





Chinese bank to back **Iran-China transactions** as of Dec. 2 4

Aliasghar Hasanzadeh named the 2018 AFC Futsal Player 15

Threat will vanish with ICCIMA hosts Iran-S. Korea business opportunities conference

ECONOMY TEHRAN – The 1st Joint Conference on Iran-South Korea Business Opportunities was held at the place of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on Tuesday, the portal of ICCIMA reported.

The conference was attended by IC-CIMA Vice President Pedram Soltani, Iranian Head of Iran-South Korea Joint Chamber of Commerce Hossein Tanhaie, South Korean Ambassador to Iran Ryu Jeong-hyun and several other officials and businessmen.

celebrates 84th birthday at

Iranian Artists Forum 16

Addressing the event, Soltani referred to the 51-year-background of the mutual economic cooperation between the two sides saying that Iranian and South-Korean small and medium-sized companies can continue and improve their cooperation even under the current U.S.-led sanctions against Iran. -> 4

Iranian company produces brain cancer vaccine

H E A L T S TEHRAN — Iranian scientists have managed to produce brain cancer vaccine, an expert in immunology whose company is involved in production of the vaccine has said.

Dr. Noruz Delirezh explained that the laboratory procedures are already finished and the vaccine is being injected to the patients, IRNA reported on Wednesday. The vaccine has been used on the patients for two years now, he said, adding that the treatment is funded by the Health Ministry and executed by Urmia University of Medical Sciences.

"Our treatment version is closely similar to the model used in other countries: however, the cost of this treatment amounts to \$94,000 for every patient in the U.S. but estimated at only around \$23,000 in Iran," he said. \rightarrow 9

11th round of Syria talks begins in Astana

The 11th round of talks on the Syria crisis has kicked off in the Kazakh capital, with the presence of representatives from the Damascus government and opposition as well as the three guarantor states of the Astana peace process.

The discussions, which began on Wednesday, will mainly focus on the situation in the de-escalation zone set up in Svria's northwestern Idlib Province and the creation of a constitutional committee in the war-torn country.

Moreover, issues such as confidence-building measures between Syria's opposite sides, fight against terrorist outfits and the return of Syrian refugees to their homes would be raised during the two-day negotiations. \rightarrow 13



Understanding essence of Islam key to fostering unity

e are fully aware of the dangers and challenges facing the Islamic world today. Evil influences not only threaten its unity, distort its identity, tarnish its tenets but brutally attack the very message of Islam.

Some elements in the West unfairly consider Islam as their enemy; others who claim to profess Islam have admittedly committed inhuman and criminal acts in its name: some others hide behind the veil of Islam to brazenly harm the very edifice of the faith. The message that is under attack is the message of peace, universal brotherhood and humanity transcending the considerations of color, race, ethnicity and religion. Islam is a righteous religion that embraces the entire spectrum of human life, upholding what is good and forbidding what is evil, accommodating others and honoring all humankind. The goal of world's 1.6 billion Muslims should be to participate fully in the development of human civilization and in the progress of humanity by stressing on unity of the human race, equal rights and obligations, peace, security, social justice, protection of human life and preservation of environment. The message of Islam is to bring mercy to all people, emphasize virtue of compassion and urge tolerance and forgiveness. Islam upholds human life. It detests extremism. The month of Rabiaul Awal is of special significance to the Ummah as it marks the birth of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh), the messenger of Allah and the seal of all prophets. The 'week of unity' is observed in this month as a mark of tribute to the man who was sent as 'mercy' to mankind. We take this opportunity to reaffirm our allegiance to the pristine principles of this great faith. On religious and moral grounds, we denounce terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. No argument or excuse can justify the brute acts of terror. Terror outfits like ISIS, Taliban or Al Qaeda cannot wriggle out of the charge of practicing terror. We reject their campaign of terror carried out in the name of Islam. We equally reject the malicious campaign that portrays Islam as a religion of terror, violence and extremism. In Holy Quran, Allah invites believers to 'the paths of peace and promises to bring them out of darkness into light (Surah Maidah). $\rightarrow 6$





France' unrestful days with Macron

rench President Emmanuel Macron is going through hard times! On the one hand, Macron's popularity with the French citizens has drastically fallen during recent months, and the continuation of public protests in different cities of France, has created a difficult situation for the young French president.

Under such circumstances, many analysts of the French affairs believe that Macron is not going to have a better fate than Francois Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy, and if he's not removed from power before 2022, he doesn't have a chance to win in the next presidential election. Anyway, the "yellow vests" have severely disturbed the French president's dreams. It should not be forgotten that in 2017, Macron came to power with the slogan of economic development in France and the economic and political leadership of the European Union. However, the French president has failed to become a strong leader in Europe. Today he's considered a defeated figure in the French economy and politics. The polls conducted in France indicate that Macron's popularity has fallen by %25 over the last months! Today, the French president is striving to resist the opposition groups in his country which are basically against his policies. These opponents are mostly members of the nationalist movement of France, along with conservative and socialist activists! The fact is that in 2021, Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, will step down from power. Many analysts believe Merkel's successor won't be able to influence the European equations the way she could, at least not in the near future. On the other hand, regarding the Brexit, British authorities can't play an important role as the leader of the United Europe. Under such circumstances, the French see themselves as undisputed leaders of Europe (after 2021). Therefore, Macron's political and social opponents are determined not to let him regain power in the next elections. Moreover, in 2017, French citizens practically turned their back on their country's two traditional parties, namely, socialists and conservatives. \rightarrow 7

'I doubt that China or Russia would supply Saudi with enrichment tech'

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Frank N. von Hippel, former assistant director for national security in the White House Office of Science and Technology says that "I don't think that South Korea could sell nuclear power plants to Saudi Arabia if Saudi Arabia does not have a 123 agreement with the U.S.

"I doubt that China or Russia would supply Saudi Arabia with enrichment or reprocessing technology but, if North Korea can do it, Saudi Arabia probably could as well," Frank N. von Hippel tells the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

Following is the full text of the interview: Saudi Arabia started its research nuclear reactor in Abullaziz city while it has not reached an agreement with the U.S. on nuclear activities. Some believe that this is a message from SA to the U.S. that it will advance its nuclear activities even without U.S. What do you think of this?

A: I am worried about Saudi Arabia's interest in nuclear technologies. Part of its interest may be in generating electricity. But there are many ways to do that more cheaply today - especially photovoltaics in Saudi Arabia. I think that part of the interest is due to the fact that some nuclear-power technologies can be dual use. They create a nuclear-weapon option. This is of course the cause of the controversy about Iran's enrichment program.

Saudi Arabia insists on having Uranium enrichment and its reprocessing while the U.S. wants "Gold Standard" in it agreement with Riyadh which doesn't include enrichment and reprocessing. Based on 123 treaty, will U.S. finally give up to Riyadh demand?

A: The Trump Administration is divided on this. Some in the State Department believe strongly in nonproliferation and support the "Gold Standard." Some in the Energy Department are more concerned that what remains of the U.S. nuclear-reactor supply industry (not much) could have a rare financial opportunity to sell reactors to Saudi Arabia. If those interested in supporting the U.S. nuclear industry prevail within the Administration, I think that there would be a strong challenge to a non-gold-standard 123 agreement in the House of Representatives, which will be controlled by the Democrats starting in January. Whether the Senate would join the House in a blocking action, I can't judge. \rightarrow 7

Afghan Shia militia commander's arrest raises many questions

By Syed Zafar Mehdi

However, there is no clear definition of who is Afghanistan, is not only curious but very com-

TEHRAN— While the 17 year old war perpetuated by the Western powers on the pretext of fighting terrorism has taken its heavy toll on life in Afghanistan, the issue of 'warlordism' and 'illegal militias' has also been an integral part of conflict-centric discourse in Afghanistan.

The recent history of the war-ravaged country bears testimony to the fact that warlords have existed in all forms and manifestations, across the ethnic lines, and some with overt or covert support of the government and law-enforcement agencies.

The grave issue of 'illegal militias' in Afghanistan is also a reality that cannot be dismissed. Some of these militias are actively supported by security and intelligence agencies for a host of reasons.

a 'warlord' and what constitutes 'illegal militias and how they can be differentiated from groups operating under the ambit of Afghan constitution and international humanitarian norms. That's where the problem arises.

Some of these militia leaders claim to fight against the terrorist groups to protect their respective communities as Afghan security forces are not always able to defend the people. According to international human rights charters, any armed group working outside the purview of government and security institutions is illegal but in a conflict-ridden country like Afghanistan, the issue becomes extremely complex.

The latest case of Alipoor, a pro-Hazara and anti-Taliban militia commander from central

plicated. While government agencies, including the National Directorate of Security (NDS), the country's top spy agency, categorically dubbed him a 'warlord' who has committed human rights abuses, some others defended him as a champion of human rights and a fierce fighter against the Taliban and other terrorist groups.

Alipoor was arrested earlier this week over allegations of human rights abuses, which triggered two days of violent protests across the country in which many demonstrators were killed and dozens of policemen wounded.

There had been few attempts to detain him in the past as well and finally he was arrested in the western province of Ghor earlier this week following a shoot-out that killed 12 people. $\rightarrow 6$



Tabriz to host ashiqlar congress

A group performs during the closing ceremony of an ashiqlar music congress organized at the Tabriz International Conference Hall on November 27, 2018 to celebrate the birthday anniversary of Prophet Muhammad (S).

Ashiqs from Turkey, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Iran attended the congress, which opened at the northwestern Iranian city on November 24. Ashiqlar is a unique style of traditional music, which is mainly common in Iran's Azarbaijan region, the Azerbaijan Republic, Turkey and several other countries.

Ashiqlar music is performed by an ashiq, also spelled ashik and ashug. He is a mystic troubadour or traveling bard, who blends together instrumental and vocal music, dance, poetry and storytelling in his performances.



NOVEMBER 29, 2018

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Ayatollah calls for Basij-Howza think tank

POLITICS TEHRAN — Grand Ayatollah Nasser ^s ^k Makarem Shirazi has called for launching a think tank between the Seminary of Religious Teachings (Howzah) and the Basij Organization.

In a Wednesday meeting with Basij Commander Ghola-mhossein Gheybparvar, the ayatollah said such a think tank would be necessary for "harmonizing" the implementation of Basij's plans.

"The Basij should be seeking help from the Howzah," such as from the currently existing 400 research institutes of the seminary, he stressed.

Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi noted that the Basij is an asset and the reason for Basij's popularity is due to the certain air of religious spirituality it possesses.



Hanachi confirmed as **Tehran mayor**

POLITICS TEHRAN — Pirouz Hanachi, who was k elected as the mayor of Tehran by the city council on November 13, was finally confirmed by the Interior Ministry on Wednesday.

He had served as deputy housing minister for architecture and urban development from 2001 to 2005.

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

On November 3, Hanachi succeeded to garner 11 votes out of the 21-memebr Tehran city council. His only rival at the last round of competitions was former transport and urban development minister Abbas Ahmad Akhoundi.



Government names four new provincial governors

POLITICS TEHRAN — The cabinet members on e s k Wednesday voted to elect four new governors for provinces of Mazandaran, North Khorasan, East Azarbaijan and South Khorasan, Mehr reported.

During the cabinet meeting, headed by President Has-san Rouhani, Ahmad Hossein-Zadegahn, Mohammad-Ali Shojaee, Mohammad-Reza Pour-Mohammadi and Mohammad-Sadeq Motamedian were appointed as governors of the aforementioned provinces respectively.

It comes as the law on prohibition of the employment of retirees goes into effect. The law is part of the plan to employ the younger generations in top state jobs.

Iran FM urges intra-Afghan dialogue to reach peace

POLITICS TEHRAN – Foreign Minister Mohammad e s k Javad Zarif on Wednesday underlined the need to facilitate the intra-Afghan dialogue, by helping to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table with the government for inclusive and comprehensive talks.

Zarif made the remarks in a speech to the Geneva Conference on Afghanistan, organized by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).

He further said there is no military solution to the problems Afghanistan is facing, reiterating the need for national reconciliation and political resolution of the conflicts there.

Jaberi Ansari meets de Mistura ahead of Astana talks

POLITICS TEHRAN – Hossein Jaberi Ansari, d e s k a senior advisor to the Iranian foreign minister for political affairs, has met with the outgoing UN special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura.

The meeting was held ahead of the 11th round of talks on the Syria crisis, which began in the Kazakh capital of Astana on Wednesday.

The two sides discussed the latest developments in establishing the constitutional committee that will rewrite Syria's constitution, according to Mehr.

Earlier, Jaberi Ansari met separately with Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal, Syria's permanent representative to the UN Bashar Jaafari, who represents Damascus at the talks, and Russian president's Special Envoy for Syria Alexander Lavrentiev.

Representatives from the Syrian government and opposition groups, as well as senior officials from Iran, Russia and Turkey are meeting in the Kazakh capital as part of efforts to find a permanent political solution to the Syrian crisis.

Representatives of Jordan and the United Nations are also expected to attend as observers.

The talks will mainly focus on the situation in the de-escalation zone set up in Syria's northwestern Idlib Province and the creation of a constitutional committee in the war-torn country.

Issues such as confidence-building measures between Syria's opposite sides, fight against terrorist groups and



the agenda of the two-day negotiations. The Astana talks have so far resulted in the return of a succession of militant bastions to the government fold, the establishment of safe zones across Syria and the movement of civilians to those regions.

The 10th round of the Astana Peace Process was held in Sochi, Russia, in July.

Leader: Threat will vanish with increased deterrence

Ayatollah Khamenei urges military commanders to promote power so highly that no one dares to threaten Iran

POLITICSdeskal Navy Day on Wednesday, a group of navy commanders and officials met with Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

During the meeting in which Defense Minister Amir Hatami and Abdolrahim Mousavi were also present, the Leader said reliance on young, devout and motivated

human forces is the key to resolving prob-lems in all sectors including the military.

Emphasizing the necessity of increased efforts and preparations, Ayatollah Khamenei said: "Enhance your abilities and preparations so much as you can so that the enemies of Iran do not even dare to threaten this great nation.'

The Leader added, "The Islamic Re-

anyone, however you need to strengthen your abilities so much so that not only would the enemy fear attacking Iran, but, as a result of unity, solidarity, and effective presence of the armed forces in the field, the shadow of intimidation and threats will also go away from the Iranian nation." Ayatollah Khamenei said in view of the

public does not intend to start a war with massive front of the enemies that Iran is

facing it is necessary to speed up intense work in all sectors.

Lauding the armed forces for their achievements, he said, "The current generation of the Navy deeply believes in its ingeniousness and abilities, and the realization of projects such as the addition of Sahand destroyer, and Fateh and Ghadir submarines to the naval forces, heralds the possibility of more progress.'

Nuclear chief warns EU patience is running thin

Iran's nuclear chief said on Tuesday he was warning the European Union's top diplomat that Iranian patience was running out on the bloc's pledges to keep up oil trade despite U.S. sanctions.

Âli Akbar Salehi, head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said the Islamic Republic could resume enriching uranium to 20 percent purity - seen as well above the level suitable for fuelling civilian power plants - if it fails to see the economic benefit of the 2015 deal that curbed its nuclear program.

"If we cannot sell our oil and we don't enjoy financial transactions, then I don't think keeping the deal will benefit us anymore," Salehi told Reuters ahead of a meeting with EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini in Brussels.

"I will pass certainly a word of caution to her (Mogherini): I think the period of patience for our people is getting more limited and limited. We are running out of the assumed

timeline, which was in terms of months." Following the meeting, Mogherini said she and Salehi remained committed to safeguarding the nuclear accord.

"They equally expressed their determination to preserve the nuclear agreement as a matter of respecting international agreements and a key pillar for European and regional security," Mogherini's office said in a statement. It said Mogherini also repeated the EU stance "on



issues of concern such as Iran's role in the region" - alluding to Iranian involvement in Middle East conflicts from Yemen to Syria.

Under the 2015 deal with world powers, Iran restricted its enrichment program.

U.S. President Donald Trump pulled out of the accord in May, arguing it was weak because it did not halt Iran's development of ballistic missiles or support for armed proxies abroad, and reimposed sanctions on Iran's oil export sector earlier this month.

But Europe sees the nuclear deal as an important el-

ement of international security.

The EU and other remaining parties - China and Russia - have struggled to preserve trade incentives for Iran to respect the deal's nuclear limits under U.S. pressure.

Enriched uranium In Brussels for talks on civilian nuclear cooperation that EU officials intended as a signal support for the accord, Salehi said the bloc's efforts were encouraging but added:

"We have not yet seen any tangible results." He welcomed an EU plan to establish a special financial vehicle for non-dollar trade with Iran but only if it could preserve Iranian oil exports.

"It (the SPV) could be helpful in keeping the deal alive," he said. "If there is nothing to reap, then what is the purpose of us staying in because voices in Iran are day by day becoming more against the deal." Under the 2015 deal, Iran stopped producing 20 percent

enriched uranium and gave up the majority of its stockpile. Salehi reiterated warnings that Iran has the technical capacity to ramp up enrichment if the deal unravels.

"It is very easy for us to go back to what we were before even to a better position. We can start the 20 percent enrichment activity. We can increase the amount of enriched uranium.'



🐚 Larijani set to visit **Turkey**

OLITICS TEHRAN — Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani k is scheduled to take a trip to Turkey to attend the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) meeting in Istanbul.

Larijani's trip is upon his Turkish counterpart's invitation Binali Yildirim, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

The APA meeting will start work on Thursday and runs for three days. The event is to focus on developing Asia economy. Some 23 Asian countries will attend the meeting.

APA was born at the seventh session of the Association of Asian Parliamentary for Peace (AAPP) in 2006.



Unilateralism detrimental to scientific progress: Zarif

POLITICS TEHRAN — In a meeting with the director general of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva on Wednesday, Iran's foreign minister said that unilateral actions and illegal sanctions are detrimental to the progress of societies in the fields of science and technology.

Foreign Minister Zarif and Francis Gurry also talked about cooperation between Iran and WIPO and current international procedures regarding intellectual property.

Pointing to a plan by Iran to transform from an oil and gasbased economy to a knowledge-based one, Zarif emphasized the significance of intellectual property in achieving that goal.

Gurry, for his part, appreciated Iran's efforts as an active and constructive member in international organizations and defending multilateralism.

Zarif also held talks with his German counterpart Heiko Maas and the EU's chief diplomat Federica Mogherini.

Iran, Russia move to expand security collaboration

By Alireza Noori

Iran's deputy interior minister for security affairs, Hossein Zolfaqari, met with Vasilii Piskarev, the chairman of the Russian Duma's Committee on Security and Corruption Control, on Nov. 5. At the meeting, both sides stressed the need to finalize a bilateral security agreement and described cybersecurity, the fight against terrorism and countering drug proliferation and illegal immigration as key aspects of such an accord.

One of Iran's goals in signing such an agreement is to boost its domestic security. particularly considering the threats emanating from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, which, to be deterred, require transnational cooperation. For Iran, to engage in security cooperation with Russia, a country that has influence in the region and shares common security concerns, can help increase the impact of its own safety measures.

Tehran and Moscow have signed several security documents in the past. Among these is a document signed in January 2013 by Iran's then interior minister, Mostafa Mohammad Najjar, and then Russian Minister of Internal Affairs Vladimir Alexandrovich Kolokoltsev, which called for adopting joint measures to fight the proliferation of drugs and countering transnational organized crime. Given the regional and international developments since then, the new agreement is more extensive and places greater emphasis on the need to counter international terrorism.

Although there have been fewer instances of terrorism around the world following the collapse of the organizational structure

analytical reports by various countries see the potential for attacks by IS as high. As a result, the desire by Tehran and Moscow to expand their security collaboration can be viewed as a response to the rising threat of narcotics and terrorism, which in recent years have found more evident transnational dimensions. Afghanistan and the Middle East are the main sources of these threats that impact the interests of Iran and Russia.

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the cultivation of opium in Afghanistan increased by 63% in 2017 compared to 2016, going from an area of 201,000 hectares to 328,000 hectares. The quantity of narcotics produced also went up from 4,800 tons in 2016 to 9,000 tons in 2017. According to UN reports, the Taliban are one of the main elements involved in the production and export of narcotics while Iran and Russia are among its key destinations. Iran's seizure of smuggled narcotics has risen by an average of some 15% a year during the past five years. In this vein, Iran's Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli has stated that about 785 tons of narcotics were confiscated in Iran in 2017, the main portion of which was destined for regional countries and Europe. Of this amount, 24 tons was heroin.

Based on available data, Russia has the world's largest heroin market in the world, with about 75-80 tons of heroin being annually smuggled in from Afghanistan. The country has about 7.3 million addicts, as indicated by statistics from the country's Health Ministry and the Federal Drug Control Service of Russia. This data alone show how large a threat narcotics

of the Islamic State (IS), intelligence and are for Iran and Russia.

Transnational terrorism has also created many shared concerns for Tehran and Moscow. The recent terrorist attacks in Iran are an example of this. These include the June 2017 attack on the Iranian parliament in Tehran, which left 23 people dead, and the September 2018 attack on a military parade in the southern city of Ahvaz, which claimed 25 lives. Meanwhile, in Russia, terrorist attacks in the year 2016 and 2017 left 64 and 36 people dead, respectively.

Âlthough Nikolai Patrushev, secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, has stated that the number of terrorist attacks in his country has decreased from 779 cases in 2010 to 24 cases in 2017, the likelihood of such strikes being carried out in Russia or Iran is still high. This has made both countries realize that effectively dealing with this transnational threat is not possible without transnational intelligence, military and security cooperation.

This shared feeling of threat is one reason for the military-security cooperation between the two countries in Syria. To further strengthen this collaboration, the two sides have signed military accords, one of which is a military-defense agreement that was concluded in January 2015, between Hossein Dehghan, Iran's then defense minister, and his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu. That agreement highlights the need for cooperation for maintaining security and stability and fighting terrorism, separatism and extremism.

Given this context, the new security accord complements existing political and military cooperation documents. By

linking the two countries' security and military organizations, the new agreement can provide a more coherent structure for security collaboration. If signed and implemented, it can make bilateral cooperation, especially in the fight against the proliferation of narcotics and terrorism, more organized and extensive, thus having a greater impact in eradicating these threats.

Furthermore, Tehran's aim in signing the agreement is not only to improve its domestic security but also to expand bilateral cooperation with Moscow to all aspects of their relations. At the regional level, Iran seeks to utilize Russia's potential in the Middle East and Afghanistan more effectively and in a more predictable manner. Tehran has no problems with achieving these aims by expanding the sought-after security agreement from a bilateral deal to a framework for organizations such as the Shanghai Cooperation **Organization or the Collective Security** Treaty Organization.

By promoting its relations with Moscow at these two levels, Tehran is also trying to use Russia's international potential to reduce U.S. pressures, including the Donald Trump administration's unilateral sanctions. Considering Tehran and Moscow's tough approach toward foreign policy, Iran sees security cooperation as a starting point for strengthening relations with Russia at other levels.

