said.

"Turkish Stream is a project of historic proportions for our bilateral relations and for energy geopolitics in our region, on which we have exerted great efforts with our Russian friends," Erdogan said.

Putin, for his part, said the Turkish president had offered to name the pipeline "Turkish Stream" and added that the most difficult part of the project had been completed.

Such an important project would not be realized unless parties had confidence, the Russian president said. He thanked Erdogan for his "political will and courage" and the Turkish Parliament for immediate permission for Turkish Stream.

TurkStream and the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant will be symbols of the development of relations between Turkey and Russia, he said, noting that his country wants to reach a \$100 billion bilateral trade volume with Turkey.

The TurkStream will deliver Russian natural gas across the Black Sea to Turkey and then onto Europe.

Putin announced the plan to build Turkish Stream in Ankara in December 2014, as a replacement for the South Stream pipeline that was to have been built in cooperation with European Union countries.

South Stream was scrapped after years of planning, with Putin angrily blaming Brussels for its failure.

Gazprom began construction of the offshore section of the Turkish Stream in May 2017. The Turkish Stream project envisages the construction of two pipelines, each 939 kilometers long.

The first line will be designed for the Turkish market and will meet 35 percent of Turkey's natural gas consumption alone. The second is for gas supply to countries in southern and southeastern Europe. The capacity of each line is 15.75 billion cubic meters of gas per year. The first deliveries are scheduled for the end of 2019.

The progress on the construction of the second line will depend on from where Russian natural gas will enter Europe, the relevant natural gas agreements to be signed and the route. Two lines will have a total throughput capacity of 31.5 billion cubic meters of gas per year. The first stream of gas is expected to flow through the pipeline in December 2019.

Natural gas extracted from Novy Urengoy in the Yamalo-Nenets autonomous region in Russia's Siberia will feed the Turkish Stream pipeline. The field, operated by the Russian energy giant Gazprom, sits on an estimated natural gas reserve of 12 trillion cubic meters, the second largest in the world after Iran's Southern Pars field.

Natural gas produced in the field is also transferred to Germany, Poland, Austria, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.

A single gas field in Novy Urengoy, such as the 16th gas field, which employs 3,700 workers, can produce enough natural gas to meet Turkish Stream's annual 31.5 billion cubic meters of capacity.

(Source: Hurriyet)

Kremlin says Putin told Pence Russia did not meddle in U.S. election

Russian President Vladimir Putin told U.S. Vice President Mike Pence Russia had nothing to do with meddling in the 2016 U.S. election, Interfax reported on Monday, during discussions about an upcoming meeting between Putin and President Donald Trump.

Putin and Pence spoke in Singapore last week about key issues that could be discussed at the meeting between the two leaders, expected to take place at the G-20 summit in Argentina in late November, a Kremlin spokesman said.

Pence raised the issue of external meddling in the U.S. election but Putin told him that "the Russian state had nothing to do ... and can not have anything to do with meddling" in any electoral processes, Interfax quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying.

(Source: Reuters)

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	175816.5
IFX	1910.86

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	\$56.60/b
Brent	\$66.63b
OPEC Basket	\$65.28/b
Gold	\$1,221.10/oz
Silver	\$14.42/oz
Platinum	\$849.40/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Iran, EU joint conference on agro-food co-op running in Tehran

1 → “In the case of development of cooperation between Iran and the European Union, the production of livestock, poultry, fruits, vegetables and fisheries could double in the next 10 years.”

Deputy Minister of Agriculture for Commercial and Agricultural Industries Ali Akbar Mehrfard also pointed to Iran's agriculture and livestock production levels noting, "Annually, 122 tons of agricultural products are produced in Iran, including 15-16 tons of protein products, 22 million tons of fruits and vegetables, 2 million tons of fisheries, and 82 million tons of crops."



Putting the Iran-EU trade in agro-food sector at \$2.5-\$3 billion, Mehrfar further called for expansion of trade ties between the two sides in this area.

CBI issues instructions on exports revenues return

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) issued the instructions on return details of the hard currency earned by exporters back to the domestic financial system, IRNA reported on Monday.

The instructions, which aim to lead the export revenues from the non-oil exports back into the country's economy through the domestic Forex Management Integrated System (locally known as NIMA), mandate all the exporters of goods and services to guarantee bringing back to the country the

foreign exchange amount allocated to them by the government at lower prices than the free market.

"CBI is in charge of providing foreign exchange merely for the imports of goods and services by those exporters who have designated the method of re-injecting their export revenues to domestic financial system," the instructions said.

Exporters with the total of one million euros of exports per year, are exempted from offering their income at NIMA.

Those with total exports of one to three

Montazer Torbati appointed new managing director of NIGC

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Hassan Montazer Torbati was appointed as the new managing director of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC), IRNA reported.

In a decree on Sunday, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh appointed Montazer Torbati to the post, replacing Hamidreza Araqi.

Montazer Torbati was previously the managing director of Iranian Gas Engineering and Development Company.

Due to the implementation of the law banning employment of the retired officials, passed in mid-September by the Majlis, Araqi



announced his resignation to the oil minister.

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

Bank loans to economic sector rise 14% in 7 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The latest report released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), the granted banking facilities to domestic economic sectors witnessed 14 percent growth during the first seven months of the present Iranian calendar year (March 21-October 22) compared to the same period of time in the past year, IRIB reported.

More than 3.581 quadrillion rials (about \$85.261 billion) of loans were paid to Iranian economic sectors in



the said period, showing 445.2 trillion rials (about \$10.6 billion) increase, i.e. 14 percent growth, from the same time span in the preceding year.

Privatization envisaged in budget law achieved by 60%: IPO head

ECONOMY **TEHRAN**—Some 60 percent of the target for divesting state-run shares to the private sector envisaged in the budget law for the present Iranian calendar year (began on March 21) has been already achieved, according to the head of Iranian Privatization Organization (IPO).

In a TV program on Sunday night, Mir Ali Ashraf Abdollah Pouri-Hosseini said that IPO still lags behind its set target

due to the number of state-run companies which have been decided to be privatized, IRIB reported.

In late May, IPO published the list of the enterprises that their shares are planned to be transferred to the private sector by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2019).

As previously reported, in its planned budget for 1397, the Iranian government expects to earn some 106 trillion rials (about \$2.5 billion) of income from divesting shares of

sate-run companies to the private sector.

The government envisioned a large privatization program in the Fifth Five-Year National Development Plan (2010-2015), aiming to privatize about 20 percent of the state-owned firms each year. Under the present interpretation of the Article 44, some state-owned companies have been privatized to reduce their financial burden on the country's budget and also increase their productivity.

Second Announcement



IN THE NAME OF GOD

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING

INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 97/164-1/20

Tender Holder:

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN BROADCASTING (IRIB)

Subject of Tender:

Purchasing of Audio and Video Equipment in accordance with the technical specifications and other terms and conditions mentioned in the tender documents.

Deadline and How to Receive the Tender Documents:

From **Monday 19th Nov. 2018 (1397/08/28)** by **8 a.m.** on **Wednesday 28th Nov. 2018 (1397/09/07)** with presentation of introductory letter by company or its representative and the receipt of paying the documents fee.

Place of Receiving the Tender Documents:

Interested participants may refer to purchasing (KALA) Dept., 4th Floor of IRIB Administration Complex, Hotel Esteghlal St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran Iran.

The Fee of the Tender Documents and How to Deposit it:

Submission of payment receipt for the amount of **1,000,000 Rials** to Account No. 4101029171204273 (IBAN: IR310100004101029171204273) with CENTRAL BANK OF IRAN in the name of IRIB.

Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participation to Tender:

The amount of deposit for participant in tender is **AED 45,000** fixed or its equivalent in **1,700,000,000 Rials** which should be in the form of Bank Guarantee.

Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:

The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted no later than **4 p.m.** on **Saturday 29th Dec. 2018 (1397/10/08)** and at the address mentioned in the 4th clause.

Time and Place of Opening Envelopes:

The date of opening the envelopes A&B is on **Sunday 30th Dec. 2018 (1397/10/09)** at **3 p.m.** in the office of Financial Vice President and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.

For more information, please see:

www.iriboffice.ir/tenders and <http://iets.mporg.ir> **Tel: 00982122167463**

Purchasing (Kala) Dept. of IRIB

Oil rises for a fourth day, buoyed by OPEC supply plans

Oil rose for a fourth session in a row on Monday, buoyed by the prospect that top exporter Saudi Arabia will push OPEC and maybe Russia to cut supply towards the end of this year.

Brent crude futures were up 24 cents at \$67.00 a barrel by 1000 GMT, while U.S. futures rose 38 cents to \$56.84.

"Oil prices continued to recover ... (as) the market will be watching closely for the possible impact of a (supply) cut," said Sukrit Vijayakar, director of Indian energy consultancy Trifecta.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, led by Saudi Arabia, is pushing for the group and its partners to reduce output by 1 million to 1.4 million barrels per day to prevent a build-up of unused fuel.

"It appears that the market takes a production cut for granted. We'll see if it is right after the next OPEC meeting on December 6. It is not unreasonable to anticipate stable prices until then," PVM Oil Associates strategist Tamas Varga said.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander



Novak said on Monday that Russia, which is not an OPEC member, planned to sign a partnership agreement with the group, and that details would be discussed at OPEC's Dec. 6 meeting in Vienna.

Despite Monday's gains, Brent is almost 25 percent below early October's 2018 peak of \$86.74, as evidence of slowing demand has materialized and output from the United States, Russia and Saudi Arabia hit historic

high.

A U.S. decision to grant waivers to some of Iran's oil customers, who faced the prospect of a drop-off in supply from sanctions that came into force in early November, has also helped soothe concern about availability of crude.

A trade dispute between the United States and China is one reason investors are a lot warier about the outlook for oil demand growth next year.

Fund managers cut their bullish exposure to crude futures and options to the lowest since around mid-2017 this month.

Weekly exchange data shows money managers hold a combined net long position equivalent to around 364 million barrels of U.S. and Brent crude futures and options, down from over 800 million barrels two months ago.

"The main trend remains bearish as investors no longer believe in a risk of supply tightness for crude," ActivTrades chief analyst Carlo Alberto De Casa said.

(Source: Reuters)

U.S. shale firms offer \$100 million to aid Texas, New Mexico

More than a dozen top U.S. energy companies have pledged \$100 million toward easing stresses on health care, education and civic infrastructure from the shale oil and gas boom in West Texas and New Mexico, the group said on Sunday.

Chevron, EOG Resources, Exxon Mobil and Royal Dutch Shell are among 17 companies backing the Permian Strategic Partnership, as the consortium is called, Don Evans, a former U.S. government official and energy executive helping launch the group, told Reuters on Saturday.

The group seeks to address labor and housing shortages, overtaxed healthcare and traffic congestion caused in part by companies descending on the Permian Basin, the nation's largest oilfield, where they hope to pump billions of dollars' worth of oil and gas in coming decades, experts said.

"It's a significant amount of money, but these are huge challenges," said Evans, a

former U.S. Secretary of Commerce who lives in Midland, Texas, the epicenter of the shale oil revolution. "We don't have enough teachers. We don't have enough doctors."

The group aims to work with regional and federal officials, companies, nonprofit groups and educators in New Mexico and Texas, said Evans, who started in the Permian and became CEO of producer Tom Brown Inc before joining the administration of former President George W. Bush.

The group is assembling plans to hold meetings in communities across the region, so "everyone have a voice" in the undertaking. There is no timetable or plan for how the initial contribution will be spent. The group is recruiting staff and searching for office space, he said.

In the last decade, the region's many pockets of oil and low production costs have led to gold rush-like conditions in the Permian. Companies are pouring staff and

equipment into the oilfield, which is expected to pump 3.7 million barrels of oil per day by December, four times its rate in 2010, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

That boom has local employers, including restaurants and school systems, under pressure from staff leaving for oilfield jobs. Midland's unemployment rate was 2.1 percent in October, compared to the nation's 3.7 percent rate.

The last decade's shale boom also has led to school overcrowding, soaring traffic fatalities, drug abuse and strains on the power grid because of the activity.

"Our roads are not designed to handle the amount of truck traffic we have," said Jeff Walker, transportation training coordinator at New Mexico Junior College in Hobbs. Drug charges in Midland more than doubled between 2012 and 2016, to 942 from 491, according to police data. Traffic accidents



also jumped 18 percent between 2016 and 2017 in Midland County, and 29 percent in nearby Ector County, according to Texas Department of Transportation data.

"They all agree that scaling up infrastructure is going to be a huge challenge," said Bob Peterson, a partner at consultancy Arthur D. Little who advises producers. "There's a common agreement that there's a whole bundle of problems."

(Source: CNBC)

Nord Stream-2 project advantageous for Europe: Kremlin spokesman

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has criticized a statement by Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki on Nord Stream-2, stressing that the project is beneficial to Europe.

"This is an unsuccessful statement. Nord Stream-2 is a commercially viable and economically feasible project. Moreover, it is economically attractive not only for the supplier but also for the recipients of this gas in Europe, primarily in Germany," Peskov told reporters.

(Source: Sputnik)

Notification for All Suppliers

2834

Obligation to use special sales Invoice for travelers of foreign countries

In order to implementation VAT refunds, according to note Article 13 of the Value Added Tax Act, all suppliers are required to use special invoices for foreign travelers (at the time of supply of goods), effective from August 23, 2018.

Iranian National Tax Administration



Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance
The Iranian National Tax Administration



وزارت امور اقتصادی و دارایی

سازمان امور مالیاتی کشور

فرم شماره ۳

Serial Number..... شماره سریال :
Date تاریخ :

Sales invoice for foreign passenger travelling to Iran
صورتحساب فروش کالا ویژه مسافران تبعه کشورهای خارجی

مشخصات فروشنده										
نام شخص حقیقی/حقوقی: شماره اقتصادی: شماره ثبت/شماره ملی: نشانی: استان: شهرستان: شهر: کد پستی 10 رقمی: آدرس: شماره تلفن نماینده: گواهی ثبت نام: 										
مشخصات مسافران تبعه کشورهای خارجی (خریدار)										
Name and surname: (نام و نام خانوادگی) Passport No.: (شماره گذرنامه) Visa No.: (شماره ویزا) Residence Address: (نشانی محل اقامت)										
مشخصات کالای مورد معامله										
11	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
Total price + VAT	Total VAT	After discount price	discount	Total price	Unit price (I.R.I. Rials)	Unit of measurement	Number / quantity	Details of the goods	Code of the good	NO
جمع مبلغ کل علاوه جمع مالیات و عوارض (ریال)	جمع مالیات و عوارض (ریال)	مبلغ کل پس از تخفیف (ریال)	مبلغ تخفیف (ریال)	مبلغ کل (ریال)	مبلغ واحد (ریال)	واحد اندازه گیری	تعداد/ مقدار	شرح کالا	کد کالا	ردیف
(9 + 10)		(7 - 8)		(6 × 4)	نحوه محاسبه پراساس شماره ستون					
				جمع کل						
				Conditions and method of sale: شرایط و نحوه فروش:						
				cash <input type="checkbox"/> نقدی <input type="checkbox"/>						
				non-cash <input type="checkbox"/> غیر نقدی <input type="checkbox"/>						
				Details: توضیحات:						
signature of the buyer				Stamp and signature of the seller						
امضاء خریدار				مهر و امضاء فروشنده						

Tel: 021 - 430 51 450
Advertising Dept
Iran's Leading International Daily

Second Announcement			
 N.I.O.C 1397.4186		 National Iranian Drilling Company	
call for public tender (First/Second publish) Two- Stages (semi compressed) tender Subject of Tender: Hydraulic Hose ¼ Inch 50 Foot			
Tender descriptions:			
The Tender holder	Registration No. through national electronic tendering system	Tender No. /Indent No.	Estimated value (Rial/Euro)
National Iranian Drilling Company	3,181,242	Tender No.: FP-09-97/041 Indent No.: 08-22-9645057	3,500,000,000 (Rial)
Qualitative evaluation of tenderers			
Method	R Based on minimum scoring(60) made in award criterion reflected in the tenderers pre-qualification forms.		
Purchasing & Submitting			
Tender Document Distribution by Company		The distribution of the documents will be started one day after the publishing of second advertisement and ended on the following tenth day thereof.	
Distribution Place		Hall No.:113, 1 st floor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN Tel: 061-34148601	
Submitting Method		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt in the amount of 510,000 Iranian Rials under account number 4001114004020491(Shaba No. IR 520100004001114004020491) In name of "NIDC Incomes Centralized Fund" issued by I.R. of Iran Central Bank. Submitting formal Request for the purpose of receiving Tender Documents. 	
Closing date		Days after the last time of Purchasing 14	
Documents Receiving Method		Address: Hall No. 107, 1 st floor, Tender Committee, Operation building, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahwaz, IRAN. Tel: +98-61-34148580 +98-61-34148569	
Tender Guarantee			
Value of guarantee	175,000,000 Rial / 3,660 Euro		
Type of guarantee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that obtain activity license from the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Submitting one original Bank Fund Receipt under account number 4001114006376636 (Shaba No. IR 350100004001114006376636) In name of "NIDC saving account" by the central bank of Islamic Republic of Iran.		
Duration of credit & quotation	Tender Guarantee and quotation should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum for one time in initial validity duration.		
(Foreign Procurement Dept.) More of this & other tenders are accessible by click on: www.nidc.ir http://sapp.ir/nidc_pr			
تهران تایمز نوبت اول ۹۷/۰۸/۲۹ نوبت دوم ۹۷/۰۸/۲۹			

NEWS IN BRIEF



India's economy to be \$10 trillion by 2035

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN — India's economy is expected to quadruple to \$10 trillion by 2035 riding on business-friendly policies, structural reforms and transparency in governance, says India's Minister for Commerce and Industry.

Speaking at the India International Trade Fair (IITF) in New Delhi, Suresh Prabhu said India is growing at a fast rate and will be a \$5 trillion economy in another 7-8 years. By 2035, he said, it will be a \$10 trillion economy.

Even though many pressing issues continue to plague the Indian economy, it has grown significantly in recent years, drawing comparisons with its bigger neighbor China.

Prabhu said no country can grow unless companies grow and their growth is dependent on interactions with rest of the world. He said the business-friendly policies of the government saw India climb from 142 to 77 rank on Ease of Doing Business in the last four years.

On the IITF, which sees the participation of businessmen from across the world, he said it will showcase India's capabilities. "This is an event where businesses meet, policy makers meet to exchange ideas, to shape together a good future for humanity and to make world a better place," he said.



U.S. envoy holds talks with Taliban

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN — Less than a fortnight after participating in a peace dialogue in Moscow, which also saw participation of representatives from over dozen countries, Afghan Taliban held talks with a U.S. envoy in Qatar this week.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the former American diplomat who was appointed by the Trump administration recently as a 'peace envoy' to Afghanistan, represented U.S. in the talks held in Doha where the insurgent group has a political office.

Speaking to media persons in Kabul on Sunday, without specifically referring to the Taliban, Khalilzad said he is "talking to all interested parties, all Afghan groups", adding that there was "an opportunity for reconciliation and peace."

