



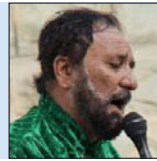
**Bolton's ouster won't change Iran's perception of U.S. policies** **2**



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## Iran-China ties have turned strategic: Baqeri

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## TEDPIX moving toward 300,000 points

**TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), has risen 9,752 points, or 3.36 percent, to 299,931 during the five working days of the past Iranian calendar week (Saturday to Wednesday), Tasnim news agency reported.

Some 12.027 billion securities worth 51.741 trillion rials (about \$1.231 billion) were traded through 1.338 million deals at TSE during the past week, indicating

38 percent and 36 percent fall in terms of the number and value of securities, respectively, and 32 percent drop in the number of trades compared to its previous week.

As previously announced, TEDPIX has risen 13,070 points, or 5.17 percent, to 266,127 at the end of the fifth Iranian calendar month of Mordad (August 22). **→4**

## Talks with U.S. under sanctions meaningless, Rouhani says

**TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that it makes no sense to hold talks with the United States when sanctions against Iran are in place.

"From the viewpoint of the government, parliament and the people of Iran, negotiations with the United States make no sense when sanctions remain," Rouhani said in a phone conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron.

Rouhani noted that the U.S. refrained from fulfilling its commitments by withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Pointing to Iran's third step in reducing its commitments under the deal, he said that the action has been done under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and is reversible. **→2**

## Trump fires Bolton

**TEHRAN** — U.S. President Donald Trump has fired National Security Adviser John Bolton, saying he has "disagreed strongly with many of his suggestions."

"I informed John Bolton last night that his services are no longer needed at the White House. I disagreed strongly with many of his suggestions, as did others in the Administration, and therefore I asked John for his resignation, which was given to me this morning," Trump said in a tweet.

"I thank John very much for his service."

I will be naming a new National Security Advisor next week," Trump continued.

This comes about 90 minutes before Bolton was expected to appear at a press briefing with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

Bolton offered a slightly different version of events than Trump, saying: "I offered to resign last night and President Trump said, 'Let's talk about it tomorrow.'" **→13**

## Machgharah: The town of resistance and martyrs commemorates Imam Hussein's martyrdom

By Sondos Al-Asaad

**BEIRUT** — Thousands of mourners have gathered from various West Bekaa villages to mark the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein, the third Shiite Imam and the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), in the Lebanese town of Machgharah, to pledge allegiance to Imam Hussein and to resonate their firm stance to all the conspirators that no war shall weaken their determination and faith in the approach of resistance.

The black-clad were crouched on the floor with tears streaming down their faces, as they listen to Hussein eulogies. Besides, Imam al-Mahdi Scout, male and female members, partook in the parade, holding black flags and pictures of Hezbollah martyrs; slapping their chests and chanting, "Never to Humiliation."

At the end of the parade, Hezbollah MP Hussein El-Haj-Hassan delivered a speech, in which he asserted that the US and the Zionists, along their allies, are hardly working to besiege the Islamic Republic and the resistance movements in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.

"We vow the supreme Leader Ayatollah Khomeini on this day, as Imam Hussein's companions and as Sayyed Hassan Nasrullah said yesterday, 'Oh master and leader, if we are to be killed, all of us, we shall never leave you, Oh son of Hussein.'"

El-Haj-Hassan added that if the Islamic Republic is in distress, then all the resistance movements would stand in solidarity with it, merely because of the dignity Iran has brought us.

"The people of West Bekaa stand with Iran and the resistance. This is our religious, political, national and ideological obligation," the

deputy avowed.

If bounteousness and hospitality could indeed be measured, then the Machgharis are Lebanon's most generous servants to the lovers of Imam Hussein.

During the 10 days of A'shuraa's religious rituals, they provide copious supplies of free food and beverages, in honour of Imam Hussein's martyrdom.

Weeks ahead, preparations get underway; they set up their houses to accommodate the mourners, in every possible way, as they perceive Imam Hussein as the beacon of honour and salvation.

On the day of A'sahuraa, they prepare meals; the main drive for this is their devotion to the holy Ahlulbait. This annual ritual is considered holy for anyone who cooks or eats it. **→13**

## Muharram mourning in a strange country

By Seyed Hossein Hosseinseddig

**TEHRAN** — A few years back, I went to Germany to study for a doctorate and settled in a university campus located in a small town hundred kilometers North of Frankfurt in the woods. After a short while, I got to know the university and its surroundings. In a cold evening, it was about four o'clock after returning from the library. I was browsing my Persian calendar, and I suddenly realized that it was the fifth or sixth of Muharram and I was struck by a strange tragedy or grief. I knew that there was not definitely a mosque for Shiites in this small town. Of course, later on, I discovered that a leased mosque belonging to the Ahmadiyya sect of Pakistan was located behind

my faculty, the Middle East Studies Center.

Anyway, I had a Mohr (Holy soil dried) from Iran with a compass to determine Qibla or Holy cube, prostration rug and handmade rug to carry out the prayer rites, but what was my intention to attend the mourning ceremony of the martyrs of Imam Hussein (PBUH)? A celebration that most of us Iranians have been obsessed with since infancy. I watched some mourning videos over the internet and I hit my chest a few times alone in my own room, but my soul was not convinced. Suddenly, on a Google search page, I wrote: "The Mourning of Muharram in Frankfurt." The search result found the address of an Iranian mosque, or Islamic Center, at the time, at Alt-Hausen

St., No 15. In fact, I contacted a couple of new friends in the city who were studying pharmacy and dentistry and suggested that if they wanted to go to Frankfurt Mosque tonight, but those friends apologized, and I decided to take the train by myself at the same sunset. I still didn't know Frankfurt. After an hour and a half journey, I arrived at Frankfurt's very large central train station, went to the information desk and was instructed by a passenger donation map to reach the two subway lines 7 and 4.

After about 200m walk from the Große Nelkenstraße station, I reached a large courtyard with many cars parked on either side and at the end of the enclosure was a two-story building. **→13**



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## People hold mass Ashura noon prayer in Zanjan

People in Zanjan, like many other places around Iran and abroad, held mass Ashura noon prayer on Tuesday to commemorate Imam Hussein's (AS) last prayer before his martyrdom in 680 AD.

## PERSPECTIVE



**Mostafa Mousavi Sabet**  
Head of the Tehran Times  
Art & Culture Desk

## Attention ALMA jury! Please recognize "You're No Stranger Here"

In early September, Iranian children's book writer Hushang Moradi Kermani was selected by Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) to represent the country at the 2020 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA), the World's largest children's literature honor.

On its website, the ALMA has labeled its twelve-member jury including researchers, authors, illustrators, librarians and critics as "Jury with extensive knowledge", as they are indeed.

The IIDCYA has definitely sent the jury a profile of Moradi Kermani who was also nominated for the award in 2018 and 2019. The profile seems to include "You're No Stranger Here", the writer's autobiography, which has also been published in English by the London-based publisher Candle & Fog.

This book described aright as a bona fide autobiography in reviews published by a number of critics has its own unique story and characteristics that deserve more attention.

In his extremely short introduction to the book, Moradi Kermani, whose works are also appealing to adults, has said, "I did no research nor had any note to write in this book; it just came from my memory." He then has dedicated it to those who are and were in company with him on the "journey", as well as "those who are influenced."

Next, he immediately grabs the readers' hands taking them to his home in Sirch, a remote village in Kerman Province, where he spent his unusual childhood; unusual simply because he lost his mother in his infancy and had to go on with his grandfather and grandmother, and a father who suffered from mental illness.

Societies differ from one another in their definition of private life. Iranians traditionally shrink from revealing even a simple fact about their private lives. But Moradi Kermani doesn't conceal even the bitter fact that his father was a psycho. In addition, he frankly reveals his rural descent while his fellow men often pretend to be a member of an ancient noble family from the heart of Tehran! **→16**

## ARTICLE



**Martin Love**  
Political analyst from  
North Carolina

## Bolton and Neocons responsible for billions in opportunity costs – does Trump realize it?

It's obvious Donald Trump, who touts himself as a superb "dealmaker", has not made any important deals yet as President. In fact, he's done little but tear up extant deals, and the most notable one he destroyed was the JCPOA. But at the same time, Trump literally likes talking to other leaders, and some other leaders have responded to him saying they actually thought he was almost charming and reasonably well spoken. One would like to imagine this is the case, because Trump made a lot more sense when he was on the campaign trail back in 2016 than he has in the past two years. Why the change, because now, very few people like Trump, and his reelection is in doubt?

Well, Trump literally had no idea whom to appoint to help him once in office. He wound up appointing people (Bolton, Pompeo, even Pence) opposed to many aspects of his original, campaign agenda, and above all, he appointed some of the worst people imaginable to soothe U.S. relations and establish fundamentally peaceful relations with other countries like Russia, China, Iran and some others in the Middle East, except for Israel (which has been totally rewarded by the U.S. alone for nothing good). The Neocons have long been particularly aggressive. With Bolton fired this week, and some saner names being suggested as a replacement, one can only hope that Trump is beginning to realize that if he wants to MAGA, it will be impossible if he caters to Neocon madness.

Under the spell of these American traitors, who are mostly Zionist in orientation, Trump hit Iran with the worst economic sanctions ever imposed on anyone short of outright military attack. And the thinking was that Iran would do the bidding of Pompeo and Bolton, which was way off the mark, and even farther off the mark succumb to the overthrow of the Islamic Republic in favor of the MEK, which is a whacko terrorist organization. **→13**



## Iran-China ties have turned strategic: Baqeri

**Military chief says Iran after closer ties with China in different fields**

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri says Iran attaches great significance to promotion of ties with China in different sectors, including military.

General Baqeri made the remarks in a meeting on Wednesday with General Li Zuocheng, the chief of China's Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission, in Beijing.

"Iran attaches great significance to its relations with the People's Republic of China in all areas. We have long-standing ties in the military sector as well, and we hope this visit can be a turning point in the development and reinforcement of the relations," Baqeri said, Press TV reported.

Heading a high-ranking military delegation, Baqeri visited China on Wednesday for a three-day visit with the aim of promoting bilateral defense diplomacy.

He said Iran and China have maintained and strengthened their ties over the past four decades.

During the meeting, the senior Iranian commander also invited his Chinese counterpart to visit Tehran.

Separately, Baqeri met with Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission Xu Qiliang, during which they discussed ways to expand defense ties and reviewed regional developments.

Upon his arrival in Beijing, the top general said Iran and China are developing their military cooperation besides their cooperation in political and economic sectors.

General Baqeri told reporters that Iran-China relations have turned "strategic" since 2016, adding that the two countries have drawn up a comprehensive plan for boosting cooperation.

On Thursday, Baqeri met with the president of PLA National Defence University in Beijing, where he said Iran's Supreme National Defense University is ready to share its military experiences with its Chinese counterpart.

He said that relations between Iran and China have been improving in the past few years and moved toward becoming "strategic".

The military official also told reporters that Iran and China will witness significant rise in their defense and military relations with the aim of promoting peace and stability and security for both nations.

The military chief said during his meetings with high-ranking Chinese military officials, they conferred on useful issues, adding that one of the topics discussed was the ways to organize Iran-China joint technical and industrial commission.

## Rouhani due in Ankara for Syria talks

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani is to visit Ankara on Sunday to attend an Iran-Russia-Turkey trilateral summit on Syria, the communications and media officer at the presidential office said on Friday.

Parviz Esmaili said Rouhani's visit will take place upon an official invitation by his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The Iranian president is also to deliver a speech at the 5th round of Iran-Russia-Turkey trilateral meeting in line with the Astana peace talks on Monday, he added.

All parties will also discuss developing trilateral cooperation in various fields and also regional interactions, the media officer said.

Rouhani also plans to hold separate meetings with the presidents of Russia and Turkey on bilateral issues.

A high-ranking politico-economic delegation will accompany Rouhani during the trip.

So far, the presidents of Iran, Russia and Turkey have met four times on Syria in order to tackle terrorism in the country, bring back peace among the warring sides, help repatriation of refugees and establishing political stability in the country.

The three countries, which are referred to as guarantors of peace in Syria, have held several rounds of talks on the country in Astana, Kazakhstan.

The 13th round of the Astana talks was held on August 1-2 and the 14th edition will be held in October.

## Talks with U.S. under sanctions meaningless, Rouhani says

**1 →** The president once against urged the European Union, particularly France as a heavyweight member of the 27-nation bloc, to play their part in preserving the deal.

For his part, Macron said that Paris will continue efforts to implement the JCPOA.

Rouhani said on September 3 that holding "bilateral" talks with the U.S. is not on the agenda.

"We've said it before time and again, and we say it again that we have no intention to hold bilateral talks with the United States," Rouhani told the parliament as he was defending his nominees for the post of education and tourism ministers.

U.S. President Donald Trump abandoned the nuclear deal in May 2018 and imposed the harshest ever sanctions on Tehran. However, Trump has been repeatedly calling for dialogue with Iran.

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. withdrawal, Tehran began reducing its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals.

In follow-up to that deadline, on July 7 Iran announced that it has started enriching uranium to a higher purity than the 3.67% as the Europeans missed the 60-day deadline to devise a concrete mechanism to protect the country from the U.S. sanctions.

In a letter to European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on September 5, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif announced that as a third step Iran stops implementing all commitments related to nuclear research and development (R&D) under the JCPOA.

"The Iranian foreign minister sent a letter to Mogherini, announcing that the Islamic Republic of Iran stops all commitments in the area of research and development under the JCPOA because of consequences of the United States' withdrawal from the deal and the three European countries' failure to implement their commitments," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said.

"In this letter, it has been said that this action is in line with Iran's rights under the JCPOA and within the paragraph 36 of it and is in response to violation of the JCPOA during the past 16 months."

# Top official says Bolton's ouster won't change Iran's perception of U.S. policies

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The **d e s k** secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) has said the dismissal of John Bolton as U.S. national security adviser will not change Iran's perception of White House policies, describing the move as a "superficial" change.

"Obama and Trump both pursued a policy of sanctions against the Iranian nation," Ali Shamkhani wrote in a message published on Wednesday in reaction to Bolton's ouster.

"Iran's criterion for assessment is the actual policy and performance of the United States, especially its adherence to international obligations and removal of sanctions against the Iranian people," Shamkhani wrote.

"Bolton's stupid promise that the Islamic Revolution would not reach its 40th year will remain in the political record of him and the U.S. government," the top security official stated.

Elsewhere in his writing, Shamkhani said that Bolton was a hireling of the monafeqin.

The Iranians refer to the Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK) or Mujahedin-e-Khalq Organization (MKO) as monafeqin (hypocrites). They sided with Saddam Hussein in the war against Iran in the 1980s. The Saddam regime also used the group to suppress the Kurds and Shias in northern and southern Iraq.

The group was until recent years on the list of terrorist organizations in the U.S. and Europe.



It is widely hated in Iran. It has close links to Israeli intelligence. Israel used the MKO operatives to assassinate a number of Iranian nuclear scientists just in the recent past.

The MKO is still widely viewed as a Marxist-Islamist cult built around the personality of its leader, Maryam Rajavi.

In his statement, Shamkhani said Bolton's "humiliating firing" from the White House not only led him to "the garbage

can of history," but made "the treasonous monafeqin's anti-nation project face scandalous defeat."

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has always blamed Bolton for the U.S. hawkish policies toward Iran and referred to him as a member of the B-Team.

The B-Team in Zarif's comments refers to a group of four anti-Iran hawks, including Bolton, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin

Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman Al Saud, and Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

U.S. President Donald Trump, who said he had disagreed "strongly" with Bolton on policy, announced on Tuesday via Twitter: "I asked John for his resignation, which was given to me this morning."

A replacement -- the White House's fourth national security chief in less than three years -- would be named next week, Trump said.

Bolton, who had been scheduled to give a press conference at the White House on an unrelated matter, denied being fired and insisted that he had resigned.

The developments came against the backdrop of increased tensions between Iran and the U.S. with Washington imposing new sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

The U.S. has ratcheted up pressure on Iran since last year after withdrawing from the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Since then, the Trump administration has been trying to reduce Iran's oil exports to "zero," and has sent an aircraft carrier strike group, a bomber squad, an amphibious assault ship, and a Patriot missile battery to the Middle East to try to stack up pressure on Tehran.

Iranian officials, however, have dismissed such moves as psychological warfare, saying the country has its own ways of circumventing the American bans and selling crude oil.

## Iran rejects Arab quartet statement as 'baseless'

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi rejected on Thursday anti-Iran claims made by the Arab Ministerial Quartet Committee as "baseless" and "continuation of committing the past political mistakes".

After its 12th meeting in Cairo on Tuesday, the Arab Ministerial Quartet Committee issued an anti-Iran statement in which it condemned what it called "Iran's role in destabilizing the security and stability in the region."

The committee is comprised of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt.

According to Press TV, the quartet also claimed that Iran continues to interfere in the "internal affairs of Arab countries"

and its officials make "constant provocative statements".

Mousavi said, "Instead of relying on Persian Gulf countries' power, certain countries make baseless and unfounded claims about regional security and welcome the foreigners' claims out of their frustration."

The ministry spokesman added, "The Islamic Republic of Iran considers baseless accusations against sovereignty over the three (Iranian) islands [of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb] as the inability of certain Arab countries to understand realities in the world."

He noted that the wrong path taken by some Arab states will only complicates the problems in the region at a time that rationality and realism are needed.



## 'Thirst for war and maximum pressure should go with the warmonger-in-chief', Zarif says in reaction to Bolton ouster

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — In reaction to the **d e s k** ouster of White House national security advisor John Bolton by Donald Trump on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted, "Thirst for war—maximum pressure—should go with the warmonger-in-chief".

Bolton was notoriously famous for his ultra-hawkish stance toward Iran. He was pushing for regime change in Iran.



Zarif had called Bolton part of the B-team who were encouraging Trump to start a war against Iran.

The other members of the B-team are Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Zayed.

Immediately after Bolton's dismissal, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin announced new sanctions against Iran in a joint press conference.

"As the world—minus 3 or 2 panicked cohorts—was breathing a sigh of relief over ouster of #B\_Team's henchman in the White House, Pompeo & Mnuchin declared further escalation of #EconomicTerrorism against Iran," Zarif wrote on his Twitter account on Wednesday.

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said on Wednesday that Bolton's firing will not change Iran's understanding of the nature of Washington's policies.

"The historic and deep-rooted hostility of the U.S. government towards the Iranian nation is something beyond the roles that officials play," Press TV quoted him as saying.

He added, "The dismissal and installation of the U.S. officials and their presence in different positions would not change Iran's understanding of the nature of the U.S. measures and policies, as both [Barack] Obama and Trump... pursued a similar policy of sanctions against the Iranian nation."

First Announcement



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**4. Closing Date.:**The eligible Bidders should submit their Bids/proposal to the central administration office as mentioned below and also in the Tender documents before 14:00 pm ,local time , on the day, **13<sup>th</sup> October ,2019 .**

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**6. Contact information .:** For more details and receiving the relevant Tender documents , the Bidders can refer to the following contact information.

**Add :** Km 7 of Sankhast Road ,city of Jajarm , Northern Khorasan Province,IRAN,P.O.Box:1135-94415 ,Commercial department / legal and contractual Affairs .

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# Iran laments sanctions' negative impact on fighting organized crimes

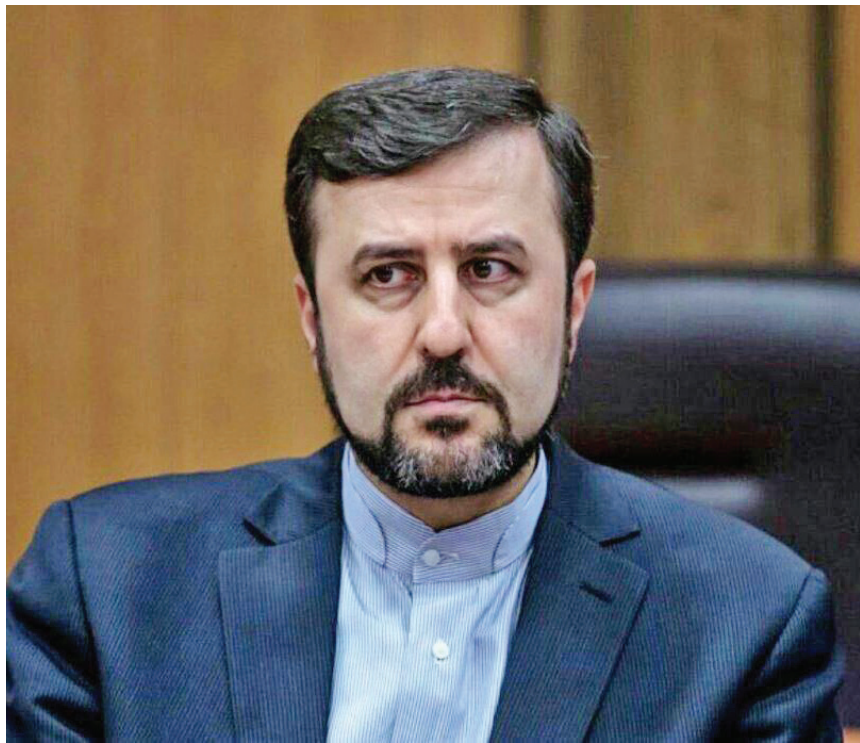
**S O C I A L** **TEHRAN** – The Islamic Republic has highlighted the importance of adopting an international approach toward the main roots of organized crimes instead of the U.S. illegal sanctions against Tehran which negatively impact the cause, IRNA reported.

Speaking at a meeting of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, Iran's ambassador and permanent representative to the Vienna-based international organizations Kazem Gharibabadi said unilateral compulsory acts are among the most important impediments for global cooperation in fighting transnational systematic crimes.

He said human trafficking is still a "bitter reality" for many children and women around the world, and is one the biggest violations of human rights and dignity.

Gharibabadi stressed that effective confrontation against such phenomena can be achieved through taking coherent and comprehensive approach like negotiations and cooperation, adding that finding the roots, preventing, protecting victims, punishing smugglers and participating at the international level should be regarded as the pillar of any comprehensive approach in fighting human trafficking.

The Iranian envoy said regarding the urgent need for promoting international cooperation



tion through presenting technical assistance and building capacity for fighting human

trafficking it is emphasized that presenting training courses and raising awareness will be

essential, especially for those who are likely to use the smugglers' services.

He pointed to Iran's commitment to preventing and fighting all shapes of smuggling, saying in recent years, the Islamic Republic has taken major strides at national, regional and international levels in fighting human trafficking.

Gharibabadi pointed out that at the international level, Iran is a member of some international conventions and has signed separate MOUs with International Organization for Migration and International Labor Organization for reinforcing its bodies in fighting human trafficking.

Referring to efforts made in fighting human trafficking, he said Iran believes that unilateral compulsory measures are against international regulations and some UN resolutions, and they prevent allocating resources for fighting human trafficking.

Such illegal choices which are regarded as "economic terrorism" prevent rendering technical aid for effective confrontation against human trafficking.

Iran considers as harmful the unilateral illegal sanctions for collective reaction to transnational crimes such as human trafficking and expresses its deep concern over the negative impacts of compulsory illegal acts on the domination of the rule of law in all levels, he added.

## UN welcomes any effort to avoid confrontation in Persian Gulf: Guterres

*By staff and agency*

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Thursday that any effort to avoid a confrontation in the Persian Gulf "will always be welcome".

According to AP, he said, "The world cannot live with a major confrontation in the [Persian] Gulf."

Talking to reporters, the UN chief said, "It is absolutely essential to avoid any escalation of the situation."

The friction is rooted in U.S. President Donald Trump's decision in May 2018 to unilaterally withdraw from a landmark nuclear deal signed in 2015 between world powers and Iran.

Since then, the U.S. has reinstated sweeping sanctions against Tehran as part of a "maximum pressure" campaign and has also beefed up its military presence in the Persian Gulf.

The tensions escalated in May, when the U.S. accused Iran of sabotaging tankers in the shipping route, allegations vehemently denied by Iran. Washington has called on its European and Asian allies to form a maritime force to supposedly monitor safe shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf. So far, only Britain, Australia and

Bahrain have agreed to join the coalition.

