



Iran monitoring all aerial moves in region **3**



Judiciary confirms Iran has detained 3 Australians **3**



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers seize two bronzes at World Wrestling C'ships **15**

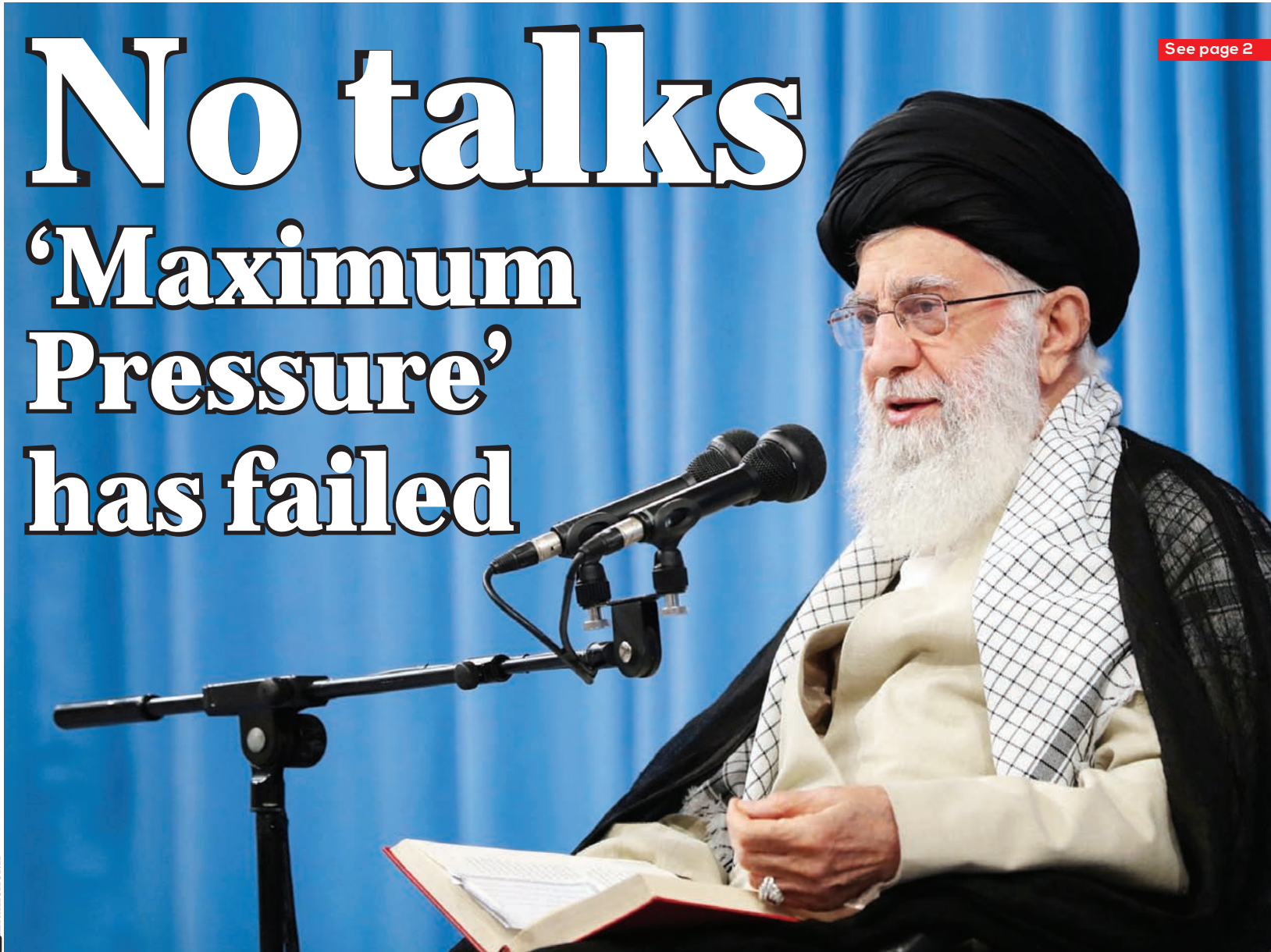


"Gold Runner", "Truck" shine at Duhok film festival **16**

No talks 'Maximum Pressure' has failed

See page 2

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SEPAM replaces SWIFT in banking transactions with Russia

TEHRAN — Central Bank of Iran (CBI)'s financial telecommunications system, known as SEPAM, has replaced the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) in the country's financial transactions with Russia, the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said on Monday.

According to Abdolnaser Hemmati, the

two countries won't be needing SWIFT for their trade transactions anymore, IRNA reported.

Referring to Iran's upcoming membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Hemmati also noted that the system [SEPAM] can also be used for trade exchanges with the union's member states for developing trade ties with them. **→4**

Foreign Ministry confirms Taliban visit to Iran

TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi confirmed on Tuesday a Taliban delegation's visit to Iran.

"Within the framework of the Islamic Republic of Iran's comprehensive consultations with all sides in Afghanistan, a political delegation of Taliban visited our country and discussed latest developments with related officials," he said.

The visit to Tehran was the second

foreign trip of the Taliban delegation. The first visit occurred in December 2018.

According to Fars, the Afghan group earlier paid a visit to Moscow, Russia.

The delegation, comprised of members of the Taliban's political bureau based in Qatar, visited Tehran on Monday for talks with senior Iranian officials on the latest developments surrounding the Afghan peace process, including the breakdown of U.S.-Taliban negotiations. **→2**

Ghani 'unhurt' as blast kills dozens at Afghan president's rally

TEHRAN — Taliban suicide bombers killed at least 48 people and wounded dozens more in two blasts Tuesday - one at a campaign rally for the president and the other in Kabul - with the insurgents warning of more violence ahead of elections.

The first attack saw a motorcyclist detonate a suicide bomb at a checkpoint leading to a rally where Pres-

ident Ashraf Ghani was addressing supporters in central Parwan province, just north of the capital, killing 26 and wounding 42.

Just over an hour later another blast also claimed by the Taliban rocked central Kabul near the US embassy. Authorities initially did not give casualty figures, but later said 22 people had been killed and a further 38 wounded. **→13**

U.S. Iran policy unlikely to change dramatically with Bolton ouster: Jahanpour

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Professor Farhang Jahanpour, a part-time tutor on Middle Eastern affairs in the Department of Continuing Education at the University of Oxford, says "although Bolton led the most extreme stance against Iran in the Trump administration, he certainly was not the only person to hold such views towards Iran."

Jahanpour, who was also a senior research Scholar at Harvard University, argues that "U.S. policy towards Iran is not likely to change very much as the result of Bolton's dismissal."

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ What is your assessment of John Bolton's

dismissal? Will the militant faction become a minority with his removal?

A: As is well-known, John Bolton was one of the most hawkish officials in the current U.S. administration. Even under President George W. Bush when the 9/11 attacks had created a strong feeling of nationalism and the desire for vengeance against the perpetrators of that crime, the U.S. Congress refused to ratify Bolton's nomination as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and he was appointed for a short time to that post during recess.

Bolton never saw a war that he did not like and he always pursued very hostile policies not only towards Iran, but also towards China, Russia, North Korea and even the European Union. His main policy was "bomb first, ask questions later."

He was the man who led the disastrous failed coup against President Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela, which greatly embarrassed the U.S. administration, while probably strengthening President Maduro.

Bolton sabotaged the nuclear deal with North Korea by saying that the only satisfactory deal would be one based on the Libyan model (where Colonel Qadhafi got rid of his rudimentary nuclear programme and was then attacked and killed). In an op-ed that Bolton penned in the Wall Street Journal in February 2018, entitled "The Legal Case for Striking North Korea First", he argued that the threat from North Korea was imminent and the United States had to launch a preventive war before it was too late. **→11**

'U.S. might topple Saudi Arabia as the world's top oil exporter sooner than planned'

By Zahra Mirzafarjouyan

TEHRAN (MNA) — Commenting on recent drone attack on Saudi Aramco Mehmet Ogutcu says prior to this attack, the U.S. was planning to double its crude oil exports to 9 million barrels per day by 2024. That means the U.S. might topple Saudi Arabia as the world's top oil exporter sooner than planned.

Following drone attacks on Saudi oil plants, the White House said on Saturday that the United States was committed to keeping oil markets well-supplied in the wake of an attack on Saudi Arabian oil plants by Yemen.

According to some sources in Saudi Arabia, its return to full oil supply capacity after Saturday's attacks on Aramco oil plants could take "weeks not days".

An attack on Saudi oil facilities on Saturday is believed to have disrupted half the country's production capacity, making the United States the only real holder of the global supply cushion via its ability to raise own output or to soften sanctions against other major oil producers.

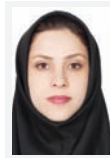
Some believe that it surely is no coincidence the U.S. is targeting virtually every major energy producer from Iran, Venezuela, and Russia, but also including its own "allies" such as Saudi Arabia.