The move to appoint Khalilzad as 'peace envoy' to facilitate talks with the Taliban, experts believe, is eyewash to tell the world that the U.S. is interested in peace.

Taliban has demanded the lifting of sanctions against the group's leaders, the release of prisoners and the recognition of their office in Qatar. During Moscow talks, the group said they want unconditional withdrawal of 'foreign forces' from Afghanistan.



Rohingya repatriation plan shelved

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN — The plan to expatriate Rohingya refugees from the crowded camps in Cox's Bazar has been temporarily abandoned with Bangladesh now set to go to the polls on December 30, according to reports. The repatriation and relocation program for Rohingya is likely to be revisited after year-end general elections in Bangladesh, a top Bangladeshi official was quoting saying in the media. More than 900,000 Rohingya refugees are currently living in Bangladesh under impoverished conditions after being thrown out of their country following a brutal military crackdown in August 2017.

On October 30, Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed to begin the repatriation process in mid-November but the UN refugee agency said conditions in Rakhine State were "not yet conducive for returns".

"I urge the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar to halt these rushed plans for repatriation," Yanghee Lee, UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, said on Tuesday, calling on Myanmar to grant the Rohingya their right to citizenship, freedom of movement and access to public services.

Lee said Myanmar "failed to provide guarantees they [the Rohingya] would not suffer the same persecution and horrific violence all over again."



India, China to hold border dispute talks

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN — The Special Representatives (SRs) of India and China are expected to hold talks on the vexed boundary dispute later this month ahead of a much-anticipated meeting between Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Argentina on the sidelines of the G-20 summit.

India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi are the designated SRs for the border talks. The 21st round of talks between them is expected to take place in the Chinese city of Duijiangyan, said a report in The Statesman.

The two SRs are expected to discuss many issues related to the border dispute which has affected ties between the two neighboring countries. They will also discuss ways to promptly defuse tensions on the common border so that a situation like the tense Doklam stand-off witnessed last summer does not recur, the report added.

Relations between the two nations have improved considerably after last year's Doklam face-off following an informal summit between Modi and Xi in Wuhan in April. Chinese Ambassador to India Luo Zhaohui last week stated that Sino-Indian ties were at "one of the best periods in history".

The report said top defence officials of the two countries had met in China earlier this week and agreed on the importance of maintaining peace in the border areas while implementing the consensus reached between PM Modi and President Xi at Wuhan.

Pakistan does nothing for U.S., says Trump; appeasement doesn't work, Mazari hits back

INTERNATIONAL d e s k TEHRAN — The no-holds-barred verbal showdown between the American and Pakistani politicians continues with U.S. President Donald Trump and Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights Dr Shireen Mazari locking horns in the latest round.

A day after Trump claimed that Pakistan "does not do anything for his country"; Dr. Mazari took to Twitter to hit back at the megalomaniac American president and remind him of the losses incurred by Pakistan in the 'war against terror' over the years.

"The loss of Pakistani lives in U.S. war on terror, the free space for Raymond Davis and other operatives, the illegal killings by drone attacks — the list is endless," Mazari tweeted on Monday. "Once again history shows appeasement does not work".

On Sunday, while speaking to Fox News, Trump sought to justify his administration's decision to withdraw "military aid" to Pakistan, which did irreparable damage to their bilateral relationship. "They [Pakistan] don't do a damn thing for us," the U.S. president said, raising the issue of Osama bin Laden being found in Pakistan's garrison city of Abbottabad in 2011.

"You know, living — think of this — living in Pakistan, beautifully in Pakistan in what I guess they considered a nice mansion," Trump said. "But living in Pakistan right next to the military academy, everybody in



Pakistan knew he was there," he added.

He went on to say that the U.S. gave \$1.3 billion a year to Pakistan as military assistance and ended it because "they don't do anything for us."

Pertinently, the former U.S. president Barack Obama, during whose time the raid was carried out, said late last year that the U.S. had "no evidence that Pakistan was aware



of his presence".

Dr. Mazari called "Trump's tirade against Pakistan" a lesson for those Pakistani leaders "who kept appeasing the U.S. especially after 9/11!" "Whether China or Iran, U.S. policies of containment and isolation do not coincide with Pakistan's strategic interests," she added.

In a reply to one tweet, the firebrand Pakistani minister said Trump was suffering

'Popular sentiment in Pakistan remains sympathetic to Tehran'

1 → A: While Khashoggi incident shook the world, in Pakistan it barely moved the needle. For reasons you have to look at the 17 years of fighting terrorism and the loss it incurred. Over eighty thousand dead, at least a few of whom were journalists. So, the entire country is desensitized to such controversies.

Pakistan's economic condition, as we have established earlier, is really dire. Hence the country had to look wherever it could get help. When PM Khan chose to go to Saudi Arabia for the second time participants were dropping out of the Riyadh investment conference in solidarity with the slain journalist. But that only meant more visible opening for Pakistan to highlight its economic cause. The country availed the opportunity.

■ Relations between Pakistan and its new all-weather ally China have improved considerably with CPEC, which has however distanced Washington from Islamabad. How do you view these changing political dynamics?

A: Pakistan-China relationship has and will go from strength to strength. But Washington is displaying a characteristic lack of imagination. This is not the age of cold wars.

If anything, Trump's surprise victory should have convinced the Washington elite that the traditional paranoid worldview has no place in the realities of our time. That the world belongs to interdependence and collective security. Ergo there is no zero sum game between China and the U.S.

A hard-learned lesson for Pakistan is that it should not build one relationship at the cost of another. The country has to take every relationship seriously and on merit. This is a country that managed to defy the western and Arab pressures during Iran-Iraq war and maintained a healthy friendship with Tehran despite being heavily invested in West's war in Afghanistan against Soviet occupation.

When it comes to two of its closest allies, China and the U.S., Pakistan can maintain a healthy balance between the two and can even function once again as a bridge between them if such a need arises.

■ U.S. unilateral withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal and diktat to countries to bring Iranian oil imports to zero has drawn angry reactions across the world. What's the popular opinion in Pakistan's intelligentsia circles regarding it and regarding Trump's policies?

A: Popular sentiment remains sympathetic to Tehran. Unity among Muslims and defiance of foreign inflicted suffering in the Muslim countries are some of the ideas that find a lot of traction here. Policies of governments can change



but one thing cannot. The hearts of Pakistani citizens and Iranians are one. And I do not exaggerate.

As for intelligentsia, the question is of the paradigm every individual uses to view the world. There are those who are given to realpolitik. And those who think a better world is possible. To the latter, every setback offers a new opportunity.

After the unilateral withdrawal of the U.S., Iran can either wait for the end of Trump's presidency or renegotiate the deal. The second option might be useful as it may offer some immediate relief to the beautiful people of Iran. But here is one fact of life that does not escape this scribe's attention. A nation of such brilliance and full of competent people cannot be kept back for long. That is a given.

■ According to reports, Pakistan-Iran gas pipeline project that was shelved by Nawaz Sharif government in 2015 apparently under Saudi pressure will be revived soon. How critical can it be in addressing Pakistan's energy crisis?

A: Pakistan is bound by international law and treaty obligations. Its economic volatility weakens its hand diplomatically and makes it prone to the U.S. pressures. Activation of IP

gas pipeline will remain a pipedream till the time one of two things do not materialize — ease of U.S. sanctions on Iran and Pakistan regaining economic autonomy.

Remember Pakistan is faced with mounting Indian propaganda and while New Delhi uses its diplomatic muscle and mysterious influence on Trump and Washington elite, it unleashes its onslaught whenever Islamabad tries to behave proactively. India exploited the name of the then Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) pipeline to seek nuclear deal as a concession from the U.S. and conveniently abandoned the project. Nevertheless, in view of waiver given to eight countries including India and China, Pakistan should use diplomacy to find a working solution on IP. The project is of great economic significance to Pakistan.

■ In the initial few weeks Khan had reaffirmed his commitment to open a new chapter of relations with India but the overtures didn't last too long. What makes India-Pakistan relationship so complex?

A: India is known for its great diplomatic skill, imagination and economic might. Despite that influence sadly a baser instinct has seized control of the policy making apparatus in the country and stymied all imagination.

Right now it is preparing for the next general elections and it seems unlikely that it will be able to reciprocate any overtures from Islamabad. Pakistan waits for the day when the election cycles are over.

As for the complexity of the relationship, many books have been written on the matter and I will not be able to do justice to it in this limited space. Two issues, however stand out: cold war mentality and denial of each other's identity.

■ Do you see 'Naya Pakistan' (New Pakistan) taking shape under Imran Khan, the Pakistan envisioned by Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Sir Mohammad Iqbal?

A: Every century has its own dynamics. Pakistan is bound to follow the path laid out by the founder of the nation, Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Sir Mohammad Iqbal being the country's national poet has special place in people's imagination.

But as time passes, realities of life and of political world change. Many institutional concepts have changed or evolved since 1947. So the idea is to take the golden principles of the country's founding fathers and adapt them to present times. Ergo, Naya (new) Pakistan.

The present government has been in power for roughly three months. In this duration what to talk of rebuilding a nation a new house is not finished. So we will have to wait and see. I am very hopeful.

Why no global outcry over Saudi war in Yemen?

1 → Saudi-led war in Yemen has stretched into its third year now, killing more than 10,000 people and leaving the country completely devastated. The humanitarian situation in the war-ravaged country has been termed 'catastrophic' by aid groups. And the world has chosen to be a mute spectator.

The blockade of the country means around 18 million people don't have access to food, which could eventually and inevitably lead to the worst famine in more than a century. Already 2.2 million children are acutely malnourished and fighting for their lives. The World Food Program warned this week that the country was "marching to the brink of starvation".

Why has the world chosen to be silent even as warnings of famine have assumed alarming proportions? Akshaya Kumar, a senior Human Rights Watch official, says it's because of the "sway" Saudi has over some members of the UN Security Council, which has prevented the UN in naming and shaming the regime in Riyadh. "At this point, vague appeals to 'all parties' to improve their behavior won't work; Any resolution that doesn't specifically mention the Saudi-led coalition by name and call it out for its role in the carnage in Yemen won't have the required effect in Riyadh," he



said in an interview.

The patronage of world powers like the United States and United Kingdom has ensured that Saudi rulers escape culpability for their war crimes in Yemen. Their support for the Saudi-led coalition in the form of arms, training, intelligence, and refueling

of bombers has compounded the misery of Yemenis. The two countries continue to sell billions of dollars in arms to the Saudi regime, thus are directly complicit in the war crimes being committed against the Yemenis.

While bombings by the Saudi-led coa-

lition have devastated the country, U.S. drones have also been flying in the air. A new report by AP documenting civilian deaths in Yemen reveals that the U.S. drones have contributed to several civilian killings this year, while pretending to be fighting Al-Qaeda's local franchise. What Americans did in Iraq and Afghanistan previously, they are now doing that in Yemen, directly and indirectly.

Many Pakistani politicians and analysts denounced the remarks of Trump. Former Pakistani foreign minister Khawaja Asif also took to Twitter to deride the Trump administration. "We continue to pay in blood for what we did for U.S. from Bada Ber to fighting wars which weren't ours. Reinvented our religion to suit US interests, destroyed our tolerant ethos, replaced it with bigotry and intolerance. A relationship of betrayals & sanctions," he tweeted.

Relations between the United States and Pakistan, which had developed strains in recent years, hit a new low in January when Trump suspended \$300 million U.S. aid to Islamabad on the pretext that Pakistan had failed to take action against militant groups.

The Coalition Support Funds were part of a broader suspension in aid announced by Trump at the start of the year, when he accused Pakistan of rewarding past assistance with "nothing but lies and deceit." Pakistani government and military establishment had dismissed the charge as baseless.

Since then, the accusations and counter-accusations have been flying thick and fast. Last month, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo drew angry reactions in Pakistan when he remarked that Pakistan should "not provide safe harbor to terrorists on their western border".

Today millions of children in Yemen weigh less than an average American's weekend lunch. One of them dies every ten minutes due to acute malnutrition and various diseases. United Nations has already estimated that 10 million people may starve to death, majority of them children, due to the Saudi-led war and blockade. Yet, there is no anger, no outrage, no vigils, no street demonstrations, no primetime TV debates, no editorials. It is a forgotten war.

Human rights have been reduced to a joke by the Saudi-led coalition and its international sponsors involved in Yemen war. The only way to end this war is to stop arms sale to the Saudi regime and to hold all parties — which includes Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Sudan, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, U.S. and U.K. — accountable for their war crimes.

Trump seems to have no concept of a multipolar world: Jahanpour

1 → In defiance of UN resolutions, Trump moved the U.S. Embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, despite the fact that various international agreements have seen Jerusalem either as an international city, or as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

Trump has withdrawn America from a number of other important international agreements and organizations, including UNESCO, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the UN Human Rights Council, etc. However, his latest withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), which prohibited the United States and Russia from possessing, producing or deploying medium-range ground-based cruise missiles, has particularly alarmed the European countries that see it as a very dangerous and provocative move.

Trump withdrew from that treaty without any consultation either with the NATO allies or with Russia. “We’re going to terminate the agreement and we’re going to pull out,” Trump told reporters on October 20 during a campaign stop in Nevada. This is not the way that a law-abiding country should deal with international treaties or with its allies. Gorbachev who signed that agreement jointly with President Reagan told Russia’s Interfax News Agency: “Getting rid of the treaty is a mistake... All the agreements aimed at nuclear disarmament and limitation of nuclear arms must be preserved to save life on Earth.”

Meanwhile, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said Washington should consider the consequences of pulling out of that international treaty, which he described as “an important pillar of our European security architecture.”

Europe has been America’s loyal ally since the Second World War, but many Europeans have come to the conclusion that America, especially under Trump, is not treating them as allies, but as vassals. They also don’t like the unnecessary conflicts that Trump is inciting against Iran, Russia, China and others, and his unilateral sanctions on a number of countries, as well as putting pressure on U.S. allies to obey U.S. diktats and do the same.

Recently, reacting to some of the arrogant and interfering stances of the U.S. ambassador to Germany, the former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder told Die Welt: “When I look at the actions of the U.S. ambassador in Germany, I get the impression that he sees himself more as an occupation officer than as an ambassador of the United States in a sovereign state.” He also criticized U.S. trade policy, saying that Germany “cannot put up with being treated like an occupied country.”

Trump may be unhappy with the decision of the European countries to form a European Army but, above all, he should blame himself for this state of affairs.

■ Speaking to the “Europe 1” radio, French President Emmanuel Macron called



I believe that with the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, NATO is obsolete. Instead of spending these insane amounts of money on warfare, the time has come to look for more peaceful means to ensure global security.

for the formation of a real European military to counter Russia’s threats and also independence from USA. In the interview, the French president said: “We have to defend ourselves against Russia, China and even USA.” Why does France now name the United States alongside China and Russia as a threat?

A: Because the United States is making excessive demands on its allies, without taking into account their long-term interests. During the Cold War, the United States formed a number of military alliances in different parts of the world to contain the former Soviet Union. They included NATO in Europe, CENTO in the Middle East and SEATO in South East Asia. Those alliances boosted the status of the United States as the so-called “leader of the free world” and as the leading country in the capitalist camp. The members of those alliances were required to contribute to the cost of running those organizations allegedly to guarantee their collective security, but also to bolster the position of the United States as one of the two superpowers.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the dismantlement of the Warsaw Pact, NATO should have been dismantled. In fact, Gor-

bachev was promised by President George H. W. Bush and his Secretary of State James Baker that if he dismantled the Soviet Union and agreed with the unification of Germany, NATO would not encroach upon former Soviet territory. However, contrary to those promises, America has brought most of the former Soviet Republics into NATO, and has pushed its forces right up to the borders of Russia.

Not content with that, American governments have called on NATO members to spend 2% of their GDPs on NATO, and of course purchase American weapons in order to maintain the compatibility of all their weapons. President Trump does not realize that NATO’s main function has been to bolster the US’s superpower status, and has complained that NATO members do not pull their weight and has demanded that all NATO members increase their contribution to 3% of their GDP. This has forced many Europeans to question the role of NATO in their security. This is why as the German Chancellor Angela Merkel, speaking to MEPs in Strasbourg on 13 November, said: “The time when we can rely on others has passed. We have to take our fate into our own hands if we want to defend our community.”

■ Ursula von der Leyen, the German defense minister, recently said that the founding of the European Army and its future activities could not only increase the security of European countries but also solve international crises. If the joint European army carried out missions outside Europe in addition to missions inside Europe, Is this not a parallel with NATO?

A: I don’t believe that most European countries would like to dismantle NATO for the time being, but they simply wish to have more say about their own defense and to be able to act more independently. So, while they wish to strengthen their defense forces and also act more in harmony with the rest of the EU members, they will stay within NATO. But it can be said that in time a European force would act in parallel with NATO.

■ Trump has opposed the plan and in response to French President Macron’s remarks called the formation of this army offensive. Due to Trump’s reaction and his renewed appeal to Europeans to give more money to NATO, can these disputes threaten NATO’s future?

A: As I said earlier, I believe that with the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, NATO is obsolete. Instead of spending these insane amounts of money on warfare, the time has come to look for more peaceful means to ensure global security.

A recent study has shown that since 2001, the United States alone has spent \$5.9 trillion on wars and that it has been in a state of constant wars, sometimes waged through contractors. So, President Eisenhower’s prediction about a military-industrial complex has been almost completely fulfilled. The continuation of the present insane course will not only create a great deal of devastation and loss of life, it may even lead to a global conflagration, which might spell the end of human civilization.

Therefore, instead of forming a new military force, the greatest contribution that the Europeans can make is to wage a determined campaign to establish world peace through dialog and negotiation. The ideals of the United Nations were certainly very noble, but sadly many of them have remained unfulfilled. What we need now is a re-invigorated United Nations, an end to militarism and a new Human Rights Charter for all the people of the world, not the privileged few.

The conflict between Europe and Russia has been artificially intensified in order to sell more arms. Many Europeans see Russia as a member of the European family of nations, and China and India as the two rising powers are also more interested in trade and economic development than in war and conflict. Europe can play a historic role by dismantling NATO, putting an end to militarism and starting a new world order.

Will Turkey attack the Kurds in eastern Euphrates?

By Ramin Hossein Abadian

TEHRAN — The eastern Euphrates, which is under the control of the U.S. allies, has taken the attention of most regional actors in Syria.

The region has the largest and most important oil fields, particularly al-Omar filed, which before 2011 produced around 300 barrels of oil per day.

Al-Raqqa, alone, has 70 percent of Syria’s water resources, not to mention its fertile land for agricultural products. The area accounts for one-third of Syria’s fertile land and plays a big role in Syrian food and economy.

Al-Raqqa, also called Raqqa, is a city in Syria located on the northeast bank of the Euphrates River, about 160 kilometres east of Aleppo. It is located 40 kilometres east of the Tabqa Dam, Syria’s largest dam.

The area also contains 90 percent of Syria’s gas and oil revenue and over half of the country’s wheat and cotton. Deir ez-Zor province, in eastern Euphrates, is the second most prominent Syrian province in terms of area (about 33,000 square kilometers). Most of the Syrian oil production comes from these areas, and it also is the richest source of Syria’s gas.