Australian Ambassador to Russia Graeme Meehan has said that Canberra's participation in the U.S.-led coalition in the Persian Gulf does not mean that the country agrees with Washington's stand on Iran.

"We are quite careful to say that our participation in the maritime action to protect shipping in the Strait of Hormuz doesn't mean that we agree with all the actions that United States are taking in relation to the nuclear deal. Of course, the two things are connected, but there are also differences, and I think that is the same for some of the European countries that are considering participating in the maritime act.

The European countries don't generally agree with the United States' action of pulling out of the nuclear deal," Sputnik quoted him as saying.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said in August he plans to do everything he can to ease tension in the Middle East region.

"Peace and stability in the Middle East directly links to



Japan's national interest," Reuters quoted him as saying in a news conference at the end of a three-day international conference on African development.

"I would like to work tenaciously, and play the best possible role to ease tensions in the Middle East," Abe remarked.

## Nasrallah hails Iran as a major resistance camp against U.S., Israel

**P O L I T I C A L** **TEHRAN** – Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the secretary general of the Lebanese Hezbollah movement, has hailed Iran as the center of a major anti-U.S.-Israeli camp led by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

"Today, the U.S., Israel and their tools are trying to besiege our camp. The leader of this camp is Imam Ali Khamenei and the center of this camp is the Islamic Republic of Iran," Nasrallah remarked.

He made the remarks in a speech on Monday, on the eve of Ashura, which marks the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the third Shia Imam and the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

"This is our camp, and this is our Imam, our leader, and Hussein of this era. In this battle, there is no place for neutrality. You are either with Hussein or you are with Yazid. The battle is renewed and so is the confrontation,"



Press TV quoted the Hezbollah chief as saying.

Nasrallah was referring to the Battle of Karbala in southern Iraq in 680 AD, during which Imam Hussein was martyred along with his 72 companions after fighting courageously for justice against thousands of soldiers of the Umayyad caliph, Yazid I.

He further stressed that Israeli and American leaders will fail in their plots to undermine the Resistance Front through embargoes.

## Iran, Kyrgyzstan ink security cooperation deal

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** – The interior ministers of Iran and Kyrgyzstan have signed an agreement on security and law enforcement cooperation between the two Asian countries. Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli and his Kyrgyz counterpart Colonel Kashkar Junushaliev signed the agreement at the conclusion of a meeting in Bishkek on Thursday evening. In the meeting, the ministers voiced the two countries' readiness to enhance cooperation for ensuring security, and discussed the mutual efforts for protecting regional stability as well as the fight against drug trafficking and extremism. Rahmani Fazli and Junushaliev also weighed plans for combatting the extremist groups, the international criminals and drug smugglers, and for ensuring border security.

Heading a high-ranking delegation, Rahmani Fazli is in Bishkek for a two-day visit to hold talks with senior Kyrgyz officials.

In May, senior diplomats from Iran and Kyrgyzstan held the fourth round of political consultations between the two countries in Tehran. The negotiations were co-chaired



by Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi and his Kyrgyz counterpart, Nuran Niazaliyev. The two sides discussed a range of issues, including mutual, regional, and international cooperation, and reached an agreement on the agenda of meetings between senior officials of Iran and Kyrgyzstan during the current Iranian year (started March 21). In their talks, Araqchi and Niazaliyev emphasized the need to implement the past agreements and documents signed during the reciprocal visits of the Iranian and Kyrgyz presidents.

## Crisis in White House led to cancellation of talks with Taliban: ex-diplomat

**P O L I T I C A L** **TEHRAN** – A former Iranian ambassador to Afghanistan has criticized the so-called U.S. peace talk with the Taliban, saying Washington's mistake was to sideline the elders and the Afghan government from the negotiation table.

In an interview with ILNA news agency published on Friday, Fada-Hossein Maleki said that the cancellation of American-Taliban negotiations and cancellation of a secret Camp David meeting with Taliban leaders was linked to the political crisis and recent clashes in the White House.

Referring to the departure of National Security Advisor John Bolton from the U.S. administration, Maleki said, "I believe that the sacking of John Bolton was also partly related to the Afghan case. We have to believe that the U.S. president was under terrific pressure during the negotiations."

In other words, the members of the Trump team do not want to sign an agreement with the Taliban, the former ambassador said.

Noting that Zalmay Khalilzad, Trump's top negotiator for Afghanistan, was not on

the president's team originally, Maleki said, "Khalilzad was on the Obama team, and people like Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and CIA director David Petraeus are strongly opposed to Khalilzad to win in this issue."

The former ambassador underlined that if Washington wants to re-negotiate, the draft agreement should be seen by the Afghan government and elders.

He further pointed out that establishing peace and security in Afghanistan will have positive effects on other countries as well, while on the other hand, the current behavior of the United States has negative effects on neighboring countries.

Peace talks between the United States and the Taliban began last October in Qatar, with the aim of ending the almost 18-year-old war in Afghanistan.

Last Monday, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that negotiations were over without a deal.

"It was astonishing for us because we had already concluded the peace agreement with the American negotiating team," Suhail Shaheen, a Taliban spokesman, told Al Jazeera



in Qatar's capital Doha following Trump's announcement.

The Taliban on Thursday called on the U.S. to restart talks, urging the Trump administration to revisit a nearly completed deal after it abruptly withdrew from the

process last week.

President Trump told reporters John Bolton wasn't getting along with some members of his administration. Bolton was fired on September 10 after there was a clash over his efforts to hold negotiations with the Taliban.

## Iran fully prepared to protect own interests in Persian Gulf, says top general

**P O L I T I C A L** **TEHRAN** – Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, the Armed Forces Chief of Staff, has said Iran is fully prepared to protect its interests in the Persian Gulf.

"In the current circumstances, Iran is ready to decisively defend its security and interests in the Persian Gulf," Baqeri said on Thursday while addressing a host of professors and students of China's National Defense University in Beijing.



Heading a high-ranking military delegation, Baqeri visited China on Wednesday for a three-day trip with the aim of promoting bilateral defense diplomacy.

"We have never started any aggression or war and will never do so but we will decisively defend our security and sovereignty in case of any aggression or intervention by foreign countries," he said, according to Mehr.

Baqeri said the Islamic Republic is after "defending the approach which focuses on the active participation of all regional countries to build a collective and regional security structure."

"Iran will not tolerate hegemony and interventions of trans-regional powers," the commander stated.

He added that Iran has never welcomed the presence of 70,000 foreign military forces and more than 40 military bases of the U.S. in the region.

If the U.S. finds a chance, it will build more bases and dispatch more forces to the region in a bid to intervene in the internal affairs of different countries, General Baqeri warned.

The top Iranian general further stressed that the security of the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman should only be provided by the Persian Gulf States.

"The presence and deployment of the U.S. and Western military forces such as the already-failed U.S.-led coalition to secure naval security in the Persian Gulf will not yield any results except sowing more insecurity."

Baqeri's comments come months after an escalation of tensions in the Persian Gulf, where the U.S. has been beefing up its military presence allegedly to contain Iran's growing influence.

Iran has repeatedly warned that it would react to any attempt to undermine the security of the region or to make it difficult for the country to export its oil.

Last month, President Hassan Rouhani said measures taken by some extra-regional countries, especially the United States, in the Persian Gulf only serve to render the region's problems more complicated and make it appear less secure in the eyes of the world.

"Iran attaches great importance to maintaining and consolidating security in the Persian Gulf region, the Strait of Hormuz and the Sea of Oman, and spares no effort in this regard, because it believes that maintaining this security will ensure development and interests of regional people," Rouhani stated.

## Cleric: Ashura played significant role in resistance front's victories

**TEHRAN (MNA)** – Had it not been for the "Ashura" school of thought, the victories in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain and Yemen would not have been achieved, said the Tehran Interim Friday Prayers Leader Hojjatolislam Mohammad Hassan Abutorabifard.



Addressing worshippers in Tehran on Friday, Abutorabifard said the Ashura school of thought has helped the Islamic Republic to flourish over the past forty years since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

He made the remarks a few days after the anniversary of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (PBUH) in the battle of Karbala on Ashura Day.

"Had it not been for Ashura school of thought, the Islamic Revolution would not have taken place, and we would not have successfully passed the difficult time of Sacred Defense (Iran's resistance against the invading Saddam Army in the 1980s)."

Had it not been for the Ashura school of thought, today's victorious Syria, strong Iraq, resistant Lebanon, standing and patient Bahrain and glorious and proud Yemen would not have been so," he stressed.

Elsewhere, he blamed the "Great Satan" (the United States) for the catastrophic situation in Yemen, describing the Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman as a puppet in the hands of the Americans.

The senior cleric further noted that the resistance front led by Iran is standing against plots designed by the hegemonic powers for the region in line with the teachings of Ashura.



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	299930.7
IFX	3884.89

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,254 rials
GBP	51,794 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$60.24/b
WTI	\$55.08/b
OPEC Basket	\$62.74/b
Gold	\$1,506.15/oz
Silver	\$18.18/oz
Platinum	\$956.90/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

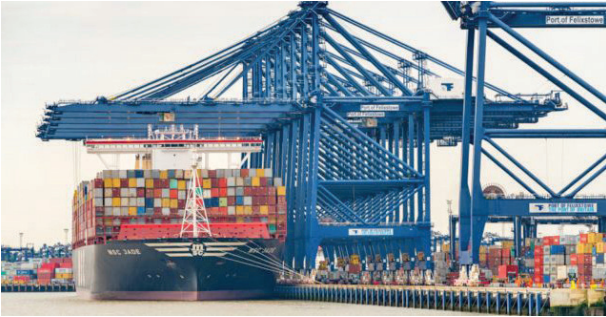
UK ports bring £9.7 billion of direct value to the UK economy

New figures published by the ports industry reveal the hidden scale of the industry across the UK. As well as being key trading gateways – handling 95% of UK trade – ports are the foundation of the entire marine economy and are increasingly supporting other types of valuable economic activity, from leisure to fishing, offshore energy and marine aggregates.

As per hellenicshippingnews.com, the research was commissioned by the British Ports Association (BPA) and UK Major Ports Group (UKMPG) via Maritime UK and undertaken by the Center for Economics & Business Research (CEBR).

Ports are the foundation of the entire marine economy – whether it is leisure, fishing, offshore energy, marine aggregates or anything else that uses the seas around this island – it matters that the industry continues to deliver.

Unlike some parts of the world, UK ports do all of this at no cost to the taxpayer. Last year we delivered £5.3b to the exchequer and supporting £46 billion of GVA. That is an incredible achievement: 20% higher than 2010 and forecast to grow another 15% in the next five years.



Ports are delivering jobs, investment and prosperity – but that is no accident. If we are to continue to deliver, we cannot stand still, the world is constantly changing and we must constantly change with it and ensure we have a business environment that continues to support success and a world class ports industry.”

Today’s report shows the hugely significant economic impact that the ports sector delivers. But the sector is ambitious to do more, growing this value further.

Ports themselves will continue to improve productivity and develop the digital platforms of tomorrow. We will work through any near term disruption but realizing the full potential of the sector for the UK requires partnership with government – for better development rules, improved road and rail links and to embed trade as an enduring priority across government. Ports and their investors are ready to play their part.”

Singapore is the world’s second-freest economy: report

It topped 162 countries for its credit market regulations.

According to sbr.com.sg, Singapore maintained its spot as the second most economically-free jurisdiction in the world for the 12th consecutive year, according to the 2019 edition of the Fraser Institute’s Economic Freedom of the World report.

The island state achieved a perfect score (10.0) for its credit market regulations tying with Hong Kong, Malta, and New Zealand. Credit market regulations measures refer to the ownership of banks, the extent of government borrowing relative to private-sector borrowing, and control of interest rates.

Meanwhile, Hong Kong continues to be the freest economy in the world, a position it has occupied since 1980, and a rating it has carried since the 1950-1965 mark, according to the report. It also topped the freedom to trade internationally as well as the regulation areas of the study.

Other countries who graced the top five, in order, are New Zealand, Switzerland, the United States of America. Other notable markets such as the United Kingdom (7th), Canada (8th), Australia (9th), Japan (17th) and South Korea (33rd) also ranked into the “freest” percentile.

Amongst the index’s areas, the island state ranked second for its freedom to trade internationally; and third for both regulation and sound money, the latter referring to the study of inflation, money growth, and freedom to own foreign currency bank accounts.

Furthermore, Singapore achieved seventh place in the legal system and property rights area, and thirty-ninth for the size of government.

The study index measures the degree to which the policies and institutions of countries are supportive of economic freedom, according to the Frasers Institute. Its cornerstones are personal choice, voluntary exchange, freedom to enter markets and compete, and security of the person and privately owned property.

TEDPIX moving toward 300,000 points



➔ Some 64,126 billion securities worth 215.639 trillion rials (about \$5.134 billion) were traded through 6.444 million deals at TSE during the past month, indicating 8 percent and 21 percent drop in terms of the number and value of securities, respectively, while 16 percent fall in the number of trades compared to its previous month.

Meanwhile, as announced by Fariba Akhavan, the deputy managing director of Central Securities Depository of Iran (CSDI), some 47,000 new trading codes were issued in Iran’s stock market during the fifth month.

With the new codes issued, the total number of trading codes in the country’s capital market reached 11.042 million, Akhavan said.

She also said that 92 codes have been issued for the foreign shareholders since the beginning of current Iranian

VP stresses coordination with private sector in drafting executive regulations

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN – Iranian desk First Vice-President Es’haq Jahangiri has stressed the need for consulting and coordination with the country’s private sector before making any executive bylaws or regulations, the portal of Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TC-CIMA) reported.

In response to a letter from TCCIMA head, Jahangiri noted that all government bodies are required to consult with the private sector in drafting bylaws and directives, calling it “legal duty and rational advice”.

Jahangiri’s remarks come as, in a letter to Jahangiri, Massoud Khansari has criticized the new restrictions on imports and the regulations which are contradictory to the government policies for facilitating domestic production and export.

He has also pointed to the untechnical decisions by some government bodies which have created barriers in the way of the private sector’s exports.

Khansari has mentioned the ban on imports of more than 60 commodity items by the Food and Drug Administration, the ban on imports of 680 items related to health and medical equipment, the barriers to clearance of 230,000 tons of rice in the country’s customs and the restrictions on the exports of steel sheets, rebar, pipes and profiles as examples.

Back in July, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani said that the imports of 148 new commodities were banned by the ministry to rise the



An undated photo depicting Iranian First Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri (L) and TCCIMA Head Massoud Khansari

number of such items to 1487.

According to the official, during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019) the industry ministry banned imports of some commodities into the country to support domestic production.

In June 2018, the minister ordered forbidding imports of 1,339 kinds of goods, classified in four groups, since they had similar domestic rivals.

Some banned products include home appliances, textile products, footwear and leather products, furniture, healthcare products, some machineries and etc.

According to Rahmani, implementation of the newly set ban on imports of goods which can be produced inside the country could prevent outflow of billions of dollars.

Emerging-market investors pin their hopes on strong consumers

The power of consumers is becoming the last best hope for emerging market investors as global recession risks rise. But even that’s starting to crack.

As per bloomberg.com, consumption makes up about 60% of gross domestic product across many developing economies, with Brazil and Mexico among those leaning hardest on households, data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development show.

“If the global economy really starts to slow down even further, domestic demand will be the last resort to sustain growth,” said Satoru Matsumoto, a Tokyo-based fund manager at Asset Management One Co., which oversaw about \$500 billion as of end-July. “Emerging markets with strong consumption will become more attractive as a strong consumer base would make monetary and fiscal policies more effective.”

While households are the last pillar in a flailing global economy hit by the U.S.-China trade war, consumption growth in emerging markets from Brazil to India is starting to slow down.

Matsumoto said bonds in countries such as Mexico, which has more room to lower rates and support domestic growth, are attractive as they bring in capital gains.

He is currently overweight Mexico bonds and said he might increase his debt exposure in India and Indonesia should global growth weaken even more.

■ The central bank’s efforts

Despite the central bank’s efforts to kick-start the econ-

omy by cutting interest rates to the lowest level on record, Brazil’s consumer confidence has dropped almost 10% from the start of 2019. Double-digit unemployment and a reduction in average net income mean that families’ consumption, which represents almost two-thirds of aggregated demand, rose just 1.5% annually in the second quarter. With President Jair Bolsonaro’s government focused on approving pension and tax reforms rather than providing fiscal stimulus, domestic consumption is expected to pick up only gradually in coming years.

Manufacturing-heavy China has been slowly trying to shift more of the growth burden to the consumer as part of a broader structural transformation. In the short run, that component of growth is unlikely to be a savior, especially as trade tensions with the U.S. continue to rage.

China’s retail sales have held up overall, though recently there are signs that edifice may be cracking. Sales grew 7.6% year-on-year in July, below 9.8% in June and missing the consensus forecast of 8.6%. Car purchases have been a clear area of weakness, declining in August for a 14th time in 15 months.

Price growth offers a two-sided story for China, and neither good: High-profile, runaway pork prices amid the ongoing swine fever outbreak cut against the festive spirit for upcoming holidays. On the other hand, the central bank is more concerned about what broader price disinflation says about waning domestic demand.

In India, buyers have cut back on spending in the past



year or so amid worries about job losses, a crisis in the shadow banking sector and a general economic slowdown. Growth in private consumption halved to 3.1% year-on-year in the quarter through June, with recent high-frequency data pointing to more pain.

Car sales have plunged, while demand for two-wheelers and tractors has been subdued. Consumption of everyday goods like hair oil and 5-cent cookies have also taken a knock, dragging down company earnings and overall GDP growth, which clocked 5% in the April-to-June period for its lowest in six years. Slower growth is likely to weigh on wages in a country where per-capita income is about \$2,000 a year, compared with China’s \$9,800.

SA companies are investing in the economy for the first time since 2017



For the first time since 2017, South African private companies have invested more back into the local economy.

As stated by businessinsider.com, statistics South Africa’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) results, released last week,

showed that gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) increased by 6.1% in the second quarter of 2019, following five consecutive quarters of decline.

Investment in machinery and other equipment grew by 5.8% - the largest increase, transport equipment grew by 2.1%, and residential assets with 0.9%.

Meanwhile, investment in construction works declined by 1.1%, non-residential assets by 1% and other assets by 0.6%.

Hugo Pienaar, chief economist at the Bureau for Economic Research at Stellenbosch University, believes the growth investment is predominantly due to a number of Independent Power Producer (IPP) projects which have started construction.

Former energy minister Jeff Radebe signed R56 billion worth of IPP contracts

with 27 independent renewable energy power producers in April 2018 to add electricity to the national grid.

Pienaar said because the investment growth is predominantly in machinery, he believes it reflects IPP projects who have shown signs of starting construction in the second quarter.

“It is too early to celebrate this as signs of an improving economy, particularly not after horrible business confidence numbers,” Pienaar told Business Insider South Africa.

The South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Wednesday said South African business confidence dropped to its lowest levels since 1985.

“Private companies typically do not invest if there is low business confidence. What we’ll have to see is a couple of quarters

calendar year (March 21) and the total number of foreign shareholders’ codes is 1,366 at the moment.

The first trading code was issued for a foreign shareholder in Iranian calendar year of 1373 (1994-95) to let it commence its activity in Iranian capital market.

Based on the already released reports and data, Iran’s exchange markets witnessed fruitful performances and results in the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended on March 20, 2019).

Applying new financial instruments in Iranian capital market was another achievements of the exchange markets during the past year, as TSE officially launched “futures” in mid-December 2018 for more risk management and IME launched “option” in early March 2019 in an approach to diversify financing methods for agricultural products.



“For basic goods such as meat, system formalities and clearance procedures will be carried out in less than an hour and importers can transport their goods soon after,” Mehrdad Jamal Orounqi said.

Connecting the ports which are the major cargo hubs of the country to the national railway network is another project seriously followed up by the government.

The head of Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI) has announced that 59 kilometers of railroads are planned to be built for connecting the major cargo hubs in the country to the national railway network by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2020).

Saeed Rasouli mentioned linking the cargo hubs to the railway network as one of the main priorities of RAI in the current year.

All such measures indicate the strong will for strengthening the role of ports specially during this time of sanctions.



# OPEC+ considers possibility of U.S. easing Iran sanctions

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies (known as OPEC+), in its latest committee meeting on Thursday, discussed reports that the United States might ease sanctions imposed on Iran's oil sale and what impact they might have on future of the global supplies.

After the meeting which was held in Abu Dhabi, Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said that members of the bloc had a debate about reports that U.S. President Donald Trump could ease sanctions on Iran.

The report about Trump's consideration of a new decision on Iran swiftly affected oil markets on Wednesday as prices tumbled more than two percent.

They come amid an ongoing OPEC+ agreement to cut supplies which is meant to boost global prices.

Iran, under the U.S. sanctions since November, is exempt from the cuts which amount to 800,000 barrels per day for



OPEC Secretary General Mohammed Sanusi Barkindo (L), Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman (C) and Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak (R) attend an OPEC+ meeting in the UAE capital Abu Dhabi on September 12, 2019. (AFP photo)

11 members of OPEC. Non-OPEC members have also agreed to cut supplies by more than 400,000 bpd.

Iran's oil minister says he is happy with results of a recent OPEC meeting in Vienna.

Prince Abdulaziz, who took over as Saudi Arabia's energy minister on Sunday, said the kingdom would remain committed to its promises to pump below 10 million bpd.

He hinted that deeper OPEC+ cuts could be agreed in the future policy meeting of the group in Vienna in December.

Last year, the U.S. brought back sanctions on Iran after withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal which was struck in 2015.

They demanded Iran's oil buyers to cut oil imports from the Persian Gulf nation to "zero" by November 4 or face sanctions.

However, Washington granted a six-month waiver to India and seven other countries to buy oil from Iran. The waivers expired in May.

## Iran seeking gas exports to Europe through Turkey: NIGC head

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Head of National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) said Iran is seriously following up on exporting gas to Europe through Turkey, ILNA reported.

According to Hassan Montazer Torbati, Iran has all the necessary infrastructure for realizing this goal in case the political barriers are resolved and the European side is ready to cooperate.

"Negotiations have been held with European companies but we haven't reached concrete results yet. Most of the private sector in Europe wants Iranian gas, and if that happens, it will be via Turkey," he said.

The official noted that Greece would be the first destination for Iranian gas if the project goes operational.

"We have held talks with several Turkish companies for transiting our gas thought the country to Europe and for the time being Greece is more serious than other destinations,"

Torbati added.

Considering recent increases in Iran's natural gas production, the country has been reconsidering its plans for expanding destination markets for gas and oil products and exports to Europe once again has come under the spotlight.

Last month, NIGC Dispatching Director Mehdi Jamshidi Dana, said the country's daily gas production has reached 810 million cubic meters (mcm).

In 2017, NIGC's Managing Director at the time, Hamidreza Araqi, said Iran is in talks with European countries to export gas to Europe.

The official noted that sending Iranian gas to Europe is possible both through pipeline and in the form of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

"Various European companies expressed willingness in this regard but reaching a final deal generally takes near five years," he said.



## Project for indigenizing oil industry equipment progresses over 50%

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — A project for indigenizing 10 major oil industry equipment items has witnessed over 50 percent progress, IRIB reported on Wednesday, quoting an official with National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC).

"Implementation of this project would enable NIOC to supply over 95 percent of the materials for manufacturing wellhead equipment as well as down-hole tools from domestic producers," NIOC Director for support, construction and goods supply, Ramin Qalambor Dezfouli said.

Following the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions and the problems caused by high volatility and rising exchange rates in the country's currency market, Iran's oil ministry was faced with some problems regarding



the supply of necessary equipment in the oil industry, so it applied new strategies to focus more on domestic production.

According to Dezfouli, NIOC and its affiliated companies, like National Iranian Drilling

Company (NIDC), have signed several deals with domestic manufacturers to produce the oil industry's necessary equipment inside the country.