We reached out to Mehmet Ogutcu, Chairman of London Energy Club to shed more light on the issue.

Referring to the drone attacks on Saudi oil plants, he said, "I believe that we have experienced the "Pearl Harbour of the oil industry"

on 14 September. Saudi Aramco lost about 5.7 million barrels per day of output after 10 unmanned aerial vehicles struck the world's biggest crude-processing facility in Abqaiq and the Kingdom's second-biggest oil field in Khurais."

"The drone attack, removing 5 percent of the global oil production, will be remembered as a watershed incident in the world oil history. Its impact will be severely felt not only for a few weeks when damaged Saudi oil installations will be repaired and crude supplies will start flowing again business as usual. The impact will be much longer. The world's largest oil exporter is vulnerable and its air defense system has proven to be ineffective," he added. **→11**



ARTICLE
Mahnaz Abdi
Head of the TehranTimes
Economy Desk

IRICA expediting, facilitating customs processes

Last month, Iran's Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dehpasand in a directive addressing the head of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) obliged the customs administration to take measures for facilitating customs processes. The directive set a deadline for IRICA to take the necessary actions.

The directive was in line with improving business condition for the enterprises and promoting foreign trade. Some of the items included in the directive come as follows.

- Setting up a strategic committee within two months to take necessary measures for stable promotion of electronic systems and expediting the process of data registration and permit control

- Improving the system of commodity code
- Revising management indices especially for production units and basic and necessary goods

- Putting the declarations of basic and necessary goods in "green path" for rapid clearance

- Developing the single-window system (a trade facilitation idea enabling cross-border traders to submit regulatory documents at a single location and/or single entity)

Also, following a previous directive by President Hassan Rouhani, IRICA is providing new facilities for importers of basic goods which makes them able to clear their commodities in less than an hour, as last month announced by IRICA Deputy Director Mehrdad Jamal Orounagi.

The official said that for the 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.

Expediting and facilitating customs processes had been already started in Shahid Rajaei Port, Iran's largest container port located in the southern province of Hormozgan, before issuance of the mentioned directives.

In late June, the acting head of Hormozgan Customs Department announced about 10 measures taken by the customs office of Shahid Rajaei Port for expediting and facilitating the clearance process especially for the commodities required in the production sectors. **→4**



ARTICLE
Yurum Abdullah Weiler
Analyst and journalist

Yemeni retaliation on Saudi oil facilities checkmates Trump

"We promise the Saudi regime that our future operations will expand further and be more painful than ever as long as it continues its aggression and siege."

—Yemeni Armed Forces spokesman

Brigadier General Yahya Sari

In a highly coordinated retaliatory attack deep inside Saudi Arabia, Yemeni Armed Forces targeted Aramco oil refineries at Buqayq and Khurais on September 14, 2019. Ten drones carried out the sophisticated operation, which has effectively reduced Saudi output by 50 percent and the global oil supply by 5 percent, raising the specter of \$100 a barrel oil prices once again. The Houthi strike came at a time when the oil giant was preparing for a public stock offering "as soon as possible" according to Saudi Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman.

For his part, Mike Pompeo, the Trump regime's diplomatic hitman, blamed Iran for the astonishingly well-executed operation, calling it "an unprecedented attack on the world's energy supply." Concurring and always ready to blame Iran for the results of failed U.S. policies, chicken hawk senator Lindsey Graham threatened, "It is now time for the U.S. to put on the table an attack on Iranian oil refineries if they continue their provocations or increase nuclear enrichment." In response to these spurious accusations and threats, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote, "Having failed at 'max pressure' US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo turning to 'max deceit'."

The Saudis have blamed Iran for the attack on their country's oil facilities out of embarrassment due to their inability to achieve their geopolitical goals despite U.S. backing. One must ask, how is it possible for the heavily-armed Saudis, awash in U.S. weaponry, appear weak and impotent in their military operations against the Houthi rebels? Why weren't the sophisticated Saudi air defenses able to intercept the Houthi drones before reaching their targets? Ineptitude on the part of the Saudis is unacceptable, so Iran must be to blame. This is the mindset of the rulers in Riyadh, who are likely wondering if their Washington ally will come to their rescue. **→3**



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Stationery packages sent for underprivileged students

Barekat Charity Foundation dispatched 250,000 school bags and stationery packages to be distributed among underprivileged students nationwide.

In a ceremony held on Tuesday, the foundation also inaugurated 120 schools in deprived areas across the country.

Empowering breadwinner women; implementing infrastructure projects such as establishing water and electricity supply networks and building roads; constructing schools and increasing educational spaces; promoting health for all; granting non-repayable loans and offering insurance services especially in less developed areas and regions affected by natural disasters are among priorities of the charity foundation.

U.S. Congresswoman says Trump's information about Iran cannot be trusted

By staff and agency

U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar has said that President Donald Trump administration's information about Iran cannot be trusted. "I think we should make sure that the American people understand that this administration that lies about weather maps or crowd sizes cannot be trusted to give us the full information we need to be able to make a decision whether we should be going to war with Iran," she told CNN in an interview aired on Monday.

Omar was referring to Trump's wrong claim in September that Alabama was set to be hit by Hurricane Dorian which was quickly refuted by the National Weather Service office in Birmingham Alabama, which tweeted that Alabama would "NOT" see any effects from Dorian.

By crowd size, she was referring to Trump's remarks in August in which he boasted about the number of people at his rally in New Hampshire. Omar added, "We are not in a position to think about another endless war and I really hope that our colleagues in Congress are going to pressure this administration to take a step back and figure out how we use diplomacy in de-escalating the situation."

"Congress has the constitutional right to declare war. The president does not have it. Secretary of State [Mike Pompeo] does not have it," she noted. In a tweet on Monday, Omar pointed to Washington's withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and said that Trump should be held accountable. "This administration reneged on the Iran nuclear deal, put in place crippling sanctions and is now openly threatening war. We must hold this President accountable and avoid another reckless war!" she tweeted.

Following Yemeni drone attacks on oil installations in Saudi Arabia on Saturday, Pompeo blamed Iran for the attacks and Trump indirectly threatened Iran with military attack. He tweeted on Sunday, "Saudi Arabia oil supply was attacked. There is reason to believe that we know the culprit, are locked and loaded depending on verification, but are waiting to hear from the Kingdom as to who they believe was the cause of this attack, and under what terms we would proceed!"

Wendy Sherman, the former undersecretary of state for political affairs who led the U.S. negotiating team that concluded the Iran nuclear agreement, noted on Monday that Trump has not the authority to go to war with Iran. "The Senate is considering language, similar to House passed, affirming @realDonaldTrump does not have authority to go to war w/Iran under existing AUMF. Now would be a good time for the Senate and Congress to step up," Sherman tweeted.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday that the United States' failed policy of maximum pressure on Iran has turned into "maximum deceit". "Having failed at 'maximum pressure', Secretary Pompeo is turning to 'maximum deceit'," Zarif tweeted.

He said blaming Iran for the dangers ensuing the Saudi-led war on Yemen "won't end the disaster".

Environment has suffered from sanctions: Kalantari

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian environment has not also remained unharmed from sanctions, head of Iran's Department of Environment said on Tuesday.

Isa Kalantari made the remarks during a meeting with Austrian ambassador to Tehran Stefan Scholz.

Kalantari criticized Europeans for failing to abide by their commitments to the nuclear deal after the U.S. abandoned the agreement and imposed sanctions.



"Our view was that the Europe is quite independent from the United States... but it was proven that with the exit of the United States, Europe also reached a deadlock," the environment chief lamented.

Kalantari added, "It is regrettable that environment is paying the cost of imposed sanctions."

After the conclusion of the nuclear agreement, known as the JCPOA, Iran signed a number of agreements with other countries, especially Europeans, for environment protection and water conservation.

"Sanctions have caused various problems for Iran's environment which has led to unsustainable use of the country's resources over the past 50 years," said Kalantari, a former agriculture minister.

"Using almost 100 percent of underground water resources, turning pastures to farmlands, and irregular grazing have caused many problems for Iran's wildlife and environment," Kalantari explained.

Scholz said that Austria is ready to cooperate with Iran in area of protecting environment.

Merkel urges return to Iran nuclear deal to defuse tensions

German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Tuesday called for a return to an international deal on Iran's nuclear program as the only way to defuse tensions in the Middle East, Reuters reported.

Speaking at a news conference with Jordan's King Abdullah in Berlin, Merkel suggested other issues which the West has differences with Iran such as Tehran's missile program should be addressed separately.

"...there is also a long list of other burdens coming from Iran like the ballistic missiles program and its engagement in Syria," she said. "In recent days tensions in the region rose and Germany will always be in favor of de-escalation and long-term solutions are only possible through a political process."