After the Syrian army defeated terrorists in various parts of the country, especially on the outskirts of Damascus and in the south, and made advances in the depths of As-Suwayda, two regions are still not in the control of the Syrian government. One is the province of Idlib that based on Putin and Erdogan agreement it is kept a weapons-free area, despite the attacks carried out on the Syrian army’s positions there by the terrorists. Some Syrian military experts, including the Brigadier General Hamdan believe that the Syrian army will soon embrace Idlib too.

General Hamdan said, “Terrorist activities that resulted in the deaths of 18 Syrian soldiers and the failure of other players to subside terrorism have put a halt to the ceasefire in Idlib. Thus, the final operation by the Syrian army is approaching fast.

Syrian army, as we have repeatedly said, continues on the path of self-restraint, but it seems the purpose of the moves is to bring all parties to war in Idlib, be it with a political reason, for exploiting the military movements of the Syrian army politically or with the aim of targeting more Syrian army personnel, militarily.

The goal of the Russian moves in the next few weeks before the coming New Year is to gain more international support for the region in bringing an end to the daily activities of terrorists. And that is only possible when everyone



takes responsibility for their own action. In a clearer sense, provokers must be put in a bottleneck and pushed aside.

The U.S., the greatest supporter of terrorism, is the only actor that gets benefit from terrorist acts in Idlib, and therefore is seeking to defeat the military victories of the Syrian army and the political achievements of Damascus.”

■ Syrian actors’ view of eastern Euphrates

The other area, out of the Syrian army’s control, is the eastern Euphrates that all actors of the Syrian affairs are keeping an eye on. This region has its own story. The other day, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkish President warned the U.S. and said “no one can turn Turkey into their own backyard.”

Turkey’s Defense Minister Hulusi Akar, who was attending Halifax International Security Forum in Canada, expressed indignation at photos showing U.S. troops dining with Kurdish militants near the Turkish border in Syria and said, “We expect U.S. to stop cooperation with the YPG terror group as promised.”

“These photos have found wide coverage in our media and disturbed our people. They tarnished the image of the U.S. and its army... for the Turkish public. It is unacceptable for the U.S. to provide arms and ammunition by plane and trucks to the YPG terrorist group even when Daesh has been neutralized to a large extent. We will not allow the formation of a terrorist corridor on our southern border,” Akar said.

It seems that north-east of Syria, where the U.S.-backed Kurds are present, will face new developments, as Ankara has threatened to intervene in the area, and Damascus has announced to send the Syrian forces to east of Euphrates

after the liberation of Idlib.

The Syrian newspaper Al-Watan has quotes the Syrian opposition as saying, “Turkey intends to attack the Syrian Democratic Forces, SDF, in Tel Aviv, located on the southern border of Turkey, where these Kurds are supported by the U.S.”

Turkey has told armed groups in Idlib, and in the western and northern Aleppo that they are ready to move to the east of Euphrates to confront the Kurdish forces who are in control of the area. Erdogan is seeking an invasion of Kobai as a starting point for moving to other parts of eastern Euphrates to dominate the border areas in the second phase.

In October, the Turkish army struck Kurdish positions in eastern Euphrates, coinciding with the statement made by Turkish President Erdogan on the determination of his country to overcome Kurdish forces in eastern Euphrates.

This is while the U.S.-backed Kurdish forces, SDF, in northern Syria also stepped in and patrol the area which invited Erdogan criticism, saying that that joint U.S.-Kurdish patrols just over the Turkish border with Syria were unacceptable and that he expected U.S. President Donald Trump to stop them.

■ Iran-Syria-Russia axis

Meanwhile, Damascus considers the military presence of the U.S. and Turkey illegitimate in the country. The Syrian army has announced that the next step will be eastern Euphrates after the liberation of Idlib. If the area east of the Euphrates were not given to the Syrian government, this will led to the confrontation between the Syrian army and U.S.-backed.

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad warned U.S.-backed Kurdish forces. “We’re going to deal with it by two options: the first one we started now opening doors for negotiations, because the majority of them [SDF] are Syrians. If not, we’re going to resort ... to liberating those areas by force”, Assad said.

Moscow, on the other hand, considers the U.S. actions in eastern Euphrates to be an attempt to create a region separate from Syria, and considers it unacceptable. Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Oct. 12, 2018: “In eastern Euphrates, the situation is such that there are inevitable actions. And the United States seeks to exploit this land through its Syrian allies, in particular the Kurds, to create a region similar to that of the country.”

But Iran has consistently stated that the presence of the United States is in the eastern Euphrates as an occupation. Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani during the Tehran summit saw the post-Idlib phase against the Syrian army as the U.S. forces in the east of Euphrates.

Israel’s moral and political defeat

By Hanif Ghaffari

TEHRAN — The recent tensions raised between the Zionist regime and Hamas have simultaneously targeted the political and military foundations of the Israeli regime. According to different sources, Netanyahu is to introduce the elections’ date in the occupied territories on Sunday.

On the other hand, Netanyahu’s former secretary of defense Avigdor Lieberman, while stressing his decision (which led to the dissolution of the coalition government in Tel Aviv), has expressed concern over the strength of resistance forces in the future. Many analysts believe that even in case of an early election, the next government in Tel Aviv will be a weak and vulnerable one; a government that will lose much of its regional and domestic maneuver ability.

Another important point is that Netanyahu and his wife, face a new charge of corruption as well as the troubles caused by Lieberman’s withdrawal from the coalition government. This issue can lead to the political death of one of the bloodiest politicians of history. There are some points about current changes going on in the occupied territories that should be taken into consideration:

Firstly, the United States, Britain and France, as supporters of the crimes of the Zionist regime, were once again prepared to pave the way for the continuation of Israelis bloodshed and crimes against the Palestinians. The failure of the UN Security Council on how to deal with the fresh wave of deadly Israeli attacks against the Palestinian territory, has once again proved that the United Nations Security Council has become a platform to support the Zionists’ crimes.

On the other hand, with Donald Trump at top of the political and executive equations of the United States, Netanyahu had no doubt about Washington’s support for Tel Aviv in the war against Hamas. Indeed, what’s the reason behind the withdrawal and defeat of Israelis against the Islamic Resistance of Palestine?

This question will be answered if we look through the existing realities in the occupied territories. The inability of the Zionist regime to destroy Hamas missiles on the one hand, and rocket-attacks on the lands and settlements of the Zionists by the Palestinian Islamic Resistance (in response to Israel’s crimes) forced the Zionists to stop their invasions.

As Hamas official, Ismail Radwan, noted; “You will not commit a crime without being held accountable for it. 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.”

Netanyahu, on the other hand, knows well that Zionist settlers and even those residents of Tel Aviv and Haifa, after witnessing several Israeli military defeats against Hezbollah and Hamas (since 2006), will no longer trust the Israeli regime in providing them with safety and security. It should not be forgotten that Netanyahu’s retreat against Hamas is not due to his peaceful nature! Benjamin Netanyahu is the same criminal who is prepared to take any villains against the resistance groups and the innocent Palestinians, and he aims at destroying these groups.

Even many Zionist politicians have repeatedly condemned Netanyahu over his excessive risk-taking. But this time even Netanyahu has lost the risk power against the resistance groups. Obviously, Avigdor Lieberman’s cries can’t reduce Netanyahu’s fear of Hamas. Of course, Lieberman himself clearly understood the truth about Tel Aviv’s inability to face Hamas and the resistance groups, but he still doesn’t dare to confess the truth.

A real European army: A naive or prudent idea?

1 → German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, further bolstered this idea by supporting President Macron’s call on the European Army, telling the EU Parliament that such an army would not weaken the US-led NATO alliance, but could complement it in many ways.

This idea has prompted a series of backlashes through Europe and North America. UK Air Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, chairman of the NATO Military Committee, dubbed this idea “unwise” while pointing to NATO’s strength as a unique command and control network: “It’s not rhetoric based. It’s real planning based on real data,” Peach noted. “And therefore, why would you wish to duplicate or replicate the strengths of an existing strong alliance.”

Likewise, the U.S. President Donald Trump, in a series of posted tweets, reacted negatively to Macron’s comments, describing it as “very insulting.” A similar criticism came from NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who asserted that “It will be not a wise decision by all those nations who are members of both NATO and the European Union to start to have two sets of command structures, or duplicate what NATO is doing.” Similarly, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte has questioned the idea of an integrated European Army, stating that the “continent’s safety could be guaranteed only through NATO.”

Russian President Vladimir Putin, by contrast, has reacted affirmatively to this proposal, describing it as a “positive” development. So have, in a rather startling manner, conservative and Euro-skeptic ruling elites of the Europe—including Czech President Milos Zeman and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban—whose support for European army has been predicted on entirely different considerations.

This support, by itself, should cause those in favor to pump the breaks on any potential future arming of the subcontinent. The goals of a secure Europe, one might argue, are not necessarily those of Orban or Zeman. To paraphrase a Latin phrase from the classic the Aeneid, “I fear the Greeks even when they bring gifts.” A reasonable dose of skepticism is required when avowed and militant nationalists support military armament.

Whether this idea is a turning point in European politics remains open to debate. It is worth noting that EU member states are driven by different motives and incentives, making it extremely difficult to build a broader consensus in the face of the unanimity rule within the EU common defense policy. The most practical obstacle to the idea of an integrated European Army is the lingering issue of national sovereignty.

Given the lack of political cohesion within the European Union, both the vision and the logistics of an authentic European integrated army are likely to fail to present a realistic alternative to NATO and may invite further arming throughout Europe. Learning the lessons that presaged the last two World Wars, one should view with apprehension this move toward military expansion.

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How does social media use affect our body image?

A new study reveals how social media use could affect the self-perceived body image of young women.

Being active on social media may affect how young women perceive their own appearance.

Recently, the effects of social media use on our mental health and well-being have been the topic of much debate.

According to the social displacement theory, for example, the more time we spend socializing online, the less time we're likely to spend socializing in the offline world.

This could lead to a decrease in one's overall well-being.

However, recent studies have dispelled this myth, with researchers arguing that social media is "not bad in the way people think it is."

Other studies have drawn links between social media use and loneliness, suggesting that going on a social media "detox" lowers feelings of depression and loneliness.

Does social media have any effect on body confidence and how we perceive our own appearance, however?

New research — led by Jennifer Mills, an associate professor in the Department of Psychology at York University in Toronto, Canada, and Jacqueline Hogue, a Ph.D. student in the department's Clinical Program — examined the effects of social media on the self-perceived body image of young women.

Mills and Hogue published their findings in the journal *Body Image*.

■ Studying social media use and body image

Mills and Hogue divided 118 female undergraduate students aged 18–27



Recently, the effects of social media use on our mental health and well-being have been the topic of much debate.

into two groups. Those in the first group logged into Facebook and Instagram for 5 minutes or more and were asked to find one peer of roughly the same age whom they "explicitly considered more attractive" than themselves.

Then, the researchers asked all of the participants to comment on the photos

of their peers. In the control group, the women logged into Facebook or Instagram for at least 5 minutes and left a comment on a post of a family member whom they did not consider more attractive.

Before and after these tasks, the participants filled in a questionnaire that asked about how much dissatisfaction they

felt with their appearance, using a scale ranging from "none" to "very much."

"Participants rated how dissatisfied they felt about their overall appearance and body by placing a vertical line on a 10-[centimeter] horizontal line," the authors explain. The researchers scored the responses "to the nearest millimeter," which created a 100-point scale.

Their results revealed that after interacting with attractive peers, the women's perceptions of their own appearance changed, whereas interacting with family members did not have any bearing on their body image.

"Social media engagement with attractive peers increases negative state body image," explain the researchers.

Mills comments on the findings, saying, "The results showed that these young adult women felt more dissatisfied with their bodies."

"They felt worse about their own appearance after looking at social media pages of someone that they perceived to be more attractive than them. Even if they felt bad about themselves before they came into the study, on average, they still felt worse after completing the task."

"When we compare ourselves [with] other people, that has the potential to affect the valuation of ourselves," she adds.

"We really need to educate young people on how social media use could be making them feel about themselves and how this could even be linked to stringent dieting, eating disorders, or excessive exercise. There are people who may be triggered by social media and who are especially vulnerable," concludes Mills.

(Source: *Medical News Today*)

Air pollution: Low emission zones not preventing stunted lung growth in London children



Children in London are growing up with smaller lungs and asthma due to toxic air pollution, despite efforts to cut fumes from the city's traffic.

A study of over 2,000 young people living in the capital found that while low emission zones designed to keep high-polluting cars away have slightly improved air quality, deeper cuts are needed to improve children's health.

Experts said the findings showed more ambitious measures are needed to tackle Britain's air pollution crisis. They added that the ultra-low emission zone launching next year is a step in the right direction.

Outdoor air pollution from cars and other sources kills four million people every year, and children are particularly susceptible to its effects.

"We are raising a generation of children reaching adulthood with stunted lung capacity," said Professor Chris Griffiths from Queen Mary University of London, one of the study's authors.

He also blamed the car industry and a government "which continues to fail to act decisively to ensure towns and cities cut traffic".

Low emission zones restrict or penalize vehicles driving into parts of the city in an effort to discourage their use, and London introduced the world's largest one a decade ago.

The research, published in *The Lancet Public Health* journal, is one of the first efforts to understand whether this strategy has had any impact on Londoners' health.

Scientists enrolled eight and nine year-olds from Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Greenwich and the City of London, all of which are failing to meet current European Union nitrogen dioxide pollution limits.

They monitored the children's health over the five years, covering the period when the low emission zone was introduced, and found that those exposed to air pollution lost about 5 per cent of their lung capacity.

Even though nitrogen dioxide levels fell thanks to the zones, there was no accompanying fall in lung conditions among the children.

London parent Alice De Ville said she

was "extremely worried" about what the city's air was doing to her sons' lungs.

"The government cannot be allowed to dismiss the evidence, air pollution is damaging our children's health," she said.

The researchers behind the study said their results showed the importance of evidence-based decision making, and provided further support for the ultra-low emission zone that will see even tighter restrictions placed on vehicles entering the city.

"This new study reveals the terrible legacy of successive governments' failure to act over illegal levels of air pollution," said Andrea Lee, senior campaigner for ClientEarth, the environmental lawyers who have successfully sued the government three times over the UK's illegal air pollution.

"The ultra-low emission zone in London will be welcome when it comes in next spring but action is also needed at a national level."

Shirley Rodrigues, deputy London mayor for environment and energy, said the report was "further evidence of how pollution blights young Londoners' lives".

She said besides low emissions zones, there was a need for the government to implement a diesel scrappage scheme to take the most polluting vehicles off the road.

London is not the only part of the UK with dangerous air pollution, with one 2017 report by the World Health Organization concluding over 40 British cities had air too dangerous to breathe.

Responding to the report, a spokesperson from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said: "While air quality in the UK has improved significantly since 2010, we understand the risk it continues to pose to human health, and realize more needs to be done. For that reason, we have introduced a £3.5bn plan to reduce harmful emissions and an ambitious Clean Air Strategy which has been welcomed by the World Health Organization."

"We will soon be going even further with new legislation to give local government new powers to take action in areas with a pollution problem."

(Source: *The Independent*)

What time of day do we burn the most calories?



A recent study shows that a person's metabolism does not stay the same for 24 hours — in fact, there are times of the day where their body is chewing through a greater number of calories while they are just sitting there.

According to a new study, a person's energy-burning ability fluctuates across the day.

The research, published in *Current Biology*, shows that our body's internal clock may have more to do with how we process calories than previously thought.

While sitting around in the late afternoon and early evening may not feel that much different from sitting around in the morning, a person burns 10 percent more calories later in the day.

Everyone burns calories no matter what they are doing, even while they are taking a nap.

The human body needs calories and uses them to supply the body with the energy it requires to function properly.

■ Isolation

To find out a little more about our internal calorie-burning capabilities, the researchers carried out a study on seven people. The participants stayed in an isolated laboratory setting that had no windows, clocks, phones, or Internet. This meant they had no clues as to what time of day it was.

Each person was assigned a time to go to bed, and a time to wake up, and throughout the 3-week study, those times were adjusted 4 hours later each day. Essentially, this was comparable with "circling the globe every week."

Since their bodies were not able to settle into a rhythm because they were sleeping and waking at different times every day, they developed their own patterns. The researchers measured their metabolic rate at different times of the day to determine how their bodies dealt with calorie consumption all around the clock.

They discovered that metabolic rate was lowest late during their biological "night," and highest around 12 hours later, in the biological "afternoon and evening."

"The fact that doing the same thing at one time of day burned so many more calories than doing the same thing at a different time of day surprised us," says lead author Kirsi-Marja Zitting of the Division of Sleep and Circadian Disorders at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, both in Boston, MA.

■ Constantly burning calories

Humans burn calories no matter what they do, whether they are sleeping in a bed, walking around the block, or running a marathon.

People take in calories through food and drink and use those calories up by breathing, digesting foods, and with every movement they make. The more a person moves, the more calories they burn.

People often turn to calorie-counting when they are hoping to lose some weight because when a person burns more calories than they take in, they tend to lose weight.

■ What does this mean for us?

Everyone has their own personal resting metabolic rate, which is a measure of how quickly the body uses up energy. The study revealed that this rate fluctuates throughout the day.

If our bodies burn calories a little faster in the afternoon to early evening, it might be a good idea to make lunch the biggest meal of the day instead of dinner.

Jeanne Duffy, also in the Division of Sleep and Circadian Disorders at Brigham and Women's Hospital, says:

"It is not only what we eat, but when we eat — and rest — that impacts how much energy we burn or store as fat. Regularity of habits, such as eating and sleeping, is very important to overall health."

This team plans to study how appetite and the body's response to food differ depending on the time of day. They also want to investigate how sleep — how long and how often a person sleeps — affects their body's response to food.

(Source: *Medical News Today*)

Declaration from the Ministry of Public Health of the Republic of Cuba

The Ministry of Public Health of the Republic of Cuba, committed to the solidarity and humanist principles that have guided Cuba's medical cooperation for 55 years, has been participating in Brazil's "More Doctors" program since its inception in August of 2013.

This initiative launched by Dilma Rousseff, who was at that time the president of the Federal Republic of Brazil, pursued the noble purpose of guaranteeing medical assistance to the majority of the Brazilian people, following the principle of universal health coverage promoted by the World Health Organization.

The program had planned the inclusion of Brazilian and foreign doctors who would work in poor and remote areas of the country.

Cuba's participation in this program was arranged through the Pan-American Health Organization with one distinctive feature: it was intended to fill the vacancies left by doctors from Brazil and other foreign nations.

During these five years of work, some 20,000 Cuban collaborators have assisted 113,359,000 patients in more than 3,600 municipalities. They were able to provide health coverage to a vast 60 million Brazilians, when they accounted for 80% of all the doctors who were taking part in the program. More than 700 municipalities were able to have a doctor for the first time ever.