As reported, of the total 88 contracts for indigenizing necessary oil industry equipment, 33 contracts which were signed for manufacturing 10 major equipment have witnessed more than 50 percent progress, and another 50 contracts have also had over 49 percent of physical progress on average.

The mentioned contracts have been signed with capable domestic companies for manufacturing all kinds of oil industry equipment, including down hole tools and equipment, pumps, types of drill bits, all kinds of control and safety valves, and accessory equipment, as well as various pipe types, explosion-proof

electro motors, turbines, compressors, alloy steels, drilling measuring tools, and etc.

In late August, IRNA reported that NIOC plans to award the production of 300 new equipment items to domestic producers by the end of the current calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020).

Earlier that month, NIDC's managing director announced that the company was collaborating with 230 local manufacturers, especially in Khuzestan Province, to indigenize drilling equipment.

"NIDC's Technology and Engineering Department has indigenized 2,000 pieces of drilling equipment since 1997, most of which are being used in offshore and onshore rigs," Abdollah Mousavi was quoted as saying by the Oil Ministry news portal.

## Oil slips on global demand fears despite U.S.-China trade talk hopes

Oil futures fell on Friday as concerns about global growth and slowing demand lingered despite hints of progress on U.S.-China trade talks, setting up prices for weekly losses after days of swinging back and forth.

According to Reuters.com, Brent crude LCOc1 was down 23 cents, or 0.4%, at \$60.15 a barrel by 0648 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) CLc1 was off by 15 cents, or 0.3%, at \$54.94.

Brent has traded in a range of nearly \$5 this week and is heading for its first weekly loss in five. U.S. crude has traded similarly and is heading for its first loss in three weeks.

Gloom over the economic impact of the trade dispute between Washington and Beijing has left investors shrugging off a strong commitment from Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) producers to trim output.

"Again it is a battle between the forces of OPEC and those of slowing global growth and thus demand," said Greg McKenna,

strategist at McKenna Macro.

The weak confidence in the markets was reflected by economists in a Reuters poll who predicted the U.S.-China trade spat will worsen or at best stay the same over the coming year.

Nearly 80% of more than 60 economists said U.S.-China trade relations would either worsen or stay the same by the end of next year. The median probability of a U.S. recession in the next two years held at a high of 45%, and the chance of one in the next 12 months held at 30%.

Still, President Donald Trump said on Thursday he would not rule out an interim deal with China on trade, though he prefers a comprehensive agreement. Asian stocks advanced on Friday on the signs of progress in U.S.-China trade talks, while aggressive stimulus from the European Central Bank also helped counter worries about a global economic slowdown.

In oil markets, however, concern over whether Trump can

achieve progress on the trade dispute has overshadowed OPEC's Thursday agreement to trim output by asking members Iraq and Nigeria to bring their production back in line with targets.

OPEC is striving to prevent a glut amid soaring U.S. production and a slowing global economy.

"With OPEC's production curbs and ongoing constraints on sanctioned countries, we see the market tightening in Q4 2019. This should help stabilize prices," ANZ Research said in a note.

Those trade tensions are hitting the shipping sector as the flow of goods and commodities slows, the International Energy Agency said on Thursday.

## Are oil and gas stocks on the cusp of breakout?

By Tsvetana Paraskova

The biggest underperformer in the S&P 500 sectors so far this year — has started to show some signs that oil and gas stocks may be close to breaking out of the downward trend.

The selloff in energy stocks and energy-tracking funds may have been overdone, says Jonas Elmerraji, senior market analyst at Baltimore-based Agora Financial and a contributor to TheStreet.

The SPDR S&P Oil & Gas Exploration & Production (XOP) exchange-traded fund broke out this week of a downward trend that had seen the ETF lose 30 percent between April and the end of August.

The relative strength index (RSI) — the momentum indicator — of the past 14 days broke out of its own downward bear range at the beginning of September, signaling that XOP could be at the beginning of an upward trend, Elmerraji argues.

However, XOP — which closed at \$23.74 on September 11 — could return on the downward path if it breaks below the previous low of \$21, Elmerraji says. The



XOP exchange-traded fund is just one of many funds tracking energy stocks — it includes oil and gas exploration and production stocks.

In the first week of September, several other energy ETFs gained momentum on the back of rising oil prices last week, according to Zacks Investment Research.

Those are VanEck Vectors Oil Services ETF, SPDR S&P Oil & Gas Equipment & Services ETF, iShares U.S. Oil Equipment & Services ETF, Invesco Dynamic Oil & Gas Services ETF, and Invesco Dynamic Energy Exploration & Production ETF.

### Recent geopolitical developments

However, the rise in oil prices could be short-lived, according to Zacks. Recent geopolitical developments also point to potentially lower prices, especially with the rumored softer U.S. stance on Iran after the ousting of war hawk John Bolton as National Security Advisor earlier this week. Global oil demand growth is also weakening, which led to OPEC and EIA downgrading their respective demand outlooks for this year.

Oil stocks have underperformed range-bound oil prices this year, yet some analysts believe that the oversold energy sector could start to recover, even if the prices of oil and gas don't move up too much.

The oil price slump in the fourth quarter of 2018 and the investors' now finite patience with shale producers not turning in cash flows have combined to punish the stocks of many big and small U.S. oil drillers in recent months. ➔13

### First Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

### NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 40-32-90207-20-001

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
14	U P C P/F "SULZER" GAS TURBINE . TYPE S 7	29

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their " Intention to participate" letter via Fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir , not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 2,868 EURO or 366, 165,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab

ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P: NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHA JARI, IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D. SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC' S MATERIAL APPROVAL NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

**FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT**  
Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex  
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran  
Tel. No.: **061 341 23455** Fax No.: **061 3445 7437**

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1398.3634



## Washington has no right to define HK's high degree of autonomy

**GLOBALTIMES** — With US Senate and House leaders from both parties pledging to advance the so-called Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, some radical activists demonstrated again on Sunday, calling on US Congress to pass the bill as soon as possible. A small number of Hong Kong's most extreme demonstrators have gone into a fit of hysteria, announcing that should their demands not be met, they would rather destroy everything.

The main tenets of the bill include sanctions against officials who undermine Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and a request for an annual justification for the special treatment afforded by Washington to Hong Kong.

The aim is to place pressure on Beijing and the HKSAR government. It is believed the city will face uncertainty once the law is passed, weakening conditions that support its status as an international financial center.

If the US passes the bill to interfere in Hong Kong's internal affairs, it would not be for the sake of the city, but rather to turn the financial hub into a card Washington can use to increase pressure on Beijing. The US will only decide its policy toward Hong Kong based on American interests.

Who cares more about Hong Kong's long-term stability and prosperity, Beijing or Washington? It is a no-brainer. While Beijing is responsible for the well-being of Hong Kong society and Washington is an onlooker. The ongoing chaos does not affect US government but is a good opportunity for the US lawmakers to put on a show. Given a choice between a good Hong Kong and using its turmoil to make trouble for Beijing, why don't they choose the latter?

The passage of the bill would constitute as a deep intervention in Hong Kong affairs, but it won't become a leverage to influence Beijing's decisions on the city's affairs. Beijing will firmly uphold the Basic Law and respect Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy. Hong Kong is experiencing serious turmoil. Beijing supports the joint efforts of the HKSAR government and the city's mainstream society to stop the violence, curb chaos, and restore order.

This attitude was clear from the start and had nothing to do with whether the US passing the bill. On the other hand, if the situation in Hong Kong gets out of control, leading to subversive disorder and humanitarian disaster among society, Beijing will definitely take action in accordance with the Basic Law. Washington's attitude will not influence any decisions made by the Chinese central government. The great uncertainty for quite some time is whether the cohesion of Chinese society can be consolidated in the long run. The performance of the US and the West around Hong Kong has offered Chinese society a solid lesson.

China has the ability to move forward getting rid of US interference. Hong Kong's special custom status is not a boon the US gives the city. It is mutually beneficial in nature. The city's future will depend on how strong China is, and not on US attitude toward Hong Kong. "One country, two systems" must be practiced jointly by the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong. It won't be defined by the US.

## China shows goodwill via tariff exemptions

**GLOBALTIMES** — China removed on Wednesday 16 categories of items from the list of US products that had faced extra tariffs, including shrimp and pawn seedlings, lubricating base oil and medical linear accelerators. The measure will benefit some companies from China and the US. In accordance with its existing system, the US has successively removed eight batches of Chinese products from its tariff list. For China, granting tariff exemptions on US goods is an innovation of the tariff system. This is the first time China has provided tariff exemptions since May. Subsequent lists will be declared in due time.

The exemption of some US products from the tariff list would effectively mitigate the impact of the US-launched trade war against China on involved Chinese companies. It is also a positive sign to Chinese people's livelihood. The China-US trade war has fully escalated with its impact clearly being felt by the two countries and the world. Beijing and Washington agreed to hold the 13th round of trade consultations in early October, saying they will keep working-level communication and work hard for making substantial progress in this round of talks. The two countries are at a crossroads either to make breakthroughs or to escalate the tensions until the situation spirals out of control.

China's attitude toward the trade war is consistent. "We don't want this fight, but we are not afraid of it and we will fight if necessary." More importantly, Chinese society is taking the trade war calmly. As pressure on China increases, Chinese people are more united, giving more trust in their government. We believe the US has understood China more than ever in the past one and a half years. The US side should have abandoned the illusion of crushing China with maximum pressure. To achieve a soft landing in the trade war, the US side is facing a dilemma of balancing their pursuit for trade interests and the complicated political game within the US.

A prolonged trade war will only end up hurting both countries' interests. It is a rational move for the two countries to stop the losses in a fair way.

This is also the real wish of their peoples. The US side has been advocating how the trade war has been benefiting the US, which is electoral politics.

There are signs of a recession in the US economy. Flaunting that the current economy is "the greatest economy in the history of America" won't help Washington gain an advantage in the consultations. China has always been active in the trade talks. We know the trade war has consumed too much and is meaningless to continue. China is willing to work with the US to reach a final deal that both countries accept.

But China will never give up the right to say "but." If Washington tries once more to open the way for a deal unilaterally favorable to the US through a maximum pressure campaign, Beijing will take it easy and take on the US to the end. Some people would link the timing of China exempting some US products from the tariff list to the coming trade talks. That is the way China handles issues.

Consultations must be based on goodwill to achieve deals. In Eastern philosophy, goodwill means strength and confidence rather than weakness or compliance. Only two-way goodwill can help the two countries make achievements that benefit their peoples and the world.

# Iran's 3rd nuclear step to force EU to stop foot-dragging: Finnish analyst



**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — A Finnish political economist and author hailed Iran's third step in reducing its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and said it would force the European Union to stop its foot-dragging on the deal's implementation.

"Iran's third nuclear step would force the EU leaders to stop dragging their feet on this (the implementation of the JCPOA) and finally decide on which side they want to stand," Jon Hellevig said in an interview with Tasnim.

Jon Krister Hellevig is a Finnish lawyer and businessman who has worked in Russia since the early 1990s. Hellevig was a candidate in the European parliament election in 2014.

He is the managing partner of the Moscow-based law company Hellevig, Klein & Usov.

Hellevig has written several books, including Avenir Guide to Russian Taxes (2002, 2003, 2006 English and Russian editions); Avenir Guide to Labor Laws (2002, 2003, 2006 English and Russian editions). Expressions and Interpretations, a book on the philosophy of law and the development of Russian legal practices; Hellevig takes actively part in public discussion of current affairs and social structure contributing with articles and commentary in the media.

He regularly lectures at international seminars on various topics.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ A year after the US withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal and the European Union's continued failure to ensure Iran's economic rights under the deal, Tehran stopped honoring certain commitments in accordance with the text of the international accord. On Friday, the Islamic Republic took "the third step" in reducing its obligations under the JCPOA.

It seems that these steps have had some good results as the European side is endeavoring to save the deal. What is your assessment of the outcomes of Iran's nuclear steps and especially the third step?

A: As a lawyer familiar with international law, I would start with giving some legal background to this question, which the parties have not wanted to voice.

The thing is that the JCPOA was a

multilateral agreement, where all the signatories were bound to it as enforced by the UN Security Council.

Now, as the United States has unilaterally withdrawn from it, the agreement is technically not binding for any of the parties any longer, including not for Iran. Therefore, Iran has the right to act as it pleases not bound by any contractual obligations to anybody.

In essence, what is now happening is that Iran, out of goodwill, is trying to renegotiate the agreement with the signatories of the original JCPOA minus the US.

This being the case, Iran has every right to announce to the European Union that its patience of adhering to the spirit of JCPOA is waning. Iran's third nuclear step would force the EU leaders to stop dragging their feet on this and finally decide on which side they want to stand.

■ As you know, Iran's policy of "active resistance" against US bullying and unilateralism has borne good results. In the latest instance, Iran's super-tanker Adrian Darya, formerly known as Grace-1, was recently released by the government of Gibraltar despite a US request to continue its detention.

In another development, the US recently announced plans to create a

new security initiative in the Persian Gulf by forming a coalition against what it calls an Iranian threat.

The US has asked its allies, including Germany, Japan, France, to join the coalition but the call has not been warmly welcomed by them.

What do you think about Iran's policy and the concept of resistance?

A: I have publicly stated already a year ago that the ultimate risk that the Iranian resistance poses to America is a military conflict in the Hormuz Strait, which could escalate to a full blockage of all oil transport through this waterway.

This, in turn, would shoot the oil price through the roof and as a consequence cause the mother of all financial crashes on Wall Street.

The American economy has already been deemed by all smart and independent experts to be approaching a recession and possibly a severe depression, therefore the risk is bigger than ever.

That would kill Trump's reelection hopes for sure.

Therefore, the Trump administration really is forced to walk a tightrope between playing tough and not letting the situation explode.

Iran has been right to show that it

is prepared to use force in reply, and indeed doing so.

The Trump regime acts like a school-yard bully and the only language they will understand is might.

■ Despite Washington's policy of "maximum pressure" and its most severe sanctions against Tehran, the Islamic Republic has been able to control prices and inflation in the country through adopting certain financial strategies which are in line with the policy of "resistance economy".

What is your take on that? Do you think that the resistance will work in the future?

A: Trump loves to brag about how he has destroyed the economy of this and that country, not only Iran but China, too, and others. But it is all empty talk catering to his core constituencies.

Iran has mounted an extraordinary resistance and will not fail.

Iran has so much going for it, a self-sufficient agriculture, medical and pharmaceutical industry and technology sectors backed up by the by far strongest scientific base in the region.

In addition to that China and Russia are standing by Iran and not only maintaining but improving economic ties and increasing investments.

For example, following (Iranian) Foreign Minister Zarif's visit to China in August, the countries updated the mega deal concerning \$400 billion of Chinese investments to the Iranian economy over the next 25 years.

China also continues to buy Iranian oil and hereby ignoring US threats.

Concerning Russia, Iran signed the temporary agreement of a free trade zone by the Russian sponsored Eurasian Economic Union.

That opened up a huge market for Iran, and vice versa.

Russia recently offered an alternative route for Iran to transport its oil to the Mediterranean Sea countries. There is increasing technological and other cooperation with Russia.

After the Iranian economy has fully adjusted to the initial shocks caused by the US withdrawal, everything should normalize and the economy start growing again.

Iran will survive without the EU getting its act together, but it could be a huge blow for the hapless EU. Let's hope they will come to their senses.

## Stephen Lendman: U.S. unable to force Iran into subordination

**TEHRAN (FNA)**- US columnist Stephen Lendman says even if US talks with Iran take place, nothing positive will be accomplished.

"Neither Iran nor any other nations should subordinate their sovereign rights to US interests," Lendman told FNA in an exclusive interview.

Stephen Lendman was born in 1934 in Boston, MA. In 1956, he received a BA from Harvard University. Two years of US Army service followed, then an MBA from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in 1960. After working seven years as a marketing research analyst, he joined the Lendman Group family business in 1967.

He remained there until retiring at year end 1999. Writing on major world and national issues began in summer 2005. In early 2007, radio hosting followed. Lendman now hosts the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network three times weekly.

Lendman is a 2008 Project Censored winner and 2011 Mexican Journalists Club international journalism award recipient.

Lendman lives in Chicago. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

What follows is FNA's interview with author and writer Stephen Lendman.

■ French President Emmanuel Macron has recently started mediation efforts between the United States and Iran. Prior to that, efforts to mediate between Iran and the United States had failed. How fruitful do you expect his efforts prove to be?

A: France's Macron and other NATO member leaders are US imperial allies, partnering with its wars of aggression and other hostile tactics against nonbelligerent states threatening no one.

There's nothing high-minded about Macron's approach to Iran.

France, Britain, Germany and the EU breached their JCPOA nuclear deal obligations by failing to observe them since Trump unlawfully withdrew from agreement in May 2018.

Affirmed unanimously by Security Council members, it's binding international law.

The US and Europe breached it by noncompliance.

I believe France, Germany, and at least most other European countries want war with Iran avoided, Britain a possible exception under hardline Tory rule, what would devastate the Middle East more than already if occurs.

That's what Macron's proposal is all about, clearly shown by inviting Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif to the G7 meeting in France.

At the same time, nothing was accomplished because of US toughness toward Iran.

The Trump regime's hardline agenda toward the country speaks for itself. Iranian President Rouhani and Zarif are right.

If Trump wants talks with Tehran, he must prove it by returning to the JCPOA and dropping unlawful sanctions — what clearly won't happen. White House policies toward the Islamic Republic exceed the harshness of their predecessors. Regime change has been US policy since Iran's 1979 revolution.

Even if US talks with Iran take place, nothing positive will be accomplished. Two North Korea/US summits achieved nothing.

Unacceptable demands were made. Hollow US promises showed its ruling authorities can never be trusted.

Behind the scenes, Pompeo and Bolton sabotaged any possible positive results.

They'll do the same thing with Iran if talks are held. The notion of the US turning a new leaf for good relations with adversaries never turns out this way.

How the US operated earlier is the best predictor of what it'll do ahead — and there's nothing good about it.

■ The US has stressed that any new agreement with Iran should cover Iran's missile program, extension of the JCPOA sunset clauses and Iran's regional power.

Do you think that Iran would ever agree to sit to a negotiation covering such issues?

A: Neither Iran nor any other nations should subordinate their sovereign rights to the US interests.

The Islamic Republic's missile program is legal. It's solely for defense, the legitimate right of a nonbelligerent nation that never attacked another preemptively, the region's leading peace and stability proponent.

The notion of an Iranian nuclear threat is debunked by reality.

The Islamic Republic's nuclear program has no military component, never had one, abhors these weapons and wants them eliminated everywhere.

The threat posed by nuclear armed and dangerous Israel goes unmentioned — a nonexistent Iranian one invented by the US and its allies to further their imperial agenda.

Talks between the Trump regime and Iran are highly unlikely.

The White House won't return to the JCPOA or lift unlawfully imposed sanctions. John Bolton earlier said the JCPOA's existence and IAEA affirmation of Tehran's compliance with its principles makes it harder for Iranophobes to sell the notion of an Iranian threat.

Bolton called the JCPOA "a threat to US national security interests." It's polar opposite, of course.



It's a threat to Washington's regime change aim.

The US hasn't had an enemy since WW II ended so they're invented — all sovereign independent states it doesn't control included, Iran a key target because of its vast hydrocarbon reserves. It's also Israel's main regional rival, the Jewish state pushing the US to transform Iran back to vassal state status.

Talks by Iran with the US and/or other countries should only happen if both sides show good faith — what clearly is out of the question with Trump regime hardliners involved.

■ Why did Trump wants talks with Iran after running his so-called maximum pressure campaign?

A: Trump is a figurehead, a geopolitical know-nothing, Pompeo and Bolton running the regime's geopolitical agenda. Nothing DJT says is credible, often saying one thing and doing another.

White House "maximum pressure" on Iran is war by other means, tactics entirely illegal, largely unchallenged by the world community through inaction to contest them.

■ Trump withdrew the US from the JCPOA. Then how could one even think of a guaranteed agreement with him or the United States?

A: Agreements with the US are never guaranteed. Time and again, its ruling authorities breach treaties and other international agreements.



# Bolton's political death at the White House

By Saeed Sobhani

**TEHRAN** — Trump's controversial national security adviser John Bolton has been fired from the White House. This undoubtedly means the end of Bolton's political life. A symbol of war in the United States. A review of the latest news and analysis on Bolton's dismissal is as follows:

Trump claims Bolton was 'holding me back!'

Politico reported that Donald Trump on Thursday again claimed former national security adviser John Bolton, well-known for his hawkish impulses and inclination toward military intervention, was "holding me back" on certain matters of foreign policy. "In fact, my views on Venezuela, and especially Cuba, were far stronger than those of John Bolton," Trump tweeted. "He was holding me back!"

The president's post was in response to a message from Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), who wrote online Thursday morning that he had spoken with Trump regarding Venezuela.

"It's true he disagreed with some of the views of previous advisor," Rubio, a fierce critic of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, had reported of his conversation with Trump. "But as he reminded me it's actually the DIRECT OPPOSITE of what many claim or assume," Rubio continued. "If in fact the direction of policy changes it won't be to make it weaker."

Among his other international priorities atop the National Security Council, Bolton had championed Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaidó's attempted overthrow of Maduro — a regime change that remains unfulfilled eight months after the administration formally recognized Guaidó as the South American nation's legitimate "interim president."

Trump, who announced Bolton's resignation on Tuesday, asserted to reporters in the Oval Office on Wednesday that he regularly backed a more hard-line brand of foreign policy than his ex-aid.

"Frankly, he wanted to do things not necessarily tougher than me," Trump said, later adding that Bolton "wasn't in line with what we were doing, and actually, in some cases, he thought it was too tough what we were doing."

But Trump also denounced Bolton's advocacy for the 2003 invasion of Iraq from within President George W. Bush's administration, mocking him as "Mr. Tough Guy" and remarking: "He's so tough, he got us into Iraq."

The president's statements this week are at odds with his previous assessments of Bolton's counsel. At a news conference in May, Trump shrugged off reports that he was losing confidence in his national security adviser and said he also receives input from "other people that are a little more dovish" than Bolton. "He has strong views on things, but that's OK," Trump said. "I actually temper John, which is pretty amazing."

Why John Bolton had to leave and what to expect next

CNN reported that John Bolton had to go -- because he wanted to cancel President Donald Trump's worldwide reality show.

For a time the now ex-national security adviser, who first caught Trump's eye with his tough talk on Fox News, was useful to the President -- sharing his desire to shake up the globe. But like everyone else in Trump's dysfunctional foreign policy team, Bolton wore out his welcome, standing in the way of his boss' impetuous instincts and seeking a share of the spotlight. Only in the bizarre Trump orbit could the exit of a national security adviser seen as an ideologue and aggressive hawk also be perceived in some ways as the removal of a stabilizing force. But he did have a view of American interests and the use of US power that while hardline was predictable and logical and positioned within the historic boundaries of US diplomacy.

With him gone, Trump may have more leeway to indulge his more dovish instincts, which rarely match big talk with action. And US diplomacy is likely to reflect its principal author even more closely. It will be more impulsive, less strategic and more geared to creating iconic moments, like the President's stroll into North Korea with Kim Jong Un. Democratic Rep. John Garamendi welcomed Bolton's departure given his "radical" instincts but warned of instability to come.

"This President has a mind of his own, often we wonder what is exactly in that mind ... chaos rules the day," Garamendi, a member of the House Armed Services Committee told CNN's Brooke Baldwin.

Like everything in Trump's foreign policy, there is a political explanation for



the latest storm that rocked the White House.

Trump's first term, while succeeding in traumatizing US allies and causing global disruption, is largely bereft of the big wins the great dealmaker promised back in 2016.

North Korea, despite Trump's embrace, is not denuclearizing. Iran is moving closer to building a nuclear bomb after Trump pulled out of an international nuclear deal. China is rising fast and Russia is resurgent after interfering in US elections.

That's a problem as Trump contemplates a lackluster record and goes in search of iconic achievements -- and longed for baubles, such as a Nobel Peace Prize -- ahead of the 2020 election. The President is in perilous political territory -- dipping to 39% approval in a new CNN/SSRS poll. Only 36% of those asked said he deserved reelection. So victories, preferably bringing favorable media coverage are imperative -- and soon.