Alireza Noori is an assistant professor of regional studies at Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran. His research interests focus on Iran-Russia relations and Russian foreign policy.

(Source: Al Monitor)

Putin accuses Ukraine leader of plotting naval clash to boost ratings

Russia to deploy new S-400 missiles on Crimea, UN chief urges 'maximum restraint'

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday accused Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko of orchestrating a naval "provocation" in the Black Sea at the weekend in order to boost his flagging popularity ratings before an election next year.

Russia seized three Ukrainian naval vessels and their crews on Sunday over what it said was their illegal entry into Russian waters, something Ukraine denies.

The episode has raised fears in the West of a wider conflict between the two countries and Kiev has since introduced martial law in parts of the country, saying it fears a possible Russian invasion.

Some of Ukraine's Western allies have raised the possibility of imposing new sanctions on Russia over the incident, which could deliver a blow to the Russian economy.

In his first public comments on the incident, Putin said the Ukrainian vessels had clearly been in the wrong, dismissed the incident as a minor border issue, and accused Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko of having orchestrated the mini crisis in order to boost his dire ratings.

"It was without doubt a provocation," Putin told a financial forum in Moscow.

Ukraine's martial law provokes Russian threats

"It was organized by the president ahead of the elections. The president is in fifth place ratings-wise and therefore had to do something. It was used as a pretext to introduce martial law.

Ukraine was successfully using the episode to sell anti-Russian sentiment and the West was ready to forgive Ukrainian politicians their shortcomings because it bought into the narrative Kiev was promoting, said Putin.

The Russian leader was speaking after Moscow said it would send more of its advanced S-400 surface-to-air missile systems to Crimea, the Ukrainian region it annexed in 2014, and a Reuters reporter saw a Russian

off than staying in the EU.



warship deploying nearby as tensions with Ukraine rose.

Fallout from the episode risks derailing a meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Putin at a G20 summit in Argentina later this week. Trump said on Tuesday that he might cancel the meeting due to the incident, but Putin said on Wednesday he still hoped to meet Trump.

Ukraine under threat of 'fullscale war' with Russia: Poroshenko Russia has sharply increased its mili-

tary presence on the border with Ukraine, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said on television Tuesday, warning of the threat of "full-scale war."

"The number of [Russian] tanks at bases located along our border has tripled," Poroshenko said in an interview, adding that "the number of units that have been deployed along our border – what's more, along its full length – has grown dramatically." He said that the military buildup meant

that the country is "under threat of full-scale war with Russia.

Poroshenko didn't give Russian troop numbers but said the information on the military buildup was based on intelligence reports.

He said that numbers of Russian troops in Crimea had tripled since Moscow annexed the peninsula in 2014.

U.S. official urges Europe to consider more Russia sanctions The United States wants its European

allies to consider further sanctions against Russia over the situation in Ukraine, the U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations said Wednesday.

"We certainly encourage our European allies to look harder at what additional sanctions could be implemented," Kurt Volker said in Berlin. "I've seen at this point that is not something Germany and France have said they're considering but these things, I think, can develop over time.'

Several senior European politicians Tuesday raised the possibility of new sanctions against Russia to punish it for capturing three Ukrainian vessels at sea, an incident the West fears could ignite a wider conflict.

UN chief urges 'maximum restraint' from Russia, Ukraine

Ukraine and Russia must exercise "maximum restraint," UN chief Antonio Guterres said Tuesday, appealing for a quick reduction in tensions after a naval confrontation sparked the most dangerous crisis in years between the neighbors.

His call came as Russian President Vladimir Putin warned Ukraine against any "reckless acts" after Kiev declared martial law in response to Moscow's seizure of three of its navy vessels.

A statement from the UN secretary general urged both sides "to take steps without delay to contain this incident and reduce tensions through all available peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

Guterres underscored "the need to fully respect the rights and obligations of all con-cerned parties" under international law and said "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, within its internationally recognized borders ... must also be fully respected.'

The Ukrainian parliament late Monday voted in favor of President Petro Poroshenko's request for the introduction of martial law in border areas for 30 days

Martial law gives authorities the power, among others, to mobilize citizens with military experience.

The move came after Russian forces fired on, boarded and captured three of Kiev's ships on Sunday off the coast of Crimea, the first major confrontation at sea in the long-running conflict pitting Ukraine against Moscow and Russian-backed separatists in the country's east.

(Source: agencies)

Hamas leader says he has been invited to Moscow

The top leader of Hamas said he received an invitation to make an official visit to Moscow.

The office of Ismail Haniyeh said the invitation was delivered Wednesday by a visiting Russian diplomat. Its statement did not elaborate on the purpose of the visit.

Russia maintains high-level contact with Hamas, which Israel, the U.S. and the European Union classify as a terrorist group. Haniyeh was elected as Hamas' top leader last year. His predecessor, Khaled Mashaal, visited Moscow frequently.

In 2007, a year after winning parliamentary elections, Hamas drove out the Western-backed Palestinian Authority from Gaza and took over the coastal enclave.

Russia has hosted several rounds of talks aimed at forging reconciliation between Hamas and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party.

(Source: AP)

Russia working on financial system independent from **SWIFT: Putin**

Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Moscow is working with its major partners to create financial systems that are not dependent on the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT).

He made the remarks on Wednesday at the 10th annual 'Russia Calling' Investment Forum in Moscow.

'We are actively working with some countries, with our partners on trade and economy, on setting up systems that would be independent of SWIFT", Sputnik quoted him as saying.

The Russian president didn't specify which countries he was referring to. However, Russian companies earlier signed a cooperation agreement on the issue with Iranian firms following the exclusion of Iran from SWIFT due to U.S. sanctions.

Elsewhere, touching upon the need to ditch dollar, he added, "we do not have the goal to move away from the dollar, we are forced to do this. Let me assure you, we will do this... We just do not want to do anything sudden that would hurt us... We have no goal to leave the dollar, it is the dollar that is leaving us."

The Russian president added that the 'lack of stability in dollar transactions causes many of the world's economies to look for alternative reserve currencies and set up payment systems independent from the dollar'.

(Source: MNA)

Saudi Arabia, Egypt to continue diplomatic, trade boycott against Qatar

Saudi Arabia and Egypt have jointly announced that the ongoing Saudi-led diplomatic and trade boycott against Qatar, which they imposed on the energy-rich Persian Gulf kingdom in June 2017, would remain in effect until further notice.

During a meeting between visiting Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi at the Ittihadiya Presidential Palace in Cairo on Tuesday, the pair reiterated their refusal to "make any concessions" to the Doha government, Saudi-owned and Dubai-based al-Arabiya television news network reported.

They also stated that both countries will continue to confront what they described as Iranian "interference" in the region.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt all cut off diplomatic ties with Qatar on June 5 last year, after officially accusing it of "sponsoring terrorism.

The administration of the Saudi-backed and former Yemeni president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, Libya, the Maldives, Djibouti, Senegal and the Comoros later joined the camp in ending diplomatic ties with Doha. Jordan downgraded its diplomatic relations as well. Qatar's Foreign Ministry later announced that the decision to cut diplomatic ties was unjustified and based on



non-tariff trade barriers would be introduced

However, perceptions that immigration was too high under the EU's freedom of movement policy were a key reason why many Britons voted in 2016 to leave the EU.

there would be no changes to migration rules, but that some

The forecasts assumed for the purposes of comparison that

Assuming there was zero net migration from the EU in the future, the hit to the economy would be bigger: 3.9 percent under May's deal, and 9.3 percent without a deal.

Four months before Britain is due to leave the EU, May is struggling to overcome deep resistance within her own Conservative Party and among other parties to the agreement she sealed with EU leaders on Sunday.

Wednesday's report said Britain's automotive and chemicals sectors faced the biggest potential losses from a no-deal Brexit – more than 20 percent of output.

The message from the government was likely to be echoed by the Bank of England, which was due to announce its own shorter-term forecasts for the economy at 1630 GMT.

Both Finance Minister Philip Hammond and BoE Governor Mark Carney have stressed the importance of a transition period, as included in May's plan, to ease Britain out of its four-decade membership of the EU.

Carney said last week that the impact of leaving the bloc without a transition could be akin to the 1970s oil crisis for the world's fifth-biggest economy.

But there remains a real prospect of a disruptive Brexit, given the scale of opposition to May's plan in parliament, where it



faces a vote on Dec. 11. The government's forecasts also revived protests from supporters of a more definitive break from the EU, who had accused those who campaigned in 2016 to stay in the EU of ignoring the benefits and exaggerating the risks.

UK ramps up no-deal Brexit warnings as May faces

battle in Parliament

"Politically, it looks like a rehash of 'Project Fear'," Dominic Raab, who resigned as May's Brexit minister earlier this month, told the Daily Telegraph, which reported the government report's forecasts overnight.

"People expect to be inspired, not scared witless into deferring to the government.

But Hammond told BBC television: "I am not trying to scare anybody and I reject the term 'scaremongering'.

Brexit supporters say May's deal will in fact hurt Britain's economy over the long term by making it harder to strike trade deals with faster-growing countries and regions beyond Europe, and it is not clear that lawmakers will be swayed by the latest forecasts. The BoE was due later to publish its assessment of the implications of different Brexit scenarios for interest rates and its oversight of the banking sector.

Carney has warned investors not to count on a cut to borrowing costs in the event of an economic shock, saying it could push up inflation sharply and damage growth.

Alongside its Brexit analysis, the BoE will publish its regular Financial Stability Report and the results of its 2018 stress tests of banks in Britain.

May's plan best for UK economy under Brexit British Finance Minister Philip Hammond, speaking ahead of a government report on the economic impact of various Brexit scenarios, said Prime Minister Theresa May's plan was the best one for the economy.

Hammond said staying in the European Union would be best for Britain in purely economic terms.

"If the only consideration, the only consideration, was the economy, then the analysis shows clearly remaining in the European Union would be a better outcome for the economy, but not by much," he told BBC television on Wednesday.

"The prime minister's deal delivers an outcome that is very close to the economic benefits of remaining in.'

He also denied the government was trying to scare lawmakers into dropping their opposition to May's plan ahead of a vote in Parliament on Dec. 11.

"I am not trying to scare anybody and I reject the term scare-mongering," he said.

(Source: Reuters)

Thirty Afghan civilians killed in U.S. air strike, officials say

At least 30 Afghan civilians were killed in U.S. air strikes in the Afghan province of Helmand, officials and residents of the area said on Wednesday, the latest casualties from a surge in air operations aimed at driving the Taliban into talks.

Afghanistan's NATO-led force said Afghan government forces and U.S. advisers came under fire from Taliban fighters in a compound in Garmsir district and called in an air strike. but the ground forces were not aware of any civilians in or near the compound.

Helmand provincial governor Moham-

mad Yasin Khan said troops had called in air strikes against Taliban fighters in Garmsir, causing both civilian and Taliban casualties. A resident of the area called Mohammadullah said the clash began late on Tuesday.

"Foreign forces bombed the area and the bombs hit my brother's house," he said. He said women and 16 children were among the dead.

Another resident, Feda Mohammad, said some victims were still buried in the rubble of the compound.

"The area is under the control of Taliban

but all of the victims of last night's bombing are civilians," he said.

The NATO-led Resolute Support forces said Afghan forces and U.S. advisers came under fire from Taliban equipped with machines guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

"At the time of the strike, the ground force was unaware of any civilians in or around the compound; they only knew that the Taliban was using the building as a fighting position," a force spokeswoman said in a statement.

"We investigate every credible allegation of error and review every mission to learn,

adapt and improve," she said.

The deaths are the latest in a growing civilian casualty toll caused by air strikes and underline the severity of the Afghan war even as moves to begin peace talks have picked up with contacts between U.S. peace envoy Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban representatives.

The United Nations said last month the number of civilian casualties from air strikes in the first nine months of the year was already higher than in any entire year since at least 2009

(Source: daily Star)

alse claims and assumptions.

On June 9, 2017, Qatar strongly dismissed allegations of supporting terrorism after the Saudi regime and its allies blacklisted dozens of individuals and entities purportedly associated with Doha. Later that month, Saudi Arabia and its allies released a 13-point list of demands, including the closure of Al Jazeera television network and downgrade of relations with Iran, in return for the normalization of diplomatic relations with Doha.

The document containing the demands by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE and Bahrain also asked Qatar to sever all ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement. Qatar rejected the demands as "unreasonable.' (Source: Press TV)

Afghan president forms team to talk peace, sees five-year timeline

Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani has formed a 12-strong team to negotiate peace with the Taliban, but implementation of any deal will take at least five years, he said on Wednesday.

Ghani was speaking at a U.N. conference on the 17-year-old war between Afghan security forces and an increasingly confident Taliban, which is fighting to drive out international forces and establish their version of strict law.

The Taliban are not at the Geneva talks but will be closely monitoring the gathering of Afghan leaders and international diplomats, which coincides with efforts by U.S. President Donald Trump's administration to push for peace with the group.

We seek a peace agreement in which the Afghan Taliban would be included in a democratic and inclusive society," Ghani said, adding that any deal must fulfil certain conditions, including respecting the constitutional rights of women.

Ghani, facing a war-weary public back home, called on Afghans to back his peace push in an election next April.

The two-day Geneva gathering is intended to help resolve the quagmire created by the war, a development that would pave way for the withdrawal of foreign troops.

(Source: Reuters)



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX IFX

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIESUSD42,000 rialsEUR47,607 rialsGBP53,838 rialsAED11,430 rials

Source: iribnews.ir

COMMODITIES

\$51.08/b
\$59.85/b
\$59.29/b
\$1,214.70/oz
\$14.23/oz
\$833.85/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Chinese bank to back Iran-China transactions as of Dec. 2

ECONOMY TEHRAN — A Chinese bank is to support



banking transactions between Iranian and Chinese businessmen as of December 2, the Iranian head of Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce announced.

> As Tasnim news agency quoted Asadollah Asgaroladi as saying on Wednesday, regarding that Iran's exports of oil to China will be commenced in few days and China will pay for the oil cargos almost in a month, China is to introduce its second bank for conducting financial transactions with the Iranian side.

13th ICA Regional Summit official opening ceremony held in Tehran

By Ebrahim Fallahi

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TEHRAN–The official opening ceremony of the 13th ICA-Asia and Pacific Regional Cooperative Conference was held at IRIB Conference Center on Wednesday.

Senior officials from Iran and ICA including Parliament speaker Ali Larijani; Finance Minister Farhad Dejpasand; Cooperative, Labor and Social Welfare Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari, Head of Iran Chamber of Cooperative Bahman Abdollahi as well as ICA Chairperson of the Regional Board Chunsheng Li along with over 170 foreign guests and 400 Iranian participants attended the ceremony.

Speaking at the ceremony, Abdollahi stressed the importance of ICA Asia and Pacific cooperative conference, saying "The Asia-Pacific Cooperative Assembly is the strongest party of the ICA World Assembly in terms of population, organizational membership and financial performance, and has played a significant role in promoting cooperatives in comparison with the three African, European and American regions."

"Iran as a country with vast potential for investment and cooperative business in diverse areas such as tourism, industry, energy and agriculture can be a model for many Asian countries." he added.

Abdollahi further mentioned the goals of the international conference saying, "The goal of this meeting is to promote cooperation among the ICA members and to address issues like job creation, supporting poverty alleviation, and promotion of the status of



cooperatives."

Chunsheng Li for his part appreciated Iran's role in International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) especially in the region.

ICA chairperson of the regional board mentioned the importance of the role of cooperatives in the developing countries' economies, noting that cooperatives can help such economies become more resilient and sustainable.

Li further noted that cooperatives are currently contributing to \$2.1 billion of the world's economy. "Cooperatives are the voices of communities and a voice by which we can create a stronger network in the region and around the world to neutralize many crises", he added.

Elsewhere in the ceremony, Parliament speaker Ali Larijani also addressed the attendees saying, "We have placed a significant importance on the role of cooperatives in the country's economy in the sixth five-year development plan."

"A great deal of work is needed for the cooperatives to get to their appropriate position in the country's economy and the Parliament will also do its best to support the realization of this goal." he said.

The official further stressed the need for educating the cooperative members in order to facilitate their growth.

He also mentioned some of the new areas like IT and ICT as potent fields for the country's cooperatives to enter.

During the event, Cooperative, Labor and Social Welfare Minister Mohammad Shariatmadari also voiced the government's readiness for assisting cooperatives in various areas including accessing global markets, networking and branding.

The official mentioned the history and improvement of cooperatives in Iran, saying "In 1357 (1978), only 4.8 percent of the people in Iran were members of cooperatives, and now the number has exceeded 52 percent."

According to the official, during the last 40 years, the number of cooperatives has increased by 11.8 percent on average annually, and now the figure has reached 90,000 nationwide.

Shariatmadari also pointed to the importance of employment in the cooperative sector and said: "There are now 1,700,000 people working in the country's cooperatives; this number can further grow with the development of cooperative culture and given the youthful population of the country."

Attendees from over 30 countries are participating in Iran's International Cooperatives Conference which is being held at IRIB Conference Center from November 26 to 30.

ICCIMA hosts Iran-S. Korea business opportunities conference

1 → "U.S. attitude towards Iran is not a threat but an opportunity for Iran's economy," Soltani said, "the agreement between Germany and France for creating Europe's intended novel financial system is a turning point which can resolve the present difficulties [of trade with Iran]."

Iran-South Korea trade volume in 2017 surpassed \$8 billion which has decreased down to \$3.7 billion in 2018, Tanhaie lamented during his remarks in the event. As he added, imports from South Korea has decreased from its previous \$4 billion in 2017 to \$2 billion in 2018.

"Trade transactions between the two sides have dropped due to U.S. sanctions against Iran which have created some difficulties in transportation sector," he said, "however, the made obstacles can be overcome by the help of Europeans."

Expressing his country's tendency for expansion of all-out ties with Iran, the Korean

ambassador, for his turn, said that "South Korea has planned the framework of its economic ties with Iran before re-imposition of U.S. sanctions against the country, and has been received some waivers under the sanctions era."

"Iran and South Korea have traded oil and home appliances till the present time and we plan to develop our ties in other sectors such as science, culture and joint research," Jeong-hyun added.





N O M Y

NOVEMBER 29, 2018

مستولیت اجتماعی سرکیی مستولیت اجتماعی سرکیی Corporate Social Responsibility and Organizational Culture و فرطیانی سازمیانی their impact on economic interaction

Hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea

December 1, 2018 - Ministry of Road and Urban Development



The Embassy of the Republic of Korea

Oil jumps more than 1 percent on outage in North Sea, expected OPEC supply cuts

Oil prices rose by more than 1 percent on Wednesday, pushed up by a North Sea production outage and expectations in the market that OPEC will next week decide to implement some form of supply cut to counter an emerging glut.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were at \$52.36 per barrel at 0748 GMT, up 80 cents, or 1.6 percent from their last settlement.

International Brent crude oil futures were up 89 cents, or 1.5 percent, at \$61.10 per barrel.

The Buzzard oilfield, which pumps about 150,000 barrels per day (bpd) has closed temporarily after the discovery of pipe corrosion. As a result, trade sources said three cargoes due to load in December had been cancelled.

The shutdown...is reducing supply of a North Sea crude that helps set global prices," said Sukrit Vijayakar, director of energy consultancy Trifecta, referring to Buzzards's role in the settlement of Brent futures.

Despite Wednesday's rise, oil prices have still lost around 30 percent in value since early October, weighed down by an emerging supply overhang and by widespread weakness in financial markets.



The crude oil price slump since October is so far on par with the 2008 price crash and steeper than that of 2014/2015.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) will meet at its headquarters in Vienna, Austria, on Dec. 6

The OPEC-meeting will follow a gathering by the Group of 20 (G20) nations, which includes the world's biggest economies, in Argentina this weekend, at which the Sino-American trade dispute as well as oil

policy are expected to be discussed. While most analysts expect some form of supply cut from the OPEC meeting, sentiment

in oil markets remains negative. "Options traders remain focused on downside risks following a 30 percent slide in WTI," Erik Norland, senior economist at commodities exchange CME Group wrote in a note, referring to the higher number of traders who have placed positions that would profit from a further fall in crude prices than those placing bets on a rising market.

Portfolio managers have slashed their combined net long position in crude futures by a total of 607 million barrels over the last eight weeks, the largest reduction over a comparable period since at least 2013, when the current data series began, exchange data showed

A concern to global markets is a slowdown in global trade as a result of the Sino-American trade dispute, swelling debt and a strong dollar that puts pressure on emerging markets.

The World Trade Organization (WTO) said in its latest outlook, published on Tuesday, that "trade growth is likely to slow further into the fourth quarter of 2018", with growth likely at its slowest since Oct. 2016.

(Source: Reuters)

Tankers going nowhere indicate LNG market becoming more like oil

Some liquefied natural gas sellers aren't in a rush to deliver their multimillion-dollar cargoes.

With uncertain demand and no signs yet of bitter cold, some traders are preferring to keep their fuel inside vessels in the hope prices will rise. While the sight of stationary cargoes might not be unusual in the more-established oil market, technology has only recently made it feasible to keep LNG at minus 162 degrees Celsius (minus 260 degrees Fahrenheit) for longer periods.

From pipes to tankers

"There are cargoes parked close to Singapore, apparently waiting for the right market conditions to be delivered," said Dumitru Dediu. an associate partner at McKinsey Energy Insights, which monitors LNG flows. "Some of the players are speculating."

There are about 30 vessels currently flagged

as floating storage globally, two-thirds of which are in Asia, the biggest LNG consuming region, according to cargo-tracking company Kpler SAS. That's still a fraction of a global fleet of more than 500 vessels.

The practice of using tankers as floating storage is common in the more developed oil market. It happens during periods of contango -- when storage on land is used up, immediate demand is weak and the cost for later delivery is high enough to cover the expense of storing crude on a tanker.

Trading houses and oil majors from Vitol Group and Glencore Plc to BP Plc and Royal Dutch Shell Plc collectively made billions of dollars from 2008 to 2009 stockpiling crude at sea. At the peak of the floating storage spree, sheltered anchorages in the North Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Singapore Strait and off South Africa each hosted dozens of supertankers.

Boil off

LNG, the fastest-growing fossil fuel, is starting to resemble the oil market in that sense. Holding it back is that some LNG is lost to keep it cool during its journey, known as boil off, and that most sales are through traditional long-term contracts without destination flexibility.

But that's rapidly changing. Modern tankers are capable of serving as floating storage, especially for markets such as China that lack that capacity. They have lower boil-off rates, bigger capacity and re-liquefaction units on board to keep the cargoes cool.

The global LNG fleet has transportation capacity of about 44 million tons, which pales beside the 372 million tons of the crude oil tanker fleet, according to Clarkson Research Services Ltd., a unit of the world's biggest shipbroker. LNG tankers working as storage can tie up transport capacity, even if volumes are not significant in a



global context, Alastair Maxwell, chief financial officer of LNG ship owner and operator GasLog Ltd., said earlier this month.