The work of Cuban doctors in areas of extreme poverty, in the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Salvador de Bahia, and the 34 Special Indigenous Districts, particularly in Amazonia, was widely recognized by federal, state, and municipal governments of that country and its population, 95% of which expressed their acceptance, according to a survey carried out by the Federal University of Minas Gerais at the request of the Ministry of Health of Brazil.

On September 27, 2016, the Ministry of Public Health, in an official statement issued on a day close to the expiration date of the agreement and amidst the events associated to the legislative and judicial coup d'etat against president Dilma Rousseff, announced that Cuba "would continue to honor its agreement with the Pan-American Health Organization for the implementation of the Program More Doctors, provided that the guarantees offered by local authorities were maintained", something that has been so far respected.

Jair Bolsonaro, president elect of Brazil, who has made direct, contemptuous and threatening comments against the presence of our doctors, has declared and reiterated that he will modify the terms and conditions of the Program More Doctors, in full disregard of the Pan-American Health Organization and the agreement reached by this organization with Cuba, since he has questioned the qualification of our doctors and has conditioned their permanence in the program to a process of validation of their titles and established that contracts will only be signed on an individual basis.

The announced modifications impose conditions that are unacceptable and fail to ensure the guarantees that had been previously agreed upon since the beginning of the Program, which were ratified in 2016 with the re-negotiation of the Terms of Cooperation between The Pan-American Health Organization and the Ministry of Health of Brazil and the Cooperation Agreement between the Pan-American Health Organization and the Ministry of Public Health of Cuba. These unacceptable conditions make it impossible to maintain the presence of Cuban professionals in the Program.

Consequently, in the light of this unfortunate reality, the Ministry of Public Health of Cuba has decided to discontinue its participation in the Program More Doctors and has informed so to the Director of the Pan-American Health Organization and the political leaders of Brazil who founded and defended this initiative.

The decision to bring into question the dignity, professionalism and altruism of Cuban cooperation workers who, with the support of their families, are currently offering their services in 67 countries is unacceptable. During the last 55 years, a total of 600 000 internationalist missions have been accomplished in 164 nations, with the participation of 400 000 health workers who, in quite a few cases, have fulfilled this honorable task more than once. Their feats in the struggle against the Ebola virus in Africa, blindness in Latin America and the Caribbean and cholera in Haiti as well as the participation of 26 brigades of the International Contingent of Doctors Specialized in Disaster Situations and Great Epidemics "Henry Reeve" in Pakistan, Indonesia, Mexico, Ecuador, Peru, Chile and Venezuela, among other countries, are worthy of praise.

In the overwhelming majority of the missions that have been accomplished, all expenses have been covered by the Cuban government.

Likewise, 35,613 health professionals from 138 countries have been trained in Cuba at absolutely no cost as an expression of our solidarity and internationalist vocation.

All Cuban cooperation workers have preserved their posts and their full salary in Cuba, together with all due labor and social benefits, just as the rest of the workers of the National Health System.

The experience of the Program More Doctors for Brazil and Cuba's participation in it show that it is indeed possible to structure a South-South Cooperation Program under the auspices of the Pan-American Health Organization in order to promote the achievement of its goals in our region. The United Nations Development Program and the World Health Organization have described it as the main example of good practices in triangular cooperation and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals.

The peoples from Our America and from all over the world know that they will always be able to count on the solidarity and humanistic vocation of our professionals.

The Brazilian people, who turned the Program More Doctors into a social achievement and, from the very beginning, has trusted Cuban doctors, recognized their virtues and appreciated the respect, sensitivity and professionalism with which they have assisted them, will understand who are to be held responsible for our doctors' not being able to continue offering their fraternal contribution in that country.

(Source: *Cuban Embassy*)



Iranian herdsman builds “underground city” to attract travelers



TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — An Iranian herdsman has completed carving an “underground city” with the hope of turning it into a tourist hub in the central Semnan province, Mehr reported on Monday.

Bahram Nik-Eqbal, who is interested in geology, employed hundreds of workers to make the subterranean city within a year in his paternal piece of land.

To have his dream come true, Nik-Eqbal make a citadel on the surface and a residents in the depth of eight to ten meters underground.

The depth has been determined in such a way that assures adequate Oxygen will come through yet it lessens the danger of crumbling.

The subterranean resident includes 15 rooms, each can accommodate 5 people. It also contains other chambers, air ducts, water pipes, storage spaces, and hallways.

There are several underground cities across the country. Just north of Kashan, in the small town of Nushabad, lies a sprawling underground city which dates back to the Sasanian era (224- 651).

Ground broken for cultural center in Khoy



HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Construction of a special cultural center began on Monday in the premises of the Shams-i Tabrizi mausoleum in the northwestern city of Khoy.

A ground-breaking ceremony was conducted with attendance of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization Director Ali-Asghar Mounesan and several local officials, CHTO reported.

The center will be named after and dedicated to Shams-i Tabrizi who was a mentor of the famed Persian poet Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi.

Born in the city of Tabriz, Shams lived together with Rumi in Konya for several years, and has been immortalized in Rumi’s collection of poetry named the “Divan of Shams ad-Din of Tabriz”.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Komodo National Park

Komodo National Park, located in the center of the Indonesian archipelago, between the islands of Sumbawa and Flores, is composed of three major islands (Rinca, Komodo, and Padar) and numerous smaller ones, all of them of volcanic origin.

Located at the juncture of two continental plates, this national park constitutes the “shatter belt” within the Wallacea Biogeographical Region, between the Australian and Sunda ecosystems. The property is identified as a global conservation priority area, comprising unparalleled terrestrial and marine ecosystems and covers a total area of 219,322 ha.



The dry climate has triggered specific evolutionary adaptation within the terrestrial flora that range from open grass-woodland savanna to tropical deciduous (monsoon) forest and quasi cloud forest. The rugged hillsides and dry vegetation highly contrast with the sandy beaches and the blue coral-rich waters.

The most remarkable inhabitant of Komodo National Park is the Komodo Lizard, Varanus komodoensis. These giant lizards, existing no-where else in the world, are of great scientific interest, especially for their evolutionary implications.

Most commonly known as ‘Komodo Dragons’, due to its appearance and aggressive behavior, the Komodo Lizard, is the largest living species of lizard, growing to an average length of 2 to 3 meters.

(Source: UNESCO)

Intl. advertising, forex-based tariffs needed for Iran’s hospitality industry: hotelier

Homa Hotel Group to introduce absolute bargains at weekends

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The managing director of Homa Hotel Group believes that Iranian hotels should be authorized to charge foreign customers with forex-based tariffs as he attaches importance to have attractions advertised in major international media.

Asghar Khayamian told the Tehran Times in a recent interview that “We do need a marketing campaign to have significant presence of international travelers in the country.”

“Affiliated with the Social Security Organization, Homa Hotel Group is a chain of five-star hotels in Tehran, Shiraz, Bandar Abbas and Mashhad, some of which amongst pioneering in the country.”

Briefing the group, he added that the chain gains over 50 years of experience under its belt by the assistance of some 1000 employees.

“Due to the growing numbers of tourists in Mashhad, a second was constructed to provide the guests with optimum level of service.”

He noted that the Tehran Homa Hotel, in an innovative approach, aims to offer absolute bargains at weekends, which could attract many people.

“We anticipate that families would highly welcome the scheme for a change... staying in five-star hotel would be fun, moreover they can benefit from all its facilities and programs that we provide in a bargain price.”

■ Dignified renovations

Khayamian underlined that constant renovation has long been on agenda in such a way that any of the hotels would not be shut due to being renovated.

“We have made over each of our hotels in stages... they should be restored regularly due to the fact that both domestic and foreign guests are sensitive to even the smallest negative points.”

To cite some examples, he said, “For instance, one of our hotels in Mashhad commonly known as Hotel-e Ahmadabad, recently underwent a restoration project in order to seem dignified to its customers... moreover, parts of our hotels in Tehran and Bandar Abbas have been renovated in a situation that they weren’t closed yet didn’t pose any problem for the guests.”

Elsewhere in his remarks, he said that “Of our grand strategies it to make hotels in several [touristic] cities including Isfahan and Hamedan.”

■ Occupancy rates soar in Mashhad hotels not others

The official also referred to occupancy rates of the hotels as he made a comparison between its figures in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started on March 21) and that of the year earlier.

“Dramatic changes in the value of rial [the Iranian currency] have had a significant impact on the tourism sector... occupancy rates of our Mashhad hotels have seen rise particularly by Iraqi travelers but the situation in our other hotels is quite different.”

The holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Shia Imam, in the province’s capital city of Mashhad, attracts thousands of pilgrims each day. The city has also the highest concentration of water parks in the country, and it also embraces variety of cultural and historical sites which are generally crowded.

■ Worldwide advertising required

Managing director of the Homa Hotel Group believes that Iran’s hospitality industry suffers from the lack of appropriate marketing in the global scene, saying “Unfortunately, a misconception is fueled [particularly by some Western media outlets] there is less security in Iran.

“For a potential traveler, certainly, when there is no safety



Asghar Khayamian, the managing director of Homa Hotel Group, speaks to the Tehran Times on November 12, 2018.

“We anticipate that families would highly welcome the scheme for a change... staying in five-star hotel would be fun, moreover they can benefit from all its facilities and programs that we provide in a bargain price.”

factor, the price factor cannot play a decisive role, however if there is a robust sense of security, one can discuss the issue of setting rates and pricing.”

The official explained that tourism and hospitality are widely considered as very sensitive industries, saying “In the current situation, many foreign tourists have a distorted image of Iran in terms of security, recreation and accommodation as long as they haven’t set foot in the country.... on the other hand, such miscalculation induces foreign investors not to risk in our country.”

He went on to stress that constructing hotels and the hospitality industry is considered as interesting yet troublesome business, saying that over the past couple of years, the country’s tourism sector has been faced with some uncertain prospects because at one time the number of passengers sharply increases and later suffers somewhat a recession.

■ In search of new markets

Khayamian also quoted some top travel agency managers who say international package tours have declined over the past couple of months.

“In an attempt to change this status quo, Homa Hotel Group, on its own, is exploring new ideas... We are actively

looking for new markets, for instance, offering special services to medical tourists to meet the growing demands of incoming patients.”

“Iran is famous for wallet-friendly costs and high medical status in this regard.”

The costs of medical treatment in Iran is almost ten times cheaper for international medical travelers in comparison with the U.S. and Europe, Mohammad-Hassan Bani-Asad, the CEO of Tehran’s five-star Gandhi Hotel-Hospital, said in October.

Data from the Health Ministry’s medical tourism department shows that the country hosted more than 300,000 patients in the 2017-2018 financial year, NewsAsia reported.

The official data shows that foreign patients are drawn by affordable treatments and high quality of services. Most of them come from neighboring Iraq, Kuwait, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and some come from as far away as Eastern Europe. Dental procedures, organ transplants, heart surgery and cancer treatments are among the most requested services.

Health officials target a revenue of \$2.5 billion by 2025 from \$500 million that the country now receives.

Economic troubles, Brexit and trade wars may affect travel companies, executives warn

Mediterranean cruises and luxury spa treatments were not the major topics of conversation at the Phocuswright Travel conference in Los Angeles.

Most pressing concern? Changing consumer trends amid economic jitters.

A number of travel executives told CNBC they are bullish on the short term but admitted that the longer-term picture is becoming more uncertain given new industry dynamics and larger political headwinds, such as Brexit and trade wars.

Kayak CEO Steve Hafner told CNBC that bookings look soft to flat going into the holidays.

Other online travel leaders expect consumers to continue to travel, though the type of travel they book may change as concerns

over the economy continue to rise.

“Often what happens is consumers are less willing to book that trip six months from now, twelve months from now. They’re thinking, ‘Let’s wait and see how we’re doing.’ Secondly, we do see more towards domestic travel, away from international. Third is we do see often a trade down, people are spending less. But in a real downturn, sometimes you get a four-star hotel for a three-star price, and so customers are getting better value,” Expedia CEO Mark Okerstrom said to CNBC.

Glenn Fogel, CEO of Booking Holdings, the largest travel operator in the world, admitted there were some areas of uncertainty, pointing to Brexit and the ongoing trade war. However, he said the tight labor market suggests the economy is in a good position and

consumers will continue to spend a portion of their discretionary income on trips.

“Look at the unemployment level in the U.S. It is booming right now. We see people, when they have cash, they want to travel. So while there may be a pocket here and there that’s causing concern, in the long run, the trend for travel is going to be upward,” Fogel said to CNBC.

Brad Gerstner, who manages \$3 billion hedge fund Altimeter Capital, said some of his biggest positions are still in online travel stocks such as Booking Holdings and Expedia.

Gerstner, while cautious on the current market landscape, said history has shown that online travel operators tend to do well amid an economic downturn.

“Ironically, if you look at 2008 and 2011,

Priceline [now known as Booking Holdings] and Expedia actually accelerated in those cycles because hotels become more dependent on them to distribute their products,” Gerstner said to CNBC.

Taking a step back and analyzing the recent stock market downturn, Gerstner characterized it as a “healthy correction ... we’re seeing opportunities.”

Gerstner said Altimeter continues to like Facebook, pointing to its valuation, which he said is at a single-digit multiple.

Looking to the IPO market, while a number of companies have delayed their listings due to the recent bout of stock market volatility, Gerstner still expects Uber to list in the first half of 2019.

(Source: CNBC)

2018 “China-EU Tourism Year” Concludes in Xi’an

XI’AN, China (PRNewswire) — The closing ceremony of the 2018 “China-EU Tourism Year” (CETY) was held in Xi’an, Northwestern China’s Shaanxi Province on November 17. Officials at all levels congratulated and expressed best wishes for the end of the year-long event.

The ceremony was jointly sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China (MCT) and Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs of the European Commission (DG GROW). The Department of Culture and Tourism of Shaanxi Province co-sponsored it.

Yu Qun, committee member of MCT, Zhao Gang, Vice Governor of Shaanxi Province, Lowri Evans, Director General of DG GROW delivered speeches respectively. Diplomatic envoys and representatives of Chinese and European tourism enterprises attended the event.

In his speech, Yu said that the successful implementation of the 2018 CETY and the booming tourism in China and Europe have once again confirmed the love for life among the people in China and Europe, their enthusiasm for exploring the world and their aspiration to understand each other. China is willing to take the event as an opportunity to deepen its cooperation in the field of tourism with the EU and its member states so as to inject new impetus into the development of China-EU relations.



Zhao said the closing ceremony of the 2018 CETY provides the EU and the world with an opportunity to understand and cooperate with Shaanxi. In light of “Belt and Road Initiative”, Shaanxi will continue to promote exchanges and cooperation in tourism with EU countries.

Evans spoke highly of the fruitful achievements of the 2018 CETY, thanked China for its contribution to the successful

implementation, and said she would continue to work with China to lift China-EU relations to a new level.

On January 19, 2018, the 2018 CETY kicked off in Venice, Italy. In the past year, China and the EU have organized more than 100 promotional events in various forms under the framework of the CETY and the events have aroused extensive interest from all sectors in China and Europe.

Laser technology uncovers medieval secrets locked in Alpine ice core, new study finds

A new study has found ground-breaking evidence from an ice core in the Swiss-Italian Alps that proves the 7th century switch from gold to silver currencies in western Europe actually occurred a quarter of a century earlier than previously thought.

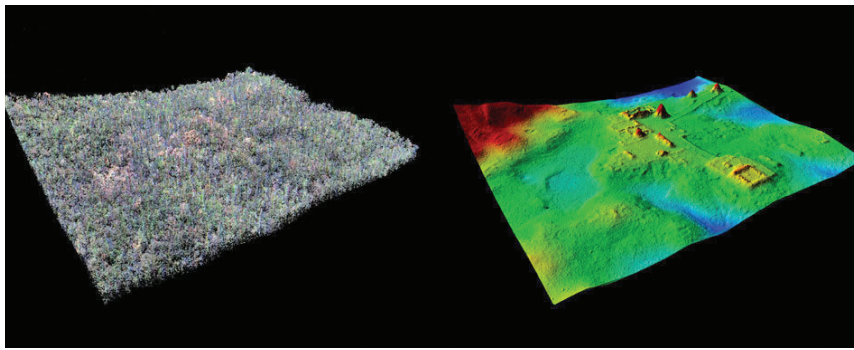
The findings, from the University of Nottingham and which are published in the journal *Antiquity*, will have major implications on the history of the European monetary system, and what we thought we knew about trade and the economy during this period.

The long-standing dating of all events and archaeological remains linked to the old dating of the first silver coinage will also have to change in light of the new study.

During the second half of the 7th century AD the coin-using regions of North West Europe switched from gold to silver currency. This change was a significant point in history and resulted in major social and economic transformations which saw increased long-distance trade and the emergence of major ports and trading centers, such as London and continental counterparts around the Channel and southern North Sea coast.

High-precision technologies

Until now, experts have reported this switch to be between 675 AD and 680 AD –



but using new high-precision technologies, a team of climate scientists, volcanologists, archaeologists and historians working on the 'Historical Ice Core Project' (HICP), have pinpointed definitively that the switch actually happened in 660 AD.

The establishment of the chronology was made possible using ultra-high resolution laser analysis of elements on the

72m-deep ice core from Colle Gnifetti in the Swiss-Italian Alps, drilled in 2013. The laser-based chronology was further refined by linkage to markers of volcanic eruptions, from tephra and other known events. This included the tephra (volcanic glass) from the 536 mega-eruption.

Analysis of the 536 tephra in this study suggests, for the first time, that the me-

ga-eruption occurred on Iceland, with major climate implications for northwest Europe especially. A unique atmospheric modelling program developed at CCI, Climate Re-analyzer, also provides a unique insight on wind directions and origins of the lead pollution (the by-product of silver-mining/smeltering) that was deposited in the Alps.

Professor Christopher Loveluck (lead-author of the *Antiquity* article), from the Department of Classics and Archaeology at the University of Nottingham, said: "We found huge lead pollution peaks in the ice, a by-product of large-scale silver mining and bullion production in the mid-7th century, in AD 640 and 660. The existing gold coinage started to be debased with silver in 640 and was replaced by a new silver coinage in 660, almost simultaneously in France and southeast England."

The team used the unique atmospheric modelling program, and weather data from NASA and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to learn which direction the lead was carried from, with the evidence indicating the mines at Melle in western France, the largest known silver source for Western Europe in the eighth and ninth centuries AD.

(Source: *phys.org*)

The long-standing dating of all events and archaeological remains linked to the old dating of the first silver coinage will also have to change in light of the new study.

Scientists challenging the next generation to put together a new message for aliens



If you're an alien far, far away inside the globular star cluster M13, one day you might receive a radio message from Earth written in binary code.

Decoding it would give you a beautiful 8-bit style picture of some basic human information – including the structure of DNA, a graphic of our Solar System and a picture of a man (minus his head).

44 years after the Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico broadcast that message, the team at Arecibo are hoping to inspire young kids and young adults to create a New Arecibo Message for the next generation.

"Our society and our technology have changed a lot since 1974," says Francisco Cordova, the director of the NSF-funded Arecibo Observatory.