Trump's team, given a lack of leverage or expertise, may struggle to manufacture big foreign policy breakthroughs. But eye catching summits will do just as well for a White House that cuts even Trump's routine meetings with foreign leaders into campaign highlight reels designed to frame him as a statesman.

"This likely signals that Trump is desperate to run a string of deals, however cosmetic, prior to the 2020 election on Afghanistan, Iran, and North Korea and sees Bolton as a roadblock," said Colin Kahl, a former Obama administration aide affiliated with the Foreign Policy for America advocacy group.

While Bolton, who even his many enemies will admit is a man of principle and a master of the Washington game, knows how to blow things up -- such as the Iran nuclear deal -- he was increasingly in the way of the President's photo-op diplomacy. Most recently, Bolton objected to Trump's idea to bring Taliban terrorists to Camp David close to the anniversary of 9/11 in search of a deal to bring troops home.

And, according to CNN sources, he told Trump so to his face, contradicting a gut call by a President who demands obedience in a way that was always likely to cut his tenure short.

Bolton's skepticism of Trump's infatuation with North Korea's Kim was also no secret. When Trump pulled off his scheme to visit his pen pal on the DMZ in June, Bolton took himself off to Mongolia. He contradicted the President by saying that the North's short-range missile tests contravened UN resolutions. Pyongyang responded by calling him a "human defect."

And Trump's adoption of his hard-line position on denuclearization seems to have been at least partly behind the collapse of the Hanoi summit earlier in the year.

In fact, Bolton's departure represents a victory for North Korea, which had been trying for months through its official media to drive a wedge between him and Trump. Now, coincidentally, the rogue nation says it's ready to talk again to the US.

Bolton was also a bump on a log for Trump when it came to Russia. While the President spent the recent G7 summit making Russian President Vladimir Putin's case for getting back in the club, Bolton never let go of his smoldering Cold War suspicions.

Trump also appears to blame Bolton, an unreconstructed hawk, for bringing him to the brink of war with Iran after the shooting down of a US drone over the Gulf of Oman. With him gone, Trump will have greater leeway to pursue his reported hopes of organizing what would be a stunning meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at the United Nations General Assembly later this month.

Bolton is unlikely to go quietly given his flair for public relations and long list

of media contacts. He seems unlikely to emulate the dutiful but pregnant silence on Trump by former Defense Secretary James Mattis as he promotes his book.

As Bolton looks back on his 19 months in the White House, he can claim several victories for his hardline school of foreign policy. The Trump administration banned an International Criminal Court prosecutor from visiting the US. The United States also withdrew from the UN Human Rights Council. And under his watch the US pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal. And the ex-national security adviser might have succeeded in one of his final acts of killing of a deal with the Taliban that critics see as a fig leaf to cover a US surrender. But Bolton's strong backing for what looked a lot like a coup attempt in Venezuela by opposition leader Juan Guaidó did not work and made the Trump administration look foolish.

Ultimately, Bolton's departure is revealing for all the insights it offers into life inside Trump's White House.

Its timing on the eve of 9/11 anniversary commemorations was also appropriate. Bolton was just about the last remnant of the neoconservative foreign policy establishment that grabbed power after the world's worst terror attack.

Much of Trump's antipathy to foreign entanglements -- like the Iraq invasion and America's longest war that he is trying to end -- springs from policies put in place by Bolton and his cohorts. The current President seems to have no organized doctrine -- other than his "America First" mantra that is mostly an offshoot of his campaign trail rhetoric rooted in a belief that the rest of the world is perpetually ripping America off.

Bolton's personality clash with Trump also offers a glimpse into how this administration works.

He became the latest key foreign policy official to cross an invisible red line for Trump -- seeming to have an agenda and power base that is distinct from the President's own. White House sources told CNN on Tuesday they believed that Bolton was leaking to the press about Trump's now canceled plans to host the Taliban at Camp David. Shortly after Trump fired Bolton -- by tweet -- two of his former antagonists, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, could barely hide their smiles. The two men also showed they had learned the lessons of how to work for Trump that Bolton apparently never absorbed -- namely appeasing his wildest instincts and showing no disloyalty. "We work very closely with the President of the United States," said Pompeo, who is not that ideologically different than Bolton but is poles apart on handling Trump. "I don't think any leader around the world should make any assumption that because some one of us departs, that President Trump's foreign policy will change in a material way," he said.

Pompeo's comment reflected reality, that the rest of the world -- US allies and Trump subordinates, especially -- have learned over two-and-a-half tumultuous years. America's foreign policy does not follow precedent, doctrine or any predictable course. It's what Trump says it is at any given moment. And people who work for him can either live with that or get out.

Trump says Bolton a 'disaster' on North Korea, 'out of line' on Venezuela

As Reuters reported, U.S. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that John Bolton, dismissed a day earlier as national security adviser, had been a "disaster" on North Korea policy, "out of line" on Venezuela,

and did not get along with important administration officials.

Trump said Bolton had made mistakes, including offending North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un by demanding that he follow a "Libyan model" and hand over all his nuclear weapons. "We were set back very badly when John Bolton talked about the Libyan model ... what a disaster," Trump told reporters at the White House.

"He's using that to make a deal with North Korea? And I don't blame Kim Jong Un for what he said after that, and he wanted nothing to do with John Bolton. And that's not a question of being tough. That's a question of being not smart to say something like that."

Trump also said he disagreed with Bolton on Venezuela but offered no specifics. "I thought he was way out of line and I think I've proven to be right," the president said. Trump said Bolton, with his abrasive, hardline approach, "wasn't getting along with people in the administration that I consider very important."

"John wasn't in line with what we were doing," he added.

Trump said he got along with Bolton and hoped they parted on good terms, but added: "Maybe we have and maybe we haven't. I have to run the country the way we're running the country."

Trump had been growing more impatient with the failure to oust socialist Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro through a U.S.-led campaign of sanctions and diplomacy in which Bolton was a driving force. Bolton was also a chief architect of the Trump administration's hardline policy on Iran. Asked whether he would consider easing sanctions on Iran to secure a meeting with its leader President Hassan Rouhani at this month's U.N. General Assembly, Trump replied: "We'll see what happens." Bolton had opposed such a step. North Korea has denounced Bolton as a "war maniac" and "human scum." Last year, it threatened to call off a first summit between Kim and Trump after Bolton suggested the Libya model of unilateral disarmament. In the past Bolton had proposed using military force to overthrow the country's ruling dynasty.

Trump's efforts to engage with North Korea nearly fell apart altogether in February after he followed Bolton's advice at a second summit in Hanoi and handed Kim a piece of paper that called for the transfer of Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and bomb fuel to the United States.

Trump announced he had fired Bolton a day after North Korea signaled a new willingness to resume stalled denuclearization talks, but it then proceeded with the latest in a spate of missile test launches. Analysts say Bolton's removal could help U.S. efforts to revive the talks but will not make it easier for Washington to persuade Pyongyang to give up nuclear weapons. Washington has given no indication so far that it will soften its demand for North Korea's ultimate denuclearization, even though with Bolton gone, the risky all-or-nothing gambit is unlikely to be repeated so bluntly. "This change in personnel could carve out some space for new approaches or thinking about what defines success and how to achieve it," said Jenny Town at 38 North, a Washington-based North Korea project. "Whether it actually does or whether Bolton's view was more deeply entrenched in U.S. thinking on this matter is yet to be seen."

## Brazil gaining from China's revenge embargoes

**ASIATIMES** — New president has been wooed by Beijing while deals in pork and soybeans have soared amid trade war and swine fever woes

Rightwing populist Jair Bolsonaro became President of Brazil on January 1 brimming with disdain and angst over Chinese business and investment in his country.

During the election campaign last year he lashed out at the People's Republic of China (PRC) for "not buying from Brazil as much as buying Brazil itself." And Bolsonaro even lobbied the ultimate insult at Beijing by visiting Taiwan during the campaign. At one point Bolsonaro even mused out loud about cancelling the scheduled November summit in Brasilia of the BRICS emerging economies -- Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa -- largely to rebuff Beijing.

But if a week is a lifetime in politics, nine months are an eternity. Since taking the presidency Bolsonaro has reversed course entirely and now seems set on making Brazil a breadbasket for the PRC and its 1.4 billion people. While Bolsonaro's increasingly intense economic relationship with the PRC may well benefit Brazilian workers and fill Chinese stomachs, it may not be good news for the Amazon rainforest and, ultimately, the 20% of the world's oxygen supply generated by its trees. The trade in meat and grains with China will undoubtedly stimulate the already rampant campaign of deforestation to create agricultural land.

A vessel arrives at the port of Ningbo-Zhoushan in east China's Zhejiang province carrying iron ore from Brazil in this file pic from 2018. Trade in pork and soybeans between the two countries has also soared. Photo: AFP

Bolsonaro's change of heart towards the PRC undoubtedly came soon after he took office and digested the reality that China is Brazil's largest trade partner, with \$US100 billion in bilateral commerce, and takes a quarter of Brazil's exports. Most of those are low value-added commodities like soybeans, meat and iron ore.

Beijing has been aware for years of the importance of Brazil, not only as a source of commodities, but as a gateway into Latin America. So a charm offensive was deployed, and in June there was a strong indication that it had paid off.

In a recent essay the Washington-based Jamestown Foundation points to Brazil's support in June for the Chinese candidate, Qu Dongyu, to head the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization as the turning point. The foundation says Brazil's move was telling because Qu's competition was French, and Brazil along with other South American countries are finalizing free-trade talks with the European Union.

Bolsonaro's skepticism about PRC business and investment appear to have disappeared completely, along with his doubts about hosting the BRICS summit. Not only is that firmly on for November, but China's President Xi Jinping is scheduled to attend, and Bolsonaro may visit Beijing between now and then. As a taste of things to come, Beijing's agriculture ministry announced this week that it has authorized a further 25 Brazilian meatpacking plants to export to China, in addition to the 53 already approved.

Beijing has some important political objectives at home in making this opening. The PRC is set to have a shortfall of 10 million tonnes of domestically produced pork this year because of an outbreak of African swine fever. This has hit every province since last year and required the culling of the national pig herd by one third.

But Chinese people have become accustomed to eating pork as a staple of a rich diet unimagined by their parents and grandparents. Chinese people ate about half the world's production of pork in 2018, but over 95% of that was produced in China before the swine fever hit.

To a significant degree the availability of affordable pork has become a symbol of the political legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). And thus there could not be a worse time politically for a pork shortage and dramatic increases in price of what is available than the run-up to next month's 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC.

The CCP has tied its own hands and limited some other sources of replacement pork. Beijing has imposed a 72% tariff on pork imports from the United States. This embargo is a skirmish in the trade war with Washington and is purposefully targeted at farmers in regions that voted for Donald Trump in 2016.

Another revenge embargo is against Canada, for whom China is the largest export market for pork by volume, though not value. That goes to Japan, which buys the expensive cuts. Beijing's ban on pork imports from Canada is an attempt to apply pressure over the detention of Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Huawei Technologies, under an extradition request issued by the US Department of Justice. ➔13

### First Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

## NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9450234

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following goods

Items	Material Description	Quantity
03	PARTS FOR "G.E.C." GAS TURBINE TYPE EASI COMPRESSOR SET. CONTRACT NO. JCF3111. REF.10 EASI COMP 28GEC. POWER TURBINE S N GT457 THRU GT462&GT483 THRU GT486. GAS GEN: ROLLS ROYCE TYPE 1534 MESC 206015 . GAS COMP: ELLIOTT TYPES 25MBH &25MBHH MESC RANGE 24 24 41 000. REF . GEC GAS TURBINE LTD . STATION LAYOUT ASSEMBLY NO 3956P826 701	15

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention to participate" letter via Fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 2, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 1,398 EURO or 176, 937,078 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab

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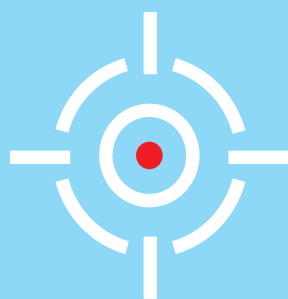
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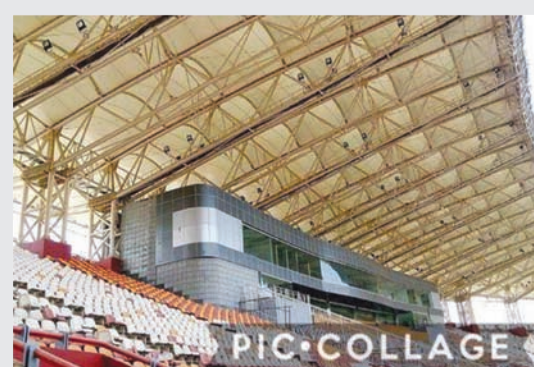
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# India moon mission: Vikram lunar lander found on surface

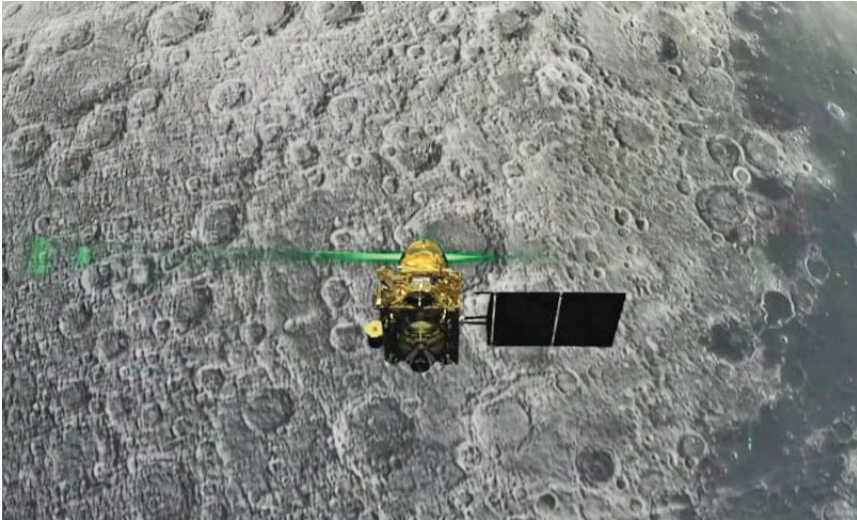
The lander module from India's moon mission has been located on the lunar surface, the day after it lost contact with the space station, and efforts are underway to try to establish contact with it, the head of the nation's space agency said.

The cameras from the moon mission's orbiter had located the lander, said K. Sivan, the chairman of the Indian Space and Research Organization (ISRO) according to the Press Trust of India news agency. He added: "It must have been a hard landing."

ISRO officials could not be reached for comment.

The space agency said it lost touch with the Vikram lunar lander on Saturday as it made its final approach to the moon's South Pole to deploy a rover to search for signs of water.

A successful landing would have made India just the fourth country to land a vessel on the lunar surface, and only the



third to operate a robotic rover there. The space agency said on Saturday

the lander's descent was normal until 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from the lunar

surface.

The roughly \$140m mission, known as Chandrayaan-2, was intended to study permanently shadowed moon craters that are thought to contain water deposits that were confirmed by the Chandrayaan-1 mission in 2008.

The latest mission lifted off on 22 July from the Satish Dhawan space center in Sriharikota, an island off the coast of the southern state of Andhra Pradesh.

After its launch, Chandrayaan-2 spent several weeks making its way toward the moon, ultimately entering lunar orbit on 20 August.

The Vikram lander separated from the mission's orbiter on Sept. 2 and began a series of braking maneuvers to lower its orbit and ready itself for landing.

Only three nations — the United States, the former Soviet Union and China — have landed a spacecraft on the moon.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Study shows how animals influence oxygen levels on Earth

New research suggests animals had a significant influence on the planet's shifting oxygen levels.

Scientists have long studied the relationship between oxygen levels and the evolution of life on Earth, but whether animals directly influenced oxygen levels or simply reacted to changes in environmental patterns has remained unclear.

"For the first time, we have succeeded in measuring 'Earth's heartbeat' -- understood as the dynamics between the oxygen level and the productivity on Earth," Tais Wittchen Dahl, an associate professor at the University of Copenhagen's GLOBE Institute in Denmark, said in a news release. "We have found that it is not just the environment and the oxygen level that affect the animals, but that, most likely, the animals affect the oxygen level."

To better understand prehistoric changes in oxygen levels on Earth, scientists analyzed ancient limestone layers dated to the Cambrian explosion, which occurred between 540 million and 520 million years ago. By measuring the ratio of uranium-238 to uranium-235 in the limestone, scientists estimated the shifting levels of oxygen in the planet's oceans during the Cambrian period.

The latest findings suggest that during the Cambrian period, the planet's oceans experienced dramatic fluctuations between two extreme conditions, an excess and a dearth of oxygen.

During the Cambrian explosion, marine animals evolved. New species began to move across the ocean floor, form shells and eat one another. The development caused phosphate in the water to become trapped in the ocean's muddy floor. Phosphate fuels algae growth, and algae performs photosynthesis, producing oxygen.

Less phosphate produced fewer algae, which over geological time led to less oxygen on Earth, and due to the



oxygen-poor conditions, the larger animals moved away," Tais Wittchen Dahl said. "Once the animals were gone, the oxygen level could go up again and create favorable living conditions, and then the process repeated itself."

In effect, the explosion of animals scurrying across and burying themselves in the mud helped curtail the increase in oxygen levels that helped spur the Cambrian explosion. In other words, the rapid evolution of animals during the Cambrian period triggered biochemical changes that eventually slowed the Cambrian explosion.

"It is entirely new that we can render it probable that such dynamics exist between the animals and the environment," Tais Wittchen Dahl said. "And it is a very important discovery in order to understand the mechanisms that control the oxygen level on Earth."

Researchers suggest their findings -- published this week in the journal PNAS -- could help scientists search for the effects of animal life on the oxygen levels of distant planets.

"Oxygen is a biomarker -- some of what you look for when you look for life elsewhere in the universe. And if life in itself helps control the oxygen level, it is much more likely that there will also be life in places where oxygen is present," said Tais Wittchen Dahl.

(Source: UPI)

## T. rex had a giant air conditioner in its noggin

To keep cool, Tyrannosaurus rex, one of the largest carnivores to ever roam the planet, deployed an air-conditioning-like system of blood vessels inside its head.

Paleontologists knew there was something unique about the top of T. rex's head. The top of the dinosaur's skull hosts a pair of large holes, the dorsotemporal fenestra.

Prior to the latest study, scientists assumed muscles filled the cavities. When earlier researchers reconstructed the anatomy of T. rex's head, they looped the temporal muscles up to the top of the skull.

Something about those early reconstructions didn't sit right with Casey Holliday, a professor of anatomy at the University of Missouri. Holliday and his research partners took a closer look.

"After careful study we found that jaw muscles couldn't really work right if they attached in this particular spot, and instead blood vessels probably excavated the space," he told UPI in an email.

To better understand what purpose a knot of blood vessels at the top of the dinosaur's head might serve, the team of researchers, which included scientists from Ohio University and the University of Florida, turned their attention to alligators, which also boast a pair of holes in the top of their skull.

"Alligators are close relatives of dinosaurs like birds and the T. rex, and share many of the same anatomical features," Holliday said.

Scientists trained thermal imaging cameras on alligators as they went about their day, tracking the movement of heat in and out of their bodies. During the coolest parts of the day, the images showed the top of the alligators head, near the dorsotemporal fenestra, turned red, indicating an influx of heat. During the hottest parts of the day, midday, the holes appeared dark blue, indicating a cooling function.

Researchers concluded that T. rex, like alligators, deployed a cross-current



circulatory system in the top of its head to help warm up and cool down. Holliday and his colleagues shared their conclusions in the journal The Anatomical Record.

According to the study's authors, T. rex and alligators aren't alone in their deployment of unique temperature-regulating vascular systems.

"Even though T. rex is getting all the focus, we found that most dinosaurs, crocodilians, birds and other fossil archosaurs have similar vascular structures, all of which probably affect the physiology of the animals," Holliday said. "These same blood vessels supply the frills of Ceratopsian dinosaurs, crests of pterosaurs, and skull roofs of weird crocodiles like Aegisuchus, and fleshy display structures of birds like turkeys and vultures. The feature is quite ubiquitous among archosaurs."

Earlier this week, scientists reported the discovery of an unusual maze of blood vessels in the heads of blue-banded sea snakes. The structure helps the marine snake absorb oxygen from the water while diving.

"I think we're just beginning to appreciate all the complicated physiological structures reptiles employ to control body temperature, besides just hanging out in the sun or shade," Holliday said.

(Source: UPI)

## Water found on most habitable known world beyond solar system

A faraway planet in the constellation of Leo has been named the most habitable known world beyond the solar system after astronomers detected water vapor in its atmosphere.

It is the first time a planet in its star's "Goldilocks zone" -- where the temperature is neither too hot nor too cold for liquid water to exist -- has been found to bear the life-sustaining substance in the blanket of gases that surround it.

The discovery has raised hopes that the planet, and similar worlds spotted in recent years, not only have conditions that can be suited to life, but in some cases may host living organisms.

"This is the first potentially habitable planet where the temperature is right and where we now know there is water," said Angelos Tsias, an astronomer at University College London. "It's the best candidate for habitability right now."

The planet, named K2-18b, was first spotted in 2015 by NASA's Kepler space telescope. Roughly twice as big as Earth and eight times as massive, it orbits a cool red dwarf less than half the size of the sun, 110 light years away.

Red dwarfs produce far less heat than the sun, but K2-18b is warmed to about 10C (50F) by circling close to its star. From a mere 14m miles out, a sixth of the distance from the Earth to the sun, the planet completes an orbit every 33 days, making a year there pass as swiftly as a month on Earth.

Today's technology is too feeble to take photos of the surfaces of such distant worlds, and they are too far away to send probes to. But space-based telescopes can glean some information about the atmospheres on alien planets.

The UCL team turned to NASA's veteran Hubble space telescope, which observed K2-18b in the two years after its discovery. In particular, they analyzed measurements of starlight from the red dwarf as the planet wandered



across its face on eight separate occasions.

The data revealed that as K2-18b crossed in front of its star, wavelengths of light that are absorbed by water suddenly dropped off, and then rose again as the planet moved on. The effect is seen as a smoking gun for water vapor in the planet's atmosphere.

"To our great surprise we saw a pretty strong signature of water vapor," said Giovanna Tinetti, a member of the UCL team. "It means first of all that there's an atmosphere, and second that it contains a significant amount of water."

Nothing has driven the search for life elsewhere more than the presence of water. On Earth, there is no life without the substance, and the same is expected on other planets, at least for life as we know it.

The discovery of water vapor on K2-18b does not prove there is water on the surface. But it ticks one more box in the hunt for worlds where the conditions are ripe for life. "We don't know any other planet with the right temperature that has water in its atmosphere," Tsias told the Guardian.

According to the report in Nature Astronomy, K2-18b has between 0.01% and 50% water in its atmosphere.

In astronomy jargon, K2-18b is a super-Earth, putting its size between Earth's and Neptune's. But rather than Earth's twin, K2-18b is more like our home planet's cousin. It is two-thirds the density of Earth and though it may have a rocky surface, it could equally be a water world.

Humans would not fare well on the planet. If it has a hard surface, it would be hard to stand with gravity so much stronger than on Earth. Added to that are intense UV rays that would drive cancer-causing mutations. But get around these and the view, at least, might be pleasing to the eye: wispy clouds, a giant red sun, and an inner planet that rises like Venus. As Ingo Waldmann, a researcher on the team, said: "It's maybe not quite your vacation destination just yet."

Ryan Cloutier at the Harvard and Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics said an independent analysis, or fresh observations, would be valuable to confirm the detection of water vapor. But he added that the apparent presence of water was promising for K2-18b's habitability.

"It's a good sign," he said. "Overall, the presence of water in its atmosphere certainly improves the prospect of K2-18b being a potentially habitable planet, but further observations will be required to say for sure."