The biggest contributor to flexible supplies is the U.S., where destination-free LNG exports started in 2016. The nation is adding production terminals and will compete with Australia and Qatar for a top place in LNG trade, which the International Energy Agency expects will overtake volumes delivered by pipelines in the middle of the next decade

(Source: Bloomberg)

OPEC expected to cut oil output despite Trump, survey shows

INTERNATIONAL DAILY

EHRANTIMES

OPEC and its allies will announce production cuts to check a slump in oil prices when they meet next week, defying pressure from U.S. President Donald Trump, according to a Bloomberg survey.

Thirty-one of 36 analysts and traders in a global poll predicted that the coalition of producers known as OPEC+, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, will announce output curbs when it gathers on Dec. 6 to 7. The average estimate for the size of the cut was 1.1 million barrels a day.

Oil prices have collapsed 30 percent in less than two months on concern that booming U.S. shale production and faltering demand -- combined with unprecedented output from the Saudis and Russia - will trigger a new surplus next year. The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its partners will meet in Vienna.

We anticipate that Saudi Arabia and OPEC will cut crude supply by 1 million barrels a day or more at the upcoming meeting," said Mike Wittner, head of oil-market research at Societe Generale SA in New York. "This will be necessary to avoid severe oversupply in 2019." U.S. pressure

Trump has repeatedly called on the Saudis to work on lowering

prices and could have extra leverage now as U.S. lawmakers threaten punitive measures against senior officials following the murder of Saudi dissident Jamal Khashoggi.

Nonetheless, the survey results suggest the kingdom will disregard the pressure from its most important political ally in order to shore up revenue while embarking on radical economic transformation at home and intervening in conflicts abroad.

'What Trump's asking Saudi Arabia to do is commit the ultimate act of self-harm -- to continue to oversupply a market when they are having their own fiscal constraints," said Helima Croft, chief commodities strategist at RBC Capital Markets LLC in New York.

Many of the respondents expecting a cut estimated a range for the size of the potential reduction. The smallest was 200,000 barrels a day, and the largest 2 million a day.

The survey showed that there's less confidence that Russia, Saudi Arabia's main partner outside OPEC, will join in cutbacks once again. Of the 31 who forecast a reduction, 12 said that Russia wouldn't participate in actual supply restraints. (Source: Bloomberg)

Iraq finalizes 2019 crude oil term deals, 67% to go Asia

Iraq has finalized its 2019 crude oil term contracts, with 67 percent of its exports poised to go to Asia, an oil ministry spokesman said Tuesday

"The percentage of the total quantities planned for export next year 2019: the Asian market (67 percent and the European market (20 percent) and the U.S. market (13 percent the spokesman, Assem Jihad, said in a statement. Jihad said the ministry approved the allocation of quantities for the contracts handled by Iraq>s State Oil Marketing Organization.

The deals involve the exports of Basrah Light, Basrah Heavy and Kirkuk crude. The ministry did not give further details of the term contracts. (Source: Platts)

Oil investors still on edge, waiting on OPEC's word

Global oil markets are nervously eyeing OPEC's upcoming meeting for clarity on future supply as the dust settles after a full-fledged rout in crude markets over the last several weeks.

So far, there is no clear view if production will be cut or remain steady, and that uncertainty raises the risk of more volatile trading after mass selling caused oil to drop by more than 30 percent in little over a month.

Participants generally expect OPEC will trim production at its Dec. 6 meeting by about 1.4 million barrels per day (bpd), but there is enough uncertainty to make traders defensive

Speculators, once betting on \$100-a-barrel oil, are now going the other direction, having boosted short positions in oil to their biggest in more than a year. The options market currently shows a record number of open positions in U.S. oil falling to \$45 or \$40 a barrel by the end of 2019, though bullish bets have also edged higher

manager at PIMCO, who co-manages more than \$15 billion in commodity assets. He added that if OPEC does not reduce

production, prices could tumble to \$40 a barrel The signals from the Organization of

the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its leader, Saudi Arabia, have been mixed. Officials familiar with Saudi plans told Reuters they expect it to trim production, but an industry source also said Saudi oil output exceeded 11 mln bpd for the first time in November.

The cartel's deliberations have been compounded by the growing influence of Russia, whose production has climbed to a post-Soviet era high, and by the United States, which is now producing at a record 11.7 million bpd. Russian oil executives and officials have been skeptical of the need to cut output

caught wrong-footed after waivers were announced and U.S. production surged faster than expected. Wall Street banks looking to protect against exposure from selling options to oil producers intensified that selling, market sources said.

Implied volatility, a gauge of options demand, soared, with U.S. crude implied volatility hitting its highest level since February 2016 last week

The price swings hit funds hard. Among renowned oil bulls, the Andurand Capital Commodities Fund lost 4.1 percent for the month through Nov. 16, putting it down 15.7 percent for the year, according to HSBC data

Open interest in bearish bets on U.S. crude falling to \$45 or \$40 a barrel by the end of 2019 are at record levels but bets on U.S. oil rising to \$80 a barrel by

end-2019 are also high, as some see the

CEO of Hormozgan Steel Co.: **Development of Rail Transport Fleet Lays Ground** for Realizing Steel Development Outlook

The inaugural ceremony of project for the operation of 200 long-edged wagon in rail line was held at the venue of Hormozgan Steel Company on Monday Nov. 26 in the presence of Nourollah Beiranvand Deputy Managing director of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways for Transport Economy and Planning Affairs, Saeed Rasouli Member of the Board of Directors of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (RAI) and senior managers and directors of the company.

Managing Director of Hormozgan Steel Company Eng. Farzad Arzani was the first speaker who pointed to the rail



"Getting some resolution around the intent of the Saudis and OPEC ... would go a long way to helping the market feel better," said Greg Sharenow, portfolio

France signals €71bn renewables charge

French President Emmanuel Macron has unveiled plans for the country to invest €71bn to significantly boost domestic renewable energy capacity over the next 10 years.

Photovoltaic capacity will almost quintuple to 40GŴ, while onshore wind will more than double in size to 35GW by 2028.

France will also add a further 2.5GW of offshore wind to the 3GW currently planned.

The plans were announced in a speech detailing the government's plans for France's upcoming energy roadmap.

The measures still need to pass through several legal stages and are likely to be set in stone in summer next year.

New renewables are set to partly replace nuclear energy. The country has set a target to reduce nuclear's generation share to 50 percent by 2035 from 75 percent currently. Paris will have shut down between four and six nuclear reactors by 2028. (Source: renews.biz)

Meanwhile, the U.S. decision to reimpose sanctions on Iran, only to grant waivers to major importers of that nation's oil, threw the market for a loop.

Macro-focused and commodity trading advisory funds (CTAs) had bet on a further rally ahead of renewed U.S. sanctions on Iran, but instead were

sell-off as having gone too far, too fast. "As sharp as the falloff has been, I think

the market is poised to have as sharp a comeback," said Shawn Reynolds, portfolio manager of the VanEck Global Hard Assets Fund in New York.

(Source: Reuters)



Foolad Kar System Esfarayen Company intends

to prequalify eligible contractor in implementing hot- and cold-rolling production lines for producing alloy steel sections (rebar, skein and strap) with the production capacity of 300,000 tons/year with EPCF format according to the following terms and conditions;

• 1- Possibility to attract international contractor owning technology within the framework of joint venture (JV) project,

• 2- Possibility to finance project

Therefore, eligible companies, meeting the above criteria, can send their working experience and capabilities to the following address not later than Dec. 8, 2018:

First Floor, No. 2/1, Corner of Shoureshi Alley, Southern Sibouyeh St., Shahid Ghandi Ave.,

North Sohrevardi Ave., Tehran Postal Code: 1554716713, Tel: +9821-88178541 transport industry and said, "rail transport has direct impact on the sustainable security and development.'

Development of rail transport fleet in the country lays the ground for the materialization of producing 55 million tons of steel according to the Development Outlook document, he maintained.

Turning to the impact of development of rail transport in steel industry and added, "development of rail transport will help increase security and sustainable development in the country.'

Development of rail transport, moreover increasing security, has direct effect in environment and economy of the country, he said, adding, "naturally, Hormozgan Steel Company welcomes development of rail transport and addition of 200 fright cars to this fleet due to the dire requirement in the sector of movement of raw materials and manufactured products.'

Arzani added, "inauguration of the first phase of development of rail transport of the country in this province can be influential and effective in movement of raw materials required by Hormozgan Steel Company.³

Elsewhere in his remarks, the managing director of the company said that 2,600,000 tons of raw materials are needed for producing 1,500,000 tons of steel product."

He reiterated, "fortunately, rail transport capacity of this industrial and production unit has been promoted from 32 to 76 percent in the current Iranian calendar year in 1397 (started 21. 2018).'

Development of rail sector of the



country helps creation of a safe and secure route for both freight and passenger, he said, adding, "in line with 2025 Outlook Vision, steel production units in the country should be able to produce 55 million tons of quality steel, 10 million tons of which has been predicted to be produced in Hormozgan Steel Company.

He pointed to the shortage of water in the central and northern part of the country due to recent droughts and added, "there is no choice except development of water-saving industries in Hormozgan province, Persian Gulf littoral states and Gulf of Oman.'

Materialization of producing 10 million tons of steel in Hormozgan Steel Company needs movement of more than 40 million tons, so that preparation of its infrastructures should be taken into consideration especially in trail transport sector.

Moreover, preparing transport infrastructures, we are in dire need of other infrastructures such as water, electricity, gas, etc. in this province for the production of 10 million tons of steel.

Production of 10 million tons of steel in the company is possible in cooperation with the private sector and cooperation of responsible officials.

With regard to winning the title of exemplary exporter for the fourth consecutive year, he added, "Hormozgan Steel Company has been planned according to exports in a way that over 70 percent of steel produced in this company was exported to other countries in the past year (ended March 20, 2018) while 30 percent of which was delivered to the omestic customers.

Meeting domestic demand has been prioritized in the country while the extra steel will be exported, he stressed.

Considering the exacerbation of sanctions imposed against the country and given the problems created for steel industry of the country, the management of the company will make its utmost efforts in order to overcome shortfalls and bottlenecks, he added.

Arzani pointed to the export promotion as the main aim of steel industry behind production growth and added, "given the government's plan for increasing steel production capacity of the country to 55 million tons, over 35 million tons of which will be exported from the country.

In conclusion, Managing Director of Hormozgan Steel Company pointed to the attraction of private sector investor for materializing objectives of producing 10 million tons of steel in this industrial and production unit and said, "in this regard, Persian Gulf Mineral and Mining Industrial Special Zone plays a leading role in this regard. Accordingly, Hormozgan Steel Company, Saba Steel Company, Kaveh and Maadkoush steel production companies can help materialize objectives of steel industry in 2025 Outlook vision." By: A.Saeidi

IN BRIEF NEWS

INTERNATIONAL DAILY **TEHRANTIMES**



Pakistan PM lays stone of Kartarpur corridor

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN—While India has categorically stated that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not be attending the SAARC Summit in Islamabad, some Indian union ministers on Wednesday attended the foundation laying ceremony of Kartarpur corridor in Pakistan.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan laid stone for the much-awaited corridor linking Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Kartarpur - the final resting place of Sikh faith's founder Guru Nanak Dev - to Dera Baba Nanak shrine in India's Gurdaspur district.

The Kartarpur Corridor, which will facilitate the visa-free travel of Indian Sikh pilgrims to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, is expected to be completed within six months.

Pakistan Foreign Office Spokesperson Muhammad Faisal told the media in Islamabad on Wednesday that the opening of Karatarpur border was the historic step for welfare of minorities. "It shows that Pakistan takes care of minorities," he said.

He credited PM Khan for the initiative to open the border for Sikhs pilgrims and said it was widely appreciated by the people including in India. He said the corridor will facilitate Sikh pilgrims to visit their holiest sites in Pakistan.

> EU, Afghanistan sign crucial aid agreement

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN—The European Union and d e s k the Afghan government have signed a financing agreement worth millions of euros during an important summit focused on development and economy of the war-torn country

The two-day summit in Geneva is billed as a platform for the Afghan government to renew its commitment to reform and discuss aid contributions in its bid to achieve stability and security.

The United Nations, which is co-hosting the summit with the Afghan government, said the conference "will also be crucial in measuring results against the \$15.2bn committed by the international community for Afghanistan in 2016.

Within the package, 311 million euros (roughly \$351m) is allocated to support the Afghan government in pursuing its reform agenda, 80 million euros (roughly \$90m) to improve the health and nutrition of the population, and 15.5 million euros (roughly \$16m) to support the presidential and provincial council elections in 2019.

The EU and the Afghan government also signed a new agreement worth 37 million euros (roughly \$42m) to "reinforce EU assistance to Afghanistan in addressing migration and forced displacement challenges".

Fleeing Rohingya sent back to **Rakhine**

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — Nearly 100 Rohingya Muslims were forcibly sent back to Myanmar's volatile Rakhine state after being detained at sea while heading to Malaysia, country's police said on Wednesday.

According to media reports, three ships carrying fleeing Rohingya were seized and returned to Rakhine over the past two weeks, as the monsoon season gives way to sailing conditions.

All on board the third boat were being returned to camps around the capital Sittwe in the central part of the state, where more than 120,000 people have been confined since violence broke out in 2012.

India turns down Pakistan's invite to **PM Modi for SAARC Summit**

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN — The rela d e s k tionship between the two estranged neighbors India and India keeps fluctuating. Last week's developments had inspired hope that the relations between them might be back on track. But Indian government seems least interested to shake hands with Pakistan at least for now.

In a major development that was seen as an attempt to resurrect the Indo-Pak ties, the Imran Khan government in Islamabad decided to invite Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the South Asian Association Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit. The announcement drew mixed reactions

in India with some seeing it as a 'ploy' and some looking it as a window of opportunity to open a new chapter in their bilateral relations. Pakistan Foreign Office Spokesman Mo-

hammad Faisal announced it on Tuesday, as reported by The Dawn. The announcement followed Imran Khan's previous letter to PM Modi earlier this year that talked about constructive engagement between India and Pakistan and invited him to Pakistan.

Imran Khan wrote the letter on September 14, a month after he was sworn-in as the new Prime Minister of Pakistan. Khan was responding to the greetings sent by PM Modi on his election victory. The previous letter talked about constructive engagement and said Pakistan had shown the spirit to talk by sending Pakistan's Minister of Law and Information to the funeral



of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The letter further highlighted how Vajpayee worked to better India-Pakistan relations and wanted a stronger SAARC.

However, soon after the letter was sent, relations between the two sides fell off again, when stamps were issued in Pakistan in memory of the slain Kashmiri militant commander, which enraged New Delhi and led to war of

words between the two sides.

Last week, Pakistan government made an effort to repair relations by inviting India's foreign minister for the Kartarpur corridor inauguration ceremony. India confirmed that two ministers would be attending the event, which signaled a thaw in their relations.

have paved the ground for resurrection of ties between two neighbors. But, that doesn't seem to be happening for now.

India has dismissed the invite. A senior government official was quoted saying that India is not a special invitee that Pakistan has the discretion to invite. India is an integral part of the SAARC Summit

On Wednesday, India put to rest any speculation over Modi travelling to Pakistan to attend the SAARC Summit.

Addressing media, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj categorically stated that there was no way PM Modi would travel to Pakistan for the summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) regional grouping. The minister said no dialogue can take place between India and Pakistan till the time the latter puts a curb on terrorist activities emanating from its soil. "PM Narendra Modi will not go to Pakistan to attend the SAARC Summit," she declared.

"For many years, the Indian government has been asking for this (Kartarpur) corridor, only now Pakistan responded positively. It doesn't mean the bilateral dialogue will start because of this, terror and talks can't go together," Swaraj said.

Pertinently in 2016, India and several other nations had pulled out of the SAARC Summit in Pakistan citing the unfavorable regional security situation and for India, specifically the issue was about cross-border terrorism.

Afghan Shia militia commander's arrest raises many questions

 $1 \rightarrow$ The legion of his supporters poured into the streets in the county's heartland and protested against the government's decision to arrest him. They questioned the selective treatment of government towards militia groups, suggesting that this Hazara commander was singled out because of his ethnicity. There are many militia groups among other ethnic groups like Pashtuns and Tajiks.

According to some reports, protestors burnt down many police checkpoints. The protestors were particularly enraged after half of dozen of them were killed by security forces, which led to intense street clashes in which many security forces were also wounded.

Demonstrators and eyewitnesses said the police opened fire "indiscriminately" to disperse the crowd, which resulted in many civilian casualties, including six killings.

While the government officials claimed that no live ammunition was used against demonstrators, protestors like Ahmer told Tehran Times that live ammunition was used and guns are pointed directly at the demonstrators. "It was a direct assault on the people protesting peacefully and it has once again exposed the government," he said.

After two days of protests that rocked the country, including the capital city of Kabul, Alipoor was released. But it again revived the debate pertaining to 'warlords' and 'militia groups' with considerable influence in Afghanistan.

Alipur's release, as President Ashraf Ghani flew to Geneva to attend a United Nations conference on Afghanistan, was announced by Vice President Sarwar Danish's office. Danish, who also belongs to Hazara community, was apparently under tremendous pressure to secure his release.

After his release, Alipoor was taken in a convoy to the office of VP Danish. According to some reports, he thanked the vice president and committed that he would be ready to respond to allegations leveled against him and will lay down his arms if found guilty.

What makes Alipoor's case so complicated is the fact hat he is seen as an anti-Taliban commander from the Shia



Hazara minority. He claims to be protecting his people from the Taliban and ISIS, as he has often said that government forces alone are not able to protect them.

According to reports, he was active in Jaghori and Malistan districts of Ghazni province recently when Taliban fighters launched coordinated attacks on predominantly Hazara Shia areas. The local people there in the absence of Afghan security forces were able to repel the attacks, with the help of Alipoor.

Known widely as 'Commander Sword', Alipoor has built a large army of his supporters who swing into action everywhere minority Hazara of the country come under attack.

Alipur formed the army among the Hazara people in Maidan Wardak province after a number of civilians were killed in militant attacks three years ago.

In conflict-ridden Afghanistan, Hazaras have often been targeted and feel extremely vulnerable. There has been growing resentment among many Hazaras against the government, which they believe does not support them from terrorist groups, leaving them with no choice but to defend themselves.

The country has a grim history of ethnic violence, especially when it comes to targeted killing of Hazara Shias. In the late 1000s, brutal Pashtun ruler Abdul Rahman Khan had

ordered extermination of all Shias in central Afghanistan, which led to the gory massacre of thousands of Hazara Shias.

The recent attacks targeting the community have brought back chilling memories of 1990s when the Taliban would raid houses, identify and kill Hazara Shias, mostly in northern provinces

NDS Chief Mohammad Masoom Stanikzai, addressing the Afghan parliament, defended the decision to arrest Alipoor, saying parliamentarians and people should check online videos which show Alipoor breaching the law. The issue was discussed threadbare on social media

with netizens lambasting the government decision to arrest the commander at a time when Hazara Shias are facing unprecedented attacks from the terrorist groups including Taliban and ISIS.

Ahmad Zubair, a government employee, said peaceful demonstration is people's legitimate right and the government has to protect the peaceful protestors. "Afghanistan government arrested Alipoor who defends Hazarajat against Taliban. Hundreds of protests in Kabul and provinces seeking his release. Kabul police opened fire and killed 3 including a young girl," he tweeted.

Arif Suleimani, a university student, said government must provide a clear definition of "enemy". "Either #Taliban who kill civilians, blast & burn schools & villages are terrorists or #AliPoor who fights against #Taliban and defends people is a terrorist. Being terrorist is based on ethnicity or violence and crimes," he tweeted.

Mahdi Mesbah, a Twitter user, said Alipoor is the "servant of the honor and dignity of this country." Baqir Haidery, a social media activist, said by arresting anti-Taliban commanders like Alipoor, government was paving a safe passage for Taliban to continue their long and dirty war in the country.

Alipoor's arrest and release has not only revived the debate over warlords and militia groups but it has once again demonstrated how the government in Kabul looks at different ethnicities

They were headed for Malaysia when stopped by navy officers on Sunday night off the southern town of Dawei, Police Major Min Lwin was quoted saying by AFP. "They were all sent back to Sittwe on a navy boat last night," he said, adding that the group, two thirds of whom were under the age of 18, would arrive on Thursday or Friday.

It has been one year since Rohingya Muslims were forced to leave Myanmar following brutal crackdown by Myanmar military with tacit support from the government. The savagery in Rakhine was described by the United Nations as "a textbook example of ethnic cleansing".



Assassin of **Kashmiri** journalist gunned down

INTERNATIONAL TEHRAN —At least two militants including the one allegedly involved in the murder of prominent Kashmiri journalist Shujaat Bukhari were killed in an encounter with security forces in central Kashmir's Budgam district on Wednesday.

One of the militants has been identified Naveed Jatt, who alledgedly played a role in Bukhari's assassination in June this year.

Bukhari, editor-in-chief of Rising Kashmir, was attacked by three bike-borne gunmen while coming out of his office. J&K Police said two of the three gunmen were from Kashmir and the third was a Pakistani.

Two security personnel accompanying Bukhari were also killed in the attack. "This week was great, those involved in killing of innocent people in Kulgam, Pulwama & Shopian belt were neutralized. As per ground verification, top Lashkar-e-Taiba commander Naveed Jatt was one of the 2 terrorists killed today," Jammu Kashmir DGP Dilbagh Singh was quoted saying by ANI.

Jatt was one of the dreaded militant commanders in Kashmir who was on the hit-list of security agencies for many years. In recent years, since the killing of former militant commander Burhan Wani, militancy has been resurrected in Kashmir with many locals taking up arms.

Understanding essence of Islam key to fostering unity

 $1 \rightarrow$ We should renew our commitment to the cause of Islamic unity and brotherhood, and help in the elimination of internecine bickering between Sunni and Shiite sects of Islam.

There is no denying that there are differences of opinion on some doctrinal and theological issues but we tend to forget that Islam is not a monolithic faith, amenable to a narrow and singular interpretation. It is made up of a rich pattern of diversity although flowing from a common source. What divides us pales in comparison to what unites us.

In this context, it is appropriate to refer to the Amman Message of November 9, 2004 endorsed by 200 Islamic scholars from all recognized schools and sects from over 50 Muslim countries. This message is a historical, universal and unanimous religious and political consensus of the Ummah.

It focused on definition of a Muslim, excommunication from Islam (takfir) and principles related to delivering religious edicts (fatwa). It recognized eight legal schools of Sharia/ Fiqh and schools of theology - Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, Hanbali, Jafari, Zaydi, Zahiri, Ibadi. It forbade pronouncing takfir upon others recognized as Muslims.