Updated messages from earthlings

"So, if we were assembling our message today, what would it say? What would it look like? What one would need to learn to be able to design the right updated message from the earthlings?"

"Those are the questions we are posing to young people around the world through the New Arecibo Message," he added.

The process won't be a simple one though, the researchers explain; teams of up to 10 students (from kindergarten through to college) will have to decode clues and learn about space science in the process.

After completing a series of projects, the winners will be announced during Arecibo Observatory week in 2019.

The history of the original Arecibo message is pretty amazing. The radio message was approximately three minutes long and was exactly 1,679 binary digits

(picked because it is a semiprime number).

It was aimed at the M13 cluster of stars a casual 25,000 light-years away from Earth. So it'll be a little while before we know if it's arrived or we end up with a response.

At the time, it was known as a bit of a publicity stunt to show off the 1,000 foot (305 meter) diameter Arecibo dish, which was the largest and most powerful at that time.

That being said, it reportedly brought some people that were there to actual tears.

Symbolic event

"It was strictly a symbolic event, to show that we could do it," said Donald Campbell, Cornell University professor of astronomy, who was a research associate at the Arecibo Observatory at the time explained in a blog post on a recent Google Doodle commemorating the event.

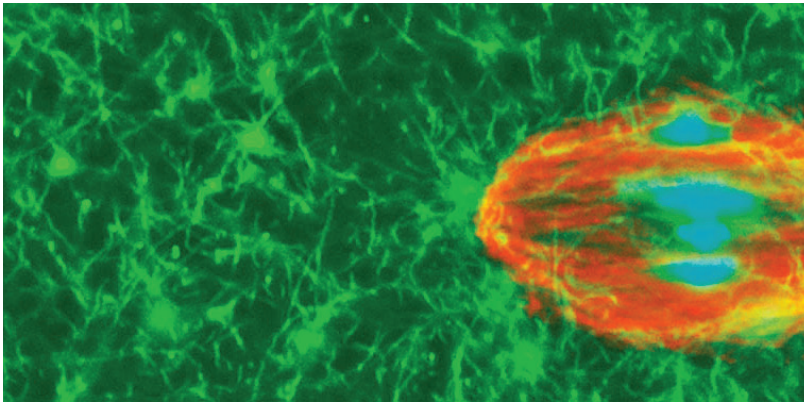
A team of researchers from Cornell University, with assistance from Carl Sagan himself, crafted a message to show our way of counting (decimal), the atomic numbers of the elements that make up DNA.

It then goes on to explain the formulas for the sugars and bases in DNA, as well as a graphic of the DNA helix structure, the population of Earth at the time, and the average height of a man.

We don't know what this New Arecibo message will look like, or even if the winning response will one day be sent to the stars as well - but it sounds like a great way to get the next generation excited about the wonderful Universe beyond our home planet.

(Source: *sciencealert.com*)

Researchers controlling organ growth with light



In optogenetics, researchers use light to control protein activity. This technique allows them to alter the shape of embryonic tissue and to inhibit the development of abnormalities. Now, scientists in EMBL's De Renzis group have enhanced the technique to stop organ-shaping processes in fruit fly embryos. Their results, published in *The EMBO Journal*, allow control over a crucial step in embryonic development.

For healthy development, tissue has to change its shape. For example, groups of cells alter their shape as part of the development of organs. Stefano De Renzis and his team members at EMBL are interested in the mechanisms behind these shape transitions and use optogenetics to steer them with light.

To form internal organs like kidneys, groups of cells must move towards the inside of an embryo. During this process, called invagination, the surface of a group of cells contracts and causes the tissue to fold inwards. "Imagine the embryo as a balloon and tissue invagination as the deformation caused by fingers that push the surface of the balloon inwards."

The process abnormalities

The only difference is that cells are not being subjected to an external force like the fingers, but need to be able to generate forces to move inside by themselves," says De Renzis, who led the project. Abnormalities in this process lead to problems in tissue and organ development.

De Renzis and his group inhibit the naturally occurring invagination process to understand its driving factors. A crucial aspect is the flexibility of the part of the tissue's surface that folds inwards. When

the scientists use optogenetics to stiffen this surface, it becomes impossible for cells to bend inwards, stopping the whole invagination process.

"If cells are not allowed to relax their bases, they cannot constrict their apices efficiently, and tissue invagination stops. To stick with the balloon analogy, it's like when you squeeze the top and the bottom of a balloon simultaneously."

The new method

The inner pressure becomes higher and the balloon can't fold inwards anymore," says De Renzis. With their new method, it is not only possible to stop invagination before it happens, but also to stop it mid-process.

While scientists had speculated about the importance of the tissue's basal (inner) surface before, experimental techniques were not advanced enough to test this. With their new method, the EMBL team can modify protein activity without damaging the cells, while still being able to activate and deactivate the modifications as necessary. Their results provide the first proof for a long-standing theory that could explain morphological abnormalities during embryonic development.

Combined with their previous results, the scientists are now able to control every step of this important developmental process in embryos. Although the experiments were done in fruit fly embryos, De Renzis expects the results and methods to be applicable in other organisms. Optogenetics could be used to create and shape artificial tissues or to control tissue development in regenerative medicine.

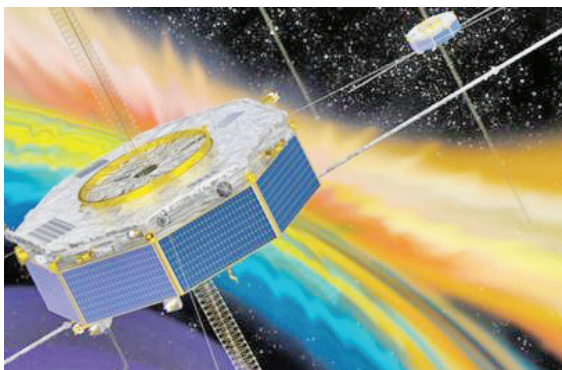
(Source: *eurekalert.org*)

NASA image of merging galaxy clusters looks suspiciously like the USS enterprise

Humanity's current understanding of physics may suggest faster-than-light travel is impossible, but researchers here on Earth can still observe happening in places much too far away to ever actually visit (and generally only what they looked like in the distant past). One of them is a galactic collision that, at least from our planetary vantage point, looks an awful lot like a craft going where no man has ever gone before.

NASA released the above composite image of the galaxy cluster Abell 1033 some 1.62 billion light years away this week, showing wisps of gas that appear to be arranged in the shape of Star Trek's USS Enterprise. NASA wrote that the image was captured by the Chandra X-ray Observatory, an X-ray telescope that detects superheated gases, as well as the Low-Frequency Array, which detects radio emissions.

The image might look calm, but it's the outcome of a cosmic phenomenon releasing incredible amounts of energy. Galaxy clusters are collections of galaxies that are the largest known entities to be held together by gravitational forces, containing both the galaxies themselves and a much larger quantity of superheated gas. Per NASA, Abell 1033 is actually two galaxy clusters that are in the process



of slamming into each other, producing "turbulence and shock waves."

The high-speed particles

In Abell 1033, the collision has interacted with another energetic cosmic process – the production of jets of high-speed particles by matter spiraling into a supermassive black hole, in this case one located in a galaxy in one of the clusters. These jets are revealed by radio emission to

the left and right sides of the image. The radio emission is produced by electrons spiraling around magnetic field lines, a process called synchrotron emission.

The electrons in the jets are traveling at very close to the speed of light. As the galaxy and its black hole moved toward the lower part of the image, the jet on the right slowed down as it crashed into hot gas in the other galaxy cluster.

NASA added that the radio emissions coming from the cluster would normally lose much of their energy as they radiate, becoming undetectable, though the "vastly extended radio emission observed in Abell 1033, extending over about 500,000 light years, implies that energetic electrons are present in larger quantities and with higher energies than previously thought".

Other sources of radio emission in the image besides the starship-shaped object are the shorter jets from another galaxy (labeled "short jets") and a "radio phoenix" consisting of a cloud of electrons that faded in radio emission but was then reenergized when shock waves compressed the cloud. This caused the cloud to once again shine at radio frequencies, as we reported back in 2015.

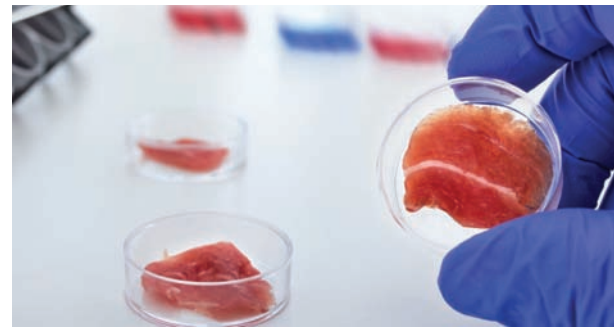
(Source: *gizmodo.com*)

Lab-grown meat gets support, say American authorities

U.S. authorities on Friday agreed on how to regulate food products cultured from animal cells – paving the way to get so-called "lab meat" on American plates.

The Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) agreed to share regulation of cell-cultured food products, they said in a joint statement, following a public meeting in October.

While technical details have yet to be confirmed, the FDA would oversee the collection and differentiation of cells – when stem cells develop to specialized cells – while USDA would oversee production and labeling of food products.



"This regulatory framework will leverage both the FDA's experience regulating cell-culture technology and living biosystems and the USDA's expertise in regulating livestock and poultry products for human consumption," the statement said, adding that the agencies see no need for legislation on the matter.

In fact, several niche "lab-meat" startups already exist, but production costs are very high and nobody has a product that is ready to sell yet.

The backers of "lab meat" argue avoiding slaughtering animals will reduce both suffering and greenhouse emissions – and is a sustainable option to feed growing populations hungry for protein.

"American consumers deserve a wide array of healthy, humane, and sustainable choices," said Jessica Almy, policy director at The Good Food Institute.

But they are locked in disagreement with farming organizations about whether such products can indeed be called "meat."

The authorities have made no statement on that -- but the U.S. Cattlemen's Association welcomed the news.

"USDA is going to oversee labeling, which we are ecstatic about because the FDA does not require pre-market label approval ... before the products hits the shelves," said spokeswoman Lia Biondo.

(Source: *Firstpost*)

Large frozen planet found in star only 6 light-years away

A team of astronomers has presented definitive evidence that an exoplanet orbits Barnard's star. The super-Earth is believed to be located close to the star system's snow line.

Astronomers have, for years, been peering at Barnard's star, one of closest star systems to Earth, looking for signs of an orbiting exoplanet.

However, for years, the search has come up empty. There have been hints of a possible hidden world here and there, but nothing was considered conclusive.

Barnard's star, because of proximity to Earth, is one of the most studied areas within the Milky Way Galaxy. It is a red dwarf located in the constellation called Ophiuchus, just below the Summer Triangle. It is only about six light-years away from Earth.

However, it took more than two decades of observation before someone found definitive evidence that an exoplanet is in orbit around Barnard's star. In a recent investigation led by Ignasi Ribas of the Institute of Space Sciences in Spain, the team used new and archival data sourced from seven instruments across the world. The data included Barnard's star's radial velocity and relative speed toward and away from Earth.

After looking at 20 years' worth of data, the team detected a planet that circles the star every 233 days, a mass at least 3.2 times that of Earth, and an orbital distance similar to that of Mercury to the Sun. Dubbed Barnard's star b, the exoplanet is situated close to its star system's snow line, which suggests that water exists in its frozen form.

The team used the method called radial velocity, which uses the Doppler shifts of a star's light to measure the tug of a nearby planet. This is the first time that astronomers used radial velocity to detect an exoplanet of this size and this far away from its host star.

(Source: *Tech Times*)

Scientists discover how electric fish got their big brains

Researchers have mapped the regions of the brain in mormyrid fish in extremely high detail. The new measurements can help illuminate longstanding questions in neuroanatomy. As brains get bigger, do all regions of the brain scale up in a predictable way? Or does natural selection act independently on separate regions of the brain -- such that certain parts of the brain become enlarged in animals that have extra reasons to use them?

Researchers from Washington University in St. Louis have mapped the regions of the brain in mormyrid fish in extremely high detail.

Helmet-heads of the freshwater fish world, African mormyrid fishes are known for having a brain-to-body size ratio that is similar to humans.

But there's actually a great deal of variation in the size of mormyrid brains. These differences provide an opportunity to look at what's behind the bulk.

Researchers from Washington University in St. Louis have mapped the regions of the brain in mormyrid fish in extremely high detail. In a new study published in the Nov. 15 issue of *Current Biology*, they report that the part of the brain called the cerebellum is bigger in members of this fish family compared to related fish -- and this may be associated with their use of weak electric discharges to locate prey and to communicate with one another.

The size finding in itself is not particularly surprising for those who follow this fish, said Bruce Carlson, professor of biology in Arts & Sciences. "It had almost become a truism," he said. In mormyrids, at least, the thinking went, "big brains mean big cerebellums."

As brains get bigger, do all regions of the brain scale up in a predictable way? Or does natural selection act independently on separate regions of the brain -- such that certain parts of the brain become enlarged in animals that have extra reasons to use them?

(Source: *Science Daily*)

Democrats to change a 181-year-old rule to allow hijab in the House

As they prepare to welcome two newly-elected Muslim women into the 116th Congress, Democrats have proposed a clarification to a 181-year-old rule banning representatives from wearing hats on the House floor.

If approved, the new rules would allow lawmakers to wear religious headwear, like hijabs and kippahs, once Democrats take control of the chamber in January.

Representative-elect Ilhan Omar, one of the first two Muslim women to serve in Congress, wears a headscarf. She was born in Somalia and came to the United States as a refugee.

No one puts a scarf on my head but me. It's my choice—one protected by the first amendment.

And this is not the last ban I'm going to work to lift.

The proposed rule was co-authored by current House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, ranking Democrat on the Rules Committee Rep. Jim McGovern and Omar. It comes as part of the Democrats' new House rules proposal package. The drafted changes promise to "ensure religious expression," by "clarify[ing] in the rules that religious headwear is permitted to be worn in the House chamber."

The current rules, which were implemented in 1837, decree that "every member shall remain uncovered during the sessions of the House." Those rules could be interpreted to disallow Omar from using the head covering she wears as part of her faith.

The rule change comes as part of Democrats' broader promise to "restore inclusion and diversity" in the House.

(Source: TIME)

RECIPE OF THE WEEK Beetroot pancakes

"This is a simple and tasty variation on a South African desert favorite, pancakes with cinnamon sugar. The beet adds a delicious natural sweetness and flavor, and the resulting red color makes this a delight to present to the table."



Ingredients:

- 1 beet, cooked
- 1 cup all-purpose flour, sifted
- 1 cup milk
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon white vinegar (optional)
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1/4 cup white sugar
- 2 oranges, quartered

Directions:

In a blender or food processor, pulse the cooked beet, flour, milk, egg, vegetable oil, and vinegar until smooth. Pour the

batter into a bowl and set aside for 30 minutes. Combine the cinnamon with the sugar and mix well.

Heat an oiled non-stick skillet over medium heat. Pour in enough batter to cover half of the skillet. Tip and rotate the skillet until the batter covers the entire area. Cook until the batter turns from wet to moist, and the edges begin to curl away from the sides of the skillet. Turn the pancake over, and continue cooking until lightly golden on the other side. Place the pancake onto a plate, and cover with a kitchen towel to keep moist. Repeat with the remaining batter, lightly oiling the skillet as needed to keep the pancakes from sticking.

Sprinkle the cinnamon sugar over the pancakes. Roll up the pancakes and serve with the orange quarters.

LEARN ENGLISH Being Scared

Shabby: Eddie, why are we at this **scary looking** mansion? It's like, **ultra spooky**!
Eddie: I told you already Shabby, the owner of the house says there is a ghost **haunting**his house so we have to go in and **investigate**.
Scruffy puffy poo: I don't like this!
Wilma: Come on guys, stop being such **cowards**. It's a **mystery** and an **adventure**!
Shabby: This place **gives me the creeps**! Seriously guys, let's get out of here! I'm getting **goosebumps** just being here!
Scruffy: Shabby is a **scaredy cat**!
Wilma: That laugh came from this room. Let's go and check it out.
Eddie: Look! A ghost! Run!

■ **Key vocabulary**
scary looking: frightening in appearance
mansion: a very large house
ultra: extremely
spooky: strange and a little frightening
haunt: (a ghost) lives or visit a place
investigate: to try and get information about something
coward: someone who is too afraid to do what is right
mystery: an event, situation etc. that people do not understand or cannot explain because they do not know enough about it
adventure: an exciting experience in which dangerous or unusual things happen
give somebody the creep: if a person or place gives you the creeps, they make you feel nervous and a little frightened, especially because they are strange
goosebumps: small bumps on your skin caused by fear, cold, etc.
scaredy cat: someone who is always scared of things
■ **Supplementary vocabulary**
Supernatural: unable to be explained by science
terrifying: extremely scary
creepy: strange or scary (informal)
chilling: very disturbing or frightening
(Source: irlanguage.com)

\$4.7m allocated to 6,500 breadwinner women

W O M E N **TEHRAN** — An amount d e s k of 200 billion rials (around \$4.7 million) has been allocated to 6,500 breadwinner women, Soraya Shareqi, general director for women's and family affairs department of Tehran Governorate said in a press conference here on Monday.

Allocation of subsidies for female entrepreneurs applying for participation in domestic exhibitions, training more than 8,000 members of the NGOs and vulnerable women are among the most important measures made by women affairs department of Tehran Governorate, Mehr news agency quoted her as saying.

Currently the presence of women in management level is impressive and a number of five general managers, two deputy general managers and two prefects are active in Tehran Province, she announced.

Women's self-employed shopping centers, in all of the cities of Tehran Province and launching the website of hamibanoo.ir supporting 800 entrepreneur women is among the achievement of the governorate, Shareqi said.

Female prisoners and women who enjoy supporting social services are among the users of hamibanoo.ir, she stated.

Setting up women's parks in all cities of Tehran Province is another important achievement in the women's field Shareqi said.

Women make up greater share of electronic health records

W O M E N **TEHRAN** — Women d e s k hold a greater share than men of forming electronic health records (EHR), said the deputy health minister, Mohammad Shariati, here on Monday.

EHR is a record of medical and health information saved electronically, Shariati said adding EHR is used in different parts of medical and health system in order to integrating the health information, improve health services and develop the management of the health system.

Out of about 55 million and 300 thousand Electronic Health Records registered in the health sector, 26 million and 500 thousand cases belong to men and 28 million and 800 thousand cases refer to women.

Emphasizing on availability of health services both for men and women in health centers, Shariati reiterated that



Website launched aiming to reduce divorce rate

W O M E N **TEHRAN** — A new d e s k website has been recently launched by Tehran province's welfare department general with the goal of reducing divorce rate in the province.

Tasmim website helps spouses facing problems and disputes, receive counseling, through social workers, psychologists, and family experts.

The website addressed www.tasmim.behzisti.net, aims at leading spouses into compromise and prevent divorce before referring to the police or judiciary system, IRNA quoted Daryoush Bayatnejad, head of Tehran province's welfare department, as saying.