Astronomers now hope to study more super-Earths for signs of water in their atmospheres. That work is due to be transformed in coming years with the launch of NASA's James Webb space telescope in 2021 and the European Space Agency's Ariel mission in 2028. Observations from these telescopes should reveal more about the makeup of atmospheres on distant worlds, including the presence of methane and other gases that could be direct signs of life.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Japan resupply mission to space station delayed by launch pad fire

Japan said it halted a resupply mission to the International Space Station (ISS) on Wednesday because of a launch pad fire that grounded the rocket.

A fire at the base of the launch pad Japan's Tanegashima island broke out near a vent designed to carry engine exhaust away from the heavy-lift H2B rocket, according to a press release from Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI), which is conducting the mission on behalf of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA).

"We don't yet have a new date for a launch, but it won't be over the next couple of days," an MHI spokesman said. "There shouldn't be an impact on the ISS for now," he added.

The unmanned Mitsubishi Heavy rocket had been loaded with 5.4 tons of supplies and equipment for the international station, including batteries and food for the six crew members, according to JAXA.

In a statement on its website the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) said it had informed the ISS crew and said they were "safe aboard the station and well supplied".

Once emptied the supply pod is designed to be filled with rubbish and detached from the space station to burn up on re-entry into the atmosphere.

(Source: Reuters)

## Huge 'structures' found at the center of our Milky Way galaxy, scientists say

Huge "balloon-like structures" have been spotted in the middle of our Milky Way galaxy, scientists say.

The pair of vast bubbles -- which stretch for hundreds of light years -- are throwing out radio signals and are some of the biggest features ever found at the center of our galaxy.

They are so huge that they dwarf all the other radio structures around the middle of our galactic neighborhood.

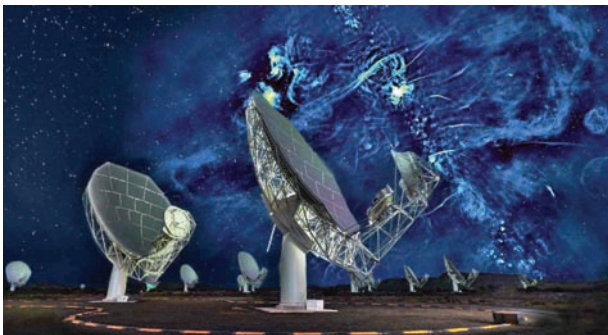
They were probably born after a huge energetic burst that exploded near the supermassive black hole that floats at the center of the Milky Way, researchers said.

"The center of our galaxy is relatively calm when compared to other galaxies with very active central black holes," said Ian Heywood of the University of Oxford, who is the lead author of an article in the journal Nature describing the discovery.

"Even so, the Milky Way's central black hole can -- from time to time -- become uncharacteristically active, flaring up as it periodically devours massive clumps of dust and gas. It's possible that one such feeding frenzy triggered powerful outbursts that inflated this previously unseen feature."

The vast structure was spotted by the South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAO) MeerKAT telescope, which Professor Heywood and his team used to map the regions found in the middle of our galaxy. They did so by looking for radio emissions at a very specific wavelength -- they can be used to find particularly energetic regions in space, looking through the dense clouds that block us from being able to see the middle of the galaxy by looking for light.

Using those techniques to look at the huge bubbles -- examining their size and shape, and finding that they appear to be almost identical -- the researchers were able to find evidence that they suggest shows they were formed in an intense eruption. That seems to have happened over a short period of time, but was so extreme that it punched through the matter of space.



"The shape and symmetry of what we have observed strongly suggests that a staggeringly powerful event happened a few million years ago very near our galaxy's central black hole," said William Cotton, an astronomer with the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Charlottesville, Virginia, and co-author on the paper. "This eruption was possibly triggered by vast amounts of interstellar gas falling in on the black hole, or a massive burst of star formation which sent shockwaves careening through the galactic center. In effect, this inflated bubbles in the hot, ionized gas near the galactic center, energizing it and generating radio waves that we could eventually detect here on Earth."

The space around our galaxy's black hole is very different to that everywhere else in the Milky Way, far more turbulent and active than any other part of the galaxy. It is also largely mysterious, since it can be so hard to see -- there are huge, long and narrow filaments that have not been spotted elsewhere, and which researchers still do not understand.

The new structures could help illuminate those filaments. Both might have been formed by the same mysterious energetic event.

"The radio bubbles discovered by MeerKAT now shed light on the origin of the filaments," said Farhad Yusef-Zadeh at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and a co-author on the paper. "Almost all of the more than one hundred filaments are confined by the radio bubbles."

Until now, it was not possible to see the structures because they were behind the glare of bright signals coming from the middle of the galaxy. Scientists were able to use new techniques to look through those dazzling emissions and see the new, towering formations.

"These enormous bubbles have until now been hidden by the glare of extremely bright radio emission from the center of the galaxy," said Fernando Camilo of SARAO in Cape Town and co-author on the paper.

"Teasing out the bubbles from the background noise was a technical tour de force, only made possible by MeerKAT's unique characteristics and ideal location. With this unexpected discovery we're witnessing in the Milky Way a novel manifestation of galaxy-scale outflows of matter and energy, ultimately governed by the central black hole."

The new research is published today in Nature, and is written by authors from 15 different institutions. It is the first paper to detail research from the MeerKAT's full array since it was launched last year.

(Source: The Independent)



## Hajj return flights conclude

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – Hajj return flights from Saudi Arabia to Iran came to an end on Monday, when the last flight returning Iranian hajj pilgrims from Medina landed at Imam Khomeini International Airport.

All Iranian Hajj pilgrims have come back home by the return flights from Saudi Arabia to Iran, said the managing director of Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC), Mehr reported.

The last flight returning Iranian hajj pilgrims from Medina, operated by Iran's flag carrier Iran Air, landed at Imam Khomeini International Airport at 1:31 a.m. local time, on Monday, concluding this year's hajj flights, Ali Rostami told IKAC News.



Since July 8, a total of 23,000 hajj pilgrims have been transported from Salam terminal at Tehran's Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC) for Medina and Jeddah over the course of 30 days.

Since the beginning of the Hajj flight season (August 17), about 22,810 Hajj pilgrims and 712,432 kg of cargo have been transported from Medina for Salam terminal at (IKAC) via 95 flights.

Imam Khomeini Intl. Airport's newly-inaugurated Salam Terminal hosted hajj pilgrim flights in Tehran.

Salam Terminal was officially inaugurated in June in the presence of President Hassan Rouhani. The new terminal, with a capacity of transporting five million passengers per year, has increased KIA's capacity by 80%.

Performing hajj is compulsory on every Muslim at least once in their life. It is one of the largest annual gathering of human beings on earth, with approximately three million people gathering each year for three to five days between the 8th and 12th of Dhul-Hijjah, the last month of the lunar calendar.

## Shrinking Yamanashi village converts 150-year-old home into hotel in hope of reversing decline

A new hotel in a traditional wooden house has been opened in a small village in Yamanashi Prefecture in the hope of revitalizing an area that it is grappling with a declining population.

The village of Kosuge, where the population has fallen by 40 percent to around 700 over the past three decades, is aiming to transform itself by further remodeling vacant dwellings to provide accommodation for tourists.

The new hotel, Nipponia Kosuge Genryu no Mura (Kosuge: Village of the Headstream), which opened in August, has four rooms that are decked out with Nordic furniture and lighting while maintaining the warmth of the wooden structure, constructed out of zelkova and pine trees.

In the 788-square-meter residence dating back 150 years, originally the home of a wealthy family engaged in silk farming, a longhouse with a gate has been renovated into a restaurant offering a seasonal menu that uses local ingredients and is changed about every two weeks.

"It's the first time we've stayed in a hotel that used to be a traditional Japanese house," said Izumi Kidooshi, 57, who came from Tokyo with her husband. "It was clean and comfortable, which I had been worried about." Another guest, Kayoko Nakanishi, 52, who stayed with her family, said, "It isn't a famous tourist spot, but we were able to enjoy the area's atmosphere."

The village, located by the headwaters of the Tama River, which flows into Tokyo, has seen local lodging businesses close and an increasing number of vacant houses as its population declines.

(Source: The Japan Times)

## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Shirakami-Sanchi

A UNESCO World Heritage, Shirakami-Sanchi is situated in the mountains of northern Honshu, Japan. This trackless site includes the last virgin remains of the cool-temperate forest of Siebold's beech trees that once covered the hills and mountain slopes of northern Japan. The black bear, the serow and 87 species of birds can be found in this forest.



The property is located along the Sea of Japan in northern Honshu at an altitude ranging from 100 to 1,243 m above sea level. It is the remnant of the cool-temperate beech forests that have covered the hills and mountain slopes of northern Japan since eight to twelve thousand years ago.

Beech (Fagus) forests are distributed across North America, Europe, and East Asia. Thought to have originated from circumpolar vegetation prior to the Last Glacial Stage, beech forests shifted their distribution from the circumpolar region to the south in the Last Glacial Stage, but in many places mountainous areas stretching east to west blocked the shifts and the vegetation became simplified. Reflecting the distinct heavy-snow environment of the inland areas along the Sea of Japan, a rare climatic condition in the world, Shirakami-Sanchi has forests of monodominant Fagus crenata, a species endemic to Japan.

A unique plant community with diverse flora, including undergrowth dominated by evergreen Sasa kurlensis, it is also a habitat for rare bird species such as the black woodpecker, and large mammals such as the Japanese serow and Japanese black bear, which requires a diverse forest environment including old-growth forest.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Muharram rituals capture attention of foreigners

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** – Iran turns to a major tourism hub during the mourning month of Muharram. Every year thousands of foreigners flock to the country to see with their naked eyes and record with cameras the Iranian fervor during Muharram that reaches its climax on its 10th day, also known as Ashura.

This all paves the way for a new sort of tourism opportunities in Iran, called Muharram tourism.

Yazd is among Iranian provinces that always attract the special attention of foreigners due to its unique Muharram rituals where hundreds of men, all clad in black, congregate in Hosayniyas (places used for religious mourning ceremonies) to beat on their chests according to the rhythm of a sung eulogy, IRNA reported.

Some 1,500 foreigners visited the central Iranian province only this Muharram, according to local officials.

Yazd, the cradle of Zoroastrianism, is now one of the unavoidable points of Islamic Iran. Home to thousands of small and big mosques and Hosayniyas, Yazd has earned the title "Iran's and world's Hosayniya", the report said.

A Hosayniya is a congregation hall for holding Shiite Muslim commemoration ceremonies, especially those associated with the mourning month of Muharram,



the month in which Imam Hussein (AS) was martyred by the then ruler Yazid.

"The Iranians' love and enthusiasm for Imam Hussein is so much that you can't record it with any device. You need to feel and experience it yourself on the

ground to get a good sense of it," said an Italian tourist who visited the Ashura ceremonies in the city of Abarkuh, Yazd province.

The Italian tourist, who spoke to IRNA, stressed that he had visited Iran during

## Azna snow tunnel added to national heritage list

**HERITAGE** **TEHRAN** – Iran has added Azna snow tunnel, which is one of the most spectacular landscapes in western Lorestan province, to its national heritage list, ILNA reported on Thursday.

The Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism announced the inscription on Thursday in a letter to governor general of the province, the report added.

Situated near the city of Azna on the slopes of Oshtorankuh, locally known as the Iranian Alps, the landscape is visited annually by hundreds of tourists, climbers and nature lovers.

Azna snow tunnel is created by the accumulation of thousands of tons of snow over many years. The length of the tunnel is over 800 meters and its height from the floor of the tunnel to the ceiling varies between 2.5 and 3 meters. This snow tunnel can be visited only in spring

and summer.

To go to the snow tunnel, you have to go to Oshtorankuh, a mountain range with 13 peaks located five kilometers south of Azna. From this mountain range, there is a way to the flourishing village of Kamandan.

According to triptoir.com, to reach this tunnel, it is necessary to go to the village of Kamandan by car, and hiking from there for about two hours. When you arrive to the tunnel, the sound of the melting water of the snow caress the ear, the flowing water, which created a tunnel of 10 meters wide and three meters high below the glaciers; a tunnel extending up the slope of the valley. Although there is a chance of snow tunnel collapse, most tourists take the risk and visit inside of the tunnel.

Suitable time to visit this beautiful place is during spring, summer and early autumn.



## Why flying out of hot, high airports is tough

By Mike Arnot

Have you felt like it took your airplane an especially long time to lift off of the ground? That might seem normal for an A380 or a Boeing 747, both very heavy aircraft, but the phenomenon is noticeable even in smaller aircraft such as the Boeing 737, especially at airports like Denver, Phoenix or Mexico City.

What makes these airports unique?

Each of these fields are high-altitude and hot temperature airports (or in the case of Phoenix, just hot). This affects the amount of pavement needed for the plane to lift off. Or more precisely, it affects the air rushing around the wings to generate sufficient lift and into the engine to provide sufficient thrust.

I connected with Kaitlin Doherty, United Airlines' Station Operations Control Manager in Denver, to understand why flying out of high and hot airports can be tough. Indeed, in 2017, American Airlines had to cancel some 50 flights from Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, whose regional jets had a maximum temperature rating of 118 degrees. On a 120 degree day, those planes won't go.

"Aircraft performance is affected by a combination of weight, outside air temperature, altitude and speed," Doherty explained.

■ **The Denver takeoff roll**

Planes fly through a fluid: air. And the density of that fluid affects the performance of an aircraft. The hotter the temperature, the less dense the air. And the same goes for higher altitude.

"Similar to how people have a harder time breathing at higher altitude, our aircraft must fly faster or carry less weight to get the lift they need to take off. The combination of hot and high makes Denver and other high-altitude stations uniquely challenged when it comes to weight restrictions," Doherty said.

Denver provides an instructive example; it has several 12,000-foot runways and a very, very long 16,000-foot runway.

The takeoff roll is 55 seconds, and the aircraft leaves the ground at taxiway M4, which means it rolled approximately



8,730 feet before taking off. (For perspective, LGA's runways are 7,000 feet long.) That still leaves some 4,000 feet of runway for our Boeing 787, plenty of safety margin.

When it's very, very hot, an aircraft operating out of LGA, which is close to sea level, might perform as if it were already flying 1,800 feet above sea level. The air-density change is that dramatic.

■ **How airlines like united deal**

Several airports qualify for high and hot operations during many months of the year. Other than Denver, Phoenix and Mexico City, these airports include Las Vegas, Reno and Albuquerque in the US; Calgary, Canada; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and La Paz, Bolivia.

Dealing with weight and balance coupled with high, hot airport is a challenge for the airlines. Ethiopian Airlines, for example, which flies out of Addis Ababa, often schedules departures later in the evening when temperatures are cooler and the air more dense.

"Sometimes we have to restrict the number of passengers, cargo or fuel to reduce the weight of the aircraft thereby improving the aircraft performance to remain within limits," United's Doherty explained.

"Typically at the warmest time of day — early to mid-after-

noon — is where we often see the restrictions start popping up," she said.

"We do prioritize the payload when we get into a restricted state," she said. "We have a weight and balance team in our Network Operations Center that are reviewing the temperatures and fuel load for each flight, among other things. And our dispatch team is monitoring the passenger, bag and cargo counts associated with each trip. This team will advise the station if there are any restrictions in place ahead of time when possible," she said.

"Our flight crew also reviews the weight and balance once in the flight deck to ensure no changes have taken place... temperature increase after planning timeframe occurred, change in cargo weight, bag or passenger count. If a flight is affected by the hot temps and or altitude, our teams coordinate to see if there is any way to find a solution to accommodate as many passengers, bags and cargo as possible while remaining safe and within compliance," she explained.

There are other factors that also must be considered for every flight, and each additional factor can compound another: shorter runways, obstacles or construction equipment near runways.

"In Denver, despite having long runways, most often it is the climb performance of the aircraft once it is airborne that has the most effect at limiting our takeoff weight."

■ **And it's getting hotter, too**

Are we going to see more weight-restricted days in the future? It appears so. One research paper has studied weight-restricted days at Phoenix, Denver, LaGuardia and Washington DCA, the latter two being affected by their relatively short runways. Not surprisingly, weight-restricted days have increased over time as temperatures have risen. That could cause increased delays in the future.

But, know that there's a team of professionals behind the scenes like United's Doherty, who handle high and hot operations as a matter of course.

Mike Arnot is the founder of Boarding Pass NYC, a New York-based travel brand, and a marketing consultant to airlines, none of which appear in this story.

(Source: MSN)

## Cathay Pacific to cut capacity as demand for Hong Kong travel falls

**HONG KONG (Reuters)** - Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd (0293.HK) said on Wednesday it would cut capacity for the upcoming winter season after reporting an 11.3% fall in passenger numbers for August as anti-government protests in Hong Kong hit demand.

The airline said inbound traffic to Hong Kong in August had fallen by 38% and outbound traffic by 12% compared with the previous year, and it did not anticipate September would be any less difficult.

Hong Kong's finance secretary reported earlier that visitor arrivals plunged nearly 40% in August, deepening from July's 5% fall, as sometimes violent anti-government protests took a rising toll on the city's tourism, retail and hotel businesses.

The weak demand and cuts to capacity will place more pressure on Cathay at a time when it is grappling with management upheaval and is trying to complete a three-year financial turnaround plan driven by boosting revenue and slashing costs.

"Given the current significant decline in forward bookings for the remainder of the year, we will make some short-term tactical measures such as capacity realignments," Cathay Chief Customer and Commercial Officer Ronald Lam said in a statement.

"Specifically, we are reducing our capacity growth such that it will be slightly down year-on-year for the 2019 winter season (from end October 2019 to end March 2020) versus our original growth plan of more than 6% for the period."

Cathay has become the biggest corporate casualty of anti-government protests after China demanded it suspend staff involved in, or who support, demonstrations that have plunged the former British colony into a political crisis.

Chairman John Slosar announced plans last week to step down in November, less than three weeks after CEO Rupert Hogg left amid mounting regulatory scrutiny.

Cathay said on Wednesday demand for premium class travel had fallen more significantly than for leisure travel, with demand from mainland China and Northeast Asia severely

hit, although Australia and New Zealand were more positive.

The carrier said lower travel demand, an increased mix of transit passengers and the negative impact of a strengthening U.S. dollar had placed passenger yields, a measure of the average fare paid per kilometer per passenger, under further pressure.

"We expect airfares to continue to fall in coming months as Cathay struggles to maintain load factors within reasonable bounds," BOCOM International analyst Luya You said, in reference to a measure of the percentage of seats filled. "In terms of earnings, the second half may be notably dismal considering plummeting yields across all classes."

Transit passengers are typically less lucrative for airlines because they face competition from more rival carriers than for non-stop flights, which places pressure on pricing.

The load factor fell by 7.2 percentage points to 79.9% in August, Cathay said. The amount of cargo carried fell by 14% amid a weak global market for air freight and the effects of tropical storms and disruptions at Hong Kong airport.



# MSM cheerleading Hong Kong demonstrations while downplaying protests in France, elsewhere

By Alireza Hashemi

**TEHRAN** — The western mainstream media is seemingly failing to report popular protests around the globe objectively.

One just has to look at how differently protests in Hong Kong and France are covered to realize this fact.

The MSM outlets dedicate extensive coverage to the anti-government protests in Hong Kong, while under-reporting incidents of police violence in other places.

This behavior has led to speculations that for the Western establishment media, not all protests are equal. In fact, the MSM's reaction to protests around the globe depends on what their governments' priorities are at any given time.

## Hong Kong Dominating MSM

In Hong Kong, large-scale demonstrations erupted late March over a proposed bill that would have allowed for suspects to be handed over to the mainland.

The demonstrations have gained momentum recently, spiraling into heavy clashes with Chinese police, despite the fact the law has since been suspended.

In line with the governmental line, the western news is dominated by Hong Kong.

Interestingly, the western outlet provide hours of coverage to demonstrations in Hong Kong, but won't mention that the organizers are in contact with US State Department officials.

This is while Hong Kong is part of China and it is up to the Chinese government to make decisions about its future.

It seems the world hegemon feels it is in decline, so it has picked a foolish fight with China which has no apparent chance of winning.

## Noticeable Pattern

The Melbourne-based journalist Caitlin Johnstone has noticed a great example of the biased western coverage of the Hong Kong protests, an ABC article titled "Australian expat living in Hong Kong throws off business suit to join protest movement".

In an article published by The Big Smoke, Johnstone brings into question the story of an anonymous Australian guy who has joined



the protests in Hong Kong.

"That's it. That's the whole entire bombshell newsworthy news story. 'In Australia, we have proper democracy but in Hong Kong, democracy is being slowly eroded away and I'll try to do whatever I can to try and help the cause,' the anonymous guy told ABC," Johnstone writes.

Comparing the coverage of the protests in Hong Kong with the protests in France brings forward a noticeable pattern.

The sort of enthusiastic non-story cheerleading is typical for MSM coverage of the Hong Kong protests so far, while the same outlets consistently downplay protests against governments allied to the US.

The entire western political/media class finds uprisings endlessly fascinating when they are in opposition to government's independent to the US, like China.

Other protests that challenge the empire

are ignored, or even demonized.

## What About France?

We see no MSM publishing similar reports on protests in France.

The yellow vest protests continue inside France after over one year with no sign of letting up, but the media coverage dedicated to the demonstrations has diminished.

Let's consider the facts: Yellow vest protesters have been shot in the eyes by police bullets and hundreds have been damaged. The protests have put in jeopardy President Emanuel Macron's chances of re-election and are of far more significance.

But there is no indication that the Hong Kong protests have moved beyond a core group of anti-China opponents or that they represent the will of the nation at large.

It seems the media pays close attention to stories that are believed to be serving western interests.

**The sort of enthusiastic non-story cheerleading is typical for MSM coverage of the Hong Kong protests so far, while the same outlets consistently downplay protests against governments allied to the US.**

## How the media denies Palestinians their humanity

By Gregory Shupak

During the Great Return March demonstrations, Israel has so far killed hundreds of Palestinians in Gaza and injured thousands more while shooting at unarmed protesters.

Israel has used bullets that leave "unusually severe wounds to the lower extremities... [and] an extreme level of destruction to bones and soft tissue", according to Doctors Without Borders. Israel's most egregious attacks on unarmed protesters came on 14 May, 2018, when its forces killed 62 Palestinians.

In coverage of the 14 May massacre and of the marches more generally, however, the media have thoroughly dehumanised Palestinians and rendered their rights invisible.

## Declining to criticise Israel

If columnists saw Palestinians as human, they would unambiguously condemn the recent mass murder. Instead, Shmuel Rosner in the New York Times outright endorsed the slaughter, writing: "It is customary to adopt an apologetic tone when scores of people have been killed, as they were this week in Gaza. But I will avoid this sanctimonious instinct and declare coldly: Israel had a clear objective when it was shooting, sometimes to kill... That objective was achieved."

In the same paper, Thomas Friedman declined to criticise Israel, blaming Hamas for supposedly "facilitat[ing] the tragic and wasted deaths of roughly 60 Gazans by encouraging their march".

We can conclude that this type of support for Israel's death squads extends even to their killing of children and disabled people, given that the aforementioned authors say nothing to the contrary.

The harshest criticism of Israel from the Times's David Brooks came when he said that he "doesn't absolve the Palestinians from responsibility for their choices" but also "doesn't let the Israelis off the hook for their failure to properly confront extremism". With a stroke of his magic pen, the killing of dozens of unarmed demonstrators is transformed into a "failure to properly confront extremism".

What has happened during the Great Return March, he claims, is that Palestinians have sought "to create a martyrdom performance that will show the world how oppressed [Palestinians] are". Similarly, Max Boot of the Washington Post describes Israel's massacre as a "possible tactical misjudgment"



that "in no way obviate[s] Hamas's ultimate responsibility for this horror".

## A 'grotesque spectacle'

Meanwhile, Bret Stephens of the Times complains: "The world now demands that Jerusalem account for every bullet fired at the demonstrators, without offering a single practical alternative for dealing with the crisis." He suggests that Palestinians place an undue burden on Israel by getting shot by live Israeli ammunition roughly 3,500 times. The idea that Palestinians are fully human so confounds Stephens that he misses the absurdly obvious: The alternative to shooting unarmed Palestinian demonstrators is not shooting them.