For Muslims, Amman declaration provided a basis for unity and a solution to infighting and for non-Muslims it presented an authentic picture of what Islam is and what it is not. The rationale behind it was to dispel the unfair charge of intolerance, lack of inclusiveness and pluralism against Islam nurtured by some sections in the West and others who claim to be Muslims and vet willingly or inadvertently present a distorted



view of Islam through their irresponsible utterances or actions.

Imperialist, colonial and neocolonial forces take perverse advantage of sectarian differences among Muslims. Following the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979, the Zionists and Western imperialist forces encouraged Saddam Hussain to fight Iran on the sectarian lines, resulting in enormous human and material loss to the Ummah.

At that time, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood had issued a statement, asking the people of Iraq to not fall into the trap of enemies who sought to sow discord. "This war is not a liberation war for the oppressed men, women and children who neither have a way out nor guidance," read the statement, urging people to lay down weapons and join the camp of the revolution. If only people had paid heed and not fallen into the vicious trap set by the enemies.

Currently, fratricidal wars are being fought in Syria and Yemen in the name of sects. ISIS is maliciously using the sectarian card in its bloody campaign in Iraq and Syria. Sectarian clashes continue to be fueled in Pakistan and Afghanistan by the neo-imperialist forces. Similarly, troubled relations between people of various sects in Bahrain, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia are a matter of grave concern.

All these sectarian feuds have no doctrinal or theological basis. They are either politically motivated or else a result of denial of political and economic rights. The international community should realize its responsibilities and right the wrongs. The United Nations (UN) has a key responsibility to ensure implementation of its resolutions to ensure justice to people who continue to be denied their basic rights. The Ummah too should pull its socks and set its house in order. Sooner the better.

Author is a Kashmir-based doctor, writer and a prominent member of civil society. He is the author of 'The Wounded Paradise'.

'I doubt that China or Russia would supply Saudi with enrichment or reprocessing tech'

1 → Will Saudi Arabia accept a nuclear agreement with U.S. like the one U.S. has signed with UAE?

A: Saudi Arabia indicates that it will not. There is some talk of a compromise under which Saudi Arabia would agree to be constrained as long as Iran is constrained by the JCPOA. Not being able to do what Iran can do naturally fuels a feeling of grievance in Saudi Arabia.

This is one reason why my preference would be for Iran to turn its national enrichment program into a multinational program in which Saudi Arabia and other countries could join. Even better, in my view – although probably even more politically difficult for Iran – would be for Iran to abandon its uneconomic national enrichment program and lead a campaign to ban national enrichment programs worldwide in favor of multinational programs like Urenco. I have been urging this on the U.S. as well.

Because our national enrichment program was privatized and then went bankrupt, the only enrichment plant in the United States today is owned by Urenco.

U.S. knows very well that if it tries to include firm and serious terms in possible agreement with Saudi Arabia, this may result in Riyadh's tendency to have nuclear cooperation with Russia and China or South Korea. How

Muslims need to talk more with each other: Bajrami



By Mohammad Ali Haqshenas

TEHRAN (MNA) - Muiadin Bajrami, Manager of Foundation Gnosa in Macedonia, is of the opinion that Shia and Sunni scholars need to talk more with each other to achieve Islamic unity.

Touching upon the importance of unity among Ummah, he said, "Those who think that Sunni is more important than Shia or vice versa would not help.

Bajrami made the remarks in an exclusive interview with Mehr News Agency on Monday on the sideline of the 32nd Islamic Unity Conference in Tehran.

Here is the full text of the interview: What do you think of this conference in general and how do you evaluate it?

A: I believe that this conference is very good for the future. Maybe this is the first step to gather important people to talk about the unity of Ummah [Muslim community]. The other point is about the problems of Muslims in the world. I believe that the conference should question some wider issues as well, not only for the Middle East.

We are always talking about Palestine, Yemen, Syria, and Iraq. This is ok, I'm sure,

but it's important to talk about the problems of Muslims living in Balkans and other parts of the world. It's crucial to hear the people who have come here from different areas that are never heard, to see what their problems are and what are the solutions.

But I think the organizer here is putting his best effort to gather all these people and I'm so pleased with all he is doing here and I pray to Allah to give him much more power to improve the event more and more.

What are the main barriers in route to uniting Muslims?

A: We need to talk more. Important people of each country, either Shia or Sunni, should talk with each other. Those who think that Sunni is more important than Shia or vice versa would not ĥelp. We should see our main aim as an Islamic Ummah. But I think this step taken here will improve significantly in the future to unite Muslim countries.

So you are hopeful about the unity. A: No, I'm 100 percent sure. I'm Shia and I believe in the coming of Imam Mahdi. I wish that this would happen as soon as possible and we would live in that time, inshallah.

China, however – just as it was unable to block Russia from building the Bushehr reactors in Iran.

will Washington solve this problem?

A: I am not an expert but I don't think that South Korea could sell nuclear power plants to Saudi Arabia if Saudi Arabia does not have a 123 agreement with the U.S. This is because much of South Korea's nuclear reactor design came from the U.S. The U.S. could not block Russia or

I doubt that China or Russia would supply Saudi Arabia with enrichment or reprocessing technology but, if North Korea can do it, Saudi Arabia probably could as well. This is one reason I find Saudi Arabia's

refusal to agree to the Additional Protocol so worrisome. That suggests that it might try to hide some of its nuclear activities. Some say that the U.S. will never agree with granting

a strategic concession like enrichment to Saudi Arabia that can change balance of power against Israel. What do you think of this?

A: Israel, obviously, has been campaigning against Iran's enrichment program. I am not close enough to the debate to be aware of whether it is campaigning for a Gold Standard 123 Agreement for Saudi Arabia.

Of course, I don't think that Israeli or U.S. nuclear weapons are usable by sane leaderships. I worry, however, about leaderships that are not entirely sane. In the U.S. and Russia, where some nuclear weapons are on "hair-trigger," I also worry about false warnings of incoming attack and, increasingly, about hackers.

Iran is a role model for uniting Muslim states: Indonesian scholar



By Mohammad Ali Haqshenas

TEHRAN (MNA) - Akmal Kamil, Deputy Head of Research and Education at Islamic Cultural Center Jakarta, believes that Iran is a role model for uniting Muslim countries around the world. Touching upon the importance of the annual Islamic Unity Conference, he said that it is a great opportunity for finding solutions to problems of Islamic countries like Palestine and Yemen. Kamil made the remarks in an exclusive interview with Mehr News Agency on Monday on the sideline of the 32nd Islamic Unity Conference in Tehran.

Here is the full text of the interview: I wanted to know your general opinion

about the conference and the role of Iran in uniting Muslim states around the world. A: First of all, I want to congratulate the

birthday anniversary of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq to all Muslims and especially to the Supreme Leader of Islamic Republic of Iran.

In my opinion, this conference is very important. The World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought and the Islamic Republic of Iran can play important roles to make Muslim people closer to each other and to share their opinion about how to solve problems of the Islamic world. We cannot deny that today we have many problems from Yemen, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and also other places in the world like Rohingya. And in this conference, scholars have gathered and try their best to find the solution for these problems. So this conference is very important because scholars at least meet with each other once a year. Iran plays a role model in this regard.

Regarding the issue of Palestine, what will be the results of the U.S. illegal decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem? And how can Islamic countries counter this kind of measures?

A: First of all, leaders of Islamic countries have to strongly condemn this decision adopted by the United States President. It's crucial for Islamic countries not to follow this measure. The government of my country, Indonesia, severely criticized Australia when they announced that they want to move their embassy to Jerusalem. This issue was so important that the Indonesian President himself condemned Australia's decision.

So first, leaders of Islamic countries should condemn this kind of hostile measures. And then, the Muslim community all over the world should put their hands together and be united against these actions.

France' unrestful days with Macron

INTERNATIONAL DAILY

TEHRANTIMES



Under such circumstances, Marin Le Pen and French nationalists are hopeful about the next year European Parliament elections. They hope that by winning these elections, they can take an important step in defeating Macron in France' next presidential elections. It is not unreasonable that some analysts consider far-right extremists behind the recent protests in this country.

Undoubtedly, recent protests in France will not be the last round of protests against the administration of Emmanuel Macron. These protests will continue until 2022 (The time for France next presidential elections). Without a doubt, the French protests and the political fate of Emmanuel Macron will also affect the equations of the united Europe, making this block and the Eurozone even more vulnerable. In such a situation, it's not exactly clear that what would be the European leaders' final decision and policy

towards France' ongoing protests. It should be noted that France protests occurred just at a time when Europe was more vulnerable than any time before, due to the London's exit from the EU. This has motivated the opposition groups inside the European countries for departing the European Union and the Eurozone, which consequently resulted in the intensification of nationalism through the Green Continent, an issue that has raised deep concerns among European officials.

Why Trump won't say **Khashoggi deserves justice**

TEHRAN (FNA) — After closing an arms deal with Saudi Arabia worth \$110 billion, it makes sense for U.S. President Donald Trump to refuse to say whether slain journalist Jamal Khashoggi deserves justice - just as he won't say Yemen and Syria are entitled to peace or ending the twin wars is the best way to ensure their people have the security they need.

Instead, he has announced the \$110 billion deal will go ahead, even extend up to \$350 billion over 10 years, Saudi Arabia is U.S. arms dealers' most important client, and it is Washington's No. 1 ally in the Middle East region, particularly in the forgotten military aggression against Yemen, which has claimed the lives of thousands of people, most of them civilians.

In his view, Saudi client state has every right to murder its critics or incessantly pound Yemen or support terror proxies in Syria. Riyadh cannot and should never be punished for its crimes or be allowed to fail to reach its criminal goals despite suffering great expense; and the Saudi regime is free to sponsor Takfiri-Wahhabi terrorists fighting against Syria, which has left hundreds of thousands people dead and millions more displaced.

In the president's view, the White House has every right to continue its brutal war on Yemen or help terrorists affect regime change in Damascus; dismiss the de-escalation zones agreement reached between Iran, Russia and Turkey; and strike as many civilians as possible in terror-held areas. There is room for very minor shifts in this excessive policy that make sure war-party Washington does not harm the most vulnerable allies. Especially for terror proxy forces in need, the Trump White House does not want to leave the "moderate" goons without training, weapons and munitions. In the interim, no one at the United Nations presses the Saudis

on their crimes or the Trumpsters on their views about the colonial policy's underlying philosophy: Is Yemen entitled to peace? Is every Syrian entitled to peace, or is Khashoggi's family entitled to some justice?

Trump wants to make sure the deal will never hold, just as the way he is making sure the Saudi-led, U.S.-backed war on Yemen will carry on. His massive arms deal with Saudis is merely a set of long-term policies that reflect his war priorities. He embarked on a racialized course of scapegoating and refused to rule out more sanctions against Iran and Russia as part of that process. He wants to have an all-out confrontation. It's good for business and it creates American jobs. Though Trump is unable to help regional allies to regime change Syria and Yemen, he did succeed in destabilizing the region for many years to come. His deplorable Saudi arms deal has effectively cast a shadow of war over the millions of people living in the Middle East and North Africa without the hope for permanent peace and tranquility. This shadow accompanies them wherever they go in their daily lives. This divisive arms deal not only serves to incite fear of war; it also helps to kill justice and to exacerbate regional insecurity and chaos, and most importantly, mistrust among Muslims, even among Saudi Arabia's own allies. Trump's discursive policy of weaponizing allies has inspired sectarian warfare as well because his administration hasn't hesitated to carry out its threats against Iran and its close allies. In its first months, the Trump administration imposed travel ban on Muslims, particularly Syrian refugees, that despite international outcry is still ongoing. Half the Muslim people applying for visa never get to travel to the United States. And the results have been predictable, as an eroding trust in so-called "American democracy' and "American dream" across the country. It's not surprising that Trump's Islamopbobia campaign has undermined Muslim trust and instigated resentment, as many pundits have attested. This has made the region highly vulnerable to exploitation as attempts to resist American hegemony and wars of aggression and deceit have often been met with threatened military attack and coup - even in the case of Qatar which wants better ties with Iran. So it is no coincidence that, over the past few months, the growing insecurity and chaos has taken place while the region has become increasingly militarized and while discussions of ending the twin wars on Syria and Yemen have been frequently linked to Iran leaving these two allies to their own devices. This president and his pro-Israel and pro-Saudi cabinet plan to take the profitability of the permanent war on terror, Islam and suchlike to new heights by giving massive arms to the Israel-allied despots of the Persian Gulf and by imposing further sanctions against Iran and Russia. Trump cannot maintain this divisive foreign policy and crimes-against-humanity complicity without escaping international condemnation in the noisy drumbeat of warmongering, scapegoating, and perverting of justice.



and the direction given by Iranian govern- cerned. Unity is the reason that caused Imam

By Mohammad Ali Haqshenas

TEHRAN (MNA) - Indian Professor Mahrukh Mirza said that the idea of achieving Islamic unity started with efforts of late Imam Khomeini.

He went on to say that the main factor which threatens the achievement of Islamic unity is lack of education and unless this is not resolved, unity will never be achieved.

Mirza, who is the vice-chancellor of 'Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti Urdu, Arabi-Farsi University', made the remarks in an exclusive interview with Mehr News Agency on Sunday on the sideline of the 32nd Islamic Unity Conference in Tehran.

Here is the full text of the interview:

What do you think of this gathering in general?

A: Regarding the 'Vahdat [unity] Week', the birthday of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), you through your media is that a day will come that the entire world will embrace the Islam. You know, many Americans are embracing Islam as they reach their peak or high place because Muhammad (PBUH) is our last prophet and no other prophet will come now but only one Imam will come and take 'Zohur' and at that time, the entire world will be praising Islam and say their 'Shahada'. You see the high intellectuals from America are following thoughts of religion. They may not be following Islam now but I'm sure they will do so one day; they have started using Hijab, their westernization circle is coming down and other smaller countries are also following them now. Another point is that unity among Muslims is the message of this conference - but I believe that there is still a long way to go - as far as global unity is con-

ment to unite Muslims, what I want to tell Hussein to give his Qurbani [sacrifice] with 72 of his companions whilst, his opposers, in the Yazid's troops, didn't know the true path which led to the real tenets of Islam.

Who initiated this unity movement and what threatens the Islamic unity the most?

A: Undoubtedly, Islamic unity started as a result of Imam Khomeini efforts. And very soon you will see all the countries will have to come and join their hands together, otherwise, we will be scattered.

Lack of education is the main factor which threatens Islamic unity. Unless Muslims are not well educated, absolute unity is impossible. Education is different from literacy; a literate person is only capable of reading newspapers but an educated individual has wisdom and enjoys a far-sighted vision. My message to Muslims is that they must prepare the grounds for educating their children.



And you see the Sunni community of Islam has also studied the message and history of Karbala. Mahatma Gandhi told if he had 72 soldiers like those of Imam Hussein he would have won the Indian freedom within 24 hours from Britain.

Only Resistance can solve Palestinian crisis: German analyst

By Mohammad Ali Haqshenas

TEHRAN (MNA) — Jurgen Grabmann, the independent analyst from Germany, said that the only solution for the Palestinian crisis is resistance. Grabmann made the remarks in an exclusive interview with Mehr News Agency on Monday on the sideline of the 32nd Islamic Unity Conference in Tehran. The three-day conference wrapped up on Monday night.

Here is the full text of the interview:

What do you think of this conference and how do you evaluate the measures adopted by Iran for uniting Muslim states?

A: It is essentially important to bring all the Muslim countries together to create a resistance against Zionism and against battles in this world. Bringing Islamic countries together needs a special strategy. It is very important to know that Iran is the only country in the world which is seriously interested in the matter. The other governments are not interested at all. Some people come, just get their money and go. But without the help of Iran and Velayat-e

Faqih [Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist], you will not succeed, and even other countries will not succeed. So they have to understand that Iran stands top regarding its foreign policy - no matter you can criticize Iran for its internal policies. So they have to follow this and we have to follow the Velayat. Even if you are not Shia, you need the control and leadership of Velayat to wake up all the people, how we make an active strategy. Just talking about revolutions is not enough, you have to be active. That is good when we come here all together and there is a chance inshallah, I'm sure.

What are the main barriers in this route to achieve unity? A: Sorry to say that, it is the brainwashed people. It is what

taught years before. I'm a specialist for Islam even if I cannot speak Arabic but you have to understand Islam in its essence. The essence is ablul-bayt which is a present. Even now you have Velayat, it is a diamond. Even Iran does not know. If you lose this diamond, you lose everything. So the main problem is that they have to understand to follow Islam in the path of ahlul-bayt. If you don't understand this, you can be professors or doctors, but you will not succeed. So that is our work to teach and we need to do something politically together to change their mind to follow Islam in the right way of ahlul-bayt.

Regarding the issue of Palestine, what is the ultimate solution for this crisis?

A: We have to find a strategy together because, in Palestine, it is 70 years that they are fighting beside the Arab armies and now you see Palestine is nothing, they only have 10 percent of their own country. They have not the right leader. In German, we say that the problem is the head. That's why its 70 years that they cannot succeed because are not dealing with it right. If you follow ahlul-bayt, you cannot lose.

Do you think that referendum is a solution for Palestine or just resistance can solve this?

A: Only resistance can solve this. With peace, you cannot get it. They will not allow making a Palestinian country. My theory is that Palestine, Mecca, Medina belong to Muslims, no matter what and where it is. So if you do not fight for it together. you cannot get it. They are losing for 70 years even when Imam Khomeini created this Islamic Revolution. You have to fight for your rights. Otherwise, they will not give it free, never.

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Office in Saadat Abad administrative office license 2 apts, 110 sq.m, parking spots Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole Building in Vanak 4 floors, 4 apts, each apt 150 sq.m, furn, balcony nice view, elevator parking spot, storage, \$2600 Ms.Diba: 09128103206

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Office in Valiasr administrative office license 3 apts, 102 sq.m, elevator lots parking spots near Niayesh highway Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole Building in Mahmoodieh 5 floors, each floor one apt each apt 170 sq.m with 3 Bdrs. unfurn, spj, 8 parking spots storage, elevator Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Luxury Office in Jordan new, between 180 to 240 sq.m flat, lobby, high quality security 2 side entrances, parking spot Ms.Diba: 09128103206

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Apt in Elahieh 180 sq.m, 3 Bdrs., fully furn nice & cozy, spj \$2500 Ms.Diba: 09128103206

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بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت مالكين محترم ویلاهای شما را جهت اجاره به منزل سفیر و مدیران مالکین محترم املاک مبله و غیرمبله، مسکونی، اداری و تجاری، ویلا و مستغلات شرکت های بین المللی در مناطق شمالی تهران شما را جهت اجاره به سفارتخانه ها و شركت های خارجی نیازمندیم. نیازمندیم.



مالكين محترم ملک های فروش و اجاره ای خود را (آیارتمان،

ویلا، مستغلات، اداری و تجاری) به ما بسیارید.



others to this worthy duty will support the

IBTO in raising the quality and quantity of

its products and help the patients," he noted.

cable diseases management has announced

that by the end of previous Iranian year some

37,650 were diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Iran out of which some 13,393 have died.

The HIV have led to AIDS in 15,278 of the

patients. It is estimated that over 66,000

people in Iran have AIDS/HIV but over one

third of them don't know they have the dis-

rest are women. Almost half of the patients

According to the Health Ministry, Some 83 percent of the patients are men and the

According to the World Health Organ-

ization (WHO), since the beginning of the

epidemic, more than 70 million people have been infected with the HIV virus and about

35 million people have died of HIV. Globally, 36.9 million [31.1-43.9 million] people were

An estimated 0.8% [0.6-0.9%] of adults

aged 15–49 years worldwide are living with

HIV, although the burden of the epidemic

continues to vary considerably between

countries and regions. The WHO African

region remains most severely affected, with

nearly 1 in every 25 adults (4.1%) living with

HIV and accounting for nearly two-thirds

of the people living with HIV worldwide.

living with HIV at the end of 2017

ease or deny it.

are ageing 21-35.

Ministry of Health center for communi-

HIV risk from blood transfusion cut to zero in 16 provinces

HEALTH d e s k **TEHRAN** — Risk of getting HIV from blood transfusion in 16 out of 31 provinces was reduced to zero in the last Iranian calendar year (March 2017-March 2018), according to the head of Iranian Blood Transfusion Organization (IBTO).

Ali Akbar Pour-Fatollah made the announcement to mark the World AIDS Day which is on December 1, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

"In meeting its global obligation, IBTO has committed itself to put forth all its efforts to reduce the risk of HIV infection from blood and blood products transfusion," he said.

With the execution of 'screening the firsttime blood donors' national plan and setting up 'the system of quality control of blood' at all transfusion centers, the transmission of infections through blood transfusion has reached its lowest level, a rate comparable to figures in developed and industrial countries," he added.

"Over the last year, HIV transmission was estimated at two in every 100,000 donations, indicating an incidence rate which is by far lower that the disease's incidence rate throughout the society," said Pour-Fatollah.

"Iran is the front runner among regional countries in guaranteeing the quality of blood and its cellular and therapeutic products. The young generation's participation in honest donation of blood as well as encouraging



Over the last year, HIV transmission was estimated at two in every 100,000 donations, indicating an incidence rate which is by far lower that the disease's incidence rate throughout the society.

Iranian company produce brain cancer vaccine

1 → "The preparations for producing vaccine for treatment of breast cancer has also been made and we are waiting for funding to begin the production phases," said the expert.

Brain cancer vaccine is a new treatment for glioblastoma (an aggressive form of brain tumors) which is still in late stage human trials but results from the 11-year international study are already "remarkably promising" with some patients living more than seven years after treatment.

According to the Independent, The treatment for people with Glioblastoma works by extracting dendritic cells, key players in the immune system, from patient's blood and



mixing them with markers from their tumor before injecting

them back in to the body to prime it to attack the cancer. Glioblastoma is one of the most aggressive and commonly diagnosed types of brain tumor in adults and is currently treated with surgery followed by radiotherapy and chemotherapy. Patients who receive this care live for between 15

and 17 months on average. But almost a third, 100 of the 331 patients enrolled in the new trial from the UK, the U.S., Germany and Canada, are classed as "extended survivors" and lived an average of 3.4 years after surgery.

IRAPEN ready to launch, aiming to control NCDs

HEALTH TEHRAN — The first phase of IRAPEN, d e s k a program for early diagnosis of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), is ready to screen around 3 to 4 million people throughout the country, said Afshin Ostovar, the Health Ministry's director for NCDs.

IRAPEN was first launched in July as a pilot program in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) Package of Essential Non-communicable (PEN) disease interventions for primary health care in low-resource settings.

According to Ostovar, at the first phase of the program, 50,000 people at each medical science university across the country will be screened and after getting the results the program will start to cover the whole population, IRIB reported last Friday.

IRAPEN has three main parts. The first part is for early detection and management of cardiovascular diseases on a scale of 10 years prior to their occurrence. Controlling blood pressure, diabetes and blood fat are also part of this program, said Ostovar.

Developing proper infrastructure for the prevention and early detection of different cancers is the second part of this scheme, he added.