EU action to save JCPOA has been just on paper: Salehi

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar **d e s k** Salehi, the chief the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI), has said that the European Union's action to save the 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the JCPOA, was good but just on the paper.

Salehi made the comments in interview with the national TV after addressing the 63rd regular session of International Atomic Energy Agency General Conference in Vienna on Monday.

Addressing the conference, Salehi said the international community must unanimously condemn the United States' destructive behavior toward the JCPOA and its economic terrorism against Iran.

Salehi also expressed regret that despite "such an unprecedented record of verification and transparency in the history of the IAEA, and the principled position of Iran on nuclear weapons, the nuclear deal has been called by the U.S. administration, the worst of the deals in the history of that country."

Following is an excerpt of Salehi's interview with the national TV:

As it was said JCPOA was a critical agreement that it signed based on an international understanding. It really was a political achievement. Iran never wants to collapse the agreement. Unfortunately, it was the



U.S. government that by withdrawing from the JCPOA put it in a dilemma. The EU had promised to make up the damages of the U.S. action (sanctions) but they didn't do enough on this. They were good on the paper but we didn't see any useful actions in practice.

So after a year of enduring this damage and

disturbance on the JCPOA in the international arena, with its "strategic patience" Iran has decided to make a balance in the agreement based on articles 37 and 37.

We have declared that the JCPOA is not a one-way agreement but it is a two-way one. If it should be in force all the sides should abide by

Ayatollah Khamenei: No negotiations with U.S. at any level

Washington's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran has failed, Leader notes

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Tuesday that there will be no negotiations between Iran and the United States at any level or any place.

"All officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran unanimously agree that there will be no negotiations with America at any level either in New York or any other place," the Leader told his theology students.

He noted that the U.S. seeks to impose its demands through negotiations and prove that "policy of maximum pressure" against Iran has worked.

"Policy of maximum pressure against the Iranian people is quite worthless and all the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran unanimously believe that there will be no talks with the United States at any level," he said.

The Leader noted that there should be no reliance on foreign countries and attached great importance to people and domestic capacities to solve problems.

"Of course, I do not mean that we should

cut relations with other governments around the world. We favor relations and talks, yet, the affairs of the country should not be dependent on our foreign relations. Benefit from the facilities of the world, as much as you can, but the cure is inside the country, and the problems can only be solved by the people," he pointed out.

Ayatollah Khamenei said that Washington seeks to impose its "imprudent demands" through negotiations and does not seek to find a fair and just solution.

"Sometimes they say that they seek talks with no pre-condition and sometimes they set 12 conditions for talks. Such remarks whether come from their turbulent politics or are a trick to confuse the other side. However, the Islamic Republic of Iran will not be confused, because our path is clear and we know what we are doing," he said.

In an indirect reference to Saudi Arabia, Ayatollah Khamenei said that Washington

should go and hold talks with those who act like "milk cow".

"The United States pursues the policy of maximum pressure against Iran through various sanctions, intimidation, and distorted claims, because the current government of the United States believes that the Islamic Republic cannot be brought to its knees, humiliated, and made to submit through any indirect approach," he said.

Elsewhere, Ayatollah Khamenei said that the U.S. seeks to prove that the only way to deal with Iran is applying policy of maximum pressure.

"Our dear nation will never see peace if enemy be able to prove that maximum pressure works on Iran. Because, this policy will become the default basis of every other oppressive policy of the United States, and after that every time they make a new outrageous demand to the Islamic Republic, we would either have to accept and be done with

their commitments. So we made these three steps.

I tried in my speech in IAEA's general conference to awaken their conscience that what should have we done after the withdrawal of the U.S. from the JCPOA? And what should we have done with these maximum pressure? I asked the representatives who were participating in the General conference that what would they have done if they were us?

We are keen that the international community make a fair judgment on U.S. behaviors. And we tried to enlighten the situation and as you saw the U.S. representative was so angry and outlined subjects that had nothing to do with the General Conference agenda. She pointed to political and the regional issues and it is obvious that the U.S. is suffering from a comprehensive political mess to expose its positions. And I think that if you look at the EU's statement it was a good answer to the U.S. envoy's speech.

As I said what Iran has done was practical and good and reversible. The EU is also doing its best as they say. They say that the U.S. is a country which is superpower in technology and fiscal fields and created obstacles to EU not to cooperate with Iran. But Iran's President Hassan Rouhani with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron are consulting to lift obstacles and save the JCPOA.

Ayatollah Khamenei says "the cure (to problems) is inside the country."

Foreign Ministry confirms Taliban visit to Iran

1 → Iran has been repeatedly saying that it attaches high value to Afghanistan as its eastern neighbor. Iran has also been insisting that peace talks in Afghanistan will not succeed without the involvement of the central government.

According to Press TV, a senior Taliban leader in Qatar had earlier said, "The purpose of these visits is to inform leaders of these countries about the peace talks and [U.S.]

President [Donald] Trump's decision to call off the peace process at a time when both sides had resolved all outstanding issues and were about to sign a peace agreement."

U.S. President Donald Trump canceled high-level talks with the group last week, citing a deadly bomb blast in Kabul that also left an American soldier dead.

After nine rounds of negotiations in Doha, which began in October 2018, American and Taliban officials agreed a

draft accord that would have seen some 5,000 U.S. troops withdrawn from Afghanistan in exchange for security guarantees from the Taliban.

However, Trump cancelled the talks in a move that surprised the Taliban leaders.

The group said that an agreement had been "finalized" and that discussions had ended in "a good atmosphere," but the deal had been sabotaged by Trump.

Rouhani, Abe to meet in New York

By staff and agency

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Tuesday he would meet Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in New York in the current month.

It was during a meeting with members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party that Abe repeated his intention of speaking with Rouhani on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, according to NHK.

Abe has said that the chief motive behind his efforts to meet with Iranian leaders is to deescalate tension in the Persian Gulf region.

Since abandoning the international nuclear deal with Iran in 2018, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington will apply economic and military pressure against Iran.

The United States has sent aircraft carriers, B-52 bombers, F-22 stealth fighters, and troops to the region to counter what it calls Iran's destabilizing behavior in the Middle East.

On August 30, Abe said that he plans to do everything he can to ease tension in the Middle East region and wants to talk with Rouhani on the sidelines of the UN General

Assembly session.

"Peace and stability in the Middle East directly links to Japan's national interest," Reuters quoted Abe 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," he said.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Abe met in Yokohama, near Tokyo, on August 28.

According to Reuters, Zarif said that Iran is not seeking to increase tension but every country should be able to enjoy its rights under international law.

"As our president has said, we are not at all seeking heightened tensions," Zarif said, speaking through a translator.

He said, "We believe every country should be able to enjoy its rights under international law."

According to The Mainichi, Zarif said, "Iran welcomes the Japanese government's role (in trying) to ease tensions in the Middle East."

Abe said, "Japan will persistently continue our diplomatic efforts to deal with rising tensions in the Middle East and stabilize the current situation."

Pointing to his meeting with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in June, Abe said that Ayatollah Khamenei promised that Iran does not seek nuclear weapons. Abe visited Tehran on June 12 for a two-day visit.

During a meeting with Abe on June 13, Ayatollah Khamenei dismissed U.S. President Donald Trump as a person not worthy of exchanging messages with.

Abe visited Iran after a meeting with President Trump in Tokyo. He said he was carrying a message from Trump for dialogue with Iran.

However, Ayatollah Khamenei said Iran has "no trust" in the U.S. and will not at all "repeat the bitter experience" it gained from the negotiations that led to the conclusion of the nuclear deal (officially called the JCPOA), which Washington later ditched.

During a joint press conference with Rouhani



on June 12, Abe said he will use his country's "utmost effort" to deescalate tension in the Persian Gulf and the wider Middle East region.

"Japan will use its utmost effort to reduce tension in the region," he said.

Abe said, "Increase in tensions in the region must be contained at any price, and Japan can play a quite constructive role in this regard."

"Peace and stability of the Middle East region is essential not only for the prosperity of this region, but also for the prosperity of the entire world," Abe noted.

Envoy: UK court rejects U.S. request to sentence Iran

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Ambassador to London Hamid Baedinejad said that the UK supreme court has rejected a U.S. lawsuit against Iran, as U.S. court rulings against other countries do not work in the UK.

"The U.S. lawyers' demand to sentence Iran to pay at least \$512 million to compensate for U.S. military personnel casualties in the Saudi Khobar base (Heiser Case) was rejected after

seven years," Baedinejad wrote on his Twitter account.

He noted that the UK supreme court said that it does not consider claims made by the U.S. lawyers against the other countries.

In a relevant development earlier, Baedinejad had commented on the Canadian Government ruling to sell a part of Iran's properties in that country, saying that the decision is contrary to

the international laws.

Regarding the Canadian Government's decision to seize Iran's properties, spokesman of Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Abbas Mousavi said in his weekly press conference on Monday that such a decision was made two years ago, but Iran warned them not to do so.