For these authors, Palestinians are not humans, but rather demonic spirits in a death cult capable of possessing Israelis and making them shoot Palestinians. Humans have rights, but to these writers, Palestinians are not human - so their rights are transformed into threats to Israel.

Rosner declares that "guarding the border was more important than avoiding killing, and guarding the border is what Israel did successfully". Boot dehumanises Palestinians by portraying them as menacing hordes: "Israel is caught in a no-win situation: It can't allow its border to be overrun - no state can - but if it tries to protect its territory, it runs a high risk of a human tragedy and a public-relations nightmare."

Brooks describes the Great Return March as "a massive border invasion" of Israel. Stephens writes of what he calls "the grotesque spectacle along Gaza's border over the past

several weeks, in which thousands of Palestinians have tried to breach the fence and force their way into Israel, often at the cost of their lives".

The protests, according to Stephens's racist drivel, symbolise a "culture of victimhood, violence and fatalism" from which "no decent Palestinian society can emerge".

## The right of return

What they call the "grotesque spectacle" and "overrun" of a "border" is actually Palestinians courageously drawing attention to the extraordinary wrongs done to them and attempting to exercise - perhaps only symbolically - their long-denied, legally mandated right to return to their homeland by crossing a colonial armistice line that no institution with any standing recognises as an international "border" that Israel has a right to "protect".

For the writers I've been discussing, Israelis are humans, so they have rights - but the same does not apply to Palestinians. The title of Rosner's article is "Israel Needs to Protect Its Borders. By Whatever Means Necessary". Friedman writes: "I get why Israel has no choice but to defend its border with Gaza with brute force."

Boot says of Israel's merciless siege of Gaza: "To protect itself, Israel established tight security controls around Gaza, but Hamas used tunnels to smuggle in missiles and other weapons from Egypt." Stephens argues that there is a pattern wherein Palestinians harm themselves and blame Israel, and that this alleged trend "deserves to be highlighted amid the torrent of morally blind, historically illiterate criticism to which Israelis are subjected every time they defend themselves against violent Palestinian attack".

These authors insist upon what they see as Israel exercising its rights to "security" and to "defend" itself, but since they see Palestinians as non-human, it's possible to ignore Palestinians' right to defend themselves from decades of wanton Israeli violence and to pretend that Palestinians don't have a right to liberate themselves - a right that is protected under international law and extends to armed struggle.

For the commentariat, Israel and its US patron have the right to use infinite levels of violence to maintain occupation and apartheid, but Palestinians have no rights - only an obligation to submit to their own slaughter, dispossession and oppression.

(Source: middleeasteye.net)

## Twitter is a very toxic place for politicians

By Matt Kelly

"How can you even question the Holocaust... Don't be misled by Corbyn." Home secretary Sajid Javid, 2018, via Twitter.

It wasn't the kind of tweet that makes headlines - but when our home secretary seemed to imply that the leader of the opposition was an actual Holocaust denier (an inference Javid was later forced to correct), it crystallised a question that has been occupying me for some time: is Twitter not merely a reflection of all today's political woes but actually the root cause? I realise this sounds hyperbolic, but hear me out.

In a world where action and reaction have essentially become simultaneous, are we only now reaping the consequences of the impact Twitter has had on our politicians, the way they think and the decisions they make? Media students (of which there are far too many these days) may recognise the concept of simultaneous action and reaction. It is an idea of Marshall McLuhan's, the extraordinary guru of communication and media.



In his 1964 book Understanding Media, McLuhan predicted uncannily the chaos a medium like Twitter could cause. His five-word phrase - "the message is the medium" - concisely defined how the qualities of the medium define the message; that the two are intertwined, inseparable.

By handy example, take Charlie Elphicke, MP for Dover and Deal. Despite the fact that his constituency faces becoming the world's biggest lorry park, Elphicke had time at the weekend to tweet the following: "Out of Europe we will be able to take back control of our tax system - including making Amazon collect UK VAT as they are now required to do in Australia. No wonder they want us to sign up to stop us doing that."

The fact that the two salient points in his tweet (Britain has full control of its tax system; Amazon do collect UK VAT) are demonstrably false is not the point. Nor is whether Elphicke is being dim-witted, blasé with the truth or plain devious and cynical. Even the fact that this tweet was shared and liked thousands of times by people disinclined or ill-equipped to think for themselves is not the point.

The point is this: in a world where Twitter exists, it is not thought and fact that reign, but speed and impact. Without Twitter, Charlie Elphicke's message could not even exist. To prove my point further, imagine this unlikely scenario: Charlie Elphicke is invited to write an 800-word think piece in a newspaper on taxation and Amazon. He would have to accord with the particular demands of the printed medium: thoughtfulness, sophistication of argument and reliance on facts. Like I said, it's an unlikely scenario.

Although a relatively small social network - Twitter has around 330 million active users versus Facebook's 2.2 billion - the instant gratification it provides, that addictive little dopamine hit, makes it uniquely attractive to egomaniacs who feel the world needs to hear their quick take on anything.

So consider for a moment the specific characteristics of this media, Twitter. It is of the moment, so it encourages instant reaction, rewards the fast and ignores the slow. It provides direct connection with an audience who literally decide the relative worth of each tweet, so it encourages the tweeter towards crowd-pleasing language and sentiment. And because the whole point of Twitter, unlike Facebook, is brevity, it not only discourages but makes practically impossible any complex or nuanced argument.

Twitter best rewards those who are most willing to abuse these characteristics.

If bleeding-heart liberals are more inclined to take a rounded view of life, then they lose every time on Twitter to the extremists who won't hesitate to play the game of Twitter as hard as they possibly can. And nowhere is that reality more dangerous than in the hands of the people we elect to resist the characteristics that define Twitter: thoughtlessness, knee-jerkery, crowd playing and unsophisticated argument.

Our politicians.

None of this would be much of a problem if Twitter existed in isolation and did not impact other media or indeed society itself. But impact them it does, profoundly. To take another McLuhan insight, every extension of mankind's technologies affects all other media and, as a consequence, the lives of us all. Twitter, the starting point for so many political opinions, has become a Petri dish for policy. The thoughts spawned here replicate and amplify until they infect other, older media. A government White Paper, for instance.

And even if you are that rare thing, the MP who does not tweet, you, too, are inevitably influenced by the shift in behaviour all around you.

I used to think of Twitter as something more or less on its own, a place of amusement and not to be taken at all seriously. A bit like a conversation down the pub. Harmless, if occasionally boisterous, and of no lasting consequence. But today I think more about how Twitter has fundamentally altered news values, our inclination to separate fact from fiction and provided a platform where the qualities we value most in our leaders are positively devalued.

I think about how I myself behave so differently on Twitter than in any other part of my life - more competitive, more aggressive, more cynical, more angry. When I see how those ugly characteristics seem to be getting worse and worse, how Twitter is getting more and more toxic, then I can't help feeling it is far from a place to be amused. It's a place to be feared. McLuhan, in 1964, described that era's media as having induced the "Age Of Anxiety". What would he call our era today? My bet - and since it's short it will make for a good tweet later - is that we are now living in the "Age Of Collapse".

So there you are: 1,000 words on the corrosive effect Twitter has had on our politicians and we haven't even talked about Donald Trump yet. I rest my case.

(Source: gq-magazine.co.uk)

## How YouTube became a powerful far-right propaganda organ

YouTube, long under fire for its role in disseminating far-right propaganda, was recently lauded for its decision to remove fringe conspiracy theorist Alex Jones' page from its platform. Yet a new report reveals the depths to which the Google-owned online video platform is adept at propagating far-right propaganda, running the gamut from white supremacy to racist alt-right ideologies.

A new report published on Tuesday by Data & Society Research Institute, an independent nonprofit, brings to light an entire network identified as the Alternative Influence Network (AIN), which, via the report, is defined as a network of 65 political influencers across 81 channels who profit from broadcasting their views. Many of these influencers openly support racism, misogyny, and white nationalism on the platform. Researcher Rebecca Lewis of Data & Society penned the report, which was published on Tuesday.

"The platform's motto, 'Broadcast Yourself,'

encourages individuals to build audiences and promote themselves outside of the confines of legacy media outlets," Lewis explains in the white paper. "YouTube also provides financial incentives for individuals to broadcast and build audiences."

Specifically, Lewis points to a partner program the platform has, called the Youtube Partnership Program (YPP), which is accessible to content creators who have received more than 4,000 "watch hours" in one year, and who have at least 1,000 subscribers.

"YouTube gives these content creators a small proportion of advertising revenue for the videos they post (YouTube keeps the rest)," Lewis explains. "Content creators can also relay their popularity on YouTube into monetary gains on other platforms."

As a result - and with the help of outside sources like Patreon which allows YouTubers to solicit donations - content creators can turn their YouTube channels into lucrative careers. While YouTube and YPP were not designed

explicitly to fund fringe ideologies like Alex Jones and his wannabes, they have inadvertently helped their cause. As I have previously written, YouTube's incentivized creator programs likely enable sensationalist and oft-controversial YouTube stars like Logan Paul, too.

Lewis manually collected data between January 1, 2017 and April 1, 2018, and discovered influencers via what she described as a "snowball approach."

"For each guest on an influencer's channel, I would visit their own channel (if one existed) to see who they, in turn, hosted," she explains, noting that "the boundaries of this network are loose and constantly changing."

Some notable right-wing figures that have made the rounds on the informal "Alternative Influence Network" include Richard Spencer, Milo Yiannopoulos, and Blaire White.

The report is alarming given YouTube's audience and ability to reach large swaths of the American population. According to a 2018 Pew

Research Center report, 73 percent of Americans visit YouTube; 94 percent of those Americans are 8- to 24-year-olds. As Lewis notes, while extremist alt-right content is often thought to be found in "dark corners of the internet," the fact is that much of it is happening on mainstream platforms like YouTube.

"This report has shown how these attempts at objectivity are being exploited by users who fundamentally reject objectivity as a valid stance," the report concludes. "As a result, platforms like YouTube have an imperative to govern content and behavior for explicit values, such as the rejection of content that promotes white supremacy, regardless of whether it includes slurs."

YouTube said in a statement that its users are subject to their "Community Guidelines," which they "enforce rigorously." Lewis concluded in the report it is indeed YouTube's responsibility to govern its platform. The community guidelines prohibit nudity, violent and graphic content.

(Source: salon.com)



## Philanthropists donate \$260,000 to health sector in a year

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian benefactors contributed some 11 billion rials (nearly \$260,000) towards development of the health sector last year (March 2018-March 2019), secretary of the national health charity association has announced.



The health charity association, founded in the Iranian calendar year 1386 (March 2007-2008), is a non-profit organization that provides charity-based services to the health sector such as building hospitals and supplying medical equipment and medication for the underprivileged.

“Some 60 trillion rials (nearly \$1.5 billion) have been allocated to the health sector since the association has been established,” ISNA quoted Hossein-Ali Shahriari as saying on Wednesday.

Despite economic problems, last year some 11 billion rials (around \$260,000) was allotted to help those patients who are financially struggling, he highlighted.

“Some 110,000 philanthropists are active members of the health charity association in 300 parts of the country, contributing to development of the health sector,” Esmail Ghanian, deputy director of the association told IRNA in August 2018.

## Squirrels eavesdrop birds’ conversations to find out if danger has passed

Grey squirrels eavesdrop on chattering birds to work out if danger has passed, according to a new study.

When the creatures hear birds sounding a predator call they freeze and look up or flee, researchers from Oberlin College in Ohio found. Then they stay on red alert until they hear birds tweeting casually again, indicating that the danger has passed and they can safely continue with foraging activities.

A total of 54 wild eastern grey squirrels in public parks and residential areas in the US state were examined by researchers.

They simulated potential danger by playing a recording of a red-tailed hawk — a common predator of squirrels and small birds.

This was followed by a playback of either multi-species songbird chatter or ambient sounds lacking bird calls. Every time they monitored the behaviour of squirrels for three minutes.

They found the creatures became more vigilant when they heard the hawk’s call. However, squirrels that were played bird chatter afterwards displayed fewer vigilance behaviors and returned to normal levels of watchfulness more quickly than those that did not hear bird calls after the hawk’s call.

This suggests squirrels are able to tap into the casual chatter of many bird species as an indicator of safety, according to the paper published in the Plos One journal.

“Recognition of bird chatter as a sign of safety is likely adaptive, as squirrels that can safely reduce their vigilance level in the presence of bird chatter presumably are able to increase foraging success,” researchers wrote in the paper.

When many species are vulnerable to a common predator it is advantageous for individuals to recognize information provided by other species, the authors said.

They added: “We knew that squirrels eavesdropped on the alarm calls of some bird species, but we were excited to find that they also eavesdrop on non-alarm sounds that indicate the birds feel relatively safe. Perhaps in some circumstances, cues of safety could be as important as cues of danger.”

Anthropogenic noise levels could be a problem for conservation efforts as it might cover up these calls, they said.

(Source: The Independent)

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Russian troops on high alert

(September 17, 2001)

Russian troops in the Chechen capital, Grozny, are on high alert after reports of an attack by separatist groups on the second city of Gudermes. Media reports in Russia say as many as four hundred rebels entered the city. This report by Chloe Arnold. Russian media are reporting that hundreds of separatists **descended on** Gudermes early on Monday morning. Some reports say the rebels have **taken control** of the city after attacking **military units** and police **checkpoints** in the area. The Kremlin initially denied the reports, saying an attack on Gudermes on Sunday evening was quickly **brought under control**. But a spokesman from the Kremlin’s Chechnya office told the BBC on Monday morning that the situation in Gudermes was complicated and that he was still waiting to confirm the reports. Moscow began a second war in Chechnya two years ago after a series of attacks on apartment blocks across the country which were blamed on Chechen rebels. Chechen fighters had also begun **incursions** into the **neighboring region** of Dagestan. Russian troops **recaptured** the city of Gudermes from rebels **early on** in the conflict, establishing it as a temporary regional capital. The pro-Moscow administration has since been moved back to Grozny.

■ **Words descended on:** If you descend on an area then you arrive there suddenly, often without warning  
**taken control:** if you take control of a place then you become in charge of it, you have the power to run it  
**military units:** small, specialized groups who are part of a larger armed force  
**checkpoints:** places where vehicles, or people, are forced to stop so that they can be checked or searched  
**brought under control:** in this case, brought under control means that the attack on the city was stopped by the Russian forces  
**incursions:** small military invasions, often temporary, or accidental  
**neighboring region:** a neighboring region is the part of a country which is next to another part of the same or a different country  
**recaptured:** if you recapture something, then you take it back, or capture it again  
**early on:** near the start (of the armed fighting)

(Source: BBC)

# 40 Iranian universities among THE’s World University Rankings 2020

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Times Higher Education has published its annual ranking of the world’s top universities for 2020, listing 40 Iranian universities among them.

Iran has 11 more ranked universities compared to the last year’s listing to take its representation up to 40 institutions, according to The Times Higher Education website.

Babol Noshirvani University of Technology tops the list of Iranian universities with 5,744 full-time equivalent (FTE) students, 29.6 students per staff, and 32:68 female to male ratio, making it to the 351–400 bracket.

Yasouj University fell in the 401–500 bracket, while Amirkabir University of Technology, University of Kashan, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Sharif University of Technology, and Tehran University of Medical Sciences all fell in the 501–600 bracket.

The Times Higher Education World University Rankings are the only global performance tables that judge research-intensive universities across all their core missions based on 13 care-



fully calibrated performance indicators that measure an institution’s performance across: teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook. It includes almost 1,400 universities across 92 countries, standing as the largest and most diverse university rankings ever to date.

For the fourth year in a row, the University of Oxford leads the rankings in first place, while the University of Cambridge falls to third. The California Institute of Technology rises three places to second, while Stanford, Yale, Har-

vard and Imperial College London all appear in the top ten.

Mainland China now provides both of Asia’s top two universities, with Tsinghua and Peking universities finishing at 23rd and 24th place respectively. The country’s universities have continued to expand their influence and presence on the world stage.

The U.S. is, once again, extremely well-represented among the global elite, while Canada’s top universities have risen up the table.

In Europe, Italy’s top institutions all make

headway among the elite top 200 and German representation remains strong. However, the UK faces declines.

The performance indicators are grouped into five areas: Teaching (the learning environment); Research (volume, income and reputation); Citations (research influence); International outlook (staff, students and research); and Industry Income (knowledge transfer) with the following percentages:

- Teaching (the learning environment): 30%; Reputation survey: 15%; Staff-to-student ratio: 4.5%; Doctorate-to-bachelor’s ratio: 2.25%; Doctorates-awarded-to-academic-staff ratio: 6%; Institutional income: 2.25%

- Research (volume, income and reputation): 30%; Reputation survey: 18%; Research income: 6%; Research productivity: 6%

- Citations (research influence): 30%.

- International outlook (staff, students, research): 7.5%; Proportion of international students: 2.5%; Proportion of international staff: 2.5%; International collaboration: 2.5%

- Industry income (knowledge transfer): 2.5%

## What discourages people to save lives of those in need of organ transplant?

By Faranak Bakhtiari

**TEHRAN** — While the lives of thousands of patients in Iran are currently hanging in the balance, waiting for a life-saving organ transplant, it remains a difficult task to convince the families of a brain dead patient to donate organs due to their cultural beliefs.

While last year (March 2018-March 2019), the rate of organ transplant was at its highest in the country, only 926 individuals donated their organs, while some 4,000 died of brain death which means only 25 percent of them donated their organs.

Currently some 25,000 individuals are in need of organ transplant in the country. However, if each brain dead patient on average donates 3 organs no one will remain on the waiting lists for organ transplant.

Mehdi Shadnough, head of the transplantation and treatment of diseases department at the Ministry of Health, announced that organ donation rate has increased by 60 times over the past 18 years, though the growth is not considerable compared to the global scale; as some countries including China have grown 122-fold over the past 10 years.

According to the figures revealed by International Registry in Organ Donation and Transplantation (IRODaT), Spain leads the world in organ donation.

Figures published for 2017 reveal that 2,183 people in Spain became organ donors last year after they died. That’s 46.9 pmp — a standard way of measuring the rate of donation in a country, The Independent reported in July 2018.

According to the data published on IRODaT by the end of 2017, Iran’s per million population of actual deceased organ donors was 11.43. In 1996, Iran’s per million population of actual deceased organ donors was 0.1, which compared to the current per million people in the population (pmp) shows a great increase.

However, still some 10 patients, waiting for an organ, lose their lives daily in Iran, Masih Daneshvari hospital’s manager Ali Akbar Velayati said in May 2018.



A brain dead 18-year-old girl saved the lives of at least three people donating her two kidneys and liver.

But what really pushes away the people from donating their deceased beloved’s organ and save the lives of many?

It is a touchy question, some experts believe that there is a large disparity between the number of people who only claim that they support organ donation and the number of people who actually register for organ donation cards.

So, the factor keeping people from ultimately donating an organ is something that academics, doctors, and organ-donation activists are trying to figure out.

Although, for long we have heard that organ donation is a generous life-saving ‘gift’, some are still unnerved by and skeptical about the donation process.

Making positive decisions about organ donation would likely require resolving tensions between respecting family, community and religious values versus their individual autonomy.

Such resistance may be explained by the lack of awareness about transplantation within their communities, dominant influences of older family members, religious myths and misconceptions, fear of premature death, concerns about bodily disfigurement, distrust of the medical system, and concerns of racial discrimination in organ allocation.

## IRCS to dispatch 2,000 health practitioners for Arbaeen pilgrimage

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) will dispatch 2,000 health practitioners to Iraq to offer medical treatment and health care services to Arbaeen pilgrims, Mohammad Taghi Helisaz, an official with the IRCS, has said.

Arbaeen pilgrimage also known as Arbaeen trek, a distinctively Shia spiritual exercise, is an epic journey gathering Shias as well as Sunnis, even Christians and Zoroastrians, etc. from various nationalities altogether walking towards the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) commemorating the 40th day of his martyrdom in the battle of Karbala, in 680 AD.

The IRCS team will be accompanied by medical special-

ists, including orthopedists, cardiologists, gynecologists, pediatricians, neurologists and psychiatrists, he noted, IRNA reported on Saturday.

This year the IRCS offers services to pilgrims in two forms of mobile health units and medical clinics, which are connected to a coherent communication network and serve as a comprehensive health center, he explained.

“Some 160 tons of medications and medical equipment will be dispatched to Karbala, along with 8 ambulance buses and 40 ambulances,” he stated.

ISNA reported on Thursday that some 181,000 pilgrims have so far registered to participate in the Arbaeen trek. Last year about 1.8 million Iranians took part in the ceremony.



## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Rainfalls brings life back to Gomishan wetland

Gomishan international wetland, northern province of Golestan, is once again partially filled with water with recent rainfalls, the provincial chief of the department of environment has said. Over the past few days more than 60 percent of the wetland was filled due to the recent rainfalls and now 20,000 hectares of the wetland are covered with water, Amir Abdous said on Tuesday. Due to the decrease in the water level at the Caspian Sea the wetland has been dried specially during hot seasons, Abdous said, adding that in winter a small part of the wetland was covered with water.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “-al”

■ **Meaning:** a word ending used to form nouns from verbs  
**For example:** Recycling as the best answer to waste disposal.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Tell against somebody

■ **Meaning:** to make someone less likely to succeed in achieving or winning something  
**For example:** I badly wanted the job, but knew that my age would probably tell against me.

## IDIOM

### Keep (one’s) chin up

■ **Explanation:** to improve one’s mood, especially when sad or discouraged  
**For example:** Come on, the project was not a total failure—keep your chin up!

## بارندگی های اخیر زندگی دوباره به تالاب گمیشان بخشید

مدیرکل حفاظت محیط زیست گلستان از آگیری بخشی از تالاب بین المللی گمیشان در این استان خبر داد

به گزارش خبرگزاری ایرنا امیر عبدوس روز سه شنبه گفت: بارندگی های اخیر زندگی دوباره په این زیستگاه مهم بخشید و بیش از ۶۰ درصد تالاب بین المللی گمیشان آگیری شد.

وی افزود: به علت پایین رفتن سطح آب دریای خزر تغذیه این تالاب از سوی دریا به حداقل ممکن رسیده بود و تقریباً تمام سطح تالاب بین المللی گمیشان در فصول گرم سال کاملاً خشک و در زمستان نیز بخش بسیار اندکی زیر آب قرار داشت.



# War has ended, Syria returning to normal: Lavrov

**TEHRAN**— Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says he believes the foreign-sponsored terrorism in Syria has come to an end, and that the need to promote the long-lasting settlement of crisis both in the war-ravaged Arab country and the entire Middle East region is highly required.

“The war in Syria has really come to an end. The country is gradually returning to a normal, peaceful life. Some hotspots of tensions remain in the territories that are not controlled by the Syrian government, such as Idlib and the eastern bank of the Euphrates,” Russia’s Sputnik news agency cited Lavrov as saying in an exclusive interview with Russian newspaper the Trud on Thursday.

The top Russian then pointed to the provision of humanitarian aid for affected civilians and “promotion of political process on settling the crisis to achieve stable and long-lasting stabilization of the situation in the country and the whole Middle East region” as the most important issues regarding Syria.

Lavrov added, “We believe the formation and launch of a committee designed to develop the constitutional reform will be an important step in advancing the political process led and carried out by Syrians themselves with the UN assistance.”



“In fact, its convention will enable the Syrian sides – the government and the foreign-sponsored armed opposition – to begin for the first time a direct dialogue on their country’s future,” he commented.

Lavrov went on to say that Russia has taken some steps to “support the efforts of the Syrian government in its fight against terrorists, who still remain in the Idlib zone, and promote issues concerning humanitarian assistance and facilitation of the political

process in the context of formation of the constitutional committee.”

The Russian foreign minister later criticized sanctions that the United States and European countries have slapped on the Syrian government, describing the measures as fully counterproductive.