"For example, when a person is detected with some risk factors in the first stage, they might be transferred to the second stage of the program for further tests and treatments, so the underpinning facilities are being prepared for such procedures," he said.

Prevention of Asthma and other chronic respiratory diseases is the third part of IRAPEN. This part of the scheme is being carried out as a pilot in six cities comprising Kashan, Qazvin, Bafq, Naqadeh, Shahreza and Maragheh, Ostovar added.

The WHO's PEN is an innovative and action-oriented set of cost-effective interventions that can be delivered to an acceptable quality of care, even in resource-poor settings. These tools will enable early detection and management of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases and cancer to prevent life threatening complications (e.g. heart attacks, stroke, kidney failure, amputations, and blindness).

Non-communicable diseases are emerging as a health problem and they are responsible for major part of the burden of the disease across the countries in the world. 70 percent



of the diseases are attributed to the NCDs globally. Regarding Iran the number is pretty much higher; 76 percent of the burden of the diseases comes from non-communicable diseases

'DNA origami' tackles multidrug-resistant cancer cells

New obesity procedure also reduces muscle mass

A study about a new procedure for the treatment of obesity has raised some concerns. This is because, while the treatment leads to weight loss, the pounds a person sheds consist of skeletal muscle as well as fat. Also, body fat loss seems to be mainly of the subcutaneous – as opposed to the riskier visceral – type. Visceral fat can harm health, and some people with obesity

resort to surgical procedures to remove it.

Skeletal muscle is necessary for good health; its loss can result in not only physical problems, but it can also impair metabolism and raise the risk of injury.



Visceral fat is the type of fat that surrounds the organs deep inside the abdomen. Doctors have linked carrying too much of it to health problems, such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

The procedure is called left gastric artery embolization. Interventional radiologists have been using it for decades to stop bleeding in emergencies.

However, the idea of using gastric artery embolization to treat obesity is new, and clinical trials are currently evaluating its safety and effectiveness for such a purpose.

The aim of the treatment is to reduce the effect of an appetite hormone by injecting microscopic beads to block an artery that supplies blood to the stomach.

 $\hat{\Gamma}$ he study's findings featured recently at the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America that is currently taking place in Chicago, IL.

Need for cost-effective, low-risk treatments Study lead author Dr. Edwin A. Takahashi, who is a vascular

and interventional radiology fellow at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, explains that a lot of research has shown that gastric artery embolization can achieve weight loss.

However," he adds, "there has been no data on what is contributing to the weight loss, whether the patients are losing fat, as desired, or muscle mass, or some combination of the two."

Obesity is a significant global public health issue with links to heart disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and other serious illnesses and health problems.

Rates of obesity and being overweight have almost tripled worldwide over the last 40 years, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

The WHO estimates for 2016 suggest that being overweight affects more than 1.9 billion of the world's adults. This figure includes some 650 million adults with obesity.

While changes to lifestyle factors such as diet and physical activity can work, for many people, these are not enough, and they opt to undergo weight-loss operations that reduce the size of the stomach.

Such surgical procedures have proved effective as treatments for obesity, but they are costly and carry risks and complications. Left gastric artery embolization

Left gastric artery embolization — if found to be effective and safe - could offer people a less invasive option for the treatment of obesity.

The procedure involves injecting microscopic beads into the artery that delivers blood to the stomach. The radiologist inserts a catheter either in the wrist or groin and uses imaging to reach the artery

Once released into the artery, the microbeads block the flow of blood through the smaller blood vessels to the stomach. This has the effect of reducing production of ghrelin, a hunger-stimulating hormone.

Early trials have shown promising results that the procedure in help people lose weight. However, there is little information

A DNA tool that combines gene therapy with chemotherapy could be a promising new way to defeat multidrug-resistant cancer cells.

New research shows how a tailored DNA nanostructure can deliver anti-cancer drugs selectively.

The tool is a "tailored DNA nanoplatform" that can carry chemotherapy drugs into targeted cancer cells while also silencing the cells' drug-resistance genes.

The technique is the work of scientists at the National Center for Nanoscience and Technology in Beijing, China.

A recent paper in the journal Angewandte Chemie International Edition gives a detailed account of how the team developed and tested the DNA nanoplatforms.

Drug treatments have significantly improved rates of survival and quality of life for people with cancer.

However, there are many cases in which cancer responds well to treatment at first but then relapses or comes back because of drug resistance.

Drug efflux

Scientists have identified several cell mechanisms that enable or promote drug resistance in cancer.

One of these is "drug efflux," a process in which transporter proteins pump drugs out of the cell body through its membranes. Efflux mechanisms exist "in all living cells," not just cancer cells.

For example, cells in the walls of the gut have an abundance of transporter proteins that pump drugs and other harmful agents back toward the digestive tract.

Thanks to extensive research, scientists now know a lot about the role of efflux mechanisms and transporter proteins in developing drug resistance in cancer.



One of the first transporter proteins that they identified was one that is coded by the Multi-Drug Resistance Gene 1 (MDR1).

Studies have also revealed that when certain organs become cancerous, their tissues start to express MDR1 more strongly. One study, in particular, discovered that treatment with the potent anticancer drug doxorubicin greatly increased expression of MDR1 in cancerous cells but not healthy cells of the lung.

Cell targeting and gene silencing

Therefore, while a drug may be very good at killing cancer cells, if the cells get better at expelling it, eventually, the drug will not be inside the cell long enough to take effect.

To tackle this problem, cancer researchers are working on ways to switch off the genes that drive drug efflux in tumor cells.

One approach to switching off efflux

pumps is a gene-silencing technique called RNA interference (RNAi). This uses molecules called RNA transcription templates to interfere with gene expression in the cells.

However, for treatment to be effective, the RNA transcription templates have to be released inside the cell body, or cytoplasm. Secondly, this has to take place at the same time as delivering the drug that kills the cells. And thirdly, healthy cells must remain untouched.

The new DNA nanoplatform addresses all three requirements — it specifically targets the cancer cells, it delivers the anticancer drug to their insides, and it switches off the genes that drive their efflux pumps to give the drug time to work.

The team used "DNA origami" techniques to create a platform that includes all the components necessary for these things to happen. Using the well-established approach,

scientists can create DNA platforms comprising simple and complicated molecular shapes that are small enough to work at the cell level.

In this case, the team made a simple structure that self-assembles into a triangular DNA nanoplatform. The platform has several sites that can bind to various "functional units."

New strategy for multidrug-resistant tumors'

The researchers tested the ability of the DNA platform to selectively deliver RNA transcription templates and the chemotherapy drug doxorubicin first in cell cultures and then in mice with multidrug-resistant tumors.

They used "two linear small hairpin RNA transcription templates." One of these took care of gene silencing, and the other took care of cell recognition and insertion.

The results showed that the "tailored DNA platform" was very effective at both the selective delivery and release of the two items. This also resulted in a highly-selective tumor kill rate

The team says that the study demonstrates how to create a nanostructure that delivers chemotherapy selectively to cancer cells while also suppressing drug resistance using gene silencing without harming healthy tissue.

They suggest that it should also be possible to tailor the DNA platforms for use in a range of treatments by altering the targets, payloads, and delivery strategies. The authors conclude:

"This tailored DNA nanoplatform, which combines RNAi therapy and chemotherapy, provides a new strategy for the treatment of multidrug-resistant tumors."

(source: Medical News Today)

about where the weight loss comes from, and how it affects body composition of fat and muscle.

Dr. Takahashi and his team examined computed tomography scans of 16 overweight people, some with obesity, who had undergone left gastric artery embolization to stop bleeding.

With help from special software that analyzes tissue density, they assessed fat and muscle composition on scans taken before and about 1.5 months after the treatment.

Results raised some concerns

All 16 of the individuals who underwent embolization lost a significant amount of weight afterward. On average, they lost 6.4 percent of their body weight in the ensuing 1.5 months.

Their body mass index (BMI) fell by 6.3 percent over the same period.

The weight loss came as no surprise to the researchers; however, what did surprise them was the alteration in body composition.

They calculated that skeletal muscle index reduced by 6.8 percent. This index reflects the quantity of muscle in the body that is attached to bone and helps the movement of limbs and other body parts.

Loss of skeletal muscle can not only reduce physical function, but it can also damage metabolism and raise the risk of injury.

"The significant decrease in the amount of skeletal muscle," says Dr. Takahashi, "highlights the fact that patients who undergo this procedure are at risk for losing muscle mass and need to be managed accordingly after [the] procedure.'

'We must make sure they receive adequate nutrition to minimize the amount of muscle tissue they lose.

The results also showed that the individuals lost a lot of body fat; there was an average drop of 3.7 percent in body fat index.

However, most of the body fat loss was due to the reduction in subcutaneous fat. Loss of visceral fat was insignificant over the follow-up.

Subcutaneous fat is all over the body under the skin. Visceral fat is fat that surrounds the organs deep in the abdominal cavity.

Science "has been distinctly linked" carrying excessive amounts of visceral fat to several health problems and conditions. These include impaired metabolism, insulin resistance, and increased risk to certain cancers, prolonged hospitalization, and higher risk of complications.

The team now want to focus further studies on individuals who undergo left gastric artery embolization specifically to treat obesity. (Source: sgtalk.org)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY TEHRANTIMES

HERITAGE & TOURISM

Iranian handicrafts to go on show in Beirut



HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iran's cultural heritage body is going to launch a handicrafts exhibit in Beirut in late Iranian calendar month of Azar (mid-December). The exhibit will put on show works by artisans who are natives

of Qom province, CHTN reported.

Carpeting, marquetry, woodcarving, tilework, pottery, stonework and personal ornamentation are amongst works selected for the event.

We are hoping that that crafts exhibit will lay the ground for cooperation in the field of tourism between Iran and Lebanon," said Hamid Yazdani, the provincial tourism chief, on Wednesday. Dozens of handicrafts from Iran have gained UNESCO Seal

of Excellence over the past couple of years.

Artisans to promote skills in **Bandar Abbas**



HERITAGE TEHRAN — Crafters from all Iranian provinces s k will promote skills in an exhibit, which opens today in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas.

Over 100 stalls have been set up for the event that will be running through December 3, CHTN reported.

Iran's handicrafts exports reached \$107 million in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21), growing 9.5 percent year on year.

Germany, Armenia, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Russia, the Netherlands, France, Italy, South Africa and the Persian Gulf littoral states constitute the main importers of Iranian handicrafts.



Sassanid-era structure offers clues about **Persian Empire in** northeast Iran

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Researchers in Iran have discovered vesd e s k tiges of an ancient structure in northeast Iran, which is attributed to Sassanid era (224 to 651 CE), and news reports suggest it could provide clues to regional architectural heritage of the famed Persian Empire.

Ĉolumns decorated with rare plasterwork that may belong to an architectural monument have been identified in Bazeh Hoor, an archaeological site near Mashhad, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

Stucco fragments, which are results of previous unauthorized diggings, have also been found, the report added.

Last year, the site yielded some Sassanid-era potteries during a project conducted by the Archaeology Department of University of Tehran under supervision of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism.

The Sassanid era is of very high importance in the Iranian history, under which Persian art and architecture experienced a general renaissance.



Workmen are seen in an archaeological trench in Bazeh Hoor, northeast Iran

Iranian, intl. experts discussing intangible cultural heritage protection

HERITAGE TEHRAN — A delega tion of Iranian experts are discussing ways with international fellows to protect intangible cultural heritage in a session running in Port Louis, Republic of Mauritius, from November 26 to December 1. Presenting relevant reports, consulting

about global registration of living cultural heritage for 2019 and 2020, and arranging exhibitions are top on agenda for Iranian team during the 13th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, CHTN reported.

Twenty-four state members of the committee, elected by the General Assembly of the 2003 Convention, are attending the event, which is chaired by Prithvirajsing Roopun, the minister of Arts and Culture of the Republic of Mauritius.



On this occasion, the committee also ex- People watch a chogan game in the UNESCO-registered Imam Square, Isfahan, central Iran.

amines the reform of the periodic reporting mechanism, further discuss the roles of accredited NGOs, reflect on how to follow up on issues related to elements already inscribed, as well as continue its deliberations on the complex role that communities play in safeguarding their living heritage at risk in emergencies.

Amongst the Iranian entries to the UN-ESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list are Radif of Iranian music, traditional skills of carpet weaving in Kashan, ritual dramatic art of Ta'ziye, music of the Bakhshis of Khorasan and Qalishuyan rituals of Mashhad-e Ardehal near Kashan.

"Chogan, a horse-riding game accompanied by music and storytelling" won Iran the same UNESCO status in the 12th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2017.

Tourism Ireland to increase spending amid Brexit concerns

Tourism Ireland is to increase its spending by €10 million to €45 million next year and mount its first new global advertising campaign in seven years.

Faced with the combined threats of a no-deal Brexit, a significantly weaker sterling and a 4.5 percent jump in the VAT rate which applies to the hospitality trade, the tourism body said it would be looking to strengthen its marketing programs in the months ahead.

Its new global campaign - "Fill your Heart with Ireland" – will begin next month in the United States, Britain, France and Germany, and from January in more than 20 markets around the globe.

Tourism Ireland said it had plans to grow overseas tourism revenue by 6 percent to €6.5 billion and visitor numbers by 4 percent to 11.67 million.

The campaign will include TV, cinema, print, outdoor



Zabid is one of the coastal towns in Tehama area west of Yemen, sitting on a rise above the river junction and the fertile flood plain. It is a circular fortified town with four remaining gates, which was supplied with water by extensive canals.

It was already flourishing when Islam was established in the region in the 7th century. Its development is due to Ibn Ziyad (the founder of the Zyadite dynasty), who was sent to the



region by the Caliph al-Mamun in 820 CE to quell a rebellion.

The core of the town is its first mosque, Asa'ir. The Great Mosque lies to the west of the town to which spread the souq. Zabid has the highest concentration of mosques in Yemen, some 86 in all, mainly simple brick structures but some with elaborate carved brick and stucco decoration.

Fourteen of these date to the Rasulid period - all of them madrasas - and are the largest group of buildings from this period in Yemen.

A network of narrow alleys spreads over the town and its vernacular buildings, typical of the southern Arabian Peninsula, give the town outstanding visual qualities

The city with its narrow closed streets, traditional houses and minarets is an outstanding example of a homogeneous architectural ensemble that reflects the spatial characteristics of the early years of Islam. Around the town are cemeteries, notably the one to the north-west with a mosque, a well and shady trees.

(Source: UNESCO)

and online ads, as well as content for social platforms. It will feature less-visited attractions and locations and aims to attract visitors all year round, highlighting outdoor activities like cycling, walking and kayaking.

Tourism Ireland also had plans to expand its operations in China – with new representation in Hong Kong – and increase its marketing activity in the U.S. and Canada, as well as in emerging markets like Japan.

Record year

This year is set to be a record year for Irish tourism, with the latest estimates suggesting that by the end of December, revenue generated by international visitors will touch €6.1 billion, an increase of 10 percent over last year.

A total of 320,000 people are now employed in the sector, catering for the 11.2 million visitors. The number of visitors



jumped by 6 percent on 2017, with growth recorded from all markets

"2018 is set to be another record year for Irish tourism, surpassing all previous records and coming on the back of a number of years of strong growth," said Niall Gibbons, the Tourism Ireland chief executive.

"And, I am delighted to report that we have seen growth from all our main markets around the world – with record numbers arriving here from North America, mainland Europe, Australia and emerging markets.

He said Ireland was heading into 2019 "in a position of some strength, based on the success of 2018. Our aim is to spread this success throughout the year and around the entire island of Ireland - ensuring we maintain our renowned welcome and superb visitor experience.

Minister for Tourism Shane Ross said there were "challenges for Irish tourism as a consequence of Brexit" but he expressed confidence the industry "can adapt quickly to enable continued growth from international markets.' (Source: The Irish Times)

From cave paintings to NASA: How humankind has captured the cosmos

On the walls of the Lascaux cave in France, prehistoric artists produced one of the oldest known star maps -- six dots painted above images of Paleolithic beasts. Some 17,000 years later, in 2017, NASA produced a series high-definition photographs showing Jupiter's stormy south pole.

Humankind's attempts to picture the cosmos have come a long way. But according to a new book on how we depict the universe, this isn't just a matter of science. It's also about art.

Bringing together a collection of 300 images -- from ancient stone carvings to abstract modernist paintings -- "Universe: Exploring the Astronomical World" charts our history of mapping, illustrating and finding meaning in the skies above.

The book features work by artists and thinkers of the past, including Galileo's sketch-



es of the moon, Andy Warhol's pop art print of Buzz Aldrin and religious manuscripts envisaging galactic disasters sent by God.

Through them, we can see changes in how humans understand the universe and our place within it, according to Paul Murdin of University of Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy. As he writes in the book's introduction: "As we have learned more about (the universe) physically, we have also come to interpret it in different ways. For that reason, space has long fascinated scientists, astronomers and visual artists and it remains a recurring subject in our society and culture.

Many of the images (in the book) prove that, as astronomical research continues, the close relationship between the scientific and the artistic will remain as close as it has been for the last 17,000 years. (Source: CNN)

Oxygen could have been available to life as early as 3.5b years ago, team finds

Microbes could have performed oxygen-producing photosynthesis at least one billion years earlier in the history of the Earth than previously thought.

The finding could change ideas of how and when complex life evolved on Earth, and how likely it is that it could evolve on other planets.

Oxygen in the Earth's atmosphere is necessary for complex forms of life, which use it during aerobic respiration to make energy.

The levels of oxygen dramatically rose in the atmosphere around 2.4 billion years ago, but why it happened then has been debated. Some scientists think that 2.4 billion years ago is when organisms called cyanobacteria first evolved, which could perform oxygen-producing (oxygenic) photosynthesis.

Accumulating in the air

Other scientist think that cyanobacteria evolved long before 2.4 billion years ago but something prevented oxygen from accumulating in the air.

Cyanobacteria perform a relatively sophisticated form of oxygenic photosynthesis -- the same type of photosynthesis that all plants do today. It has therefore been suggested that simpler forms of oxygenic photosynthesis could have existed earlier, before cyanobacteria, leading to low levels of oxygen being available to life.

Now, a research team led by Imperial College London have found that oxygenic photosynthesis arose at least one billion years



before cyanobacteria evolved. Their results, published in the journal Geobiology, show that oxygenic photosynthesis could have evolved very early in Earth's 4.5-billion-year history.

Lead author Dr. Tanai Cardona, from the Department of Life Sciences at Imperial, said: "We know cyanobacteria are very ancient, but we don't know exactly how ancient. If

cyanobacteria are, for example, 2.5 billion years old that would mean oxygenic photosynthesis could have started as early as 3.5 billion years ago. It suggests that it might not take billions of years for a process like oxygenic photosynthesis to start after the origin of life.'

If oxygenic photosynthesis evolved early,

In the first stage of photosynthesis, cyanobacteria use light energy to split water into protons, electrons and oxygen with the help of a protein complex called **Photosystem II.**

it could mean it is a relatively simple process to evolve. The probability of complex life emerging in a distant exoplanet may then be quite high.

It is difficult for scientists to figure out when the first oxygen-producers evolved using the rock record on Earth. The older the rocks, the rarer they are, and the harder it is to prove conclusively that any fossil microbes found in these ancient rocks used or produced any amount of oxygen.

Main proteins

Instead, the team investigated the evolution of two of the main proteins involved in oxygenic photosynthesis.

In the first stage of photosynthesis, cyanobacteria use light energy to split water into protons, electrons and oxygen with the help of a protein complex called Photosystem II.

Photosystem II is made up of two proteins called D1 and D2. Originally, the two proteins were the same, but although they have very similar structures, their underlying genetic sequences are now different.

This shows that D1 and D2 have been evolving separately -- in cyanobacteria and plants they only share 30 percent of their genetic sequence. Even in their original form, D1 and D2 would have been able to perform oxygenic photosynthesis, so knowing how long ago they were identical could reveal when this ability first evolved.

(Source: sciencedaily.com)

The Milky Way's central black hole is a hot spot for astrophysics, researchers say

INTERNATIONAL DAILY

TEHRANTIMES

The discovery of wobbling "hotspots" circling the drain of a massive black hole offers exciting new evidence for the behemoth that lies at our galaxy's center - and the study leader shares how 13 years of observations have finally paid off.



The new study, involving the work of by Avery Broderick, an astronomer from the University of Waterloo in Ontario, Canada, revealed three flares, or visual hotspots, emanating from the Milky Way's central black hole, also known as Sagittarius A*.

The team detected a wobble of emissions coming from the flares, allowing the scientists to detect the accretion disk -agrowing mass of orbiting gas and debris - surrounding the black hole itself.

Broderick's black hole theory built on earlier research by two teams that studied the galactic center of the Milky Way in near-infrared. This included the work of Reinhard Genzel, an astronomer from the Max Planck Institute for Extraterrestria Physics in Garching, Germany, as well as researchers Andrea Ghez and Mark Morris of University of California, Los Angeles. At the time, their work revealed that the center of the Milky Way wasn't steady, but instead would drastically brighten about once a day for about 30 or 40 minutes, Broderick said.

Researchers think supermassive black holes exist at the center of most, if not all, large galaxies. Therefore, in 2005, while working alongside researcher Avi Loeb at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, Broderick argued that a periodic brightening observed at the heart of the Milky Way, also known as a bright infrared flare, was the result of an incredibly massive object such as a black hole.

(Source: Scientific American)

Zapping the olfactory bulb produces phantom smells, study says

Researchers envision a cochlear implant-like device for the nose to give people with impaired olfaction a sense of smell.

The sensation of perceiving a smell can be induced in people by using electrodes to stimulate the brain's olfactory bulb, researchers reported on November 27 in the International Forum of Allergy & Rhinology. The results, they suggest, are a proof of concept that it would be possible to develop an "olfactory implant system" to aid people with an impaired sense of smell, known as anosmia.

"Our work shows that smell restoration technology is an idea worth studying further," says coauthor Eric Holbrook of Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary in a press release. The "development of cochlear implants, for example, didn't really accelerate until someone placed an electrode in the cochlea of a patient and found that the patient heard a frequency of some type.'

Holbrook and colleagues enrolled five subjects in the study who were able to smell. Three of them reported perceiving odors not actually present when the researchers stimulated different parts of their olfactory bulbs with electrodes inserted through the nose, a procedure the study authors say caused "minimal discomfort.

The finding follows a report earlier this year that electrically stimulating structures high up in the nasal cavity produced smell sensations. The scientists who conducted that study at Malaysia's Imagineering Institute aim to one day transmit smells electronically, reportes IEEE Spectrum - for example, to give restaurant-goers a whiff of dishes on the menu as they decide what to order. As in the Massachusetts Ear and Eye study, the Imagineering Institute researchers weren't able to control which odor the subjects perceived. The Malaysian team suggests the digital smells could be transmitted through a noninvasive headset, rather than with electrodes up the nose, which their volunteers found quite uncomfortable.