Out of the total number of 3,600 counseling cases formed for control and reduction of divorce during the first 6 months of the current Iranian calendar



year (beginning March 21), 8.5 percent has culminated in compromise, he added.

The website is being run with the co-operation of the Welfare Organization and the judiciary system.

"Child abuse, spousal abuse, sexual harassment abnormalities and addiction are the result of insecure family life that we aim to minimize," emphasized the official.

Women on bikes have right of way in Pakistan, only if they are white

I have been an avid cyclist for over three years and on my cycle, have explored areas of Lahore I would have never seen otherwise.

Needless to say, it is one of my favorite pastimes and has added a lot of positivity to my life.

I quickly realized that this feeling of liberation was something I wanted to share with other women and have since been advocating for the cause and have been managing a group of female cyclists known as Girls on Bikes.

Now, all of that sounds great and has received its fair share of media attention. But, the fact of the matter is that pictures never portray the effort it takes for Pakistani women to get on the road and the strength they need to stay on it.

■ Misogyny on wheels

In March 2017, I had my first terrifying brush with street harassment while cycling.

"Zara smile to karo na, meri taraf hi dekh lo", he kept insisting from behind as I pedaled, legs shaking, through the residential streets in the posh Cavalry Ground area.

Petrified at the prospect of him intercepting me or ramming his motorbike into my cycle, I decided to stay mum and ignore him completely.

Of course, this did not deter the slimy person in the least. He continued: "Hum baat to kar sakte hain na, tum mute ho gae ho, koi jawab to do".

I turned towards Cantt., hoping he would disappear. Flustered, I told the army men at the check post that a man on a motorbike was harassing me.

It made no difference; the miscreant dodged the guards and went straight ahead.

He continued to follow me for another kilometer, spewing filth in broad daylight in one of the most heavily monitored areas of the city.

What I faced was actually nothing compared to what happened to two other women cyclists I know.

On separate occasions, the women were purposely rammed into by groups of men in their vehicles.

The incidents occurred in the upscale Defense Housing Authority and, in both cases, the perpetrators walked away scot-free, leaving the cyclists injured and traumatized.

Street harassment in Pakistan is a serious concern. Women are groped and catcalled regardless of age or clothing.

A female cyclist is the most vulnerable. While on a cycle, all four limbs are engaged and do not easily allow for any action like reaching for a cell phone and, due to slower speed, make it harder to flee the scene.

Harassment is the main factor preventing women from stepping out and also the reason why families are unsupportive of girls taking up cycling.

Harassment does not stop here; it transitions from streets to social media, where photos of Pakistani girls on cycles receive torrential abuse from mostly men.

Moreover, the availability of cycles is also a problem; the old cycle market at Neela Gumbad sells low quality bikes for exorbitant prices.

There is a niche market for buying and selling (often smuggled) cycles online through Facebook groups.

Nonetheless, finding a good cycle is difficult and quite heavy on the pocket with basic models starting at Rs15,000

and high-end racing cycles costing up to a million rupees.

Given these limitations, women comprise between 10% to 20% of the already small cycling community in Pakistan.

Yet, I can safely say that the number of women interested in the activity is growing and even the ones who have faced harassment have not let the experience stop them.

■ Right of way for Westerners only

Recently, a photo of Cynthia Ritchie, an American documentary director/producer based in Pakistan, riding a cycle in Peshawar went viral, with captions appreciating representation of the country in a positive light.

Pakistani feminists and cyclists have multiple issues with this portrayal by the white lady in question.

Pakistanis have a tendency to bend over backwards in their attempts to facilitate Westerners, an effort that lies somewhere between hospitality and a serious post-colonial inferiority complex.

Added to Cynthia's privilege, the photo is performative to the extent of being cringe-worthy. No pedestrian or bystander is in sight as she pedals with ease.

The photo is in no way representative of the concerns and struggles of Pakistani women's attempts to reclaim public space.

To attack Cynthia for completely lacking selfawareness about her privileges would be unfair on my part and, instead, I choose to assume positive intent.

Her experience deserves depiction but the attempt to turn it into how liberated women in Pakistan are left me scratching my head.

(Source: Dawn)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

Specialized center for dialysis, thalassemia patients opens

A specialized medical center was inaugurated in Sirjan, southeastern province of Kerman, on Monday for dialysis patients as well as patients with thalassemia. The center is stretching over 900 square meters land area, Sirjan Medical Sciences University chancellor has said, adding that 600 square meters of the center is allocated to dialysis patients and the rest is for patients with thalassemia. Construction and equipping the medical center cost 50 billion rials (nearly \$1.2 million), IRNA quoted Masoud Mohammadi as saying. The budget to build and equip the hospital was allotted by the government as well as philanthropists, Mohammadi added.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-ard”

■ **Meaning**: a person who does an action
■ **For example**: Ben's a real **wizard** at chess.

PHRASAL VERB

Boil down

■ **Meaning**: if a food or liquid boils down, or if you boil it down, it becomes less after it is cooked
■ **For example**: Spinach tends to boil down a lot.

IDIOM

Storm is brewing

■ **Explanation**: there is going to be trouble or emotional upset
■ **For example**: He looks angry. A storm is brewing.

افتتاح مرکز جامع بیماران تالاسمی و دیالیزی در سیرجان

مرکز جامع بیماران خاص برای بیماران تالاسمی و دیالیزی در سیرجان امروز (دوشنبه) افتتاح شد و به بهره برداری رسید.

رئیس دانشکده علوم پزشکی سیرجان در مراسم افتتاح این طرح درمانی گفت: مرکز یاد شده در ۹۰۰ مترمربع زیربنا ساخته شده که ۶۰۰ مترمربع آن به بخش دیالیز و ۳۰۰ مترمربع دیگر به بخش تالاسمی اختصاص یافته است.

به گفته مسعود محمدی ساخت و تجهیز این مرکز ۵۰ میلیارد ریال هزینه در برداشته است. وی افزود: این هزینه ها از محل کمک خیرین و اعتبارات دولتی تامین شده است.

May sticks to Brexit deal as opponents seek formal challenge

May's rivals 6 letters short of no confidence vote

British Prime Minister Theresa May vowed on Monday to stick to her draft European Union divorce deal as dissenting lawmakers in her own party tried to trigger a leadership challenge.

Since striking a deal with the EU on Tuesday, May has faced the most perilous crisis of her premiership with several ministers resigning, including her Brexit minister.

May has pledged to fight on, warning that toppling her risks delaying Britain's exit from the EU or leaving without a deal, a step that could thrust the world's fifth largest economy into the unknown.

"We have in view a deal that will work for the UK and, let no one be in any doubt, I am determined to deliver it," May said in a speech to Britain's premier business lobby, the CBI, to loud applause. "We are not talking about political theory but the reality of people's lives and livelihoods."

"While the world is changing fast, our geography is not: Europe will always be our most proximate goods market, and ensuring we have free-flowing borders is crucial," May said, citing the importance of the automotive industry.

The EU is due to hold a summit to discuss the draft deal on Nov. 25. Some Brexit-supporting ministers are reported to want to rewrite parts of it, though Germany has ruled this out.

The EU's Brexit negotiator, Michel Barnier, said the draft deal was "fair and balanced".

May said she wanted any Brexit transition, during which Britain will remain a member in all but name, to have ended by the time of the next national election, due in 2022.

■ **Brexit "wrecking ball"**

More than two years after the United



Kingdom voted to leave the EU, it is still unclear how, on what terms or even if it will leave as planned on March 29, 2019.

Many business chiefs and investors fear politics could scupper an agreement, thrusting the economy into a no-deal Brexit that they say would weaken the West, spook financial markets and silt up the arteries of trade.

CBI President John Allan said such a Brexit would be a "wrecking ball" for Britain's economy while CBI Director-General Carolyn Fairbairn said politicians were playing a high-stakes game that could lead to an accidental 'no-deal' departure.

"Surely, surely, we can do better than this," she said.

Asked about the unpopularity of her deal among many in her party, May said voters

should listen to business.

However, rebels in her own Conservative Party who say the deal will leave Britain in indefinite subjugation to the EU are attempting to trigger a vote of no confidence in her leadership.

The chairman of the party's "1922 Committee", Graham Brady, said on Sunday the threshold of 48 letters from lawmakers had not yet been reached. He also said if there were a vote, May would win.

The Sun newspaper said the rebels were six letters short.

One of them, Simon Clarke, told BBC radio: "This day must be the point at which ... action is taken."

May's biggest challenge will be getting the deal through parliament. The DUP, a

small Northern Irish party that props up her minority government, has threatened to pull its support because the deal could end up treating Northern Ireland differently from the rest of the United Kingdom.

Also speaking at the CBI conference, opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn was set to describe the deal as "a botched, worst-of-all-worlds deal which is bad for Britain, leaving the country in an indefinite halfway house without a real say".

Corbyn, who has said his party will oppose May's deal in parliament, was due to say Labour's plan for Brexit would include a new, comprehensive and permanent customs union, and a "strong single-market relationship".

"The government is trying to force a bad deal that doesn't meet our country's needs by threatening us all with the chaos and serious damage to our economy of a no deal outcome," an advance text of his speech said.

■ **May's rivals 6 letters short of no confidence vote**

Opponents of British Prime Minister Theresa May are six letters short of the threshold to trigger a no confidence vote, The Sun newspaper reported.

The Sun said that 42 lawmakers in May's Conservative Party had given firm assurances that they had submitted no confidence letters, short of the 48 needed.

The Sun said 25 had publicly declared they have submitted letters while a further 17 have privately said they have written to Graham Brady, who collects a list of names anonymously in his role as chairman of the Tory 1922 committee.

(Source: agencies)

Pakistan PM Imran Khan lashes out at Trump 'tirade'

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday lashed out at U.S. President Donald Trump following his remarks that Pakistan doesn't "do a damn thing" for the United States despite billions of dollars in U.S. aid for the South Asian nation.



The friction threatens to further worsen already fragile relations between Islamabad and Washington, on-off allies who have repeatedly clashed about the war in Afghanistan and Pakistan's alleged support for extremist militants.

Khan, who assumed power in August and is known for his fiery anti-American rhetoric, said in a series of tweets that "record needs to be put straight on Mr. Trump's tirade against Pakistan" over the weekend.

Trump, during a Fox News TV interview aired on Sunday, defended cutting aid to Islamabad and also suggested Pakistani authorities knew Osama bin Laden's location prior to his killing by U.S. troops in a raid inside Pakistan in 2011.

Pakistan denies supporting Afghan Taliban insurgents waging war against U.S.-backed troops in Afghanistan and Islamabad has also always rejected claims officials aided former al-Qaeda leader bin Laden.

"Instead of making Pakistan a scapegoat for their failures, the U.S. should do a serious assessment of why, despite 140,000 NATO troops plus 250,000 Afghan troops & reportedly \$1 trillion spent on war in Afghanistan, the Taliban today are stronger than before," Khan tweeted.

Trump, in a pre-recorded interview, said bin Laden had been living in "a nice mansion" in Pakistan next to a military academy and "everybody in Pakistan knew he was there".

"And we give Pakistan \$1.3 billion a year. ... (bin Laden) lived in Pakistan, we're supporting Pakistan, we're giving them \$1.3 billion a year - which we don't give them anymore, by the way. I ended it because they don't do anything for us, they don't do a damn thing for us."

Khan said Pakistan had borne the brunt of the United States' war on terror, which focused on militants that straddle the Afghanistan-Pakistan tribal belt.

"No Pakistani was involved in 9/11 but Pak decided to participate in U.S. War on Terror," Khan said. "Pakistan suffered 75,000 casualties in this war & over \$123 bn was lost to economy. U.S. 'aid' was a minuscule \$20 bn."

Khan also pointed out that Pakistan continued to provide its roads and air space for the re-supply for more than 10,000 U.S. troops currently based in Afghanistan.

"Can Mr. Trump name another ally that gave such sacrifices?" (Source: Reuters)

French fuel depots targeted as 'yellow vest' protesters persist

Protesters angry over high fuel prices blocked access to fuel depots and stopped traffic on major roads on Monday after the government refused to back down on fuel taxes after a weekend of demonstrations across France.

More than 400 people were injured during the "yellow vest" protests which began Saturday with nearly 300,000 participants country-wide.



Early Monday, dozens of barricades were still being manned on motorways and roundabouts, but far fewer than the more than 2,000 sites on Saturday and 150 on Sunday.

Other protesters continued to camp out in supermarket parking lots. "The movement is not exceptional... and obviously isn't as big as on Saturday," Laurent Nunez, junior interior minister, told CNews, adding that police would continue to intervene to ensure major roads are not blocked.

A handful of skirmishes were reported overnight, including in the northern port city of Calais where an Australian truck driver was detained after trying to force his way through a barricade.

A British motorist was also detained trying to break through a barricade in Calais. The grassroots movement emerged on social media last month over a surge in fuel prices this year, in particular for diesel, which many blame on taxes implemented in recent years as part of France's anti-pollution fight.

It quickly snowballed into a broader protest over stagnant spending power under President Emmanuel Macron.

"I earn 500 euros (\$570) a month -- how do you expect me to live on that? With what I earn I can only allow myself one meal a day," said Jean-Luc, a 57-year-old protesting in Calais.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe said Sunday night that the government had heard the anger, but that it would maintain the fuel taxes, which are set to increase again in January. Last week the government unveiled a 500 million euro package of measures to help low-income households, including energy subsidies and higher scrappage bonuses for the purchase of cleaner vehicles.

But even some lawmakers in Macron's Republic on the Move (LREM) party are urging the government to do more to help ease fuel and energy costs as winter approaches.

"We need to maintain environmental taxes, (Philippe) is right to reiterate this, but we also need more measures to assist the French, especially the middle classes and the less well off," LREM lawmaker Matthieu Orphelin told RFI radio on Monday.

(Source: Daily Star)

Israel PM snubs calls for early polls

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has rejected calls for early elections as "irresponsible," although pressure from his coalition partners could bring down his government and make the polls inevitable.

In a televised address from Tel Aviv on Sunday, he urged his coalition partners to show "responsibility" at a time that Tel Aviv was "facing security challenges." Israel's "security is above political consideration," he alleged.

"We will defeat our enemies and I do not minimize the challenges that are facing us," the premier noted.

Earlier in the day, a meeting between Netanyahu and Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon aimed at resolving a coalition crisis ended "without results" and they will meet again this week, Kahlon's spokesman said. "The meeting between the finance minister and the prime minister ended without results," the spokesman said in a statement. "The two agreed to meet later in the week."

Netanyahu's crisis further deepened after the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, which rules the Tel Aviv-blockaded territory of the Gaza Strip, started to return the Israeli military's back-to-back incursions with rocket fires against the city of Ashkelon in southern Israel.

The group has warned the regime against testing the limits of its retaliatory capacity, threatening to hit Tel Aviv next.

-----What prompted the crisis?

On Wednesday, Israeli Minister for Military Affairs Avigdor Lieberman resigned over a ceasefire deal with Gaza.

Lieberman's withdrawal along with his Yisrael Beiteinu party depleted the government's parliamentary majority to a one-seat edge in the 120-seat legislature.

Netanyahu now holds Lieberman's portfolio, but Education Minister Naftali Bennett's far-right Jewish Home party has threatened to withdraw from the coalition if he was not given the post.

On Saturday, Bennett, whose party has eight seats,

told Israeli television that Lieberman had "collapsed the government." "There is no more government and we are heading towards elections," he said.

Also on Saturday, Finance Minister Moshe Kahlon said he did not think it was possible to continue with the existing coalition.

"If [Netanyahu] pulls a rabbit out of his hat, we'll see," said Kahlon, whose center-right Kulanu party holds 10 seats. "Meanwhile, I don't see a rabbit or a hat," he added.

Formal elections are not due until November 2019. Netanyahu separately faces a credibility crisis among Israelis, who have been holding weekly protests for months on end, calling for his resignation over four high-profile cases of fraud.

■ **Research finds 70% of Israeli politicians' statements false; Netanyahu on top**

A new study has revealed that more than 70 percent of statements by senior Israeli politicians are false, putting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on top of the list of those who uttered fake news.

The study carried out by Yifat Media Check Ltd. and Hamashrokit - "The Whistle" fact-checking NGO - found that most statements made by top Israeli politicians in the past year were either totally or mostly wrong.

The study showed that representatives of coalition parties have a higher tendency to make false statements as 74 percent of their statements were found to be false, 12 percent were partially true and only 14 percent were true.

The political lie that got the most press coverage (7 million exposures on regular and social media outlets) belongs to Netanyahu who has made numerous unsubstantiated allegations against Iran's nuclear program.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran has continued to implement all its commit-



ments under the 2015 nuclear deal even as the United States reimposed sanctions against Tehran.

Israel's Interior Minister Arye Deri was in the second place in the list of the speakers of fake news.

According to the report, the main problem with false news is that when it is broadcast on established media, it is granted a higher degree of credibility.

The research found that Netanyahu's false remarks on Iran were considered as credible by 88 percent of readers and viewers in Israel.

"This study indicates that politicians know they won't have to pay a price in the established media for their inaccuracies," Tehilla Schwartz-Altschuler, head of the Democracy in the Information Age program at the Israel Democracy Institute, said.

"If 75 percent of what they say is just not true, and the established media continues to serve this institution known as 'press release' and to be the government's mouthpiece -- we're in real trouble."

(Source: agencies)

UNRWA says budget deficit slashed after EU input

The United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees said Monday that it has dramatically reduced its budget shortfall despite U.S. funding cuts, after Persian Gulf and EU contributions.

"You are all aware how difficult this year has been for UNRWA in particular following the unexpected decision by the U.S. to cut \$300 million this year of UNRWA's income," Commissioner Gen. Pierre Krahenbuhl told a news conference in Jordan.

At the start of 2018, the UN agency faced a \$446 million budget deficit, he said.

But after mobilizing to tackle the unprecedented financial crisis caused by the U.S. cuts, "we have now reduced the shortfall ... to \$21 million," he added.

"This is a very encouraging result at the end of a lot of work," he told reporters after meeting with the agency's advisory commission in Sweimeh on the Jordanian shore of the Dead Sea.

Krahenbuhl thanked in particular Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Qatar, saying they had helped plug the deficit by contributing \$50 million each.

Their combined contribution of \$200 million "is almost half of the total amount that we mobilized this year," Krahenbuhl said, adding that aid also poured in from the European Union.

The United States, which was by far the biggest contributor to UNRWA, announced in August that it would no longer fund the agency.

The administration of President Donald Trump has backed Israel in accusing UNRWA of perpetuating the Middle East conflict by perpetuating the idea that

millions of Palestinians are refugees with a right to return to homes in what is now Israel.

Aside from cutting funds to UNRWA, the Trump administration has also cut \$200 million in bilateral aid to the Palestinians for projects in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Set up after Israel's creation in 1948, UNRWA has provided aid to millions of Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinian territories.

(Source: AFP)

Infighting between pro-Turkey militants kills 25 in Syria

At least 25 militants have been killed in an "unprecedented" infighting between pro-Turkey groups over influence in Syria's northern town of Afrin, a pro-opposition monitoring group says.