The verdict is clearly violating the international laws, and Iran reserves the right to defend itself.

The necessary steps have been taken, he said.

Canada has gifted some \$30 million worth of Iranian assets to the victims of terrorist attacks in which Iran says has not been involved.

The victims have received their share of the money earned through the sale of two Iranian-owned buildings in Ottawa and Toronto, a document filed in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in August reveals.

Rouhani proposes solutions to inspire life into Syria

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — In a trilateral meeting on Syria with his Russian and Turkish counterparts in Ankara on Monday, the Iranian president stressed a few points to help revitalize the war-torn Syria.

The return of refugees to Syria, non-interference of foreign countries in Syria's affairs, fighting terrorism, facilitating humanitarian aid to the Syrian people, and helping the formation of a constitution were among the points emphasized by Hassan Rouhani.

It was the fifth summit of its kind attended by Hassan Rouhani, Vladimir Putin, and Recep Tayyip Erdogan as the host.

The full text of Rouhani's address to the summit follows:

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to my brother Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the honorable President of Turkey, for hosting the fifth summit of Astana Peace Process Guarantors, and appreciate the Turkish government and noble nation's hospitality.

At the outset, I would like to reiterate the common principles on the Syrian issue:

Preservation of Syria's integrity and territorial integrity, respect for national sovereignty and independence; and the non-interference of foreigners in its internal affairs, which have always been emphasized by us, must be taken seriously and all the necessary grounds for restoring stability, security and peace to the country must be provided.

Our most important agenda is to evaluate the efforts of the three countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey to end the Syrian crisis through peaceful means, fighting terrorism, assisting in the formation of a constitutional committee, return of refugees, exchange of detainees and abductees, improvement of humanitarian outreach, reconstruction as well as evaluation of international efforts in this field.

Now, two and a half years after the beginning of this process, in addition to its new results and achievements, we are witnessing the growth and strengthening of its position and influence in helping Syria and the international community to overcome its problems and tensions.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, as in the past, believes that there is only a political solution to the Syrian crisis, and this can only be achieved through constructive interaction and participation by all Syrian people. The Syrian government and people - with all the diversity - are able to go through this crucial and, of course, dangerous path by themselves. The Islamic Republic of Iran has emphasized from the outset the inefficiency of a military solution to ending this crisis, and this fact is still true.

Now, after nearly nine years of the Syrian crisis, and based on the experiences gained, we still believe that the vision of regime change that some used to sought has failed. The Syrian crisis and other similar crises in the region must be resolved by peaceful means and by their own people. Our efforts over the past few years, and especially after focusing our



Rouhani proposes “re-enacting the 1998 Adana Agreement between Syria and Turkey could be a good model for resolving both sides’ concerns and starting the end of a bitter era.”

activities on the Astana Process, have always been based on facilitating the process of dialogue and encouraging government and opposition to join it.

The fight against terrorism, especially ISIS, al-Qaeda and their affiliated groups, must continue in order to eliminate them completely in Syria. Of course, the health and safety of civilians should never be compromised. At the same time, the terrorists must not be allowed to use people as a human shield in a cowardly way. A proper solution must be found to save the innocent civilians who are in the hands of terrorists.

On such days last year, representatives of our partners in the Astana Process signed the Idlib Agreement in Sochi, and we also backed the agreement in the hope of driving the terrorists out and restoring Syrian government's control over the terrorist-controlled areas. Undoubtedly, one of the main goals of the Guarantors of the Astana Process in supporting its implementation was avoiding a widespread humanitarian crisis in the Idlib region. But the deal did not go as planned. Unfortunately, a few days after its signing, the terrorist-controlled areas not only did not decrease, but also increased unbelievably. This situation confirms the fact that terrorists must never be given the opportunity to abuse the field to their own advantage.

We have come together for the fifth

time to evaluate the way we have come and make important decisions for the future that can help the Syrian people in portraying their future away from any foreign pressure and interference.

The common principles we emphasize are the continuation of the fight against terrorism to eradicate this disaster, dialogue and reconciliation, reducing tensions, reforming the constitution, return of refugees, exchange of detainees and rebuilding of Syria. A free and independent Syria, one that is not threatened by others or a base against others; a Syria away from foreign occupation and threat and free from terrorism; a united Syria, integrated with the preservation of the territorial integrity and national sovereignty, one in which each of its children have their inherent, natural and citizenship rights. And in this way, only the Syrian people will decide for their future and others should not be allowed to interfere in their internal affairs.

I emphasize an important point:

The increased cooperation of the three guarantors can be a key guarantee in resolving the Syrian crisis and other regional crises. Foreigners are leaving this region today or tomorrow, but we've been, are, and will be neighbors.

Re-enacting the 1998 Adana Agreement between Syria and Turkey could be a good model for resolving both sides' concerns and

“The illegitimate presence of American troops on the Syrian soil jeopardizes its territorial integrity and national sovereignty as an independent UN member state,” the president laments.

starting the end of a bitter era.

Unlike other processes related to the Syrian crisis, the Astana Process has not sought to divide Syrian parties. Its main approach has always focused on resolving disputes through constructive interaction and trying to find a peaceful solution to the Syrian crisis. At the same time, the Astana Process has not been designed in contrast to other processes and initiatives.

The illegitimate presence of American troops on the Syrian soil jeopardizes its territorial integrity and national sovereignty as an independent UN member state.

The American President spoke last year about his decision to return his country's troops from Syria, but the result was just like his other promises. Statement that have neither been realized in the past, nor will be realized in the future.

Once again emphasize that the American troops must leave the area as soon as possible and that the Syrian government's control must expand in the east and north of the Euphrates, as in the rest of Syria.

The return of Syrian refugees from neighboring and non-neighboring countries and internally displaced persons to their homes can be a source of blessing to the host and the guest.

Postponing the start of the reconstruction process and making it conditional on interventionist political considerations that did not materialize during the war would only prolong the crisis and cause more harm to the Syrian people.

Accordingly, it is essential to facilitate the return of Syrian refugees to their homes as soon as possible and assist the Syrian people and government in rebuilding the country on the basis of the Syrian people's desire to eradicate past hostilities and build the future.

Revising and reforming the current Syrian constitution based on the will of the people of Syria can be an important step towards ending the current crisis. The efforts of the three countries and the UN Secretary-General's representative have made significant progress in the process of forming a constitutional committee. It is necessary to commend the constructive cooperation and engagement of the Syrian government in this field.

The Zionist Regime has increased the number of its acts of aggression on the Syrian soil in recent months, and its officials have claimed responsibility for the aggressions and have extended their attacks to Iraq and Lebanon. These attacks are a clear example of provocative and illegal hostile acts that can cause widespread tension and conflict in the region. Obviously, governments and nations in the region have the right, in accordance with the UN Charter, to defend themselves against such acts of aggression, while unfortunately international organizations do not respond appropriately to these aggressions.

At the end, I would like to thank the Honorable President of Turkey, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, as well as the Turkish government, officials and great nation once again for hosting this important meeting.

Iranian and British chief diplomats hold phone talks on pressing issues

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab held a phone conversation on pressing issues on Tuesday afternoon.

According to the Iranian Foreign Ministry's website, Zarif and Raab talked about the latest bilateral ties, developments over the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), consular affairs, as well as recent developments in Yemen.

Judiciary confirms Iran has detained 3 Australians

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The Judiciary on Tuesday confirmed the detention of three Australian citizens that had been announced last week by the Australian government.

“Two of them had taken pictures of military facilities and restricted areas and the photos are available on the memory of the camera that have been detected,” Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili said, according to the Judiciary news agency Mizan.

The third person was arrested for spying for a third country, the spokesman added.

“The court will decide whether this person (detained for spying) is guilty or not.”

Esmaili did not identify the detained people and gave no details about when they had been arrested.

The Australian Foreign Ministry last week said it was providing consular assistance to the families of three Australians detained in Iran after Britain's Times newspaper reported that two British-Australian women and the Australian boyfriend of one of them had been detained in Iran.

The newspaper did not identify the dual British-Australians at the request of the British Foreign Office and said the Australian government was taking the lead in both cases.

“One of the Australians was arrested for spying for a third country and the other two had taken photos of military facilities and restricted areas”

Commander: Iran monitoring all aerial moves in region

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — The second-in-command of the Khatam al-Anbia Air Defense Base has said his forces, equipped with the most state-of-the-art systems and radars, monitor the moves of all flying objects in the region.

“The integrated air defense network precisely monitors all air moves in the region fully and vigilantly,” Brigadier General Qader Rahimzadeh told FNA on Tuesday.

Given the equipment of the country's integrated air defense system with various radars that operate in different frequencies, there is no spot in Iran that is not covered by our integrated system, he said, adding that Iranian experts have also manufactured mobile radars to be used in any place and under any condition if necessary.