Climate change poses significant threat to nutritional benefits of oysters

The nutritional qualities of shellfish could be significantly reduced by future ocean acidification and warming, a new study suggests.

Research has previously shown that climate change could threaten future production, safety and quality by negatively impacting the fitness of marine species.

Now scientists from the University of Plymouth, in a study published in Marine Environmental Research, have demonstrated the potential for negative nutritional effects within economically and commercially valuable species.

The research focused on the Pacific oyster (Magallana gigas) and the native flat oyster (Ostrea edulis), with results showing that increased temperatures and CO2 levels could significantly reduce the former's levels of proteins, lipids and carbohydrates.

Aquaculture industry

With seafood being the source of more than 15% of animal protein consumed globally, scientists say the aquaculture ndustry may wish to consider a shift in focus toward species that are most robust to climate change and less prone to deterioration in quality.

Dr. Anaëlle Lemasson, a former Ph.D. student at the University, led the research having previously shown that although the physiology of the Pacific oyster can be negatively impacted by future climate change, its taste might not be adversely affected.

She said: "Identifying changes in nutritional quality, as well as species most at risk, is crucial if societies are to secure food production. Our previous research had



suggested there could be negative effects in the conditions predicted to occur in 2050 and 2100. However the fact that Pacific oysters, which currently accounts for around 90% of UK oyster production, can be affected could be a cause for concern."

The research was conducted by scientists linked to the University's Marine Biology and Ecology Research Centre (MBERC) and the Food, Health and Nutrition research group.

MBERC is one of the world's leading research centres examining the impact of multiple stressors on marine organisms and environments, and undergraduate and post-

graduate students are regularly involved in that research. The oysters were subjected to six different sets of ocean conditions over a 12-week period, from current temperatures and CO2 levels to the increased measurements predicted for both the middle and end of the century.

Nutrient levels

As well as changes in nutrient levels, researchers also observed important changes to essential mineral composition, adding that the enhanced accumulation of copper in Pacific oysters may be of future concern in terms of con-

Dr. Victor Kuri, Lecturer in Food Quality at the University, said: "With a low environmental impact, shellfish are a promising highly nutritious alternative to fish and other animal products, but their sustainability depends on their quality attributes including palatability, nutrition and safety. This work confirms the need to understand the science behind the risks and mechanisms of shellfish production, as this knowledge is needed to build adequate resilience in harvesting and aquaculture industries"

Dr. Antony Knights, Associate Professor in Marine Ecology, added: "Climate change and the growing global population are placing arguably unsustainable demands on sources of animal protein. This comes at a time when increased obesity in several regions of the world is leading to greater public awareness of the need for healthy and balanced diets. Oysters have the potential to be a sustainable, low-cost alternative source of protein for humans.

(Source: eurekalert.org)

Wild bees are dying and ecosystem collapse will follow: new study

The humble honeybee was domesticated by humans thousands of years ago, and today it plays an important role in the world economy as a pollinator of crops.

In recent years, a significant amount of attention has been paid to the numerous threats that are facing the honeybee. But contrary to what many people believe, not all bees are in dire straits. For example, numbers of the Western honeybee - the most common of the domesticated species - in the United States have actually been rising slowly in recent years (there around 2.9 million colonies today compared with 2.5 million colonies 10 years ago, according to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture), and the species is not at risk of extinction. This is not to say that the situation is good. Huge numbers of hives are being lost every winter and spring, with some beekeepers reporting losses exceeding 40 percent, May Berenbaum, a professor with the department of entomology at the University of Illinois, told Newsweek. Maintaining the current levels Essentially, honeybee numbers in the U.S. are only stable because beekeepers are becoming better at compensating for losses, so it's becoming a very time-consuming and expensive process just to maintain their current levels.



sumption safety.



A number of policy and conservation initiatives have been put in place to address these kinds of issues. But according to a 2016 paper in Conservation Biology, while such efforts may sound beneficial, they may actually be exacerbating another significant problem — the decline of native bee species, such as bumblebees, of which there are around 4,000 in North America. Unlike the honeybee, a small portion of these native species are classified at risk of extinction.

"We argue that North American honeybee losses are not a conservation problem," the authors wrote. "Rather, they are a domesticated animal management problem. By focusing attention on honeybees, policies and funding priorities may undermine native bee conservation and have negative impacts, ecologically and socially."

ogy and Biotechnology, in Massachusetts. Gegear's research is focused on wild bee populations.

The bee diversity

Gegear has created a project called Bee - Cology to educate the public on the importance of bee diversity and the conservation of bees, particularly bumblebees in America's Northeast. Our conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

Can you talk a little bit about the problem of pollinator decline Pollinator decline is a problem in two very different but equally important contexts. On the agricultural side of things, which is getting a lot of attention, we've got honeybees and the loss of hives.

The other is the ecological context. We have many native pollinator species that are in rapid decline. Some are on the verge of extinction, such as Bombus affinis - the first bumblebee on the endangered species list here in North America.

In the agricultural context, we're talking about managed bees, and in the ecological context we're talking about wild bees.

(Source: Newsweek)

BMI Shows Reaction to US Department of Treasury's News

Bank Melli Iran (BMI) shows reaction towards the news published by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) and subsequent republications in online environment with regard to enlisting the name of the Bank Melli Iran (BMI) in the sanctions list of the US government, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

The notification is read as follows, "the activity of branches of Bank Melli Iran (BMI) in regional countries and other parts of the world dates back to previous decades according to the International

Trade Law and under the strict supervision of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) of that countries. It is for about 50 years that branches of the bank in the Persian Gulf littoral states are busy active. Branches of the bank have been set up in neighboring Iraq in 2007 in line with offering quality conventional banking services after proceeding legal formalities.'

Up to the present time, performance of BMI branch office in neighboring Iraq has been evaluated conventionally and accurately, the report added

Therefore, claim of the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) on setting up a branch office of Bank Melli Iran in Iraq for sending fund to quasi-civilians of Iraq is beyond reality, the issue of which has been stated with renunciation of vastness of borders of the two countries and historical, cultural, social and economic exchanges as well as negligence from consecutive presence of pilgrims of the two countries as well as the necessity of using banking services, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

(Source: the-scientist.com)

Longest time-lapse shot from space for ISS 20th anniversary

The International Space Station (ISS) has been orbiting Earth as a functional station for 20 years this month, and it's time to celebrate as only astronauts can — with a really long timelapse video from space. The ESA has put together a fantastic 15-minute video of Earth from the ISS, but the actual length of time shown is much greater. In fact, this is the longest timelapse video ever shot in space.

German astronaut Alexander Gerst captured the video aboard the ISS on Oct. 6. It has a total of 21,375 images of Earth spread out over about 90 minutes of real time. Traveling at 28,800 kilometers per hour (17,896 mph), that's how long it takes the station to make a full orbit of the planet.

The video starts over northern Africa with the station cruising off to look down upon central and then East Asia. It's nighttime in these regions, so you can see the glowing lights of civilization as well as some lightning from the station.

The ISS then heads across the ocean toward Australia and New Zealand. As it crosses the Pacific, you get to see the sunrise from the station's perspective around the 10-minute mark.

The station might be getting old, but it's still one of Earth's most important scientific achievements. Astronauts undertake research on the ISS that can't happen anyplace else.

However, the current U.S. administration is pushing to end public funding of the ISS in the next decade, transferring operation and upkeep to private entities. There's no telling how that would affect the ISS. (Source: extremetech.com)



Relief Foundation grants solar panels to the underprivileged for income generation

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN – Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation e s k (IKRF) has provided solar panels to financially struggling villagers in Khorasan Razavi province, northeastern Iran, to help them gain income.

Solar-powered photovoltaic panels convert the sun's rays into electricity by exciting electrons in silicon cells using the photons of light from the sun, which is the cleanest, most reliable form of renewable energy, and can be used in several forms to help generate electricity along with income



The Relief Foundation have granted a budget amounting to 250 million rials (nearly \$6,000) to each families under its coverage, living in Chah-Nasar village in Neyshabour county located in Khorasan Razavi province, Mehr reported on Saturday.

So, the residents managed to purchase a number of solar panels which constantly generate electricity and help them earn monthly income through selling the generated power to the country's grid.

IKRF is an Iranian charitable organization, founded in March 1979 to provide support for deprived families along with helping them regain financial stability. It focuses mostly on generating sustainable jobs for the low income individuals rather than allocating only an amount of money

Hojatollah Abdolmaleki, an official with the Foundation has said that the foundation has generated over 34,000 job opportunities for the deprived individuals in the first six months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 21-September 22).

Earthquake maneuver performed at schools nationwide

SOCIETY TEHRAN – The 20th earthquake maneuver, d e s k aiming at preparing for the unexpected natural disasters and practicing personal protective actions, is performed at over a 100,000 schools across the country on Wednesday, YJC reported



If the seismic action is a prolonged shaking and rolling event, it is prudent to immediately take protective measures, so the event is held annually during the past 20 years to reduce the damages happens once the earthquake

Many injuries and damages occur during unpredictable incidents mostly due to many people not knowing how to handle the earthquake or remain safe.

The maneuver is carried out under the theme "safe school, resilient society" to increase disaster preparedness among students.

Located on the active Alpine-Himalayan seismic belt, Iran has experienced more than 130 strong quakes with magnitude of 7.5 or more in the past centuries.

In a recent quake hitting the western province of Kermanshah on November 12, 2017 more than 600 died and at least 12,000 got injured and hundreds of thousands were displaced.

A magnitude-6.6 quake that struck early morning on December 26, 2003 devastated the historic city of Bam, killing about 26,000 people and damaging 90 percent of the buildings in the tourist hub.

În June 1990, a powerful earthquake killed at least 37,000 people and injured 100,000 in northern and northwestern provinces of Gilan and Zanjan.

LEARN ENGLISH

Asserting children's right requires govt. legal support: minister

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — In order to establish children's right, the government should come out in support for it, Justice Minister Alireza Avaie has said.

Avaie made the remarks over Regional Conference on Rights of the Child, opening on Wednesday in Tehran, IRNA news agency reported.

The 22-million children constituting 30 percent of the country's total population need legal support from the government, Avaie said, adding that while parents are legal guardians of the children in order for children to enjoy their rights the government should stand up for them.

In the Islamic Republic of Iran refugee children or foster and adopted children are all the same regarding their rights and families as well as the government should strive to grant them their right, he added.

The minister went on to say that granting citizenship to children born to Iranian mothers and foreign fathers, supporting orphans and children with dysfunctional families, approving law on children's right, and reforming the law on marriageable age are some of the social and legal measures taken in support for children's right.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (commonly abbreviated as the CRC or UNCRC) is a human rights treaty which sets out the civil, political, economic, social, health and cultural rights of children. The Convention defines a child as any human being under the age of eighteen, unless the age of majority is attained earlier under national legislation.

The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention and opened it for signature on 20 November 1989 (the 30th anniversary of its Declaration of the Rights of the Child). It came into force on 2 September 1990, after it was ratified by the required number of nations. Currently, 196 countries are party to it, including every member of the United Nations except the United States. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most rapidly and widely ratified international human

rights treaty in history. The Convention changed the way children are viewed and treated – i.e., as human beings with a



distinct set of rights instead of as passive objects of care and charity

The unprecedented acceptance of the Convention clearly shows a wide global commitment to advancing children's rights.

Iran has adhered to the convention since 1991 and ratified it in the Parliament in 1994. Iran has also signed the both optional protocols which relate to the special protection of children against involvement in armed conflict and the sale of children and sexual exploitation.

Regional Conference on Rights of the Child The Regional Conference on Rights of the Child under the theme of "Justice for Children" will culminate on Friday. The opening ceremony was attended by Iranian vice president for women's and family affairs Masoumeh Ebtekar, Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Masoud Soltanifar, Prof. Philip D. Jaffé a member of UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, and UNICEF Representative in Iran Will Parks.

The conference aims to highlights the achievements of Iran on children's right and set the scene for knowledge exchange between experts on children's rights.

30 of judges, representatives and experts on children's right from Russia, Lebanon, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Switzerland, Palestine and Jordan have taken part in the conference.

The conference is co-organized by vice presidency for women's and family affairs, Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs, and Foreign Ministry.

Rare Corsac fox coming to the verge of extinction

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN – The Corsac fox, a small intelligent hunter, having a limited range in Turkmen Sahara, northeastern Iran, is endangered due to habitat fragmentation and lack of safety, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

Corsac foxes live in the steppes and semi desert of central and northeast Asia, found throughout Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan, and through all except the northernmost regions of Mongolia. In the south, their range extends into the more northern parts of Iran, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, and China.

The major threat posed to the Corsac fox is hunting for the fur trade. In the late 19th century, up to 10,000 foxes were killed annually for pelt trade. Their other main threat is natural disasters, which can cause the numbers of foxes to drop by 90 percent in some areas.

Iran was not listed as a country within the distribution range of the Corsac fox since 2005, while it was cited later in 2014. The various distribution maps of the species often include two separate patches as its distribution range in Iran, first, on the southeastern coast of the Caspian Sea near the border with Turkmenistan, and second,



province, of which only four nests have been active and last year the nests have no longer been active, he added.

All Corsac habitats have been destructed turning into agricultural land, animal husbandry, manufacturing workshops or factories, so that the animal has no place to live, he regretted.

such as agriculture, sheep grazing and using pesticides to deal with desert locust, limits their habitat and the number of rodents and insects, which are the main preys the animal feeds on.

food chain, it plays an important role in conservation of the country's ecosystem as well as protecting other species, he highlighted. He also added that if efficient measures are

not taken by the DOE and other responsible bodies, these few number of foxes will not survive by the next few years.

An environmentalist, Siavash Roshanian also said that in the Iranian calendar year 1389 (March 2010-March 2011), which was unprecedented for the past 60 years, I came across a carcass of this animal in the region and sent documents and photographs to the DOE.

Moreover, in the Iranian calendar year 1391 (March 2012-March 2013), when pesticides have been used in the area to fight desert locust, I spotted two carcasses of a Corsac couple which were poisoned and I reported to the DOE, he further explained.

Referring to seven years of research, photography and restoration of the species in the region, he emphasized that in [the Iranian calendar year] 1395, I succeeded in finding 14 Corsac foxes nests, only four of which have been active, adding, three nest had twin foxes and a nest was filled

Immigration and Customs

A: Good afternoon, passport and arrival card please.

- B: Here you are.
- A: Where are you coming from?
- B: China.
- A: Is this your country of birth or **residence**.
- B: I just work there.
- A: What is the **purpose** of your visit to the United States?
- B: I'm here on vacation.
- A: How long do you plan to stay in the United States?
- B: Almost three weeks.
- A: Sir, you didn't fill out the information on your arrival card of where you will be staying.
- B: Oh, I'm sorry, but there are a couple of different places I will travel to within the United States, so I wasn't sure what to put.
- A: You must specify an address of the place where you will spend most of your time.
- B: Ok, here vou are.
- A: Do you have enough means to support yourself while you are here?
- B: Yes. I have some traveler cheques and two credit cards.
- A: Very good. Do you have anything to **declare**?
- B: Nope. I only have my clothes and camera!
- A: Very well sir, welcome to the United States, enjoy your visit.

- **Key vocabulary passport:** a form of identification that allows someone to travel residence: the place, esp. the house, in which a person lives or resides; dwelling place; home
- purpose: reason for doing something
- vacation: have holidays
- arrival: act of arriving; a coming
- traveler: a person or thing that travels
- **declare:** to state something officially

Supplementary vocabulary

metal detector: an electronic device for detecting the presence of metal objects

luggage: baggage such as suitcases and personal belongings terrorist: a person, usually a member of a group, who uses or advocates terrorism

body scanner: a device that virtually strip searches a person in order to look for hidden objects without physically removing clothes or making physical contact

around the Tejen Basin near the border with Afghanistan, although there is no record for the latter.

An official with the Golestan DOE, Mahmood Shakiba, said that living conditions for this rare species in the country is so improper that spotting a few nests of the specie is a pleasure.

In the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), some 14 Corsac nests have been found in Turkmen Sahara in Golestan

In recent years, the animal's carcasses have been sighted in the region, the main cause of which has been poisonous baits, as well as livestock guard dogs killing Corsacs, so the region is no longer safe, he further lamented.

He went on to explain that this fox needs a huge area to live, while human activities

It is not possible to declare a huge area as a protected area to conserve a few foxes: but we must try to protect them by training people on the importance of the precious creature, he noted.

On the other hand, Ramezanali Ghaemi, a former official with the Golestan province DOE, said that the only way to preserve the limited number of remaining Corsac foxes, is to declare the region as a protected area. As the species is at the top of the

with quadruplet foxes, only one of the cubs lost life due to flood and nine cubs were abandoned in nature.

Last year, from Gomishan to Maraveh Tappeh in Golestan province was monitored, but no active nest has been found in the area, he regretted.

"If the Corsac only habitat is not protected properly in the country, unfortunately, no Corsac will remain within the next few years,' he concluded.

'Regional cooperation, only way to tackle SDSs'

Sand and dust storms (SDSs) severely hitting the southern part of the country posing threat to human and environmental well-being, requires the cooperation of neighboring countries to be tackled, head of the international affairs at the Department of Environment (DOE) has said.

Since the past decade, SDSs have become of increasing concern among countries of western Asia and Iran due to its vast damaging effects on human health, agricultural land, infrastructure, and transport, Naser Moqaddasi said.

تنها راه حل مقابله با گرد و غبار، همکاری کشورها با یکدیگر است

مقدسی گفت: موضوع گرد و غبار که تبدیل به تهدید جدی ای برای جنوب کشور شده است، هم کاری کشورها با یکدیگر تنها راه حل آن است.

بـه گـزارش خبرنـگار حـوزه محیـط زیسـت گـروه اجتماعـی باشـگاه خبرنـگاران جـوان؛ ناصر مقدسـے رئيس مركز امور بين الملل وكنوانسيون سازمان حفاظت محيط زيست، اظهار كرد: يديده گرد و غبار در دهه اخیر در منطقه غرب آسیا و ایران بدلیل تاثیر شدید بر سلامت آنسان ها، زمین های کشاورزی و زیرساخت ها، به موضوعی نگران کننده تبدیل شده است.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

"anti-"

Meaning: against

For example: This guide is intended to serve as an educational tool for **antibiotic** use at the hospital.

PHRASAL VERB Lie with

Meaning: to have the right to make a decision For example: The decision about the contract lies with the courts.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

IDIOM

Clinch a deal

Explanation: to reach agreement on a proposal or offer **For example:** Paul's final argument enabled us to clinch the deal.

U.S. impeding UN bid to broker peace in Yemen

The U.S. has urged the UN Security Council to put on hold a draft resolution demanding an immediate truce in Yemen, in what is viewed as an attempt to hinder international efforts aimed at ending the Washington-backed Saudi war on the impoverished country.

In a message sent to other council members on Tuesday, the U.S. mission signaled that it was reluctant to act on the UK-drafted resolution until after the talks had taken place in Stockholm in early December.

"We look forward to offering more substantive comments to the draft once we have more information on the outcomes of the upcoming consultations," the message said.

Britain circulated the draft text to the 15-member council a week ago and called on parties involved in Yemen's crisis to restart peace negotiations.

The draft sets a two-week deadline for warring Yemeni parties to remove all barriers to humanitarian aid, halt attacks on civilian areas and allow unhindered access to the strategic port city of Hudaydah.

Negotiations on the proposed resolution -- the first to be discussed by the council on Yemen since 2015 -- began last week, but no decision has been made on when the draft should be put to a vote.

The truce would take effect on the day of the adoption of the resolution.

Additionally, the Security Council has demanded that the warring sides in Yemen engage with the UN special envoy for the impoverished country, Martin Griffiths.

UN diplomats said that Griffiths was hoping to bring the warring sides to Sweden for negotiations that could begin as early as December 3.

The diplomats, however, said they did not expect a vote this week on the measure due to the U.S.'s reluctance to put pressure on the Saudi-led coalition, which has Washington's firm support in the bloody war against Yemen.

The United States made a surprise call for a truce in the war-ravaged country last month and threw its weight behind the UNled effort to hold peace talks

That call came as the war became the focus of attention amid international outrage over the assassination of Saudi dissident journalist



Jamal Khashoggi at Riyadh's consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, early in October.

Yemen was grappling with a domestic political conflict when the Saudi regime and its allies intervened in March 2015 and unleashed the military campaign in favor of the government of ex-president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, a close Riyadh ally who had earlier resigned and fled to the Saudi capital.

Another party to the conflict is Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement which has been running state affairs from Sana'a in the absence of an effective government besides defending the country against the Saudi aggression.

The offensive initially consisted of a bombing campaign but was later coupled with a naval blockade and the deployment of ground forces to Yemen.

Over the past few months, Saudi-backed militiamen loyal to Hadi and foreign mercenaries have been fighting Houthi Ansarullah for the control of the port city of Hudaydah, a vital conduit and lifeline for the delivery of humanitarian aid to millions of Yemeni people.

During a meeting with Griffiths in Sana'a on Thursday, the leader of the Houthi Ansarullah movement praised positive initiatives and practical steps,

health care.

says in the video.

which seek to ensure a political solution to the Yemeni conflict.

Abdul-Malik al-Houthi then demanded an immediate end to the Saudi-led aggression, the removal of the blockade and humanitarian aid deliveries to war-stricken people.

Last week, the administration of Hadi announced that it would take part in the proposed peace talks in Sweden, hours after the chairman of the Supreme Revolutionary Committee of Yemen, Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, said Ansarullah fighters were halting their retaliatory attacks as a goodwill measure to speed up the "peace" process. Griffiths says that he has received "firm

assurances" that the warring Yemeni par-ties would attend talks in the Swedish city of Stockholm

The Saudi-backed side has, however, stepped up the raids aimed at seizing Hudaydah despite the peace efforts.

Ansarullah has warned that the rise in Saudi assaults on Hudaydah could frustrate efforts by Griffiths to rekindle peace talks in Sweden next month.

UN concerned over falling imports at Yemen's lifeline port

Meanwhile, the United Nations has warned that operations at the strategic Yemeni port of Hudaydah have plunged by nearly 50 percent over the past two weeks, making it difficult for local residents to afford their basic commodities in the wake of the recent wave of violence there.

WORLD IN FOCUS

The World Food Programme warned on Tuesday that imports had fallen substantially "because of the high levels of insecurity in the city" as Saudi-sponsored militiamen loyal to former Yemeni president Abd Rab-buh Mansur Hadi are engaged in a fierce offensive against fighters from the Houthi Ansarullah movement to establish control over Hudaydah.

"Operations at Hodeida Port have decreased by 47 percent over the past two weeks," WFP spokesman Herve Verhoosel told reporters in the Swiss city of Geneva.

"If this situation persists or further dete-riorates, it would have (a) drastic impact on food availability and prices in the markets and (would make) it increasingly difficult for Yemeni families to afford their basic needs," he added.