The Turkish army and the so-called Free Syrian Army units which are backed by Ankara established full control over Afrin in March after more than two months of battles with U.S.-backed militants.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said on Sunday that clashes between the majority of the pro-Ankara militants and a group of about 200 fighters in several districts had left 25 dead.

According to the Britain-based group, the 200 militants were accused of "disobeying" Turkish troops and "committing abuses."

Observatory head Rami Abdul Rahman described the heavy clashes as "unprecedented since the rebels seized

Afrin."

"The clashes provoked terror among civilians," he said, adding that "Turkish tanks are patrolling the streets of the town."

The fighting comes amid a curfew imposed by Turkish forces stationed in Afrin on civilians since Saturday evening, according to the observatory.

The United Nations and human rights groups, including Amnesty International, have documented widespread abuses since the capture of the northern city by the Ankara-backed militants.

Turkey-led forces reportedly went on a rampage in Afrin, pillaging shops and homes after capturing the city.

According to a report by the UN Commission of Inquiry, half of the enclave's 320,000 residents fled and most are unable to return.

Turkey began the so-called Operation Olive Branch against

Afrin on January 20 to cleanse the northern Syrian border of US-backed Kurdish militants whom it associates with the homegrown Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) fighting for autonomy on Turkish soil.

The Turkish operation was launched without permission from the Syrian government. It has also pitted Ankara against Washington, which supports the Kurdish militants.

On Saturday, Turkey's Defense Minister Hulusi Akar expressed indignation at photos showing U.S. troops dining with Kurdish militants near the Turkish border in Syria.

The U.S. has been arming and training Kurdish militants under the banner of helping them fight the Daesh terror group, but Syria and several other countries see ulterior motives behind the deployment.

(Source: Press TV)

Briegel: Guardiola is responsible for the crisis in German football

Former Germany international Hans Peter Briegel believes that Pep Guardiola's football philosophy is behind the current crisis for Joachim Low's team.

Germany bowed out early at the World Cup and never looked convincing while they have also struggled since.

"It is his (Guardiola's) fault, he cheated us by saying it was sufficient to win by having 75% of possession," said Briegel.

"It isn't the case, in football the result is far more important than controlling the play. To have the ball is not sufficient in order to win. France gave a clear indication of that by winning the World Cup.

"You can even win by returning to a more traditional style of play, what is important is not the quality of the football but having equilibrium."

Briegel added that he felt that Germany was passing through what was on a "transitional" period.

(Source: Marca)

Rider banned for pulling Stefano Manzi brake lever to return

Italian rider Romano Fenati, who was banned for pulling a rival's brake lever while travelling at 135mph during a race, is set to return next season.

Fenati grabbed the brake lever of compatriot Stefano Manzi, who briefly lost his balance before regaining control, during the San Marino Moto2.

The 22-year-old will return to his former team, the Marinelli Snipers, who had sacked him after the incident.

Fenati will compete in the Moto3 World Championship, a demotion from Moto2.

The news was confirmed as the sport released its provisional riders list for the 2019 season.

After the incident in September, Fenati apologised for a "disgraceful gesture" and Giovanni Castiglioni, president of rival team Agusta, described it as "the most dangerous act of behaviour" he had seen. The International Motorcycling Federation (FIM) had withdrawn his licence until the end of 2018, meaning any potential return would not be until 2019.

Fenati has 10 Moto3 race wins in his career, and has reached the podium 23 times.

(Source: BBC)

Australia football picks new chairman after FIFA battle

Australia's football governing body elected a new chairman and several board members Monday as it drew a line under its long-running reform battle with FIFA.

The end of Steven Lowy's chairmanship comes after football's world governing body successfully pushed Football Federation Australia into democratic reforms, and marks the end of his family's more than decade-long grip on the body.

Chris Nikou, a lawyer, was elected by the board to replace the outgoing Lowy, who chose not to stand again amid the reform push which had seen FIFA threaten to take over the federation.

Following a period of turbulence over the reforms in recent months, the FFA adopted an expanded new congress in October to include A-League clubs, the footballers' association and a women's council.

The move was opposed by Lowy, the son of Westfield shopping-mall tycoon and former long-time FFA boss Frank Lowy, who said the move could hand the A-League's foreign owners too much power. He finally threw in the towel in August, paving the way for new leadership. Nikou, a former chairman of Football Federation of Victoria, was re-elected onto the board alongside three others including women's football pioneer Heather Reid, who was chosen as vice-chair.

The board election signalled the end of an era for the FFA. It is the first time in more than a decade that no-one from the powerful Lowy family is at its helm.

(Source: AFP)

S. Korean judoka suspended over military service claim

An Olympic silver medal-winning judoka was expelled from South Korea's national training centre Monday and suspended from a Grand Slam event after being accused of fabricating documents for his military service exemption.

Nearly every able-bodied South Korean man aged 18 to 28 owes 21 months of military service by law, but Olympic medal winners and Asian Games champions are granted special exemptions.

However they are still required to complete basic military training of up to 60 days, as well as 544 hours of sports-related community service.

An Ba-ul, who won silver at the 2016 Rio Olympics, submitted documents purporting to show he had completed 300 hours of community service between November 2016 and July this year.

But South Korea's YTN news channel reported discrepancies: An said he carried out community service at a school on the same day he attended an open training session at the national training centre. The Korea Judo Association (KJA) said it had expelled An from the centre and barred him from representing South Korea at a Grand Slam event in Osaka, Japan this week.

"We still need to review the case for further measures," a KJA official told AFP. Earlier this month, South Korean footballer Jang Hyun-soo was banned from the national team for life by the Korea Football Association for submitting false documents for his military exemption.

South Korea has recently hinted at a possible reform of its controversial military service exemption programme, which critics say unfairly rewards athletes and artists for their one-off achievements.

(Source: AP)

Zverev stuns Djokovic to claim ATP Finals title

Twenty four hours after being booed for having the audacity to take down a tennis great, Alexander Zverev returned to topple another one as he stunned Novak Djokovic to win the ATP Finals title on Sunday.

Zverev, billed as the player most likely to lead the sport into a new golden era once the holy trinity of Roger Federer, Djokovic and Rafael Nadal have hung up their rackets, took full advantage of an off-key Serb to win 6-4 6-3.

Hamburg-born Zverev had been shamefully booed and heckled on Saturday by a Federer-worshipping crowd having beaten the six-time champion after a controversial second-set tiebreak.

Against world number one Djokovic, however, the 18,000 fans wedged into the cavernous O2 arena were roaring their support as he produced a level of tennis his opponent could not match. He struck 20 winners to Djokovic's seven — the last of which was a backhand to end a one hour and 19 minute duel.

"I really can't describe it. It is the biggest title I have ever won," Zverev said on court after becoming the first German to win the ATP's most prestigious title — often referred to as 'the fifth slam' — since Boris Becker in Frankfurt in 1995.

In becoming the youngest ATP Finals champion since Djokovic, also 21, in 2008, Zverev sent out a clear message that he is ready to spend a considerable amount of time at tennis' top table and start accumulating the game's biggest prizes.

Djokovic, whose error-strewn display was a shock after a dominant week in south east London which included an easy round-robin win over Zverev, sportingly walked around the net to congratulate his conqueror after match point — the German still laying on his back in a state of disbelief.

Later, Djokovic told reporters: "There's a lot of similarities in terms of trajectory of professional tennis, in our careers. Hopefully he can surpass me.

"There's a lot of time ahead of him. (I) Wish him to stay healthy and obviously win a lot of titles."

Zverev, younger brother of Tour pro Mischa and now coached by eight-times major champion Ivan Lendl, is yet to go past the quarter-finals of a Grand Slam.



■ NATURAL FLAIR

That is still the test next year but on Sunday he displayed an added sense of maturity, to go with the natural flair and easy power that have marked him out as a future number one.

His forehand, often regarded as a weakness, was armour-plated and he showed a refreshing willingness to attack the net — a skill he perhaps has learned from his brother.

Most impressive was that he often prevailed in the long, attritional baseline rallies in which Djokovic has used as the foundation for 14 Grand Slam titles.

Uninspiring Spain end difficult year with win over Bosnia



Spain returned to winning ways after two straight defeats by overcoming Bosnia & Herzegovina 1-0 in a stale international friendly on Sunday as midfielder Brais Mendez came off the bench to score on his debut for the national team.

Spain had learnt several hours before kickoff that they had missed out on reaching the semi-finals of the UEFA Nations League due to England beating Croatia 2-1 in London.

They seemed affected by the news as they played with little spark or imagination until Mendez tapped in from close range to settle the game.

Having lost 3-2 away to Croatia on Thursday and to England by the same scoreline in October to leave their Nations League fate out of their own hands, coach Luis Enrique used the occasion to give a chance to his second string players.

Chelsea goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga came in for the much-criticised David de Gea and Espanyol defender Mario Hermoso

made his international debut, while Isco wore the captain's armband in his 35th appearance for Spain.

Spain dominated possession throughout the game but struggled to create decent chances, with Isco and Marco Asensio taking turns in the first period to try their luck with long range shots which rarely bothered Bosnia goalkeeper Ibrahim Sehic.

Alvaro Morata missed a glorious chance to break the deadlock early in the second half when Sehic parried a shot from Asensio at his feet, but the Chelsea forward failed to properly strike the ball and missed the target.

Spain's eventual breakthrough came from another rebound, when 21-year-old Mendez pounced first on a loose ball as Sehic failed to hold a ground shot from Isco.

The goal gave a much-needed lift to the crowd in Las Palmas and allowed Spain to at least round off what has been an eventful and difficult 2018 with a victory.

(Source: Eurosport)

Croatia boss says 'football's coming home' very soon after loss to England



Croatia manager Zlatko Dalic said he believes "football's coming home" very soon after his side were beaten 2-1 by England in their UEFA Nations League group finale.

England's bright start was undone when Andrej Kramaric's deflected effort gave Croatia the lead with their first shot on target early in the second half, but Gareth Southgate's men pulled off a stirring comeback to secure a place in the Nations League final four next summer.

Jesse Lingard, on as a substitute, poked in an equaliser after Harry Kane had controlled Kyle Walker's long throw and Kane then sent Wembley into raptures by steering Ben Chilwell's inviting free kick beyond Lovre Kalinic.

When asked how this England team compared to the one his side knocked out of the World Cup semifinals in July, Dalic simply smiled: "Football's coming home... very soon."

Unlike in the World Cup semifinal

meeting between the two teams in Moscow last summer, it was England who enjoyed the majority of possession and created a greater number of scoring opportunities, but Modric did not seem as convinced as his manager that Southgate's men have gone up a level in the last four months.

"I don't know," he replied when asked if England have improved. "That's maybe more a question for them to assess if they are improving or not. I see them as a good team, a young team. They have a bright future in front of them. They are in the final four of this UEFA Nations League and it's showing that they are in a good way."

Modric and his Croatia teammates stoked their rivalry with England following their World Cup triumph by claiming they felt disrespected by the words of English pundits ahead of the game, as well as the "football's coming home" slogan used by Southgate's team and their supporters.

(Source: ESPN)

Powerful sheikh steps aside from IOC after forgery charge

World sport powerbroker Sheikh Ahmad al-Fahad al-Sabah said he was "temporarily" stepping aside from his International Olympic Committee duties on Monday after the Kuwaiti was charged with forgery in Switzerland.

The Kuwaiti, one of the most influential figures in international sport, said he "strenuously denies any wrongdoing", calling the allegations "maliciously motivated by political factions within Kuwait".

Sheikh Ahmad said he would put his work with the IOC on hold until he had been investigated by the body's ethics commission.

"Sheikh Ahmad has today decided to step aside temporarily from his roles and responsibilities as an IOC member and chairman of Olympic Solidarity Commission, pending the outcome of an IOC Ethics Commission hearing," said a statement from his office.

The decision came after it was revealed at the weekend that Sheikh Ahmad and four other men -- three of them lawyers -- had been charged over an intricate forgery scheme linked to his efforts to prove that Kuwait's former prime minister and speaker of parliament were guilty of coup-plotting and corruption.

The Sheikh is a long-time IOC member who is close to the body's president Thomas Bach, and also head of the powerful Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC), and chair of the Olympic Solidarity Commission



in charge of distributing millions of dollars to help athletes.

The aim of the alleged forgery, according to the Swiss charge sheet seen by AFP, was to legitimise suspicious video recordings Sheikh Ahmad had presented in Kuwait as evidence of corrupt practices by ex-premier Sheikh Nasser Mohammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah and former parliament chief Jassem al-Khorafi.

■ 'Politically motivated'

Sheikh Ahmad, a senior member of Kuwait's ruling family and a former energy and economy minister, said he had material evidence that the senior ex-officials plotted a coup and stole tens of billions of dollars of public funds.

He presented video recordings to back up his claims,

but their authenticity was contested.

According to the charges, Sheikh Ahmad is accused of orchestrating a complex set-up, in which he ceded the broadcast rights of the videos to Delaware firm Trekell, which allegedly is a shell company.

"It was discovered that the company was a company that does not exist, that has no structure," Pascal Maurer, a lawyer for former Kuwaiti prime minister Nasser al-Sabah, told AFP.

That did not stop Trekell from filing a lawsuit claiming the videos were fake, allowing an arbitration to be set up.

In the arbitration case, a judge signed a ruling stating that the videos were authentic, and received a 10,000-Swiss-franc (\$10,000, 8,700-euro) payment in return, according to the charge sheet.

Sheikh Ahmad then attempted to use the Swiss court ruling as evidence that the voices heard in the recordings were those of the two former officials.

"The only aim of this arrangement was to be able to create a fictitious lawsuit between Ahmad al-Fahad al-Sabah and Trekell Group LLC with the goal of launching a fake arbitration," the charge sheet said.

The case against Sheikh Ahmad, who like Sheikh Nasser is a nephew of Kuwait's ruler, Emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, is set to go before the Geneva court next year.

(Source: AFP)

Iran football in chaotic situation

By Masoud Hossein

TEHRAN — With less than two months to go before the AFC Asian Cup 2019 starts, Iran football faces so many challenges which can hurt Team Melli's preparation for the biggest continent's competition.

Last week, the Asian Football Confederation warned Iran they could face sanctions over government interference in their national football association.

It follows the Iranian parliament passing a law barring the employment of retirees in government, state or public institutions which use state funds or facilities.

Local media reported that the law applied to the current president of the Iranian Football Federation (FFIRI) Mahdi Taj and a number of other board members.

The AFC said in a statement issued late Tuesday that they were "closely monitoring the current issues" and that the FFIRI stressed that it was a non-governmental organization.

Moreover, Iran faces economic hardship as a result of the re-imposition of the sanctions in which Team Melli cannot arrange the warm-up matches with the strong teams due to financial terms.

Iran coach Carlos Queiroz and Persepolis (most popular football team in Iran) trainer Branko Ivankovic have not solved their problems after months and it seems there is no obvious solution since there has been complete neglect and mismanagement by the football federation over the issue.

The coaches' problematic situation has affected the fans as Team Melli friendly match against Trinidad and Tobago was attended by just 2,000 spectators in Tehran's Azadi



Stadium.

The Iranian fans have never seemed more divided.

After the match, Queiroz's assistant Oceano da Cruz attacked an Iranian journalist and the bust-up immediately went

viral on social media. Queiroz also opted to interview with a reporter from Trinidad and Tobago in locker room instead of participating in post-match news conference.

Iranian reporters boycotted Queiroz's conference on Sunday in response to this.

Forty-two years have passed since Team Melli last won the AFC Asian Cup – too long for such a giants of the Asian game – and Queiroz is determined to end title drought; however the chaotic situation has overshadowed what needs to be done.

IPL: Persepolis come from behind to beat Paykan



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Persepolis came from behind to defeat Paykan 2-1 in Iran Professional League (IPL) here on Monday.

In the match was attended by 15,000 spectators at the Azadi Stadium, Shahin Saghebi gave the visiting team the lead with three minutes before the half time.

Kamal Kamyabinia was on target with a header in the 77th minute.

Ali Alipour scored the winner in

the 79th minute with a powerful shot. "I am very satisfied with this win because we faced shortage of players," Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic said in the post-match news conference. "I enjoyed my team's performance. We put our opponents under pressure despite our players' tiredness," he added.

Persepolis are fourth in the IPL table with 20 points, six points behind leaders Padideh.

Iran's Esteghlal Khuzestan face points deduction



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian top-flight football team Esteghlal Khuzestan have been fined by FIFA for not paying salary of their Brazilian midfielder Deyvid Sacconi.

The Alvaz based football team were docked six points and are also facing a FIFA transfer ban for debt to the player.

Esteghlal Khuzestan sit at the bottom of the Iran Professional League table with four points after 12 weeks.

Iranian football clubs Padideh and

Siahjamegan faced point deduction over the past year.

In accordance with FIFA Circular no. 1628 and in order to ensure that all decisions passed by FIFA bodies are respected as soon as they are issued, should the relevant amounts due not be paid in full by the debtor within the final deadline, the debtor's association will be required to automatically apply the point deduction and/or the ban from registering any new players.

AFC Annual Awards Oman 2018 nominees announced

After another thrilling Asian football season, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has announced the nominees for this year's AFC Annual Awards Oman 2018 which will be held at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre in Muscat on November 28, 2018, at 7:00pm local time.

Kashima Antlers' Yuma Suzuki and Kento Misao, who were at the heart of the J.League side's first-ever AFC Champions League title triumph last week, lead the nominations in the men's category with Al Sadd's Abdelkarim Hassan completing this year's star-studded cast.

At just 22-years-old, Suzuki, who came through the Kashima youth system, distinguished himself with his all-round play and work rate, scoring twice in the AFC Champions League this season and was named the tournament's Most Valuable Player.

Compatriot Kento Misao played an equally integral part in Kashima's fairy tale season. The 22-year-old was ever reliant in midfield, breaking down the opposition's threat with an impressive tackle success rate of 70.8 percent.

The Japanese pair will face stiff competition from experienced Qatari international Hassan, who showcased remarkable consistency and was a towering figure in Al Sadd's march to the 2018 AFC Champions League semi-finals.



Meanwhile, in the women's category, Australia's Samantha Kerr will be looking to clinch her second consecutive award after the Perth Glory forward guided the Matildas to a second-place finish at the AFC Women's Asian Cup Jordan 2018 in April.

The Australia international, who has scored 27 goals in 72 appearances, is up against China PR's Wang Shuang whose four goals in Jordan helped the Steel Roses finish third at the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2018.

Wang's impressive displays for her former club Dalian Quanjian and country caught the eye of French giants Paris Saint-Germain who offered the 23-year-old a two-year contract in August.

Olympique Lyonnais' Saki Kumagai completes the world-class line-up in the women's category.

The Japanese skipper, who along with Kerr was nominated for the Best FIFA Football Awards in July, was instrumental in leading the Nadeshiko to their second AFC Women's Asian Cup title in Amman.

Kumagai, who is fondly remembered for scoring the winning penalty in Japan's 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup triumph, joined the exclusive centenary club for her country earlier this month in a 4-1 victory over Norway.