General Rahimzadeh underlined that operational durability, equipment with special systems for resistance and confrontation against any electronic jamming attempts by enemies are the clear specifications of the Iranian radars.

He further declared that Iran is in the final stages of testing its home-made low-altitude air defense system named “Oqab (Eagle)”, adding that the country has also made good progress in developing weapons to target flying objects with laser power.

General Rahimzadeh said enemies are aware of Iran's military capabilities and have arrived at the conclusion that they will receive a crushing response from the country in case of a slight aggression, adding that the Islamic Republic has displayed its power to them on several occasions so far.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Aerospace Force shot down an American spy drone over the territorial waters of Iran near the Strait of Hormuz at dawn on June 20.

After the incident, U.S. President Donald Trump said the U.S. Air Force was “cocked and loaded” to attack three Iranian targets, but he called off the strike with 10 minutes to spare after being told that the airstrike might kill as many as 150 people.

Trump said in a series of tweets that he decided that the death toll was not a proportionate response to the Iranian downing of a U.S. spy drone off the Iranian coast.

After Trump's remarks, IRGC Aerospace Force Commander Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh said that his forces could have shot down a U.S. P8 aircraft with 35 on board which was violating Iran's airspace, but decided to shoot down the drone to only send a message to Washington.

“We intended to send a message to American terrorists in the region,” Brigadier General Hajizadeh said, adding that his forces had also traced a military P8 aircraft violating the airspace of Iran.

“Along with the American drone was an American P8 aircraft with 35 on board, and it was also violating our airspace and we could have downed it too,” he said, adding, “But we did not do (shoot down) it, because our aim was to warn the terrorist American forces.”

General Hajizadeh also stressed that Iran was not after war but was fully ready to defend itself, adding that the fate of the downed U.S. spy drone was waiting for any intruding flying object.

“Our response to anything trespassing Iranian territory is like this, and if such acts of aggression are repeated, our response will also be the same,” General Hajizadeh said.

“We don't embrace war but we are ready to fully defend the country,” he said.

“We possess a collection of American drones which is a proof that America has violated Iran's airspace and shows that they don't want to respect international law,” General Hajizadeh said.

“If such an aggression is repeated, we will add other American (military) products to complete this collection,” he said.



Leader's top aide calls for maintaining security, peace by regional states

(FNA) — Iranian Supreme Leader's top adviser for international affairs Ali Akbar Velayati underlined the need for restoration of security and peace to the region by regional states themselves without any foreign interference.

“For example, Afghanistan's neighbors such as Iran, India, Pakistan and Central Asia can have good cooperation to

guarantee security in the country and region. Securing peace and stability in the region needs to be addressed without foreign interference,” Ali Akbar Velayati said in a meeting with Indian Foreign Secretary Vijay Keshav Gokhale in Tehran on Monday.

He, meantime, called for proper settlement of the humanitarian crisis in Kashmir without other countries' interference.

Gokhale, for his part, stressed that India's ties with Iran are very important, because Iran holds important position in the world.

The two officials called for further development of bilateral ties.

Gokhale is currently on a visit to Tehran within the context of the 16th political dialogue between Iran and India.

Yemeni retaliation on Saudi oil facilities checkmates Trump

1 → In reality, Iran's influence within Yemen is at best marginal, and certainly the Houthis are not aligned with the Islamic Republic in a manner such that they could be termed proxies. The main ignitor of the raging fire of conflict in Yemen is Saudi Arabia, whose de-facto leader, Mohammad bin Salman (MBS), made the misguided decision to invade the country in March 2015 to restore the exiled government of Abd Rabbu Mansour al-Hadi. While the western narrative accusing the Islamic Republic of aligning with the Shi'a Houthis strictly due to religious considerations simply does not hold up to a closer examination, Iran does, of course, cultivate ties with non-state actors who are in opposition to the U.S.-Israeli-Saudi regional hegemonic axis. For their part, the Houthis have the same goal as in the 1990s when the movement was born, and that is for increased autonomy, but not necessarily independence, from the central government.

Trump, being the draft-dodging, bellicose blowhard that he is, announced he is “locked and loaded” for a military operation, presumably against Iran, for which he is busy manufacturing consent. The argument being put forth is that the Houthi Ansar Allah forces lack the expertise to pull off the missile attack, which impacted 17 different points within the critical infrastructure of Aramco's Abqaiq oil processing facility in Buqyaq. U.S. officials claim that, based on

satellite imagery of the 19-odd impact points at both targets, the projectiles most likely originated in Iraq or Iran. Such an argument underscores the enduring colonial mindset of western officials, who readily accept as axiomatic that Ansar Allah is made up of backward, tribal people who could never carry out such a sophisticated attack. Nevertheless, some unnamed, but perhaps more enlightened, U.S. officials conceded that the trajectories could have originated in Yemen.

Regardless of the origin of the drone attack, its execution and timing display a brilliant sense of strategic thinking and planning, as well as a profound grasp of tactics. Think about it for a moment: with comparatively low-tech weaponry at their disposal and at relatively modest cost, resistance fighters of Ansar Allah, or their backers as the case may be, were able to take a critical Aramco oil production facility off line and cut Saudi oil output by 50%, all in a military “op” that did not take a single human life. Global oil markets have surged in reaction to fears of shortages, if the imbroglio escalates, while the White House has announced its intention to release oil from the U.S. strategic petroleum reserves, an indication that U.S. political leaders fear a worldwide economic slowdown should crude prices take off.

According to U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, “The global growth

outlook has been deteriorating since the middle of last year.” So given the sluggishness of the world's economy, which, according to the International Monetary Fund, is being held back by “rising trade uncertainty,” any further escalation of tensions in the Persian Gulf may be sufficient to initiate a global recession. With the IMF World Trade Uncertainty Index already at levels exceeding previous records by an order of magnitude, the Washington warmongers must be fully aware that initiating any military action against Tehran would come with an extremely high economic cost. Trump himself has indicated his awareness of this reality by his remarks on Twitter that he is “waiting to hear from the Kingdom as to who they believe was the cause of this attack and under what terms we would proceed!”

And then there are the coming U.S. elections in November of 2020 and, of course politicians are already on the campaign trail stumping for re-election. Trump is no different in this regard, having organized numerous campaign rallies in anticipation of his re-election. Currently engaged in a vigorous trade war with China, the current occupant of the Oval Office is desperately in need of some positive economic news to parade before American voters. From this fact, we can conclude that starting a war with Iran, and its ugly economic consequences, is most likely not a viable option if Trump wants to be re-elected. This explains why, so

far, the White House reaction to the Ansar Allah military strike has been vague and subdued.

But then the bellicose, anti-Iran rhetoric, which the former reality TV star and his B Team less Bolton has relentlessly regurgitated since his initial presidential campaign speeches, seems to resonate with a significant portion of his electoral base. Along with Pompeo and Bolton, Trump has been upping the rhetorical ante with Iran to the point where if he does not respond militarily to Ansar Allah's successful retaliatory raid on Aramco's oil processing facilities in Saudi Arabia, he will look decidedly weak and foolish. The director of the Future of Iran Initiative at the Atlantic Council, Barbara Slavin, noted that Trump has been “[r]ejected again and embarrassed by the escalation in the Persian Gulf his policies have incentivized,” and is likely to do more of the same. Trump certainly appears to engage in behavior that Slavin previously dubbed “head-snapping schizophrenia” after his pontifical performance at the U.N. in September 2018.

In short, Trump has checkmated himself. He must do what he cannot afford to do militarily or economically, but if he does it, namely launch an attack on Iranian oil facilities, he will risk causing a global recession, which will negatively impact the U.S. economy and hence his chances for re-election. Checkmate!

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	302082.0
IFX	3990.08

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,238 rials
GBP	52,135 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$66.58/b
WTI	\$61.74/b
OPEC Basket	\$60.02/b
Gold	\$1,502.15/oz
Silver	\$17.91/oz
Platinum	\$939.75/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Saleh appointed new head of Iranian Privatization Organization

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Alireza Saleh was appointed as the new head of Iranian Privatization Organization (IPO), IRIB reported.

Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Delpasand appointed Saleh to the post replacing Mir Ali Ashraf Abdollah Pouri-Hosseini.

Saleh previously served as deputy chief of the National Development Fund of Iran and also as the deputy head of the Planning and Budget Organization (PBO).

After Pouri-Hosseini's resignation in early August, Davoud Khani was appointed as IPO's acting head.

SEPAM replaces SWIFT in banking transactions with Russia

1 → The CBI governor also referred to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's meeting with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, on the sidelines of the fifth trilateral summit of Iran, Russia and Turkey in Ankara on Monday evening and said the banking ties between Tehran and Moscow were also discussed at the meeting.

Back in June, the Iranian parliament ratified an agreement that allows the administration to join a free trade zone with the EAEU countries.