The UN estimates that 70 percent of all imports into Yemen come through the port of Hudaydah, which lies on the Red Sea.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating military campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the aim of bringing the government of Hadi back to power and crushing the country's Houthi Ansarullah movement.

According to a new report by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, the Saudi-led war has so far claimed the lives of around 56,000 Yemenis.

The Saudi-led war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories. The UN has already said that a record 22.2 million Yemenis are in dire need of food, including 8.4 million threatened by severe hunger. According to the world body, Yemen is suffering from the most severe famine in more than 100 years.

A number of Western countries, the U.S. and Britain in particular, are also accused of being complicit in the ongoing aggression as they supply the Riyadh regime with advanced weapons and military equipment as well as logistical and intelligence assistance. (Source: agencies)

11th round of talks on Syria crisis begins in Astana

 $1 \rightarrow$ In addition to representatives from the Syrian government and opposition groups, delegations from Iran, Russia and Turkey, which are acting as the guarantors of an all-Syria ceasefire, as well as international observers - the UN and Jordan - will attend the talks.

The Astana talks have so far resulted in the return of a succession of militant bastions to the government fold, the establishment of safe zones across Syria and the movement of civilians to those regions.

The Syrian government's delegation, headed by the country's UN Ambassador Bashar al-Ja'afari, arrived in the Kazakh capital on Tuesday for the Astana negotiations.

Hossein Jaberi Ansari, senior assistant to the Iranian foreign minister on special political affairs, Russian Special Envoy for Syria Alexander Lavrentiev and Turkish Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal will also lead the delegations of the guarantor states to the talks.

Heydar Beck Tomatov, director of Asia and Africa depart-ment at the Kazakh Foreign Ministry, said in a statement that bilateral and tripartite consultations will be held in the first day of the Astana meeting and that the second day will feature the general session.

Kazakh Foreign Ministry spokesman Aybek Smadiyarov also said journalists from more than 200 media outlets had been accredited to cover the event.

The 10th round of talks in the Astana format took place in the Russian Black Sea resort of Sochi on July 30-31.

A Tuesday UN statement said Staffan de Mistura, the international body's special envoy for Syria, will join the 11th round of the Astana talks.

"The Special Envoy, in consultation with the Secretary-General, accepted to be in Astana where, within the framework of the Geneva process and in accordance with Security Council resolution 2254 (2015), he will chair a meeting with senior representatives of Iran, Russia and Turkey in their capacity as the conveners of the Sochi meeting of January 2018," read the statement.

(Source: Press TV)

Blast kills 22 outside China factory in Olympic city

A vehicle carrying dangerous chemicals exploded at the entrance of a chemical factory in a northern Chinese city that will host the 2022 Winter Olympics Wednesday, leaving 22 people dead and 22 others injured, state media and authorities said.



The blast ignited other vehicles, leaving charred and smoking remains of trucks and cars scattered on a road as firefighters worked at the scene, according to images posted online by state media.

A witness told AFP he heard a "very loud bang" after midnight and saw a field and trucks engulfed in flames outside the Hebei Shenghua Chemical Co. factory in Zhangjiakou, a city some 200 kilometres (124 miles) northwest of Beijing.

The side of a building was covered in soot in front of a row of burnt out trucks across the road, footage broadcast

by CCTV showed following the latest deadly incident to hit a factory in China.

The blast damaged 38 trucks and 12 cars, the local propa-

French Senate official arrested on charges of spying for North Korea

DGSE foreign intelligence agency had been arrested last

December on suspicion of passing information to China. Quennedey has traveled extensively throughout the Korean

peninsula, according to the website of his publisher Delga.

impoverished, isolated North Korea as a "model for devel-

opment," praising citizens' free access to education and

Korea, you notice it, there's no litter on the ground," he

rean Friendship Association, formed in the late 1960s by

journalists sympathetic to socialist and communist causes.

In a video posted on YouTube that month, he described

"I've been there seven times since 2005, and in North

Since 2007, he has been president of the Franco-Ko-

The group pushes for closer ties with Pyongyang and

Quennedey attended France's elite Sciences Po univer-

France's Senate said Tuesday it had suspended a senior French civil servant arrested on suspicion of spying for North Korea

Benoit Quennedey, a senior administrator in France's upper house of parliament and president of the Franco-Korean Friendship Association, was taken into custody late Sunday.

Investigators suspect him of the "collection and delivery of information to a foreign power likely to undermine the fundamental interests of the nation," a judicial source told AFP.

He is being held at the headquarters of France's DGSI domestic intelligence agency on the outskirts of Paris.

In a statement the Senate said he had been provisionally suspended from his job as chief administrator in the department of architecture, heritage and gardens and that his Senate office had been searched by police

"It's now time to let justice take its course without interference," Senate President Gerard Larcher said.

sity as well as the ENA school which produces its top civil The French news and talk show Le Quotidien, which servants and political leaders.

supports the reunification of the divided Koreas



Hopes of a breakthrough were sparked last June when U.S. President Donald Trump met with regime leader Kim

Jong Un for a historic summit meeting in Singapore. Both men vowed to improve relations and Kim indicated

broke the story, said Quennedey, who has written extensively on North Korea, often in admiring tones, was arrested at his home.

It was not clear what type of information he was suspected of trying to pass to Pyongyang.

The Senate said the alleged spying, if proven, would be "extremely serious and would deal a blow to the image of our institution," adding that it had joined the criminal case as a civil plaintiff.

It is the second time this year that reports of suspected spying have emerged in France.

In May, officials revealed that two former agents at France's

In regular interviews with the French arm of the Kremlin-funded TV network RT, Quennedey is presented as an "expert in international relations" offering commentary and analysis on Korean relations and other subjects.

In 2013 he wrote "North Korea's Economy: Birth of a New Asian Dragon?".

The book posited model growth in the country despite tough international sanctions over Pyongyang's nuclear program which have crippled the economy.

The UN estimates that some 10.3 million people, or 41 percent of North Korea's population, are undernourished - even as neighboring South Korea's economy flourishes.

he would abandon the nuclear work.

But despite a string of reconciliation gestures between North and South Korea progress has been patchy, and Washington is still pushing to maintain sanctions until Pyongyang's "final, fully verified denuclearization.'

Researchers have accused Kim Jong Un of using undeclared bases to hide nuclear-capable missiles, while Pyongyang's state media reported this month that the country had developed an unspecified "ultramodern tactical weapon."

(Source: AFP)

Mueller focused on tip about WikiLeaks plans, document shows

Special counsel Robert Mueller's team believes a conservative author and conspiracy theorist tipped off Donald Trump's confidant Roger Stone months before WikiLeaks released thousands of emails stolen from Hillary Clinton's campaign chairman, according to a document newly made public.

The document, which was drafted as part of a plea offer to Jerome Corsi, provides an unprecedented window into an active part of Mueller's investigation into Russian election interference and possible coordination with Trump's associates. It reveals that Mueller is keenly focused on whether Americans close to the Trump campaign had any foreknowledge of WikiLeaks' plans to release hacked material during the 2016 presidential campaign.

The document's contents were first reported by NBC News, and a copy of it was posted online by The Washington Post. Corsi told The Associated Press Tuesday evening that the document had been provided to his attorney by Mueller's team. Stone has denied knowing about WikiLeaks plans' ahead of time. Mueller spokesman Peter Carr did not immediately return a message

seeking comment.

Corsi said the document, which mirrors similar ones filed by Mueller in previous plea deals, contains portions of emails he exchanged with Stone in the summer of 2016 about WikiLeaks. But he denied that he intentionally lied to investigators about the emails, and said that was why he rejected the plea offer, which would have charged him with one count of making false statements.

"I did not ever willfully and knowingly give them false information," Corsi said. He said he forgot about the emails in question during his first interview with Mueller's team, noting they were among 60,000 contained on the laptop he provided to the special counsel's office.

According to the document, the emails were exchanged in late July and early August of 2016, more than two months before WikiLeaks published thousands of emails stolen from the private email account of Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta.

In late July 2016, the document shows, Stone emailed Corsi, asking him to get in touch with WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, who has been living in Ecuador's embassy in London since 2012. Stone said he wanted Corsi to try to obtain emails the group possessed about Clinton. The document says Corsi passed Stone's request to an "overseas individual." whom Corsi identified as Ted Malloch. a London-based academic who has said he was also questioned by Mueller. And on Aug. 2, 2016, the document quotes Corsi's response to Stone.

Word is friend in embassy plans 2 more dumps. One shortly after I'm back. 2nd in Oct. Impact planned to be very damaging,' wrote Corsi, who was in Europe at the time. He then told Stone it was time for Podesta to "be exposed as in bed w enemy if they are not ready to drop HRC," a reference to Clinton.

On Tuesday, Corsi told the AP that the email he sent Stone - which accurately forecast that WikiLeaks would release derogatory information about Podesta in October - was based on his own deduction and not the result of any inside information or a source close to the group.

"It's all a guess. That email – 'word is' is 100 percent speculation on my part, a package so that Roger's not going to dismiss it because I'm real sure I'm right," he said. He said that he has never had contact

with Assange and that he didn't obtain any advance knowledge of WikiLeaks' plans.

Corsi said he disclosed to investigators - including Mueller team members Jeannie Rhee, Aaron Zelinsky and Andrew Goldstein – that he had told Stone that Assange had Podesta emails. "But I maintained and still do that I figured it out," he said, adding: "I made it sound maybe like I had a source, but I didn't. And I don't think Stone ever believed me."

Corsi said the prosecutors wouldn't believe him, thinking he was trying to protect Stone. And he believes he was threatened with a felony charge "because I couldn't give them what they wanted" by connecting Stone to WikiLeaks.

Corsi said he also believes the plea offer was extended to prevent him from speaking publicly about his contact with Mueller's team. He said he doesn't know if Mueller will now follow through with charging him. The last time his attorney, David Gray, heard from Mueller's team was on Monday after he had publicly rejected the deal.

According to Corsi, they told Gray: "We'll take it from here.'

(Source: AP)

ganda department said on its Twitter-like Weibo social media account.

The injured were taken to hospitals for treatment following the blast at 00:41 am, according to the department.

The factory's and exterior archway were blackened. Across from the blast, AFP reporters saw a field of blackened grass and trees, with smoke billowing from the embers. Heavy machinery was brought in to remove debris.

According to a preliminary investigation, a vehicle carrying dangerous chemicals blew up while waiting to enter the plant, igniting nearby vehicles, according to the official Xinhua news agency. CCTV described the vehicle as a tanker.

Rescue efforts and the investigation are still underway, Xinhua said.

'It was after midnight when I put down my phone to go to bed when I heard a very loud bang, followed by a few more,' said a man named Zhang who works in another chemical factory some 200 metres away from the blast site.

There was a shaking and two pieces of the ceiling fell. I thought it was an earthquake so I hid under a bed for a while," he said.

"When I looked out of the window I saw a large fireball sweep across the area," said Zhang, whose car was singed.

He awoke others in his dormitory and they ran to safety. "Even the grass outside our factory was on fire, so we quickly put it out." he said.

Beijing is hosting the 2022 Winter Games, with some of the mountain sport competitions taking place on the outskirts of Zhangjiakou.

The explosion occurred in the city's Qiaodong district. Snowboard, cross-country skiing and freestyle skiing events will be held some 45 minutes away in Chongli.

Road and industrial accidents are common in China.

A blast at a chemical plant in southwest Sichuan province left 19 dead and 12 injured in July. The company had undertaken illegal construction that had not passed safety checks, according to local authorities.

In 2015, giant chemical blasts in a container storage facility killed at least 165 people in the northern port city of Tianjin.

The explosions caused more than \$1 billion in damage and sparked widespread anger at a perceived lack of transparency over the accident's causes and its environmental impact. (Source: AFP)

14 TEHRANTIMES

Postponed Copa Libertadores final to be played outside Argentina

The postponed Copa Libertadores final second leg between River Plate and Boca Juniors will be played outside of Argentina on 8 or 9 December.

Saturday's game was initially delayed until Sunday after River Plate supporters attacked the Boca Juniors team bus, before being postponed. A statement from South American football's governing body Conmebol said a date and venue would be decided "as soon as possible". The first leg of the final ended 2-2.

Conmebol president Alejandro Dominguez met with the presidents of both clubs on Tuesday.

The statement added that Conmebol would co-ordinate security with the relevant authorities before the rearranged fixture. The fixture had been poised as the biggest club match in the

127-year history of Argentine football.

But it was marred by the "shameful" attack in which Boca players suffered cuts from the glass from broken windows, and were also affected by the tear gas used by police to disperse the crowds. A number of players, including Boca's former Manchester City, Manchester United and Juventus striker Carlos Tevez, reportedly suffered from dizziness and vomiting and were being treated by club doctors.

The mayor of Buenos Aires, Horacio Rodriguez Larreta, said River Plate hooligans described as the "mafia of Argentine soccer" were behind the attack.

It came a day after police raided the house of a leader of the Barra Brava - the powerful and violent wing of River's hardcore support - and confiscated 10m pesos (\pounds 207,285) and 300 tickets for the final. Paraguay, Brazil and Italy have all offered to hold the match. On Monday, the city government of Genoa wrote to both clubs offering to host the postponed match because of the role immigrants from the Italian city played in forming the two Argentine clubs.

(Source: BBC)

Italian police probe Sampdoria owner and **Obiang sale**

Italian police said on Wednesday that they had seized 2.6 million euros (\$2.9 million) in cash and property from Sampdoria club president Massimo Ferrero, the club and five other people as part of a financial investigation.

The investigators are particularly interested in funds related to the 2015 transfer of Pedro Obiang, a Spanish midfielder, from Sampdoria to West Ham.

The investigation centres on fake receipts and invoices, money laundering and fraud allegations, and relates to the flow of money between different companies in the "Ferrero Group".

Ferrero is a film producer and owns cinemas in Rome. The Guardia di Finanza, the Italian financial police, said in a statement that a sum of 1.2 million euros related to the Obiang sale could have been diverted "and partly reused to clean up the financial positions of other indebted companies in the group and to finance two other related companies in the Ferrero group" as part of the production of a film.

The police statement said they had seized financial assets, including more than 200,000 euros worth from the club, and a building in Florence.

Ferrero, 68, purchased the Genoa club in the summer of 2014. They won their only Serie A title in 1991, with their biggest European success the Cup Winners' Cup in 1990.

This season they are 12th in Italian top-flight league, 21 points behind champions Juventus.

(Source: AFP)

Mexican referee on hunger strike outside federation

Flying water bottles and a stat-off - why it was another colorful night for Mourinho

With his team accused of boring the Old Trafford faithful this season, manager Jose Mourinho is at least providing his own pyrotechnics on the touchline.

The Portuguese celebrated Marouane Fellaini's 91st-minute winner against Young Boys by throwing a crate of drinks bottles to the floor, used his post-match interview to issue a message to his "lovers" and finally to declare his goalkeeper "the best in the world".

'You know I'm right'

First, the celebration. Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain famously marked the end of particularly satisfying gigs, sometimes just individual songs, by reducing his guitar to splinters against the nearest amp. Mourinho channelled his inner rock god as he took out his emotion on a basket of bottles. There hasn't been this much disdain for a watercarrier at Old Trafford since Eric Cantona was asked for his opinion on international team-mate Didier Deschamps.

Mourinho was criticised for his reaction by Rio Ferdinand on BT Sport, with the former United defender suggesting it was an attempt to grab the limelight.

was an attempt to grab the limelight. Jose disagreed. "The ones who comment on football, not a lot of them have been on the touchline," he said. "For those who speak about expressing frustration on the bench I would invite them to come and sit there as a manager.

"Maybe they prefer lots of holidays in Barbados and they can go to the TV and use their electric dummies.

"That is much more comfortable than being on the bench. I am pretty sure a proper football manager would never criticise another for what they do on the touchline. For the ones who have a nice life, it is different."

This is not Mourinho's first water bottle-based incident - in November 2016 he was sent off and had to serve an additional one-match touchline ban after kicking a water bottle deliberately during a Premier League game against West Ham. Arsene Wenger was sent off for booting a water bottle in frustration when he was managing Arsenal at Old Trafford in 2009. And Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp apologised for throwing one to the floor in last season's draw with Arsenal.

14 from 14

Mourinho was in no mood to discuss the statistical small

print of his side's season either. United are closer to the bottom of the Premier League

than the top, while conceding more than four times as many

Bale hopes Roma display will galvanize 'turbulent' season



Gareth Bale has borne the brunt of criticism for Real Madrid's recent decline but the Welsh forward hopes Tuesday's 2-0 win at Roma to seal top spot in Champions League Group G can act as the catalyst to turn their faltering campaign around.

The 29-year-old has failed to score in his last nine league appearances and came in for scathing criticism following Saturday's stunning 3-0 loss at Eibar, the three-times defending European champions fifth league defeat of the season.

played the ball like we normally do. We got some confidence back and need to build on that now," Bale told reporters. "We know obviously the start of the

"We know obviously the start of the season was not exactly as we would like. We need to keep working hard together as a team to get the performances and get the results... and get back up the table in the league."

Bale has largely failed to fill the huge void left by Cristiano Ronaldo as Real have toiled domestically, sitting sixth in the La Liga and registering their worst goal difference after 13 league games in 18 years, scoring 20 and conceding 19.



goals as rivals Manchester City and Liverpool.

An 'expected goals' graphic produced by number-cruncher Michael Caleyafter the weekend draw with Crystal Palace showed the goalless stalemate was exactly what they deserved.

"The most important thing is to qualify and for some of my lovers, and those that like stats, I am 14 seasons in the Champions League and 14 times my teams have qualified through to the group stages," said Mourinho.

"The season I was not in the Champions League, I won the Europa League." The Portuguese has done his homework. Nothing wrong with that stat. I know he wants to stay'

Mourinho did have praise for his goalkeeper though after David de Gea produced a superb sprawling stop to keep United level earlier in the match.

The 28-year-old is committed to Old Trafford until the summer, with the club having an option to extend to 2020. "He is a world-class player; the best goalkeeper in the world," said Mourinho. "I know he wants to stay and the

agent wants to do what the player wants. The board want him to stay and are working on that." (Source: BBC)

Milan, Stockholm present 2026 Winter Olympic bids as rivals drop away



Milan and Stockholm presented their bids to host the 2026 Winter Olympics at a Tokyo meeting Wednesday, the last two cities standing after a string of withdrawals.

The race to host the 2026 Winter Games has highlighted a general trend in recent years against staging the expensive showcase sporting event. The Swiss city of Sion and an Austrian bid based around Graz withdrew, citing a lack of either political or public support. Then the Canadian city of Calgary formally pulled the plug on its bid last Monday after residents roundly Sala cited a poll commissioned by the IOC that showed 83 percent of the region's citizens were in favour of hosting the games.

He said the bid combined the attraction of the Alps -- "the most beautiful mountains in the world" -- and the city of Milan, which he said was a "globally recognised brand" as well as a "symbol of style and elegance."

For Stockholm, the president of the Swedish Olympic Committee, Mats Arjes, said the bid was "something bold, something new and something fun."

Bid head Richard Brisius described the

offices in protest at 'racism'



Mexican referee Adalid Maganda has begun a hunger strike outside the headquarters of the country's Football Federation (Femexfut) in protest at his dismissal.

After being sacked in April, Maganda attempted to return to his job but did not reach an agreement with the country's referees commission for his reinstatement.

The 34-year-old, who originates from the town of Huehuetan in the state of Guerrero, accused the referee commission of racism and discrimination. He said Arturo Brizio, president of that commission, insulted him for both his skin color and his height.

The last game Maganda took part in was on Jan. 16 as a fourth official. He has set up camp outside the Femexfut headquarters and is refusing to eat until he gets his job back.

"I'm not fighting for money," Maganda told local media. "I'm just fighting for fairness and dignity.

"I want my job back as what I achieved I earned by putting in a lot of effort on the pitch, without getting any gifts from anyone. They are the ones to blame for being racists."

Maganda said he has no choice but to go on a hunger strike.

"We have taken this decision because the Federation has taken us for a ride since this [process] began," he said. "In the first hearing, I was told I would not get my job back, then in the second, they said that I would but only officiate in the second division and in the third, they told me I would get to referee in the first division but that they didn't know when that would be.

"They are the ones to blame for being racists."

ists." (Source: ESPN) He gave the ball away 20 times against the Basque side and registered just one shot on goal, with an online survey by Spanish newspaper Marca revealing Real fans did not want him to start in the Italian capital.

Rather like his team, though, he rose to the occasion in the Champions League and after a mixed first-half display, Bale broke the deadlock with his third goal in four European outings, later helping set up Lucas Vazquez to seal victory.

"The manager told us at halftime we needed to keep playing the way we know. And in the second half, we played very well, He admitted to feeling disappointed with how the season has gone since the Portuguese talisman left to join Juventus. "It has been a bit of a turbulent start

to the season but we have to keep fighting every game no matter what position we are in. That is football, it can be frustrating sometimes when things are not quite coming off," he added.

"But I know from experience you just have to keep working hard, together as a team, and we did that today."

(Source: Reuters)

rejected it in a referendum. The northern Japanese city of Sapporo originally threw its hat into the ring to host the 2026 Games but then shifted its focus to 2030.

Perhaps mindful of recent public support issues, the mayor of Milan -- which plans to co-host with the nearby ski resort of Cortina d'Ampezzo -- said his residents were firmly behind the bid.

"I'm proud to say that the citizens have responded with remarkable enthusiasm to the vision and challenge of becoming an Olympic host city," Giuseppe Sala told delegates from 206 Olympic committees from around the world. Swedish capital as a "beautiful, stunning and sustainable city which ... offers you everything you want."

"Our plan reflects the IOC's new reality which is 'use what you have, where you have it and build as little as possible'," he said, adding that "this is how we have been doing business in Sweden for many years."

"You have a city and whole country that you can trust to deliver what the Olympic Movement needs right now," concluded Brisius. IOC President Thomas Bach has admitted there was no fall-back plan if something went awry with the remaining two bids. (Source: AFP)

Robbie Keane retires: Ireland hero with the record to back it up

Former Tottenham Hotspur and Republic of Ireland striker Robbie Keane has announced his retirement from professional football.

Keane, 38, scored a record 68 goals in 146 international appearances and was recently named as part of new Republic manager Mick McCarthy's backroom team.

The former Republic captain scored 325 goals in 737 appearances for 10 clubs during a 23-year playing career.

Keane retired from international football in 2016. "Today, after 23 wonderful years, I am formally announc-

ing my retirement as a professional footballer," Keane said in a statement.

"From Crumlin United around the world to the likes of Milan, London and Los Angeles, I could never have imagined the path my football life would take.

"It has exceeded all the hopes I had as a football-mad boy growing up in Dublin."

"Leaving home at 15 years of age to pursue my professional career in England seems a lifetime ago now. I was a street footballer full of hope armed with huge ambitions and a determination to succeed.

"All I needed was that one chance. I would like to pay a special thanks to Wolverhampton Wanderers for believing in me and giving me that chance."