Russia has been helping Syrian forces in ongoing battles across the conflict-plagued Arab country. Syrians continue to recapture key areas from Daesh and other foreign-backed terrorist groups across the country.

Separately, U.S.-sponsored militants have opened fire at displaced Syrians stranded in a camp near the Jordanian border after the latter demanded that delivered humanitarian food be distributed among them.

According to Press TV, the United Nations says about 45,000 people, mostly women and children, are trapped inside Rukban, where conditions are desperate. This is while Geneva-based international aid agency Doctors Without Borders has put the number at some 60,000.

**■ Militants open fire on civilians at Rukban camp**

Head of the Russian Center for the Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic, Major General Alexey Bakin, said members of the so-called Forces of Martyr Ahmad al-Abdo militant group have seized a significant amount of cargo delivered by the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to the Rukban camp, and moved the consignment to their base north of the camp.

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## Trump fires Bolton Bolton not in line with what we do: Trump

**➔1** Trump had sometimes joked about Bolton’s image as a warmonger, reportedly saying in one Oval Office meeting that “John has never seen a war he doesn’t like.”

Bolton has adopted an aggressive approach towards Iran since his appointment to the top post by Trump. Independent observers have accused him of conniving with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in order to provoke a military conflict between Iran and the United States.

Bolton has also opposed Trump’s peace initiative towards North Korea and urged the president to pursue gunboat diplomacy against the East Asian country.

-----Why Trump fired Bolton

American journalist and political analyst Don Debar said he knew he saw it coming. “I knew it would happen sooner or later.”

“People apparently don’t put themselves in Trump’s

chair just to check out the view. He has managed to maintain himself in the office despite the best efforts of the CIA, FBI, Democratic and Republican Party establishment, supported by the corporate media,” he told Press TV.

“No one has ever withstood this; people like Howard Dean fold after three or four days of that kind of media coverage and a couple of phone calls from Langley. Trump manages to stand because he knows how to maintain a sufficient assembly of constituencies that would make it impossible to remove him in a way that seemed illegitimate,” he said.

“Again, look at North Korea. There is no way that he could walk into office and start negotiating with Kim Jong-un. First he had to kick him in the face, repeatedly and in public, to get the support of the various constituencies that would otherwise attack him for making peace. Once he has their support, he is free to make peace. This is what



is happening with Iran also. Bolton is an example of the ‘tough cop’. It was hard to accuse Trump of appeasement if he had Bolton negotiating and talking crazy s--t,” he stated.

## Taliban responds to Trump’s peace talks withdrawal

**TEHRAN** — Peace talks between the United States and the Taliban began last October in Qatar, with the aim of ending the almost 18-year-old war in Afghanistan.

On Monday, US President Donald Trump announced that negotiations were over without a deal.

“They are dead. They are dead. As far as I’m concerned, they are dead,” Trump told reporters, blaming a Taliban attack last week in which an American soldier was among the 12 people killed.

“They thought that they had to kill people in order to put themselves in a little better negotiating position ... You can’t do that with me, so they [the talks] are dead as far as I’m concerned,” Trump said.

The president’s move surprised the Taliban leaders.

“It was astonishing for us because we had already concluded the peace agreement with the American negotiating team,” Suhail Shaheen, a Taliban spokesman, told Al Jazeera in Qatar’s capital Doha.

After nine rounds of negotiations in Doha, it seemed that most of the differences between the U.S. and the Taliban had been resolved. The U.S. special representative for Afghan reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, also said a peace agreement was finalised in principle.

Since talks began, discussions focused on four key issues: a Taliban guarantee it will not allow foreign armed groups and fighters to use Afghanistan as a launchpad to conduct attacks outside the country; the complete withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces; an intra-Afghan dialogue; and a permanent ceasefire.

Shaheen said a ceasefire inside the country was never part of the negotiations but rather an intra-Afghan matter that would form part of future discussions with the country’s government - but only after foreign forces withdraw.

“About the other Afghans, we are ready to talk with them. If there is a ceasefire with them, there will be no attack [on] them. But this is another aspect of the Afghan issue. We want to end the occupation of Afghanistan first,” he said.

He said the Taliban’s agreement with the U.S. was to offer them safe passage in the withdrawal of troops - something they would stand by if a deal is signed.

“If we sign an agreement with them, we have the obligation not to attack them and provide them a safe passage. If they withdraw

without any peace agreement signing with us, it is up to our consent or willing[ness] whether to attack or not to attack them,” Shaheen said.

“It is then up to us, because there is no agreement. So we will attack them if we see it is in our interest, our national interest, our Islamic interest. If we see it in our interest not to attack, we will not attack them.”

“If the Americans want to not attack us, and they want to withdraw, and they sign the agreement, yes we will not attack them ... But if they attack us, they continue their bombardment, their night raids, [then] that will continue from our side what has been continuing for the last 18 years.”

So with the U.S. quitting the negotiating table, can peace be achieved in Afghanistan? And if so, what would it take?

## Netanyahu denies report of Israeli spying near White House

**TEHRAN** — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has denied a media report stating Israel spied on mobile phones in the vicinity of the White House - and United States President Donald Trump said he believed him.

Speaking on a trip to Russia on Thursday, Netanyahu said there was no eavesdropping on mobile phones around the U.S. presidency because he had forbidden spying against the U.S.

“I have a directive: no intelligence connection in the United States, no spying,” he said. “It’s rigorously enforced without any exception. It’s a complete fabrication.”

A statement from Netanyahu’s office echoed his comments and called the report “a blatant lie”.

“There is a long-standing commitment and a directive from the Israeli government not to engage in any intelligence operations in the U.S.,” the statement said.

Online news outlet Politico said that an

investigation by the FBI and other U.S. agencies concluded that Israel was most likely behind several so-called stingray scanners, which mimic cellphone towers to intercept nearby calls and text messages, that were discovered in downtown Washington in 2017.

Several former national security officials told Politico that forensic analysis on the devices by the FBI and other agencies tied them to Israeli agents.

## Muharram mourning in a strange country

**➔1** Unlike Iranian cities outside there was no sign of mourning, banners and flag. There was no black noise or the sound of a noose leaking out. I pressed the bell and one of the black dressed career opened the door. I asked if there would be a Muharram ceremony here. I am a student and recently came to Germany and he greeted me after welcoming me, he apologized and inspected my backpack because he had never seen me

before, which was not uncomfortable for me, but I thought it was necessary for security reasons. The mosque in both male and female sections was filled with lovers of Imam Hussein (PBUH) and had an intimate and warm atmosphere, and very quickly some Iranian students attending ceremonies from and around Frankfurt, such as Wiesbaden, Mainz and Siegen universities, were treated with indescribable kindness. It became a

background for deeper friendships of the future, and after joining the Center’s email list, I was always aware of various events and attended as much as possible.

Finally, that night after reciting the Qur’an and the pilgrimage of Ashura, the speech and commemoration of the Imam of the Center, a passionate rite of passage, and a reception dinner; moving around at 32 minutes midnight, I would arrive at

the university town at 2 in the morning and from the railway station to the dormitory at mid night, there would be no bus service and the use of a taxi that did not fit the student life budget and then through the snow, I reached the student village through forest narrow way and steep slopes.

“Amiri Hossein and Nema Al-Amir” Hossein is my commander and he is what a good commander should be.

dith scholar, who wrote numerous books, notably: Wasa’el ash-Shiite, which is a vast but concise compilation and classification of Hadith that took him 18 years to compose.

The stunning town of Machgharah sits on the eastern slope of Mount Lebanon, along the Yammouneh fault and is known for its orchards, narrow streets and ubiquitous stairs.

According to some chroniclers, its name derives from Mash’arta, with the root, Sha’ar, meaning ‘gush’ in the Phoenician language, as the town has multiple springs, cascades and streams.

## Brazil gaining from China’s revenge embargoes

**➔7** European pigs are filling some of China’s shortfall, but there is African swine fever in Europe as there is in much of Southeast Asia. So fever-free Brazil is an obvious source, and sales of pork to China have grown by around 80% in the last three months. Now that Bolsonaro has changed his tune about the PRC, the relationship is set to pick up where it left off under Brazil’s past left-wing administrations. Beijing and its corporate offshoots like the globe-trotting China Communications Construction Company are already involved in Belt and Road Initiative-style infrastructure investment in Brazil. What is notable, however, is that like the BRI projects across Asia, those in Brazil are aimed at getting the country’s commodities on ships to China.

China Communications is already involved in building railroads to transport grain and the company is currently building a port in the northern city of Sao Luis. A question now is how much investment and grip on Brazil’s infrastructure and commodities trade Bolsonaro will be able to absorb before he feels forced into a nationalistic backlash.

Assessing the situation recently, Oxford Analytica, the global risk assessment company, noted: “Even if relations with Beijing continue reasonably unscathed, Bolsonaro’s government lacks a China strategy. It also has no clear plan to adapt Brazil to a world in which Chinese growth is slower and more focused on domestic consumption, and hence less dependent on Brazilian export to the Asian giant.”

So perhaps the hope must be that Bolsonaro does not promote the removal of the entire Brazilian Amazon rainforest, which provides 20% of the world’s oxygen, before it becomes clear to him that there is a limit to China’s thirst for commodities.

## Are oil and gas stocks on the cusp of breakout?

**➔5** Energy has been the least winning sector in the S&P 500 this year, and analysts say that it has also been the least loved by investors.

The worst performer According to Yardeni Research, Inc., the energy sector has gained 5.4 percent year to date to September 11, compared with a 19.7-percent increase in the S&P 500 index. Energy was the worst performer among the major sectors in the S&P 500.

While the S&P is up 19.7 percent year to date, as of close on September 11, the SPDR S&P Oil & Gas Exploration & Production ETF was down 10.52 percent year to date.

Volatile oil and gas prices, sudden price slumps, and concerns about future oil demand have combined over the past year or two to make investors shun oil and gas stocks, which have been the worst performers as a sector in recent months.

Yet, despite the apparent Wall Street snub, Wall Street sell-side analysts and stocks experts are not convinced that the energy sector is done for good. If the early sign of breakout of one ETF tracking energy stocks turns into an uptrend, it could signal that there could still be value in oil and gas stock investment.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Bolton and Neocons responsible for billions in opportunity costs – does Trump realize it?

**➔1** But more importantly, with the U.S. meddling in Hong Kong and with the tariff war underway between the U.S. and China, China’s President Xi no longer trusts Trump and seems to have concluded that trying to make a deal with the U.S. is a fruitless undertaking and that China might be better off just going its own way and doing deals itself with better partners. Such as Iran.

China has said it will invest \$400 billion in Iran’s oil infrastructure and other industry. (Iran is, after all, the keystone country in China’s Belt and Road initiative given its size and location between East and West Asia. This scheme by China for Iran gives Iran the option of even continuing its current foreign policies in the Middle East.

Could it be that Trump realizes the opportunity costs the U.S. has borne with the Mideast policies it has maintained over the past three years? This may be too much to ask of Trump, such realization, but it’s not hard to imagine the benefits of a slowly warming relationship between the U.S. and Iran had the U.S. stuck to the JCPOA. (This writer argued with an editor at a major U.S. newspaper for the “normalization” of U.S. relations with BOTH Israel at one extreme and Iran at the other back in 2013, but the ideas were rejected and the editor refused to publish them. The editor had Neocon pals like Bill Kristol, a Zionist.) With normalization, the U.S. certainly would have gotten the lion’s share of scores of commercial deals with Iran, and China would not likely be preparing to make Iran a strategic partner.

Iran, for example, would likely have bought hundreds of Western-made aircraft from Boeing and Airbus, for one thing. The facts are that Natanyahu and the Jewish lobbies in the U.S., aiming to dominate naïve Trump as they did other Presidents, are ultimately to blame for what may be one of the biggest, commercial economic errors the U.S. has made since World War 2: pushing most of Asia and Russia together into a virtually united bloc that ultimately will declare a big “sayonara” to the unreliable, untrustworthy U.S.-led West.

Now, with Bolton out, it is possible that President Rouhani may have second thoughts about rejecting any talks with Trump at the UN General Assembly later this month. The question may be (in some jest) that if “Bibi” Natanyahu loses the election in Israel, whether Trump will do something even crazier than appointing Bolton in the first place in 2018 and appoint “Bibi” or someone like him to replace Bolton.

## Machgharah: The town of resistance and martyrs commemorates Imam Hussein’s martyrdom

**➔1** The Machgharis are well known for their high humility, enthusiasm and solid commitment to the resistance, in the defence of their homeland and sacred cause.

They are part and parcel of the resistance, have fought for years within its ranks and have sacrificed a large number of martyrs, mostly during direct confrontations; among others: Hajj Abu Hassan Muhammad Bejailhi, Leader Hussein Meri and Hajj Ibrahim al-Hajj, known as Hajj Salman, who martyred championing the oppressed Iraqi people

in the face of the savage aggression by ISIS.

The Machgharis believe that A’ashura symbolises the eternal and unwavering stance of truth against falsehood, injustice, tyranny and oppression, the cause for which Imam Hussein was martyred.

Machgharah is inhabited by both Catholic and Orthodox Christians and Shiite Muslims, which makes it a mosaic of cultural and social diversity.

It is also a fertile ground for intellectuals like al-ʿurr al-Aʿamili al-Mashghari, a prominent theologian and ha-



## Messi: I don't know if Barcelona did everything to bring Neymar back

With Neymar's potential transfer to Barcelona dominating the summer headlines, captain Lionel Messi feels the club could have done a little more to bring the Brazilian back.

With negotiations ongoing right until the final hours of the transfer window, no deal was agreed and Neymar will stay at Paris Saint-Germain for the foreseeable future.

"I would have loved Neymar to have rejoined the club," Messi told Sport. "Honestly, I don't know if Barcelona did everything possible to ensure his return.

"However, it is certainly true that negotiating with PSG isn't easy. "On a sporting level, Neymar is one of the best in the world. The club would also have taken a leap in terms of the level of image rights and sponsors.

"I never asked for the signing of Neymar. All I did was give my opinion. "I'm not disappointed [that he didn't sign]. We have a have a spectacular squad, which can compete for everything, even without Neymar."

In terms of Messi's own future with the club, he dampened recent revelations over a clause in his contract which will allow him to leave Barcelona at the end of the season.

"This is my home and I don't want to leave," Messi said. "But I want to win."

(Source: Marca)

## Pogba, Martial, Shaw ruled out as injury crisis hits Man United

Manchester United are facing an injury crisis on their return to Premier League action, with Paul Pogba, Anthony Martial and Luke Shaw set to miss Saturday's clash against Leicester City.

Pogba sustained an ankle injury during United's 1-1 draw before the international break, while Martial and Shaw have not featured since United's 2-1 league defeat by Crystal Palace on Aug. 24.

"The treatment room been busy and still is... I don't really know who will be available," United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer told reporters on Friday.

"Pogba won't be fit unless he has had a miraculous recovery overnight or before the game. But you have players who can come in with loads of experience — Juan (Mata), Nemanja (Matic), Ashley (Young). They are the ones who have to step up now."

Diogo Dalot, who is nursing a hip injury, and Eric Bailly (knee) are also ruled out but Solskjaer is hoping that Aaron Wan-Bissaka and Jesse Lingard could be involved this weekend after late fitness tests.

"Maybe Aaron, maybe Jesse. But that's it, from the ones who have pulled out. I can't promise they'll be available either," Solskjaer added.

United are looking to turn their season around after failing to record a victory since the opening weekend.

A second league defeat of the campaign would leave United six points behind Brendan Rodgers' Leicester and heap further pressure on Solskjaer who has failed to deliver results since being confirmed as full-time manager in March.

"We want to get the results we feel we deserve. We are coming into a busy period now, we don't want to be behind Tottenham, Chelsea or Arsenal," Solskjaer said.

(Source: Reuters)

## Cold comfort: Tokyo 2020 tests fake snow to beat the heat

Tokyo 2020 organizers blasted volunteers with fake snow on Friday as they trial ever more extreme ways to beat the heat ahead of the Games.

But instead of light fluffy snowflakes, the crowd, consisting mainly of Tokyo 2020 staff, was pelted with fairly coarse shards of shaved ice at the canoeing test event.

And ironically, after several weeks of almost unbroken heat and humidity, Friday saw temperatures in the Japanese capital drop sharply -- no doubt a relief to millions of Tokyo commuters and players training for the forthcoming Rugby World Cup.

"We are trying everything possible to ease heat risks," said Taka Okamura, from the 2020 organizing committee.

"This is not meant to cool the entire atmosphere but have spectators feel refreshed when the flakes of ice touch them," added Okamura, who acknowledged that the system needed some refinement.

One problem became immediately apparent after the volunteers were doused in 300 kilograms (650 pounds) of snow in a matter of minutes: the "spectators" were quickly soaked through and the floor became slippery -- resulting in one journalist taking a tumble.

Okamura played down any environmental risks from the system -- such as CO2 emissions from the machine -- and declined to reveal its cost. Tokyo 2020 officials have admitted in the past that anti-heat measures will swell the budget for the Games.

Tokyo 2020 organizers have largely won praise for their preparations for the Games. With the construction work on track, IOC President Thomas Bach has said Tokyo is the best-prepared host ever with less than a year to go until the opening ceremony.

But the sweltering Tokyo heat has already proved a headache and there are fears for athletes, volunteers and spectators if conditions in recent summers are repeated at Games time.

(Source: AFP)

## Kobe says US Dream Team days are over

Kobe Bryant leapt to the defence of the United States basketball team after their failed World Cup campaign, saying on Friday: "The days of the 1992 Barcelona 'Dream Team' are gone."

A Team USA missing their biggest names were beaten for the second time in as many days on Thursday in China and are left fighting for a best finishing spot of seventh.

It is a sorry end to a long reign over international basketball that brought three Olympic gold in a row and two world crowns.

There has been a strong focus on the likes of LeBron James and the other NBA A-listers failing to turn out for their country in China.

But Los Angeles Lakers legend Bryant said in Beijing: "The best players that you think, which is going to make the best players that you can put on the floor, you are still going to have challengers.

"It's not going to be a cakewalk."

The 41-year-old Bryant, who won Olympic gold in 2008 and 2012, added: "The days of the 1992 Barcelona 'Dream Team' are gone so it's going to be tough."

The star-studded roster that rampaged to gold in 1992 is frequently mentioned as one of the finest sports teams ever assembled.

The US, who had one of the youngest rosters at the on-going World Cup in China, now face a threat to their Olympic title in Tokyo next summer.

"It's not a matter of the rest of the world catching up to the US," Bryant warned.

(Source: ESPN)

# Top doctor sounds alarm over heatstroke at Tokyo 2020

One of Japan's top doctors has slammed the decision to hold the Olympics at the height of Tokyo's baking summer, warning that heatstroke will be the "biggest risk" during the Games.

In an interview with AFP, Kimiyuki Nagashima, executive board member of the Japan Medical Association, also sounded the alarm that the Olympics will stretch the country's doctors at a time when local families are most at risk from the heat.

And it's not just the heat: Nagashima cautioned against the risk of communicable diseases as people fly in from around the world and gather en masse. Measles is thought to be a particular risk as many Japanese are not adequately vaccinated as children.

"My personal opinion as an individual is that sporting events should be held in a comfortable environment. I don't think it is agreeable to hold it at an inappropriate period at an inappropriate location due to business and economic concerns," he said.

The sweaty Tokyo summer is "generally speaking not a suitable place" for outdoor sports and for their spectators, added the doctor, an orthopedic surgeon who oversees the association's sports medicine activities.

In the city's bidding document to win the Games, Tokyo said the competition period between July 24 and August 9, followed by Paralympic Games, "provides



an ideal climate for athletes to perform at their best" with "many days of mild and sunny weather."

However, last summer, nearly 93,000 people sought emergency care across Japan, with 159 of them dying. Most of these cases took place during the time the summer Olympics will take place.

"From the start, we have seen heatstroke

as the biggest risk factor for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics as far as health goes," Nagashima said.

### ■ Humidity 'extremely high'

The 1964 Tokyo Olympics were held in October to avoid the heat of the summer and the issue has quickly become the major headache for organizers, who have otherwise won praise for their

preparations.

Organizers have brought forward the start time for several events including the marathon and rolled out a variety of anti-heat measures including artificial snow.

However, recent test events did little to cool fears, with a French triathlete treated for heatstroke and several spectators taken ill at a rowing trial.

Many test events took place under conditions regarded as "dangerous" for exercise, according to the internationally accepted WBGT index that measures heat and humidity.

Nagashima said he had urged organizers to think beyond the Games and be "fully considerate" that medical emergencies during the competition will divert resources away from locals at a critical time.

"Japan's heat is not just about the high temperature. Humidity is extremely high... This means a higher risk of getting sick than in other countries," he said.

But given that Japan is determined to host the event, the nation must prepare itself and offer visitors advice to stay healthy, the doctor said.

"There are steps you can take to avoid heatstroke. Please learn about heatstroke. Take preventative measures. Then please come to Japan and enjoy the Olympics in comfort," he said.

(Source: AFP)

## VAR system has made four errors in Premier League - referees' chief



The introduction of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) has been unable to prevent four wrong decisions in the Premier League matches this season, referees' chief Mike Riley has said.

Riley, managing director of the official referee's body and the man responsible for VAR in England, said technology had "added value to the game" but said there had been incidents where a referee's decision should have been overturned.

"If you look at the four match rounds, 227 incidents have been checked. Out of that we've changed six decisions. We think we should have changed 10 in total," Riley told Sky Sports News on Thursday.

"That gives you the scale of where VAR can help and add value to the game, but it also demonstrates that this is still about refereeing a game of Premier League football on the pitch."

VAR's guidelines state that the technology should only be used to overturn a decision if the on-pitch referee has made a clear and obvious error.

Riley explained that the technology should have been used to award reigning

champions Manchester City a penalty in their 3-1 win at Bournemouth and give a spot-kick to West Ham United in their 2-0 victory at home to Norwich City.

He also said Fabian Schar's goal for Newcastle United in the 1-1 draw with Watford should have been chalked off for an earlier handball, while Leicester City's Yuri Tielemans should have been sent off in their 3-1 win over Bournemouth.

England's top flight joined Germany, Spain and Italy in bringing in video technology at the start of the campaign and it has played a decisive role in the opening four rounds of games.

Manchester City had an added-time strike in their 2-2 draw at home to Tottenham Hotspur ruled out for a handball by Aymeric Laporte which no-one on the pitch had spotted.

Wolverhampton Wanderers also had a goal ruled out for handball in their 0-0 draw with Leicester on the opening day after a lengthy review, prompting coach Nuno Espirito Santo to say the technology was hurting the sport's spirit.

(Source: Mirror)

## Froome happy to be alive as he targets fifth Tour title



Chris Froome admits he is "grateful to be alive" after a horrific high speed crash into a wall in June that left the four-time Tour de France winner with multiple fractures.

However, despite still needing crutches to walk, Froome is targeting a record-equaling fifth Tour title and Olympic gold in Tokyo next year.

The 34-year-old broke his neck, femur, elbow, hip and ribs when he crashed before stage four of the Criterium du Dauphine in France in June.

Such was the extent of his injuries, he initially feared his career, and not just his season, was over.

"I'm grateful to be alive. I'm grateful to be on the road to recovery, I'm grateful that I'm able to recover," Froome told the Daily Telegraph. "Now I've got to give it everything."

Froome's Ineos teammate Egan Bernal took advantage of his absence to win the Tour de France in July.

The Colombian is 14 years younger than Froome, who will be 35 when the 2020 Tour starts in Nice.

No rider aged 35 or older has won cycling's biggest race since Firmin Lambot in 1922.

But Froome is so convinced of his powers of recovery that he is targeting not just the gruelling three-week trek around France, but a double shot at Olympic gold in Tokyo a week later.

"Both the TT (time trial) and the road race in Tokyo look very appetizing," added Froome.

"And coming a week after doing the Tour -- assuming I'm doing the Tour -- it's almost perfect. I'd like to throw my hat in the ring for both.

"As for the Tour, going for a fifth title off what was potentially a career-ending crash -- that would be even bigger.