The agreement, signed in Kazakhstan in May 2018, sets the main rules of trade between the EAEU, Iran and those of the World Trade Organization (WTO), of which Iran is not a member.

The free trade zone is planned to be in effect for four years, under which the EAEU will grant Iran tariff concessions on more than 500 items.

Russia's State Duma and the Federation Council had ratified the agreement to establish Iran-EAEU free trade zone in November 2018.

The Eurasian Economic Union includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia. Iran and EAEU members started to develop the agreement on the free trade in 2015, though the signing was postponed several times.

IRICA expediting, facilitating customs processes

1 → Making the remarks during a visit of some parliament members and IRICA senior officials to the port, Hossein Saeedi mentioned offering round-the-clock customs services and conducting required processes related to the exports and transit declarations day and night as one of the most important actions in this due.



While all these measures are some good news for the businessmen and enterprises, they have also brought some fruitful results.

On Monday, IRICA announced that the time of customs operations has decreased 46 percent for the imports and 39 percent for the exports processes in the country in 2019.

Now IRICA hopes that through more supports of the government and parliament it could play some more prominent role in expansion and facilitation of trade especially during the time of sanctions, reduce economic pressures on the country and support production and exports.

Iron ore concentrate output exceeds 19m tons in 5 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Production of iron ore concentrate in Iran during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 – August 22) reached 19.725 million tons, registering a four-percent rise compared to the same period last year, IRNA reported.

As reported, the data regarding the output of major mineral production companies released in the first five months of the current year indicated that in the same period, 17,640,479 tons of iron ore conglomerate was

produced, showing one percent decline as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

According to the statistics, 2.22 million tons of granulated iron ore was also produced in the first five months of the current year, showing a four-percent decline as compared to the last year's corresponding period.

Production of iron ore concentrate in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 – July 21) was reported to be 15.903 million tons, three percent less



than the figure for the same period last year.

Iran's export of iron ore concentrate rose 96.6 percent during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20), compared to the

preceding year.

The country exported 5.552 million tons of the product worth \$398 million during the mentioned period.

Iran, Turkey mulling over trade via national currencies: CBI governor

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — In a meeting between Iran and Turkey's presidents on Monday in Ankara, the two sides stressed expansion of economic and banking ties and emphasized the need for following up on a plan for trade via national currencies, the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said.

"Mutual talks between Iranian and Turkish Presidents, held today, majorly revolved around improvement of economic, trade and banking relations between the two sides besides improvement of bilateral trade volume and removal of banking difficulties, and in particular, development of cooperation between the central banks of the two countries to increase doing common monetary transactions through national currencies," CBI portal quoted Abdolnaser Hemmati as saying on social media.

According to Hemmati, the two sides also agreed that Turkey's central bank would hold training courses on open market operations for Iranian bankers.



Rouhani arrived in Turkey on Sunday night to take part in a trilateral meeting with his Russian and Turkish counterparts in order to discuss a political resolution to the crisis in Syria.

A delegation comprised of Iranian ministers of foreign affairs,

defense, energy, agriculture, the CEO of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and other Iranian top officials are accompanying Rouhani in this visit.

Earlier in April 2019, The Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said that Turkey is taking into account establishing new trade mechanisms with Iran, like the INSTEX system set up by European countries, to avoid the U.S. sanctions reimposed last year on exports of Iranian oil, Reuters has reported.

Cavusoglu reiterated Turkey's opposition to the sanctions and said Ankara and neighboring Iran needed to keep working to raise their bilateral trade to a target of \$30 billion, around triple current levels, according to Reuters.

"Along with the existing mechanisms, we evaluated how we can establish new mechanisms, like INSTEX...how we can remove the obstacles before us and before trade," Cavusoglu told a news conference after talks with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif.

UK GDP forecast down as no-deal threat increases

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) has dropped its UK GDP growth forecast for 2019 from 1.3% to 1.2%

According to [economia.icaew.com](#), a further cut from 1.0% to 0.8% in 2020 is now predicted but 2021 remains unchanged at 1.2% in 2021, said the business group.

It follows a similar downgraded economic outlook from ICAEW, which last week reduced its GDP predictions from 1.5% to 1.1%, against a background of continuing Brexit uncertainty, falling business investment and declining output.

"Our latest forecast shows a number of warning lights are flashing for the UK economy, even if we are able to avoid a messy and disorderly exit from the EU in just a few weeks' time," said Adam Marshall, director general of the BCC.

"There's no dancing round the fact that Brexit uncertainty has hit business investment hard. In addition to reaching a negotiated settlement with the EU, the government should be preparing big new incentives for business investment in the UK, and should reconfirm its unconditional backing for the big infrastructure projects our economy needs to unlock growth, he added.

Also today, the Institute of Directors (IOD) has called on the UK and EU to compromise to chart a way forward on Brexit. It says businesses are facing an "impossible situation."

Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his government have been steadfast in their willingness to attempt to push through no-



deal Brexit on October 31st if no agreement is struck, despite a bill passed in Parliament last week that aims to stop it.

The IOD's survey found that a slim majority would prefer a further extension of Article 50 over a no-deal Brexit, but that both options raised concerns among business leaders. Most would prefer a deal was agreed.

"Firms are facing an impossible situation as they try to prepare in advance for the possibility of simultaneous sweeping changes on an unprecedented level.

The idea of leaving the EU without a deal in place is certainly the bigger concern, but the prospect of repeated delays with no clear path forward is far from an appetizing prospect for enterprise," said Allie Renison, head of Europe and Trade Policy at the IOD.

Nearly a third of IOD members have started "engaging" with relocation as part of their Brexit contingency planning, with 14% indicating they had already moved operations or were in the process of doing so.

Swiss slash 2019 growth forecast as industry struggles

The Swiss government cut its 2019 growth forecast by a third on Tuesday, citing as risks the escalating trade war between China and the United States, the rising Swiss franc and the drastic slowdown in neighboring Germany.

As stated by [reuters.com](#), government economists now expect the country's economy to grow by 0.8% in 2019, down from the June forecast of 1.2% and well below the long-term average increase of 1.7%.

The government said it expects the Swiss economy to grow 1.7% in 2020, the same rate as the previous forecast.

"Weaker development than previously assumed is anticipated for the global economy and uncertainty is high, which is weighing on the export economy and investment," it said.

The government cited weak foreign demand in Germany, which was hitting sectors like the metal and machinery industry.

Companies like steelmaker Schmolz+Bichenbach (STLN.S) see weaker demand from automotive customers, with its order backlog shrinking by nearly a third since the end of 2018.

"Automotive customers are about half of our sales and this sector is really struggling. Germany was maybe the fastest to drop, but clearly this is all over the European carmakers now," Chief Financial Officer Matthias Wellhausen told Reuters.

■ Seeking higher productivity
The Lucerne-based company is seeking higher productivity and looking for extra

contracts for its steel mills. It has scrapped some shifts, introduced short-time working and extended its summer shutdown.

"We do see the destocking continuing, but eventually that will have to end and companies will buy new steel eventually," Wellhausen said at the end of last month.

The Swiss franc's rise is also curbing exports, the government said on Tuesday. Strength in the safe-haven currency makes Swiss exports more expensive abroad.

The Swiss National Bank, which has been battling against the strong franc for eight years, holds its quarterly policy review on Thursday.

Wellhausen said 30% of his company's costs were in francs but all its revenue was in euros. "But if I had only one wish, I'd ask for the volumes to come back," he said.

Another company hit is Autoneum (AUTON.S), which makes auto components to reduce sound and protect cars from heat. It swung to a 6 million franc first-half loss from a 60.1 million franc profit a year earlier.

The "global automotive recession is noticeable in lower volumes, which is leading to lower capacity utilization, especially in our European and Asian plants," Chief Executive Martin Hirzel said.

The company, which has a plant in eastern Switzerland, has cut costs, reduced temporary workers and frozen hiring.

"At the moment there is no sign of a market recovery in the short term," Hirzel said. The "markets and overall macroeconomic environment remain very challenging."

Malaysia upbeat on enhancing its global supply chain

Malaysia needs to halt the pre-mature deindustrialisation and reindustrialise in an effort to become an industrialised economy and join the ranks of the high-income economy.

As per [nst.co.my](#), Malaysian Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng said the government clearly has a role to play to boost Malaysia's investment numbers, while enhancing the country's position in the global supply chain.

"State interventions are required to improve national competitiveness, raise productivity, prioritise investment in strategic sectors, re-energise export-led industrialisation and structure market incentives around political goals of encouraging entrepreneurship," he said at the 2020 Budget focus group discussion with technology industry players in Kulim, Perak today.

Lim said the government did not forsake the free market and disavow trade liberalisation, provided that poorer countries were protected with favorable trade status, allowing them to compete.

"Deregulated finance must also protect minority shareholders and members of the public from predatory speculators and opportunists.