Distinguished club career

He enjoyed two successful spells as a player with Spurs, and his other clubs included Inter Milan. Leeds United, Liverpool, Celtic (on loan) and LA Galaxy.

"From Wolves, my professional career followed a path that took me far and wide, giving my family and I the opportunity to meet and work with so many wonderful people and experience several different countries and cultures.

"I have always wanted to test myself and strive to be the

best that I could be, so I embraced new challenges be it at Coventry City, Inter Milan, Leeds United and then possibly the most successful period of my club football career with Tottenham Hotspur.

"I had the great privilege to represent and captain Tottenham over 238 games. I had many wonderful times there and I will look back on my days at White Hart Lane with great fondness. The club will always hold a special place in my heart.

"There were shorter times spent at Glasgow Celtic and Liverpool, two truly iconic global institutions, and then West Ham United, before Los Angeles became our home away from home. We spent five hugely successful and rewarding years, both on and off the field, with LA Galaxy.

"After a spell with Aston Villa, my playing career concluded with an exciting few months with ATK, a club which also gave me my first experience of management.

"Playing and captaining my country has been the highlight of my career. I enjoyed every moment of the most incredible journey with the Ireland team over an 18-year period and as I have said many times before, words cannot express how proud I am to be Irish. I hope I have made the fans proud wearing the green jersey and armband.

(Source: Sky Sports)

AFC Special awards for Iran match officials Faghani, Reza and Mansouri

Muscat: Islamic Republic of Iran's Alireza Faghani received the AFC Referees Special Award 2018 at the 2018 AFC Annual Awards in Muscat on Wednesday.

Faghani has taken charge of a number of high-profile games in Asia and is up there among the best in the world.

The 2018 edition of the FIFA World Cup in Russia was Faghani's second stint at the global stage.

The Iranian was tasked with refereeing the 2018 FIFA World Cup third-place playoff between Belgium and England at the Saint

Petersburg. It was Faghani's fourth appointment in Russia 2018, after overseeing the Round of 16 tie between France and Argentina; the Group E tie between Serbia and Brazil and the Group F match between Germany and Mexico.

His appointment equalled UAE's Ali Bujsaim who officiated Sweden's 4-0 win over Bulgaria in the 1994 FIFA World Cup USA third-place playoff at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena.

In his impressive career, the 40-yearold has officiated finals of the 2014 AFC Champions League, 2015 AFC Asian Cup, 2015 FIFA Club World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Football Tournament.

Faghani started his career in 1994 and became a FIFA referee in 2008. In 2009, he become an elite referee and went on to build his career by officiating in the AFC



Cup, AFC Champions League and two years later, participated in the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil as a support referee.

The 2016 AFC Referee of the Year built on the experience and officiated in the 2017 FIFA Confederations Cup semi-final and was also tasked with the 2018 FIFA World

Cup Qualifiers Asian play-off match between Syria and Australia.

Compatriot Sokhandan Reza, the 2016 AFC Assistant Referee of the Year, was also honoured.

He has been an active FIFA assistant referee since 2003 and has overseen numerous AFC competitions as well as the Olympic Football Tournament and the FIFA Confederations Cup.

Mohammadreza Mansouri began his career about 20 years ago and has been an international referee since 2012. (Source: AFC)



Aliasghar Hasanzadeh named the 2018 AFC Futsal Player

Islamic Republic of Iran's Aliasghar Hasanzadeh has been named the 2018 AFC Futsal Player of the Year, winning the prestigious honour for the fourth time.

Hasanzadeh, 31, also won the award in 2014, 2016 and 2017, surpassing compatriot Vahid Shamsaei who won the accolade in 2007, 2008 and 2015. In 2018, Hasanzadeh was Iran's Most Val-

uable Player, contributing 12 goals to steer them to the AFC Futsal Championship title in Chinese Taipei.

In continental club competition, Hasanzadeh proved why he is the best when he guided Mes Sungun of Iran to their maiden AFC Club Futsal Championship in Yogy akarta.

(Source: AFC)

IFCPF secretary general lauds organization of Asia-Oceania Championship

S P O R T S TEHRAN — The International Federation for Cerebral Palsy Football (IFCPF) secretary general Sam Turner praised the organization of the IFCPF Asia-Oceania Championship.

The competition has brought Iran, Australia, Jordan, South Korea and Thailand together in Kish Island in southern Iran in Persian Gulf.

"The organization of the IFCPF Asia-Oceania Championship in Kish Island is very good and I think the organizers are doing well to host the event," Turner said.

Asked him about the level of the competition, the Englishman said, "The level of the competition is high and some good teams are competing for their places in the 2019 IFCPF



SPORTS TEHRAN — Iran nas k tional football team are



World Cup in Spain."

2018 IFCPF Asia-Oceania Championships is an important event for the participants since the top two teams will advance directly to the 2019 IFCPF World Cup – Pinto Madrid, Spain.

Football 7-a-side is governed by the Cerebral Palsy International Sports and Recreation Association (CPISRA) using the modified rules of the International Federation of Associated Football (FIFA).

IFCPF became the official IF for cerebral palsy football following the sport realizing its independence from January 1 in 2015, after 37 years, from the Cerebral Palsy International Sport and Recreation Association.

> Darwin Daniel Machis found the back of Iran's net in the 35th net.

Iran lose to Uzbekistan in CAFA Women's Championship

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran lost to Uzbekistan 2-1 at d e s k the 2018 CAFA Women's Championship on Tuesday. The Iranian football team had started the competition with a 6-0 win over Afghanistan on Sunday.

Team Melli will play Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan on Thursday and Saturday respectively.

The 2018 CAFA Women's Championship is the first edition of the CAFA Women's Championship, an association football tournament for women's national teams from the Central Asian Football Association.

It's being held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from Nov. 23 to Dec. 1,2018.

Iranian beat Indian opponent in int'l badminton competitions

IRNA — An Iranian badminton player in the first day of the International Badminton Championships on Wednesday defeated his Indian opponent.

According to Iran's Badminton Federation, Amir Jabbari managed to beat his rival 2-1.

The international tournament is being held in India from November 28 to December 2.

In addition to Jabari, an Iranian female badminton player Sorayya Aghaei has taken part in the competitions.

Iran wins China at World **U16 Chess Olympiad**

MNA — The Iranian junior chess team defeated China in the 4th round of 2018 World Youth U-16 Chess Olympiad in Turkey.

The Iranian team edge past China on Tuesday 2.5-1.5. Alireza Firouzja and Arash Daghli outplayed their Chinese rivals while Amirreza Pour Aghabala conceded a defeat and Mahdi Gholami's match ended with a draw.

Iranian team comprises of the four mentioned boys plus Motahare Asadi as the girl member.

The team has gained two 4-0 victories over Romania and Slovakia while suffering a defeat to Sri Lanka in the previous rounds. It will face Serbia today at the 5th round.

At the end of the 4th round, Belarus tops the table with 8 points while USA and Russia stand next with 8 and 7 respectively. Iran has achieved the rank of 11 till now with 6 points.

The 2018 edition of World Youth U-16 Chess Olympiad kicked off on November 24 in Konta, Turkey. The event will have 9 rounds, wrapping up on December 3.

Iran to participate at Asian Women's Handball C'ship

Tasnim - Iran national women's handball team will leave Tehran for Japan on Wednesday to participate at the 2018 Asian Women's Handball Championship.

Team Melli is pitted against Japan (host), Kazakhstan, Australia and New Zealand in Group A.

Group B consists of South Korea, China, India, Hong Kong and Singapore

Iran will face Kazakhstan on December 1 at the Yatsushiro Gymnasium.

The 2018 Asian Women's Handball Championship will be the 17th edition of the Asian Women's Handball Championship, which will take place from 30 November to 9 December 2018 in Kumamoto, Yamaga and Yatsushiro, Japan. The tournament will be held under the aegis of Asian Handball Federation and will act as the Asian qualifying tournament for the 2019 World Women's Handball Championship.

scheduled to meet Qatar in a friendly match in Doha on Dec. 31.

The warm-up match will be held as part of preparation for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup. Iran national football team will hold a training camp at the Aspire Academy in Doha, Qatar ahead of the Asian Cup.

Team Melli will reportedly play two friendly matches with Lebanon and Palestine in Doha.

Carlos Queiroz's team played Venezuela on Nov. 20 in Doha and the match finished 1-1.

Seven minutes later, Charleroi strik er Ali Gholizadeh equalized the match, dribbling past the Venezuelan defender and opened the goal with a shot from

Iran national football team will prepare for the 2019 AFC Asian Cup, where they have been drawn along with Iraq, Yemen and Vietnam in Group D.

The 2019 AFC Asian Cup will be held in the United Arab Emirates from January 5 to February 1.

Japan backs incumbent in Asian confederation election

apan Football Association President Kozo Tashima on Wednesday threw his support behind Sheikh Salman Bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa's bid for re-election as Asian Football Confederation president.Tashima praised Sheikh Salman's success in developing Asian soccer "both on and off the pitch" and for promoting commercial stability in Asia's rapidly evolving market. "AFC's recent commercial rights agreement with DDMC Fortis International Limited is a

mere one example of the meaningful investments AFC has made under the leadership of Sheikh Salman," Tajima said in a statement released by the JFC.

Tashima said he would run for a place on

Boomers close in on World Cup berth

The Australian men's basketball team need just one more win from four qualifiers to clinch their spot at the FIBA World Cup, but coach Andreis Lemanis wants to get the job done sooner rather than later.

The Boomers take on Iran on Friday and Qatar on Monday, with both matches at Melbourne's Margaret Court Arena.

Australia are top of Group F and need just one win to qualify for next year's tournament in China, with tricky away games in Iran and Kazakhstan in February to come.

"It would certainly be nice to secure our spot in the World Cup ... obviously winning (one of) these games at home now and ticking that box would be a good outcome," Lemanis told reporters on Wednesday.

"(Iran) are a good basketball nation, a proud basketball nation.

"This is a top-of-the-table clash.

"We had a great battle with them in the gold medal game of the Asia Cup and I know they'll be keen to try to turn the



tables on that."

With the NBA in full swing, Lemanis has again filled his 12-man squad with the best NBL talent available.

He praised the work ethic and spirit of his players, with most knowing full well they will make way for the likes of Ben Simmons, Dante Exum, Patty Mills and Matthew

the FIFA Council in the upcoming election and "would like to continue working together with Sheikh Salman for the development of world football as well as Asian football.' (Source: Japan Times)

Dellavedova for the World Cup. "We're really fortunate at the depth of talent we have in

Australia and not only the skill level but the attitude of the

doing whatever it takes to help the sport.'

"And their commitment to playing for Australia and

Lemanis said as few as one or upwards of three NBL

Dellavedova is on the outer at the Milwaukee Bucks,

"Delly's got a body of work already with the Boomers

"He's someone who absolutely loves playing for Australia

"If he's healthy and available for selection I'm sure he's

players could suit up in China depending on availability

seeing his game time slashed this season, but it appears he

need not worry how that will affect his World Cup chances.

players," Lemanis said.

of US-based stars.

anyway," Lemanis said.

and is 100 per cent committed.

a pretty good chance of being selected.'

(Source: ESPN)

IOC chief: Tokyo 'bestprepared' city for Olympics

IOC chief Thomas Bach said Wednesday that Tokyo was the best-prepared host Olympic city he could remember, with just more than 600 days to go until the 2020 Opening Ceremony

Speaking to representatives from 206 Olympic Committees from around the world, Bach noted he had some "unfortunate" experiences with the preparations of some Olympic Games.

But he added: "I do not remember any host city which was so far in its preparations two years before the Olympic Games than Tokvo.

Japan has mostly lived up to its reputation for efficiency, with construction projects generally on schedule.

However, there have been concerns over the summer heat in Tokyo affecting endurance events such as the marathon and race walking.

There has also been some wrangling over the cost of the Games -- split between the 2020 Organizing Committee, the Tokyo city government and the central government -- with disagreements over what counts as Olympics-linked expenditure.

According to the latest version of the budget, organizers project the total cost of the Games at 1.35 trillion yen, or around \$12 billion.

Organizers are expected to release an updated version of the budget next month.

Bach said he expected an "excellent Olympic Games from the organizational point of view, from the engagement point of view and from the atmosphere point of view.

(Source: AFP)

TEHRANTIMES

INTERNATIONAL DAILY www.tehrantimes.com Managing Director: Ali Asgari Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

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Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000 Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450 Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807 Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603 www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.

Tel: 88911433 Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com

Printed at: Rooztab - ISSN: 1017-94



One whose desires are endless, will go wrong in his deeds and will suffer loss.

Imam Ali (AS)

Enemy's full-scale soft war against Iran undeniable: Leader

TEHRAN – Leader of the Islamic Revolution d e s k Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has said that the enemy's ongoing full-scale soft war against Iran is undeniable.



Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in an undated photo.

He made the remarks in a note published by his office on Wednesday. Copies of the note have been sent to a number Iranian filmmakers who met the Leader on November 15.

"Today, the enemy's full-scale soft war is not deniable," Ayatollah Khamenei wrote and added, "However, some people deny it and this is part of the soft war.'

He said that artists and thinkers are the armed forces, which should fight the war.

He asked the cineastes to make films on topics such as martyrs. the Sacred Defense, revolution, Islamic lifestyle, and Arbaeen pilgrimage.

Movies from Iran to compete in Greece Olympia festival

TEHRAN – Two films from Iranian direcd e s k tors will compete in the various sections of the Olympia International Film Festival for Children and Young People, which will be held in Athens, Greece from December 1 to 8.

The Skier" by Fereidun Najafi will go on screen in the official competition while "Butterfly" by Maryam Khalilzadeh will compete in the short animated film section.

Actor Jamshid Mashayekhi celebrates 84th birthday at Iranian Artists Forum

TEHRAN – Jamshid d ^{e s k} Mashayekhi, star of acclaimed TV series such as "Hezar Dastan" and movies like "Qeisar", celebrated his 84th birthday at the Iranian Artists Forum on Tuesday evening.

His colleagues, including Reza Kianian, Reza Ruygari, and Alireza Shojanuri, and a number of officials like Farabi Cinema Foundation director Alireza Tabesh, attended the ceremony.

Speaking at the ceremony, Kianian called Mashayekhi one of the five actors who made good progress in Iran's New Wave cinema during the 1960s.

Film critic Reza Dorostakar said that Mashayekhi has had a very impressive acting career. "However, he has sometimes accepted to collaborate with young filmmakers to help them improve their works.

Critic Parviz Jahed also said that actors such as Mashayekhi were allowed to continue working in Iran's post-revolution cinema due to their impressive acting careers in the New Wave cinema.

"For his brilliant acting, he will live in the memory of Iranian cinema history forever," he stated.

The celebration came to an end with a brief speech by Mashayekhi, in which he recited verses from the Divan of Hafez and expressed his thanks to the organizers of the party.



Actor Jamshid Mashayekhi (C) poses with his colleagues, including Reza Kianian (L), during his 84th birthday celebration at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran on November 27, 2018. (Mehr/Masud Saki)

Shajarian to perform at Istanbul music festival



CEMAL REŞİT REY KONSER SALONU 3 ARALIK PAZARTESI

BİLETLER BILETIX VE CEMAL REŞİT REY KONSER SALONU GİŞELERİNDE



A poster Homayun Shajarian's concert at the 1st International Folk Music Festival in Istanbul.

A R T d e s k celebrated Iranian vocalist Homayun Shajarian will give a concert during the 1st International Folk Music Festival on December 3 at Cemal Resit Rey Music Hall in Istanbul, Turkey, the organizers announced on Wednesday.

Songs from his acclaimed albums "Neither Angel Nor Devil Am I", "The Lords of the Secrets" and "The Mirrors" have been selected to be performed at the event. His ensemble features Sohrab Purnazeri on Kamancheh, Tahmures Purnazeri on

tar and setar. Hossein Rezainia on daf. Ain Meshkatian on percussion, Mahyar Tarihi on santur and Arian Keshishi on bass guitar.

Ensembles from Spain, South Korea, Azerbaijan and Turkey will also give performances at the festival, which will be held from December 1 to 5.

Kamran Shirdel to display rarely-seen photos, docs on Islamic Revolution



A poster for Kamran Shirdel's exhibition at Tehran's Nabshi Gallery.

TEHRAN – Tehran's de sk Nabshi Gallery plans to organize an exhibition to feature a collection of Kamran Shirdel's rarely seen photos and documentary films on the 1970 Islamic Revolution.

The exhibit entitled "Margins: The Revolution in the Wanderings of Kamran

Shirdel", will open on Friday. The photos have recently been published in a book, which will be unveiled at the opening ceremony of the showcase. Author and translator Babak Ahmadi has written a preface to the book.

Shirdel's credits include "Women's Quarter", "Tehran Is the Capital of Iran", The Morning of the Fourth Day" and "Solitude Opus 1".

He is also the director of the acclaimed documentary "The Night It Rained".

The exhibit will run until January 25, 2019 at the gallery located at 51 Khosro Alley, Villa St.

"SpongeBob SquarePants" creator dies at age 57

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — "SpongeBob SquarePants" creator Stephen Hillenburg, who brought the zany cartoon marine underworld of Bikini Bottom to television, the movies and the stage, has died at the age of 57, the Nickelodeon television network said on Tuesday. Hillenburg had said last year that he was suffering from the neurodegenerative disease ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease. He died on Monday.



hearts go out to his entire family." Hillenburg was a marine biology teacher in

partner to everyone at Nickelodeon, and our Hollywood movies and a Broadway musical. The television series has aired in more than 200 nations and has been translated into more than 60 languages



A scene from Iranian director Fereidun Najafi's "The Skier".

"The Skier" tells the story of a boy from Kuhrang who faces problems on his way to take a little ibex to a tribal ritual in a snowy, remote region in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari Province.

"Butterfly" is a love story about a man who tries to transform 1001 girls to butterflies with his magical musical instrument.

S BRIEF NE IN



Al Arz, Farabi **CEOs meet in** Tehran

TEHRAN – The director of Iran's Farabi Cinema Foundation, Alireza Tabesh, and Lebanon's Alarz Production Company CEO Ali Zaher held a meeting in Tehran on Tuesday to discuss ways to expand relations.

Ways to collaborate on joint film projects and plans to screen Iranian films in Lebanon were also discussed at the meeting.

Zaher is in Tehran to attend the 15th International Resistance Film Festival

"We are incredibly saddened by the news that Steve Hillenburg has passed away following a battle with ALS." the network said in a statement. "He was a beloved friend and long-time creative

"SpongeBob SquarePants" creator Stephen Hillenburg in an undated photo.

National Board of Review names "Green Book" year's best film

NEW YORK (AP) — The feel-good road-trip drama "Green Book" was named the best film of the year, and its star, Viggo Mortensen, best actor, by the National Board of Review in one of the first in a parade of awards season honors.

The NBR awards. announced Tuesday. gave the Oscar hopes of Universal's "Green Book" a jolt. The film, directed by Peter Farrelly (who typically makes broader comedies like "There's Something About Mary" with his brother, Bobby) was declared an Oscar favorite after taking the audience award at the Toronto International Film Festival.

But in two weeks of release, it has struggled to latch on at the box office, and some critics have called its portrayal of race relations old-fashioned and criticized it for relying on "white savior" tropes. It stars Mahershala Ali as classical pianist Don Shirley, who tours the Deep South in 1962 with a racist Italian-American driver played by Mortensen.

Bradley Cooper's lauded remake "A Star Is Born" also took several top awards, including best director for Cooper, best actress for Lady Gaga and best supporting actor for Sam Elliott

Barry Jenkins' James Baldwin adaptation "If Beale Street Could Talk" took prizes for Jenkins' screenplay and for Regina King's supporting performance.

Though sometimes called an Oscar harbinger, the National Board of Review, a 109-year-old organization of film enthusiasts,

academics and professionals, has typically deviated from eventual best picture winners. It last year chose Steven Spielberg's 'The Post." Before that, its top winners were "Manchester By the Sea," ?Mad Max: Fury Road" and "A Most Violent Year."

On Monday night, the Gotham Awards which honor independent film, selected Chloe Zhao's "The Rider" as its best feature film of the year. Critics groups will soon start weighing in with their picks, starting with the New York Film Critics Circle on Thursday.

Other prizes from the National Board of Review included best ensemble for the cast of the romantic-comedy hit "Crazy Rich Asians"; best documentary to the popular Ruth Bader Ginsberg chronicle "RBG"; best screenplay to Paul Schrader's "First Reformed"; best animated feature to "Incredibles 2?; best foreign language film to "Cold War."

Southern California when he started creating sea creatures as teaching tools. The first episode of "SpongeBob

SquarePants," featuring the cheerful yellow sea sponge, who lived in an underwater pineapple, and his friends Mr. Krabs, Larry the Lobster, Patrick, and their Krusty Krab restaurant hangout, aired on U.S. television in May 1999.

The series went on to win multiple awards, produced a series of spin-off books, two

"Steve imbued SpongeBob SquarePants with a unique sense of humor and innocence that has brought joy to generations of kids and families everywhere," the Nickelodeon statement said.

"His utterly original characters and the world of Bikini Bottom will long stand as a reminder of the value of optimism, friendship and the limitless power of imagination." Nickelodeon is a unit of Viacom.

Predator cities fight for survival in Peter Jackson's "Mortal Engines"

LONDON (Reuters) — Oscar winning filmmaker Peter Jackson is returning to the big screen with adventure fantasy 'Mortal Engines", a post-apolcalyptic tale of survival in his first feature film project since his award-winning adaptations of J.R.R. Tolkien's novels.

The New Zealand-born director, known for his "The Lord of the Rings" and "The Hobbit" trilogies, produced and co-wrote the script for the film, based on the young adult book series by Philip Reeve.

Oscar-winning visual effects artist Christian Rivers, who worked with Jackson on the Tolkien adaptations as well as 2005's "King Kong" makes his directorial in the film, set hundreds of years after a catastrophic event wipes out civilizations.

"Once 'The Hobbit' was done, we were looking forward to getting this made," Jackson told Reuters at the film's premiere in London on Tuesday.

'I didn't want (Rivers) to make his first feature with somebody else ... I wanted to be part of helping him get his feature film career off the ground ... He's done an amazing job.'

In the film, humans live in gigantic moving cities which devour smaller towns. A group made up of an outlaw, outcast and mysterious woman lead a rebellion against one such predator city, London.

"It was the fear of saying yes because I knew how much work it would be and it was also a fear of saying no, if I said no and someone else made it and it wasn't any good, I'd be kicking myself," Rivers said about directing "Mortal Engines". "It was a freight train, it was a big

film that came in and I had to jump on and take the ride.

On top of his work in the art department, Rivers was a second unit director on the last two "Hobbit" films, the last of which came out in 2014.

Since then, Jackson directed World War One documentary "They Shall Not Grow Old", released this month.

"Mortal Engines" features a young cast led by Icelandic actress Hera Hilmar. "Matrix" and "The Hobbit" actor Hugo Weaving also stars in the film.