"Loads of people came out after the crash and said 'he's done, he'll never win another Tour.' They only spur me on."

The British rider is hoping to make his return to competitive action on a bike by the end of the year.

"It would be great to be able to do some of those post-season events that I typically do in the off-season.

(Source: France 24)

## Leipzig await Bayern Munich on bumper Bundesliga Saturday

RB Leipzig coach Julian Nagelsmann has called on his team to confirm they are Bundesliga title contenders when they face reigning champions Bayern Munich in one of two top-of-the-table clashes this weekend.

Leipzig host Bayern on Saturday evening, just hours after fellow Champions League participants Borussia Dortmund and Bayer Leverkusen do battle in Dortmund.

The two games are expected to set the tone for what many are predicting will be a three or four horse title race.

Germany great Lothar Matthaeus claimed last week that Leipzig, who finished third last year and reached the German Cup final, were definite title contenders under new coach Nagelsmann.

"I am always happy when experts like Matthaeus see the team's development positively -- now we have to confirm it," said Nagelsmann on Thursday.

"The game will not be decisive for the title race, but a win can give us a lot of confidence," he said.

The 32-year-old coaching prodigy said that in-form striker Timo Werner could make the difference against Bayern.

Werner, 23, has scored five goals in three games already this season.

"He is on a good run, and he can really hurt Bayern," warned Nagelsmann.

Bayern are still without Leon Goretzka after the midfielder underwent a thigh operation this week, but they otherwise return from the international break at full strength.



The champions, who trail Leipzig by two points in second place due to their opening day draw with Hertha Berlin, can go top with a win on Saturday.

"This is where the season gets going," said coach Niko Kovac on Thursday.

"We have six games until the next break, and we want to position ourselves high in the table."

"The game against Leipzig is important in that regard." Yet Kovac also insisted that Leipzig were not Bayern's only contenders for the Bundesliga title this season.

"You also have to mention Borussia Dortmund and Bayer Leverkusen," he said.

"Those were the top four teams last year, and I think they will share the spoils this year as well."

### ■ Dortmund in the doldrums

Yet Dortmund, who sit one spot behind Leverkusen in

fifth, are under growing pressure after a recent dip in form.

Coach Lucien Favre has faced criticism in the German media following a shock 3-1 defeat away to promoted side Union Berlin at the end of August.

Bild newspaper claimed Wednesday that some players were disgruntled with Favre's selection and tactics, calling the atmosphere around the club a "powder keg".

On Thursday, Favre insisted that he still had the support of the dressing room.

"We have lost one game. The trust is still there. We need to look forward and be positive," said the Swiss.

"We know about Leverkusen's quality. It is no coincidence that they finished fourth last year," he added.

Saturday's game will see Leverkusen coach Peter Bosz return to Dortmund for the second time since his ill-fated, six-month spell in charge of the club in 2017.

The Dutchman's reign at Dortmund ended in disaster after a nine-game winless run, but he has since restored his reputation by leading Leverkusen into the Champions League last season.

Leverkusen midfielder Sven Bender, a former Dortmund player himself, said this week that Bosz was a "sensational coach".

Dortmund midfielder Julian Brandt will also come up against his former colleagues on Saturday, having left Leverkusen for 25.5 million euros (\$28.1m) in June.

With Belgian winger Thorgan Hazard still out injured, Brandt is expected to start against his old club.

(Source: Guardian)



# Ansarifard happy just to play for Iran

Karim Ansarifard was restored to his favored center forward's role as the Islamic Republic of Iran made a winning start to their Asian Qualifiers campaign against Hong Kong, but the Team Melli star is prepared to maintain a flexible approach to ensure he retains his spot in Marc Wilmots' star-studded side.

Ansarifard scored his side's second in the 2-0 FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 qualifying match win at Hong Kong Stadium on Tuesday, doubling Iran's lead following Sardar Azmoun's opener in an impressive first competitive game under the former Belgium coach.

Wilmots started with Ansarifard in the central striker's position as a partner to Azmoun in a potent pairing as the 29-year-old reverted to the role he held when he first made his name in the international game.

But while Ansarifard was delighted to be back scoring goals after a lengthy period spent playing in a variety of positions under former coach Carlos Queiroz, he plans to continue to put team glory ahead of personal satisfaction.

"All of our country appreciates Carlos Queiroz, he did a fantastic job for us and really we had a good time with him but this was the formation he had," he said of the tactical approach of the Portuguese coach, who led Iran to consecutive FIFA World Cup tournaments.

"If he wants me to play in any position I have to play, and I don't have any problems.

With Carlos Queiroz there were a few games I played in my normal position, or I played as a midfielder or I played as a winger and we had some tactics for that. I'm happy to play in any position.

"Each coach has his own program, his own tactics and we respect all of them. Our new coach is doing well for us.

All over the world, each coach has his own tactics and we have to respect that and play the way they want, that's the most important thing."

The fluidity of Iran's attack often left Hong Kong chasing shadows, although Mixu Paatelainen's side did well to limit an attack that also featured Alireza Jahanbakhsh and Mehdi Torabi to two goals at a boisterous Hong Kong Stadium.

The understanding between Ansarifard and Azmoun, in particular, caused the home defence difficulties and



the Al Saliya forward stressed that potency comes from a strong sense of familiarity between the players.

"Our team, we all have played together, most of us, for seven or eight years," he said. "We know the movement of each other and it makes it easier to read our positions.

We have to continue like this and it doesn't matter who plays, we play for our flag and our country and we will give every time 100 percent."

The win means Iran are in second place in Group C after their opening game and trail Bahrain, who have played one game more, by a point.

Wilmots' team next face Cambodia in Tehran's Azadi Stadium on October 10.

"It was a great game for us and a good result," said Ansarifard of the win over Hong Kong. "I think for the first game we did well and we have to continue like this because all the teams now in our group are strong.

Hong Kong earned our respect, they are a really good team but I think we were better tonight and we deserved the result.

"In the future it doesn't matter who we play, we have to get the three points. That's the most important thing." (Source: the-afc)

## Shahintab to remain Iran basketball coach until after 2020 Olympic



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Mehran Shahintab has extended his contract with Iran basketball team until after the 2020 Olympic Games.

After two editions absence at the Olympic Games, Team Melli could secure their place at the 2020 Olympic Games.

Under tutelage of Shahintab, Iran booked a place in Tokyo as the best Asian team in

the 2019 FIBA World Cup in China.

Iran national basketball team lost to Puerto Rico, Tunisia and Spain in Group C but defeated Angola and the Philippines in Group N and will participate at the Olympics after 12 years.

Shahintab was assistant of German coach Dirk Bauermann who cancelled his contract with the Asian giants in January 2017.

## Mirhashem Hosseini seizes gold in World Taekwondo Grand Prix final



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** - Iran's Asian Games champion Mirhashem Hosseini won a gold medal at the 2019 World Taekwondo Grand Prix on Friday.

He defeated Lee Dae-hoon from South Korea 36-20 victory in the final match of the 68kg.

Briton Bradley Sinden and Zhao Shuai from China had to settle for the bronze.

Top competitors will be awarded ranking points towards the World Taekwondo world ranking which could help them qualify for the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Winners will earn 40 points towards the rankings.

The prestigious competition is being held at the Chiba Port Arena, in Chiba, Japan from September 13 to 15.

## Iran star Haddadi happy of making it back to the Olympics again

It's been 11 years since Iran's last Olympic dream was realized, and after more than a decade they are back in the quadrennial event.

Iran qualified for Tokyo 2020 Olympics after their rousing 95-75 win over the Philippines coupled with the hosts China losing to Nigeria in the penultimate game day of the Classification Phase of 17-32.

"We're so happy and thankful that god gave us a second chance. China had a chance to beat a couple of teams and they didn't so we grabbed our chance and took it," said longtime Iranian star, Hamed Haddadi.

In the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, a young and relatively unknown Haddadi had a coming-out party in the world stage which opened an opportunity for him to play in the NBA.

Haddadi parlayed his impressive performance to an NBA contract with the Memphis Grizzlies after averaging 16.6 points while also leading the entire Olympic tournament with 11.2 rebounds and 2.6 blocks.

"Listen, I thought I will never be able to make it back to the Olympics again because

China is always strong. I never thought I would be able to go back and I am so happy for my country," said the 34-year old.

"We worked really hard in the last two months preparing for the World Cup and I am so thankful for everything. We went through a lot of ups and downs but through it all, we stayed together," he added.

The 2-3 record of Iran does not reflect how competitive "Team Melli" were in the 2019 World Cup. Iran was up 49-31 at the end of the first half in their first game against Puerto Rico but David Huertas waxed bot and they couldn't hold on to the win.

Iran also played competitively against Tunisia and surprisingly lost by single digits, 73-65, to World basketball powerhouse Spain.

"We had a chance to beat some of our teams in our group but lost in the last minute against Puerto Rico and made some mistakes against Spain but for us to be able to advance to the Olympics made all those lows worth it in the end," said Iran head coach Mehran Shahintab. (Source: FIBA)



## AFC President meets FIFA President in Zurich

Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, the AFC President, has held wide ranging discussions with the FIFA President Gianni Infantino on a number of subjects, including greater co-operation between the world governing body and the Continental Confederations.

Meeting at FIFA House in Zurich, the AFC President, who was joined by General Secretary Dato Windsor John, outlined the AFC's plans for a new state of the art training center which is to be built at Putrajaya, in Malaysia. He also discussed forthcoming competition proposals with the FIFA

President as well as the key role that Confederations play in the structure of international football.

The AFC President requested that there be greater co-ordination and co-operation, particularly in the area of development and stressed the need for unified objectives.

In addition, there was discussions around the need to ensure that there is a stronger understanding between FIFA and Confederations for more structured program which will lead to the avoidance of duplication of resources and efforts.

(Source: the-afc)

## Iran basketball book 2020 Olympics place

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national basketball team advanced to the 2020 Olympic Games after beating the Philippines in the 2019 FIBA World Cup classification round on Sunday.

In the match held at Beijing Wukesong Sports Center in Beijing, China, Iran center Hamed Haddadi had 19 points, seven rebounds and two blocks.



Robert Bolick led the Philippines with 15 points.

Iran had suffered three defeats against Puerto Rico, Tunisia and Spain in Group C.

The Persians beat Angola and the Philippines in Group N.

"First, I would like to congratulate all Iranian people. I think it's a great honor to win a place in the Olympics for the third time. I am also satisfied with the way our players did against the Philippines," Iran coach Mehran Shahintab said after the match.

Iran have previously participated at the 1948 and 2008 Olympic Games.

Nigeria also advanced to the Olympics as the best Asian African team after holding off China. China's loss opened the door for Iran to secure a berth in the Olympics as the best Asian team.

## Iran beat Hong Kong in World Cup qualifier

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team defeated Hong Kong 2-0 in the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 on Tuesday.

The win gave Team Melli the opening three points of their bid to qualify for the World Cup while Hong Kong have one point after two matchdays.

Sardar Azmoun opened the scoring for Marc Wilmots's team in the 23rd minute with a low volley into the bottom corner and Karim Ansarifard extended the lead nine minutes into the second half.

"We played a good football and started our campaign with three points. We have become a better team in term of attacking football but we need to improve in defense," Iran coach Marc Wilmots said.

Team Melli will host Cambodia on Oct. 10 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium in their next match.

Iran have been drawn in Group C alongside Iraq, Bahrain, Cambodia and Hong Kong.

The eight group winners and four best runners-up will advance to the AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Finals and the final round of qualifying for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

The next best 24 teams from the second round of the joint qualifiers will compete in a separate competition for the remaining 12 slots in the 24-team AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

## Iran U23 football team suffer two defeats against Uzbekistan

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran U23 football team suffered two losses against Uzbekistan in friendly matches.

The Iranian team, who are headed by Farhad Majidi, lost to Uzbekistan 1-0 on Friday and were pummeled by the Asian rivals 4-1 once again on Monday.

"We made many mistakes in the match against Uzbekistan and gave them many possession. We could equalize the match in the second half when putting them under pressure but conceded two more goals on counter attack," Iran assistant coach Omid Namazi said.

Iran prepare for the 2020 AFC U23 Championship Thailand.

The competition will be held in Thailand from Jan. 8 to 26.

The top three teams qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in July, although should Japan emerge as one of them, the fourth-placed side will advance.

Iran, a powerhouse of the Asian football, have not been in the Olympics since the 1976 games in Munich.

## Iranian teams know rivals at Asian Club League Handball C'ship

**Tasnim** — Zagros and Foolad Mobarakeh of Iran learned their opponents at the 22nd Asian Men's Club League Handball Championship 2019.

The competition will be hosted by Samcheok, South Korea from November 7 to 17.

Zagros have been drawn in Group A along with Kuwait SC, SK Hawks of South Korea, Qatar's Al-Arabi and Sharjah Club of the UAE.

Group B consists of Foolad Mobarakeh, Qatar's Al-Wakrah, Oman Club, Barbar of Bahrain, Al-Wehdah of Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait's Al-Arabi.

The Asian Handball Club League Championship is the official competition organized by Asian Handball Federation for the men's handball clubs of Asia, and takes place every year.

In addition to crowning the Asian champion, the tournament also serves as a qualifying tournament for the IHF Super Globe.




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One who is sure of God’s compensation, shows much generosity himself.

Imam Ali (AS)

## “Driving Lessons” crowned best short at London film festival

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iranian director Marzieh Riahi’s movie “Driving Lessons” has won the award for best short drama at the 13th edition of the I Will Tell International Film Festival in London, the organizers have announced.



A scene from Iranian filmmaker Marzieh Riahi’s short film “Driving Lessons”.

The film tells the story of Bahareh, a young girl who, according to Iranian law, must have a man from among her relatives accompany her on driving lessons so she and her male instructor won’t be alone.

“A Modern Genocide” by Alex Blum, Noman Robin and Bart Gavigan from England received the award for best short film, while “Neighbors” by Tomislav Zaja from Croatia was named the best feature documentary.

The I Will Tell International Film Festival was held from August 30 to September 9.

“Driving Lessons” won the Golden Apricot for best short film at the 16th Golden Apricot International Film Festival in Yerevan, Armenia, in July. It also received the best non-Irish short award at the Dublin Feminist Film Festival in Ireland in August.

## Attention ALMA jury! Please recognize “You’re No Stranger Here”

**I →** No work by any other Iranian writer comes nearly as close to describing the ambiance of Iranian society as that which is described in Moradi Kermani’s books, particularly in “You’re No Stranger Here”. This is the reason why his works are also appealing to adults.

And this is the reason why Iranian filmmakers found his stories interesting enough to be turned into films. His “The Stories of Majid”, about an ambitious teenage boy, Majid who lives with his grandma Bibi in the central Iranian city of Isfahan, was made into a popular TV series of the same title by Kiumars Purahmad during the 1990s.

In 2000, Marzieh Borumand directed a screen adaptation of Moradi Kermani’s “A Sweet Jam” about 12-year-old Jalal’s struggles to open a jar of jam.

In 2004, Dariush Mehrjui also made a film based on his novel “Mom’s Guest: An Evening in Isfahan” about a working-class family’s efforts to receive a young couple in their modest accommodation.

However, none of Moradi Kermani’s works are as dramatic as his masterpiece “You’re No Stranger Here”, but the large budget required for making the story into a film or TV series has been an obstacle preventing filmmakers from approaching this story.

“You’re No Stranger Here” is actually the key to learn how Moradi Kermani made himself into one of the few great writers of modern Iran.

During a special ceremony organized in April at the 32nd Tehran International Book Fair to release his latest book “Teaspoon”, his publisher Moin took Moradi Kermani’s fans by surprise with an announcement that he was retiring from the writing business. Bad news!

“I want to learn from those professional athletes who retire in their prime,” 75-year-old Moradi Kermani said a few days after the announcement.

“No matter how much of a professional swimmer you are, you can’t stay in the water forever and you have to finally get out one day,” he noted and added, “Yeah, everybody reaches their retirement; otherwise, I would never make out a will. God is the only one who never retires.”

However, he said, “Perhaps, the tide will turn and once again, a new idea will flash into my mind.”

Perhaps a prestigious international honor will be the something that can turn the tide.

# ‘Tazieh can embellish capital all throughout the year’

By Manijeh Rezapoor

**TEHRAN** – After the advent of Islam in Iran and the consolidation by the Safavid dynasty (1502-1736) of Shia Islam as the state religion of Iran, the Shia have always tried to keep the tragedy of Ashura alive.

Ashura is the 10th day of Muharram, the day upon which Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred in Karbala, Iraq in 680 CE.

One of the efforts made to keep this tragedy alive is the religious performances in form of tazieh, Iranian passion play, which are mainly organized during the first 10 days of the lunar calendar month of Muharram.

However, expert on tazieh Ala’eddin Qasemi believes that tazieh can be performed throughout the year every day.

“At the present time, I have 400 tazieh plays ready to be performed and I can stage them on 400 nights throughout the year,” Qasemi told the Tehran Times in a recent interview.

“We have taizeh plays on all the Imams of the Shia. We also have comic tazieh plays like ‘The Meeting of Prophet Solomon and the Queen of Sheba’ which is a very delightful and comic tazieh,” he explained.

“The root of the word tazieh comes from the Arabic-Persian word ‘aza’ which means mourning and grieving. So some may imagine that tazieh only depicts events that are related to mourning and sorrow. But happy and joyful events in the history of Islam and Iran can also be the theme of tazieh,” Qasemi said.

“The kind of tazieh depends on the occasion, but when the two months of Muharram and Safar, (the first and second months of the lunar calendar) are over, the tazieh performances are over too,” he regretted.

Over all these years, tazieh has been performed across the country in all the cities and villages reminding the viewers of the tragedy of Ashura, and these performances have always been warmly welcomed by people from all walks of life.

Tazieh performances are so impressive that at times members of the audience feel themselves to be in the main core of the event being depicted by it.

Many experts believe that tazieh is the unique passion play of the Islamic world and also one of the most traditional types of theater in the world.

Qasemi and his friends have participated in various Iranian and international traditional and religious theater festivals. “We gave our first international performance during an Italian festival on Imam Reza (AS),” he said.

Afterwards, the legendary filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami invited them to perform in Rome for one month.

“Later we were invited to perform in New York and the performance was warmly received mostly by local people,” he said.

Qasemi said that tazieh performances are highly regarded overseas for at least two reasons. First for their musical form and more importantly, because of the specific costumes the thespians don during the performances.



Ala’eddin Qasemi (L) and his colleague perform a tazieh in an undated photo.

A tazieh performance is composed of music, poetry, and its specials techniques. In addition, the audience’s knowledge of history and their faith are the keys to better understand it.

“Music and the voices of the performers play major roles. All of the dialogues have a poetic form and are sung with music. Therefore, if the performer does not have a good voice, he will not be well received,” Qasemi said.

Qasemi said that taizeh as a dramatic art is respected in the country. However, he lamented the lack of a permanent location for such performances.

Dowlat Tekyeh, a place for seasonal Islamic ceremonies that was built during the reign of Qajar king Nasser ad-Din Shah near the Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran was a permanent place for tazieh performances. Troupes used to stage their performances at the tekyeh, which was a three-story building 24 meters in height with a circular shape covering 2,824 square meters in area. Unfortunately, the structure was demolished years ago.

“We need a permanent center to perform every night. It should not just be limited to Muharram and seasonal performances,” Qasemi said.

He added that his efforts to convince cultural officials to allocate a permanent special place for tazieh performances

have been in vain.

The Society for Iranian Tazieh was established several years ago aiming to train young talents to perform tazieh. It also attempts to focus on restoring old tazieh scripts, as well as producing costumes and instruments used during the tazieh performances.

“But the accessories, the costumes and the properties are preserved by some individuals who rent them whenever needed,” he said, adding that the society has not been able to establish a sufficiently large tekyeh for tazieh in Tehran.

“We wish that the society could help establish troupes and get sponsors to organize taziehs, however, none of these have happened so far,” he lamented.

Tazieh was registered on UNESCO’s List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in November 2010.

This year, Qasemi has been invited to perform tazieh in Sirjan, Kerman Province, during Muharram.

He also said television has had a great role in introducing the intangible cultural heritage.

“The TV series ‘The Tenth Night’ directed by Hassan Fat’hi, introduced tazieh to the audience in the best way possible. These types of programs can help promote tazieh more,” he concluded.

## Turkish publisher buys rights to Farhad Hassanzadeh’s “Kuti Kuti Stories”



This combination photo shows the front covers of the Persian versions of “Dinner Got Cold Kuti Kuti”, “Don’t Catch Cold Kuti Kuti” and “Shake the World Kuti Kuti” from the “Kuti Kuti Stories” series by Iranian Children’s book writer Farhad Hassanzadeh.

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** – The Turkish publisher Mevsimler Kitap in Istanbul has acquired the copyrights to three stories of the book series “Kuti Kuti Stories” by Iranian writer Farhad Hassanzadeh.

“Dinner Got Cold Kuti Kuti”, “Don’t Catch Cold Kuti Kuti”, and “Shake the World Kuti Kuti” are the three stories, Iran’s Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA), which is the publisher of the original books, announced on Friday.

Illustrated by Hoda Haddadi, “Kuti Kuti Stories” tells the story of a centipede.

In 2017, Timas Publications in Turkey also bought the rights to two of Hassanzadeh’s other novels, “Hasti” and “Call Me Ziba”.

“Hasti” is about a twelve-year-old girl from Abadan, who is unlike any other teenage girl in her city. While the conservative society expects girls her age to play with dolls, do needlework and dream of their wedding days, Hasti dresses like boys, rides on motorbikes and plays soccer with boys.

“Call Me Ziba” is about a young girl who wants to help her father escape from a mental hospital to celebrate her birthday together.

## Zurich Film Festival picks two films from Iran



A scene from “Son-Mother”, a film by Mahnaz Mohammadi.

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Saeid Rustai’s drama “Just 6.5” and Mahnaz Mohammadi’s fiction-feature debut movie “Son-Mother” will be competing in the 15th Zurich Film Festival running from September 26 to October 6, the organizers have announced.

The two films will be screened in the official competition with American filmmaker Oliver Stone as the jury president.

Starring Payman Maadi, Navid Mohamadzadeh, Parinaz Izadyar and Farhad Aslani, “Just 6.5” shows a police group under the leadership of Samad who was assigned to arrest Nasser Khakzad, a major drug trafficker in Tehran.

“Son-Mother” is about a widow who works tirelessly at a factory, failing due to

the U.S. imposed sanctions, in the current era in Iran. She receives a marriage proposal that could mean financial security, but could also tear her family apart.

Starring Maryam Bubani, Raha Khodaryari and Shiva Ordui, “Son-Mother” is a co-production between Iran and the Czech Republic.

The official competition features the best cinematic discoveries from all over the world with 14 first, second and third directorial works competing for the Golden Eye Award.

Laura Bispuri from Italy, Ciro Guerra from Colombia, Sebastian Koch from Germany and Tiziana Soudani from Switzerland are other jury members of the international section.

## “Disappearance” director Ali Asgari selected for Bulgarian festival jury

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Ali Asgari, the Iranian director of acclaimed movie “Disappearance”, has been selected as a member of the jury of the 16th In the Palace International Short Film Festival in Varna, Bulgaria, the organizers have announced.

He is a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and his “Disappearance” was named best film the 28th Singapore International Film Festival in 2017. The film had its world premiere at the Venice

Film Festival and Toronto Film Festival.

UK-based Arab producer Faisal-Azam Qureshi, Contrast Films manager Katya Trichkova from Bulgaria, Swiss cinematographer Pascal Reinmann and Philip Ilson, the artistic director of the London Short Film Festival, are also among the members of the jury.

The Iranian films “The Sea Swells” by Amir Gholami, “Last Season” by Hamidreza Arashkia, and “One Person” by Mahbubeh Kalai will be screened in various sections of the festival, which will run from September 19 to 26.



Ali Asgari attends a photocall for his movie the “Disappearance” during the 74th Venice Film Festival at Sala Casino on September 8, 2017 in Venice, Italy. (Getty Images Europe/Vittorio Zunino Celotto)