■ Zero-sum game

"Safeguard must be there to protect the losers of liberalisation, as we cannot live in a zero-sum game world," he added.

Lim said the ongoing trade war between China and the United States cannot be ignored.

The global upheaval provides Malaysia with an extra impetus to raise its competitiveness while ensuring its manufacturing bases, particularly the electrical & electronics (E&E) as it remains crucial to the reorienting global supply chain.

"We must understand Malaysia is not the only country



looking to capitalise on the reorientation. Economies like Thailand and Vietnam are eager to grab the opportunities to embed their economy deeper in the global supply chain.

"We are in a race that could determine the trajectory of our individual national growth for decades to come, just as the industrialisation of the past had boosted our growth for about four decades," he said.

Lim said Malaysia's comparative and competitive advantage will enable it to benefit from business relocation as well as trade and investment diversion, despite the ongoing competitions.

"We have superior infrastructure, multilingual population with widespread use of English, skilled workers, strong rule of law particularly in terms of intellectual property rights, and strong links to the world's markets.

"Our institutional reforms have also made our institutions more trustworthy and transparent. And Malaysia is already the 15th easiest place to do business out of 190 economies according to the World Bank," he said.

He said the country is a safe haven amid the trade war, as companies seek to create new supply chain to avoid the trade war.

"We have been making good progress too. In the first half of 2019, approved foreign investment across all sectors rose 97.2 percent to RM49.5 billion from RM25.1 billion last year.

"Out of the RM49.5 billion approved foreign investment, RM25.1 billion were in manufacturing. This is after approved foreign investment reached record high in 2018, hitting RM80.1 billion last year with RM58.0 billion went into the manufacturing sector," he said.

■ Reindustrializing the country

Lim said the RM21.6 billion National Fibreisation and Connectivity Plan (NFCP) was among the strategies to reindustrialise the country through public private collaboration in the age of Industry 4.0.

Malaysia, he said, would be ready for the implementation of 5G technology for wider coverage of faster and higher quality connection, and more affordable broadband internet.

As the seventh-largest E&E exporter in the world, Lim said the sector has been the backbone of the Malaysian manufacturing sector, and the economy as a whole

From 2016 to 2018, RM30.0 billion worth of E&E investment was made. Out of that, 44.4 percent came from the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER).

He said Penang as the principal E&E hub in Malaysia contributed RM9.93 billion of the total investments, with Kedah attaining RM1.85 billion while Perak RM1.58 billion.

"Penang recorded RM9.2 billion investment for the first half of 2019. These benefits from trade and investment diversion as a result of trade war are not bound to last forever," he said.

The E&E industry contributed 38 percent of the total Malaysian exports, yielding the country with a goods trade surplus worth RM120.3 billion.

Tehran, Ankara discuss resumption of electricity trade

ENERGY

TEHRAN — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian discussed resumption of electricity trade between Iran and Turkey, with his Turkish counterpart Fatih Dönmez in a meeting in Ankara on Monday, the portal of Iran's Energy Ministry (known as Paven) reported.

Ardakanian who accompanied President Hassan Rouhani in his visit to Turkey for attending Iran-Russia-Turkey trilateral gathering on Syria, discussed possibility of mutual cooperation in various energy sectors with Dönmez underlining the need for increase of electricity trade between Iran and Turkey from the previous 640 megawatts to 1,280 megawatts.

The two sides also agreed on establishing a sub-committee on energy under the framework of the two countries' joint economic committee to support the two sides' private sectors in the regional markets.

Nearly 40 percent of Turkey's electricity generation is sourced with natural gas, while the country is an importer of Iran's gas.

As Iranian officials announced, the Islamic Republic of Iran has the capacity to exchange energy with all of its neighboring countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Iraq.

A high-ranking delegation of Iranian ministers and officials visited Turkey accompanying Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in his visit to the country.

Back in December 2018, Iran and Turkey had announced that they are going to form a joint electricity market committee to cooperate on generation and transferring electricity besides renewable energy plants and regional electricity market.

During the 5th session of the High Council of Iran-Turkey Strategic Relations, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani announced that Iran is capable of supplying energy to Turkey in the long run.

"Iran is ready to set the proper ground for the participation of Turkish investors in Iran's energy market," he said.



Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian (L) met his Turkish counterpart Fatih Dönmez in Ankara on Monday evening.

Concept of what 'peak oil' means has shifted, OPEC's Barkindo says



A particularly fascinating development in this current decade is that the concept of what 'peak oil' means has shifted, Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo, OPEC Secretary General, said at the Fifth Iraq Energy Forum in Baghdad, Iraq, Trend reports.

As per aznews.az, "at the beginning of the 2010s, reports of peak supply were almost omnipresent; however, we are about to conclude the decade when this purported 'worry' has shifted to concerns about 'peak demand.' Peak demand

fears do not necessarily reflect market fundamentals or the overwhelming majority of long-term forecasts of most reporting agencies," he said.

Barkindo noted that in the long term, as OPEC's flagship publication the World Oil Outlook has shown, world oil demand is set to grow considerably in the future.

"Long-term oil demand is expected to rise to almost 112 mb/d by 2040. This will be primarily driven by developing countries: their expanding middle class, high population growth rates and strong economic potential. Looking at the road transportation sector and the idea that electric vehicles are about to replace conventional vehicles; it should be noted, that according to our WOO, although the rate for new sales of electric vehicles is very high, the share in total stock in 2017 was just 0.3% and 1.3% of total vehicle sales," noted OPEC's secretary general.

He pointed out that while the long-term share of electric vehicles in the total fleet is projected to expand and reach a level of around 13 percent by 2040, conventional vehicles will constitute the majority of growth of the total vehicle fleet. "For example, ICE vehicles are expected to maintain their dominant share of new commercial vehicle sales over

the forecast period. Although their share declines from 96 percent in 2017 to 81 percent by 2040, this still constitutes an overwhelming majority."

"Furthermore, just as technological innovation defied the 'peak supply' prognosis, I believe it will play a pivotal role in assuaging 'peak demand' concerns. Many link the fate of future of demand with concern regarding the environmental credentials of oil. Technological innovation, particularly energy efficiency improvements, fuel efficiency standards and carbon capture and storage offer promising avenues to reconciling the conflicting components of the energy trilemma," said Barkindo.

In late 2018, OPEC and a number of countries outside this organization (OPEC+ format) decided to modernize the terms of the agreement on the reduction of oil production, in force from the beginning of 2017. The countries agreed to reduce the total production by 1.2 million barrels per day from the level of October 2018.

On July 2, 2019, a decision was made in Vienna to extend the agreement on reducing oil production by OPEC member and non-member states until the end of the first quarter of 2020.

OPEC, Russia hold off pumping more oil after Saudi attack

OPEC and Russia are so far holding off pumping more oil to fill potential gaps in global supplies after an attack in Saudi Arabia over the weekend led to a major crude disruption, officials said, Wall Street Journal reported.

Crude prices surged on Monday in the aftermath of a weekend attack on Saudi Arabia's crude production infrastructure. Officials said the Saudi Arabian Oil Co., known as Aramco, aimed to restore about a third of the disrupted output by day's

end on Monday.

Saudi Arabia held a series of calls with cartel members and other oil-producing allies over the weekend and told producers that they wouldn't need to respond with additional output, Saudi and OPEC officials said. Saudi energy officials fear that other members might begin pumping too much and take away some of the kingdom's market share, Saudi oil officials and advisers said. Saudi officials told cartel members that the kingdom would mitigate

the outage by tapping into its reserves, the Saudi and OPEC officials said.

The strikes knocked out 5.7 million barrels of daily production, about half of Saudi capacity. One of the main targets of the attack was a large crude-processing plant in Abqaiq—the largest of its kind in the world.

Meanwhile, the attacks also targeted the Khurais oil field. According to early damage reports, four of five processing lines at were damaged, people familiar

with the matter said. Each line has the daily capacity of some 300,000 barrels of crude.

At Abqaiq, at least two of seven stabilization facilities were severely damaged and have to be rebuilt, which could take months. Three others were hit. The units process crude to make it safe to ship. Ten of 18 of the plant's desulphurization towers were hit, too, though it was unclear how badly. The towers reduce the sulfur content of Saudi's heavier crudes.

Oil declines as market assesses attacks on Saudi facilities

Oil prices declined on Tuesday and Saudi Arabia has decided a price spike not seen in decades.

According to reuters.com, Saturday's attacks raised the prospect of a major supply shock in a market that in recent months has focused on demand concerns due to the pressure on global growth from an ongoing U.S.-China trade dispute. Saudi Arabia is the world's top oil exporter and has been the supplier of last resort for

decades.

Brent crude was down 15 cents, or 0.2%, at \$68.87 a barrel at 0750 GMT, and West Texas Intermediate was down 54 cents, or 0.9%, at \$62.36 a barrel. Earlier, the crude benchmarks both fell by around 2%.