---The stellar cast of nominees (in alphabetical order of Member Association) for the AFC Annual Awards Oman 2018 are:

- **Men**
Kento Misao (Kashima Antlers and JPN)
Yuma Suzuki (Kashima Antlers and JPN)
Abdelkarim Hassan (Al Sadd and QAT)
- **Women**
Samantha Kerr (AUS)
Wang Shuang (CHN)
Saki Kumagai (JPN)
- **AFC Futsal Player of the Year**
Rafael Henmi (JPN)
Ali Asghar Hasanzadeh (IRN)
Mahdi Javid (IRN)
- **AFC Youth Player of the Year (Women)**
Fuka Nagano (JPN)
Moeka Minami (JPN)
Saori Takarada (JPN)
- **AFC Youth Player of the Year (Men)**
Jun Nishikawa (JPN)
Jeon Se-jin (KOR)
Turki Al Ammar (KSA)
- **AFC Coach of the Year (Women)**
Asako Takakura (JPN)
Miyo Okamoto (JPN)
Nuengrutai Srathongvian (THA)
- **AFC Coach of the Year (Men)**
Basim Hamdan (IRQ)
Go Oiwa (JPN)
Ravshan Khaydarov (UZB)

(Source: the-afc)

Manchester United's Jose Mourinho facing injury crisis

Manchester United manager Jose Mourinho is facing selection problems ahead of the clash with Crystal Palace on Saturday but the club's medical staff are hopeful Paul Pogba will be fit, sources have told ESPN FC.

United will definitely be without Luke Shaw, who is suspended after picking up his fifth booking of the season during the 3-1 defeat to Manchester City, while there are injury concerns over another six first-team regulars.

Pogba and Anthony Martial both with-

drew from the France squad ahead of the international break while Romelu Lukaku was sent back to Manchester by Belgium after failing to recover from a hamstring problem.

Victor Lindelof was substituted at half-time of Sweden's UEFA Nations League game against Turkey because of illness and Marcus Rashford picked up a knock during England's 2-1 win over Croatia. Marouane Fellaini is also continuing his recovery from injury after he was left out of Belgium's squad

for games against Iceland and Switzerland.

Sources have told ESPN FC that United medical staff are hopeful Pogba and Fellaini will be fit to play when Crystal Palace visit Old Trafford. Pogba was allowed to travel to Dubai during the international break rather than undergo treatment at Carrington.

Martial, Lukaku and Rashford will be assessed once they return to United's training HQ.

Antonio Valencia is in line to take Shaw's

place against Palace with Ashley Young switching to left-back. Valencia hasn't featured for United since the goalless draw with Valencia on Oct. 2 but was fit enough to play and score in Ecuador's 2-0 win over Peru on Thursday.

Sources have told ESPN FC the 33-year-old made himself available for games against Juventus and Manchester City before the international break but was not selected by Mourinho.

(Source: ESPN)

Iranian wrestlers rank 3rd in Senior U23 World Champs

IRNA — Iran's national wrestling team ranked third in Senior U23 World Championships which was held in Bucharest, Romania.

Iranian squad with one gold, four bronze medals and 105 points stood on the third place in the world.

Kamran Qasempour in the weight category of 86kg received a gold medal.

Navid Zangeneh, Hossein Shahbazi, Ali Shabani and Ramin Taheri in the weight categories of 74,92,97 and 125 kg earned bronze medals.

Russia with 181 points and Georgia with 108 points ranked first and second respectively.

Tim Cahill eyeing goal-den goodbye

Tim Cahill may only make a cameo appearance against Lebanon but the Socceroos legend is determined to make his Australian goodbye one to remember.

Cahill, who arrived in Sydney late on Sunday for Tuesday's international friendly against Lebanon at the ANZ Stadium in Sydney, told local media he is looking forward to what will be the "best five minutes of my life."

In a fitting farewell to one of Australia's greatest players, Cahill will play the final minutes of Australia's tie against Lebanon to earn his 108th international cap.

Now playing club football for Indian club Jamshedpur FC, Cahill knows how he plans to bow out - by scoring.

Having racked up 50 goals for Australia, Cahill is confident he will get a chance to add to his tally irrespective of how many minutes he has on the pitch.

"I'm pretty sure I'll get a chance. It's what everyone expects. It felt good the other night in India to score again with a header and it'll feel great come Tuesday night if I get that opportunity. The boys know where to put the ball, even if they've never played with me, they know that something's going to happen," said Cahill.

While the closing minutes, or whenever head coach Graham Arnold decides to field Cahill, will be about the legendary player, the Lebanon tie is crucial as the Socceroos work towards defending their AFC Asian Cup title.

They drew 1-1 with Korea Republic on Saturday and the Lebanon friendly is the last before the squad regroup in December ahead of their AFC Asian Cup kick-off against Jordan on January 6.

Also in Group B are Palestine and Syria, who the Socceroos will play on January 11 and 15 respectively.

(Source: the-afc)

Injury rules out Korea Republic's Koo

Veteran midfielder Koo Ja-cheol will miss Korea Republic's friendly against Uzbekistan on Tuesday after suffering a back injury.

Koo injured his lower back and right hip during Korea Republic's 1-1 draw with Australia in Brisbane on Saturday.

For precautionary reasons, Koo will return to his Bundesliga club, team officials said.



This was Koo's first international match since the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia - and his first under head coach Paulo Bento.

Koo got the starting nod but hurt his back and hip in the closing moments of the first half. Team officials said Koo's injury isn't serious but they didn't want to aggravate his condition.

For Bento's first two matches in September, Koo was not considered for the team because he was still recovering from a knee injury. Koo was selected for Korea Republic's next two matches in October but was later dropped due to a kidney infection.

Koo's departure will leave Bento with 23 players. Before the team traveled to Australia, defender Kim Moon-hwan and forward Hwang Hee-chan were dropped from the squad with injuries of their own.

Korea Republic will be aiming to get back to winning ways against Uzbekistan in what is a clash between two teams preparing for the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019.

The Taeguk Warriors are undefeated in the five friendlies they have played since Bento took charge but have drawn their last two ties - against Panama and Australia.

Korea Republic will play in Group C at the AFC Asian Cup UAE 2019 against China PR, Philippines and Kyrgyz Republic.

(Sources: Yonhap)

Iran to host int'l women's gymnastics champs

IRNA — Women's gymnastics of the Islamic nations championships is planned to be held in the Iranian southern Island of Kish on February 2019, said the head of Iran's gymnastics federation.

The event will be held to mark the 40th anniversary of the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

It is the first time after 15 years that the national Iranian women's gymnastics team participates in an official international tournament.

A delegation from the International Gymnastics Federation (French acronym: FIG) will visit Iran on December 5 to help the Iranian federation prepare for the tournament.

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
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No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.o. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713

“In Between” wins award at Tirana film festival

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian director Aliyar Rasti’s short drama “In Between” has won the Ron Holloway award for best debut film at the Tirana International Film Festival in Albania.

Starring Saber Abar and Neda Jebraeili, the film is about Rana, a woman who is under investigation for a crime.

The Golden Owl for best film went to “Irina” by Nadejda Koseva from Bulgaria during the awards ceremony held on November 9.

Rene Eller from the Netherlands was selected as best director for “We”, while “The Greenaway Alphabet” by Dutch filmmaker Saskia Boddeke won the award for best documentary film.



A poster for “In Between” by Iranian director Aliyar Rasti.

“Alphabet” wins best animation award at FICEE in Spain

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – “Alphabet”, Iranian director Kianush Abedi’s acclaimed movie, won the award for best animated film at the 8th FICEE - Ciudad Rodrigo International Festival of Educational and Spiritual Cinema in Spain, the organizers announced on Saturday.


The story in “Alphabet” is set in a town located in nowhere land. It has been years since the people of this town have forgotten the alphabet of life. They have no sight, hearing or speech left... but the words are impatiently waiting to be sung again.

The festival was held in Ciudad Rodrigo from November 9 to 17.

The film has been screened in numerous events around the globe and won honors at some.

Earlier in September, it was selected as best animated movie at the Revolution Me Film Festival in New York.

It was also picked as best short animation at the Festival Sayulita in Mexico in February.



A poster for “Alphabet” by Iranian director Kianush Abedi.

“Star Wars” producer Kennedy wants new movie voices ‘to bring world to its senses’

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — “Star Wars” producer Kathleen Kennedy on Sunday accepted a lifetime achievement award from the organizers of the Oscars and said she hoped it would open the door for new voices in the movie industry who “might bring the world back to its senses.”

Honored with her producer husband Frank Marshall, Kennedy was the first woman to receive the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences’ annual Irving. G. Thalberg award.

In 2012, Kennedy became president of LucasFilm, reviving the sci-fi saga and producing multi-billion dollar movies “Star Wars: The Force Awakens” and “Star Wars: The Last Jedi” that have made her one of the most powerful executives in Hollywood.

“I am very proud to be the first woman to accept this award. But I am also not the first to deserve it and I am 100 percent sure I am not the last,” Kennedy said to wild applause at a gala dinner attended by studio executives and many of Hollywood’s biggest actors and directors.

Kennedy and Marshall co-founded Amblin Entertainment with director Steven Spielberg in 1981 and produced of blockbusters including “Raiders of the Lost Ark”, “Jurassic Park” and “E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial”.

Kennedy said recent efforts to improve diversity in Hollywood and give women better roles in front of and behind the camera must be embraced.

“It is my hope that with the inclusion of these powerful new voices, we might just bring the world back to its senses and maybe, just maybe, shatter a few glass ceilings along the way,” Kennedy said.

Veteran actress Cicely Tyson, who turns 94 in December, was presented with an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement, along with Argentinian musician Lalo Schiffrin, the composer of scores for “Dirty Harry” and “Mission: Impossible”, and publicist Marvin Levy, who has worked with Spielberg for more than 40 years.

New York-born Tyson, who has appeared in numerous films, television shows and stage plays, was praised by record producer Quincy Jones for her “grace, dignity and class” and for focusing on roles that highlight the struggles of African-Americans.

“The Ugly Duckling”, “Les Misérables” coming to Hamedan theater festival

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** – “The Ugly Duckling”, one of Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen’s most famous fairy tales, and “Les Misérables”, French writer Victor Hugo’s most famous novel, will be go on stage at the 25th International Theater Festival for Children and Young Adults, which will open today in Hamedan, Iran.

“Les Misérables” has been produced by Krizo Theater, a French company that is being led by stage comedian and director Christophe Thébault, the organizers announced on Monday.

Wearing various masks, Thébault, Aimée Leballeur and Laurent Dupont will give one performance set for Thursday.

“The Ugly Duckling” will also be performed by a Turkish troupe of puppeteers on Thursday. The puppet show has been produced by the Turkish company Uçaneller Kuklaevi.

The play will be staged by the Turkey-based Bulgarian director Theodora Popova Lazarova and the troupe is composed of Mesut Ridvan Sarioglu, Bircan Sarioglu and Elif Devrim Varol.

Three foreign companies are scheduled to give performances during the Hamedan festival, which will run until November 24.

The Indian company Theatre Shine will stage “Thirsty Crow Returns” by director Suvojit Bandyopadhyay.

Giuseppe Semeraro from the Italian company Principo Ativo Teatro will also compete in the festival with “A Story of a Man and His Shadow”.

In addition, Dmitry Nomokonov from the major German troupe Fifth Wheel will participate in the event with a puppet show named “Extraordinary Voyage”.



A poster for “Les Misérables”, a production from French theater company Krizo Theater.

Iranian architects big winners at 2A architectural awards

A R T d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian architects have been the big winners at the 2A Continental Architectural Award for Asia and Europe by scooping 28 of the 43 awards presented in 12 categories.

The winners were honored during a special ceremony held at the Institute for Advanced Architecture of Catalonia (IAAC) in Barcelona, Spain on October 26.

A jury composed of Carme Pinós, Yoko Okuyama, Abbas Gharib, Willy Müller and Ali Basbous judged the projects at the architectural awards, which are presented by 2A, an architecture and art magazine that is published in Tehran.

All the prizes in the Old & New Asia section were presented to Iranian architects. Maneli Afshang and Mahfam Kushesh won first prize for the Rayzan Culture House.

Second prize was presented to Ara Aliabadi for the Aban Art Gallery while Reza Mafakher for Rahimzadeh Jewelry and Sara Khatibi for Braim Restaurant Project shared third prize.

Iranian architects were also overall winners in both Future Projects – Small Scale Architecture Asia and the Future



The Nur-e Mobin Primary School in Bastam won first prize in the Asia Public category at the 2A Continental Architectural Award for Asia and Europe in Barcelona, Spain.

Projects – Urban Asia categories.

In Small Scale Architecture Asia, Omid Mohammadi, Mohammad Ebrahim Tajik and Behruz Nakhaei won first prize for

their collaboration on the Tiny House project. Moein Jalali stood second for the Palemos Villa 2. Third place was shared by Mohammad-Hassan Foruzanfar for Parsin

House and Saman Sayar for Villa Vanush.

In Future Projects – Urban Asia, Mehdi Kambuzia took first place for Forgotten Spaces/Open Museum under the Mirdamad Bridge. Amir and Samaneh Qasempur won second prize for the Haqani Pedestrian Bridge and Hooman Balazadeh and Mohammad Khavarian received third award for the Chitgar Garden.

First prize in Asia Public went to Ensieh Khamseh and Arash Nasiri for the Nur-e Mobin Primary School. Other prizes in this category were presented to architects from India, Afghanistan and China.

Zahra Arman and Mostafa Omidbakhsh were the top winners for their joint project Orange Gallery in the Commercial - Retail, Stores, Warehouse – Asia section.

Iranian architects were also top winners in both sections of Interior Architecture Asia and Urban Projects, Rural Projects, Landscape & Public Spaces – Asia.

Hamed Moradi Aleshtar won the award for Aviator Box in the Interior Architecture Asia category and Mahdieh Sadat Hedayati received the award for Déjà vu Pavilion in the Urban Projects, Rural Projects, Landscape & Public Spaces – Asia section.

“Fantastic Beasts 2” charms with \$62 million debut

LOS ANGELES (Variety) — “Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald” enchanted moviegoers with a debut of \$62 million. While that’s slightly lower than the start of “Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them”, the first installment in the “Harry Potter” spinoff series, it was easily enough to dominate the weekend box office.

Warner Bros., the studio behind the wizarding series, sees “Fantastic Beasts” as more of an international play, where the follow-up has already earned \$191 million. Stateside, “Crimes of Grindelwald” has battled the worst reviews yet for a “Harry Potter” entry. It currently holds a bleak 40 percent on Rotten Tomatoes and a B+ Cinemascore.

“The Crimes of Grindelwald” is the second entry in what Warner Bros. intends to be a five-film franchise and is part of the studio’s ongoing effort to wring more riches from the wizarding world popularized by author J.K. Rowling. It sparked controversy when Johnny Depp was cast as the infamous dark wizard Gellert Grindelwald. However, it didn’t seem to taint enthusiasm among Potterheads.

Theaters were able to entice more than just witches and wizards this weekend. New offerings, along with a number of holdovers, were able to draw muggles and crack the top five as comedy “Instant Family” and heist drama “Widows” each opened relatively on par with expectations.

For Paramount, “Instant Family” starring Mark Wahlberg and Rose Byrne, generated \$14.7 million when it launched in 3,286 locations. The feel-good film that’s loosely based on a true story of a married couple who adopt three young children earned a



Actor Ezra Miller attends the British premiere of “Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald” movie in London, Britain, November 13, 2018. (Reuters/Toby Melville)

promising A CinemaScore, as well as a 79 percent on Rotten Tomatoes. The audience was predominately female and over the age of 35. The studio is banking on a strong Thanksgiving showing to boost momentum and justify its \$48 million price tag.

Fox and New Regency are distributing “Widows”, directed by Steve McQueen, which brought in a tepid \$12.5 million from 2,805 venues. The movie cost \$40 million to make and follows a group of women who arrange a caper in order to pay back a crime boss after their criminal husbands are killed on a job gone wrong. The ensemble cast includes Viola Davis, Michelle Rodriguez, Elizabeth Debicki, and Cynthia Erivo. Since its debut at the Toronto Film Festival, “Widows” has garnered rave reviews, especially for Davis’ performance.

Second place went to Universal’s “The Grinch”, which pocketed another \$38 million to bring its domestic tally to \$126 million. “Bohemian Rhapsody”, Fox’s Freddie Mercury biopic, also saw a strong outing in its third weekend and nabbed third place with \$15 million. That takes its North American total to \$127 million.

Lights, camera, factions: Stars at Chinese-language ‘Oscars’ split over Taiwan

TAIPEI/SHANGHAI (Reuters) — The Chinese-speaking world’s version of the Oscars, the Golden Horse Awards, has created a sharp political divide between film stars and directors as the annual event becomes a lightning rod for questions about Taiwanese independence.

At Saturday’s ceremony, held in Taipei, documentary filmmaker Fu Yue called for Taiwan to be recognized as “an independent entity”, sparking off a live sparring match between mainland and Taiwanese stars at the glitzy show.

Mainland actor Tu Men, while presenting an award, referred to Taiwan as “China Taiwan”, while the chair of the awards committee, Oscar award-winning director Ang Lee, told reporters after the show that everyone was allowed to say what they wanted to say on stage.

However, he added: “We hope that art can be art, and that no political issues will interfere with it because art is very pure.”

Taiwan is self-governed and has a democratically elected leadership, but China claims the island as a breakaway province and has not ruled out the use of force to ensure unification. The question of Taiwanese independence is one of Beijing’s most sensitive political concerns.

Tensions between China and Taiwan have grown since pro-independence President Tsai Ing-wen took power in 2016. Taiwan is now preparing for local elections on Saturday, seen as a bellwether for the ruling party’s performance in the 2020 presidential race.

Tsai herself weighed into the debate on Sunday saying that Taiwan had never accepted being called “China Taiwan”.

“We can’t accept this term. Taiwan is simply Taiwan,” she said on Facebook, adding she was “proud” of the awards ceremony which “highlighted that Taiwan was different from China, that being in our freedom and



Taiwan’s director Yue Fu (R) poses backstage after winning Best Documentary for her movie “Our Youth in Taiwan” at the 55th Golden Horse Awards in Taipei, Taiwan November 17, 2018. (Reuters/Tyrone Siu)

diversity”.

“Taiwan is a democratic and open society,” she said. “No one here will be silenced or disappeared because they have different views. We have no sensitive words that will be censored online.”

Social media users also left close to 20,000 comments on Fu’s Facebook account after the show, with some criticizing her support for Taiwan independence while others praised it. Some said she should not have politicized the ceremony.

In a separate statement on Monday, Taiwan’s ruling Democratic Progressive Party said the criticism of Fu was an attempt at “election interference from outside forces”.

The Golden Horse Awards was one of the most discussed topics on China’s Twitter-like Weibo platform on Sunday, with a number of mainland stars also posting supportive posts about China’s claims over Taiwan.

Among them was A-list Chinese movie star Fan Bingbing, who earlier this year vanished for months from public view sparking widespread rumors about her whereabouts. She was fined for tax evasion last month and in her apology said her achievements were inseparable from the Communist Party.