On Monday, the prices surged nearly 20% in intraday trading in response to the attacks, the biggest jump in almost 30 years, before closing nearly 15% higher at four-month highs.



Vacancy Notice

The Office of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in I.R.Iran, intends to recruit a "NATINAL POST: Programme Specialist, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)".

For further information, please consult the detailed job description posted on

<https://iran.unfpa.org/en/vacancies/national-specialist-srhr>

Please apply online by 2 October 2019, 5 PM Tehran Time.

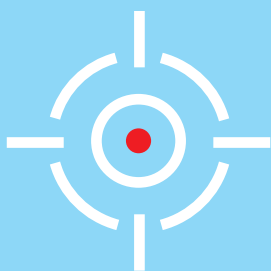
Notice:

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- "UNFPA does not solicit or screen for information in respect of HIV/AIDS or disabilities and does not discriminate on the basis of HIV/AIDS status and disabilities".

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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 10,624 EURO or 499, 376,558 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

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Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 341 23455 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437

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U.S. weak in face of Iran's mentality of resistance: UK analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A political analyst and Islamic scholar based in Leicester, the United Kingdom, described Iran's "mentality of resistance" as the reason behind its power and said the US is weak in the face of the Resistance Axis and knows it cannot defeat it.

"The only reason that the Islamic Republic of Iran is still strong today is because of this mentality of resistance, and of not bowing to any except God, and standing tall, having honor and dignity and never compromising on core principles," Shabbir Hassanally said in an interview with Tasnim. "The problem the US has is that in the face of the resilience of the Resistance Axis and the Resistance Ideology, its punches are meaningless and have little effect, and its threats are weak," he said, adding, "It knows it cannot defeat the resistance, it will make noises, but it knows it can never defeat this movement."

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 deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (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: Firstly, I should make clear my position on the entire issue of the JCPOA. I feel that while it achieved the objective of exposing the true nature of the American regime, in that, it (the US) honors no accord or deal, ultimately, it was never going to be successful. A deal with the devil is always doomed to failure. My position regarding this still-born deal was based on the numerous advice positions of Imam Khamenei, as well as the historical experiences that other nations who have had the misfortune to deal with the United States administration have experienced. Iran of all countries is well aware of the treacherous nature of the US Administration, examples exist which expose their reality, such as the Algiers Accords, that was betrayed before even the ink had dried.

Sadly, the same was the case with the JCPOA. When it was signed by the US Administration under Obama back in July of 2015, certain sanctions might well have been removed by the United Nations, however, those same sanctions (and their corresponding secondary sanctions) were immediately re-applied by the US Administration (under the guise that they are for 'other reasons') unilaterally. This was fully predictable. Now, when Trump ascended the throne of the American Empire, he decided he wanted to fully and officially pull out of the JCPOA, and so he did. He also immediately implemented the so-called "snap-back" regime, that while a system that was designed to be invoked should Iran break the deal, it was instead invoked by the US against Iran, when the US broke the JCPOA's terms.

When that happened, the European nations that were and are also signatories to this accord should have immediately applied punitive sanctions upon the United States, as a punishment for its lack of adherence to the rule of law. They didn't. They didn't even try. They complained somewhat, certainly, but bowed down to the US administration's desire and did absolutely nothing. Sure, they didn't themselves leave the JCPOA, this is because they don't wish to look like the "bad guys", rather, they continued to pander to the US — with token statements from various European countries in support of Iran's rights, but nothing of great substance.

Painful and indeed completely illegal sanctions then continued to be applied to the Islamic Republic. Europe continued to watch, and do, frankly speaking, very little. The only time the Europeans began to run around a little (though still not particularly effectively) was when Iran began to declare that since it's rights vis-a-vis the JCPOA were not being respected, that it would begin to cut down on its commitment within the JCPOA.

It is important to mention at this juncture that since the JCPOA has optional and mandatory components, Iran has thus far not broken its commitment to any of the mandatory components; and since Iran is a country that abides by the rule of law and decency, it will not break its commitments; rather as is discussed further in this document, it reserves the right to suspend its commitments (not break, there is a difference) to certain articles of the JCPOA. The European countries then realized that Iran was not going to capitulate, that it was firm and resistive, that the American gambit was failing catastrophically, and their pandering to, albeit clandestine abiding to, the edicts of Washington was not

going to hold water, and that Iran was not some weak country that would bend the knee to the tyranny of the tyrants.

Since it is the month of Muharram, it is befitting to use an example of Imam Hussein (AS) here to elaborate on the position adopted by the Islamic Republic under the guidance of Imam Khamenei: The same way that Imam Hussein (AS) said to the tyrant Yazeed: "Someone like me cannot give allegiance to someone like you", the Islamic Republic of Iran (indeed the entire Resistance Axis), tells the American Empire and its allies and minions, that: "People like us, cannot and will not bend the knee to someone like you".

After this short preamble, coming to your actual question, the way that Iran has handled this massive and public betrayal by the international community - while America is the one that waves the flag, the entire international community that abides by these draconian and illegal US sanctions is responsible for this crime - is an example, and one that I am sure will be studied by students of international law and political science for generations to come. Again, we can leverage an example from Karbala. Where while it was Imam Hussein (AS) and the 72 pure souls that defended and fought for Truth alone, there were many who stayed silent and did nothing, who did not actively fight against Imam Hussein (AS) in Karbala but remained silent. These ones who were silent are also completely culpable and responsible for the massacre of innocents in Karbala.

When Truth is at stake, and in this context, Iran carries the flag of Truth, anyone who even stays silent and doesn't oppose the injustice that is being meted out on the Islamic Republic, is a partisan of the ones committing the crime, and equally culpable. History will judge the silent ones in the same way as the ones who actively attack Iran. It is important that the world, the international community understand this. There is no neutrality in the stance of Truth against Falsehood. This is a reality that must be understood and accepted. Iran's policy has been one filled with bravery and honor. It has forced the Europeans — in order to save face and appear to be 'impartial' and supportive of an international agreement they have signed — it has forced them to create this "instrument" known as INSTEX



— which while created and as far as the world is told, "in place", has yet to yield any real fruits.

But it forced them to act, and act in opposition (at least on the surface) to the desires of the American Administration. This is important from the perspective of (to quote an American marketing term) "optics". It shows the population that the EU is committed to the JCPOA, that it cares about international accords and agreements, and that it is not as wanton in its arrogance as the US. This is very important, as at least in the public eye, it creates the perception of a rift between Washington and the EU. As for the third step, this shows the honor with which Iran operates, and America would do well to learn from this. Iran has said, as its third-step, it will suspend (not put aside — but suspend, for now), it's commitments in the JCPOA. This is valid and fair. The EU and the US — essentially the P5+1 — have essentially suspended their adherence to the JCPOA. Iran is fully within its rights to do the same. In fact, the US — a part of the so-called JCPOA — has not only suspended but actually has reneged on its commitments and indeed has torn up the JCPOA.

Iran for its part is not doing that, it doesn't need to. Rather, Iran will suspend its adherence to elements of the JCPOA, until such time as the EU get their act together and start to behave like adults and be responsible. They signed a

commitment, not only the US, the US, in fact, is only 1 part of the P5+1, so out of 7 signatories, if 1 decides to renege, that doesn't mean everyone has to tear up the agreement. While the US might have a veto in the UN Security Council — and that is another discussion for another day — within the JCPOA it doesn't have any sort of veto. The Europeans have a duty to abide by their commitments. To ensure the free trade of Iranian oil and other products, as well as allowing the Islamic Republic of Iran to import and export as well as procure any items it needs — regardless of what the American Empire might say or want.

Europe needs to provide a clear system for countering these so-called "secondary sanctions" — which are essentially the American Administration exercising extra-territorial power outside its own territory, and essentially acting as a World Empire. This is a behavior that counters all international norms and practices. If Europe continues to pander to these secondary sanctions, if it allows them to prevent European companies from trading with the Islamic Republic, Europe should understand that it is in no way independent, and is — publically evidenced — as a vassal state of the American Empire.

So, the Islamic Republic in its resistive stance. It's not bending the knee — even a little. It's staying firm, and declaring that it will — as did Imam Hussein (AS) in Karbala in the face of massive odds — that they will never succumb to humiliation, it has essentially broken the scheme of the Empire and exposed its lackeys for what they are.

Those lackeys now have a choice, with the third phase of Iran's resistive approach. They can either declare they are vassal states, or rise up and show they are truly independent and can counter Washington and reject its demands. What they will actually do? Well, I suppose it would be fair to say, only time will tell — but I think many who are of understanding, know exactly how Europe will behave — sadly.

■ As you know, Iran's policy of "active resistance" against US bullying and unilateralism has borne good results. In the latest instance, Iran's supertanker 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: This is a very interesting question. I want to take hours discussing this, but I will refrain and say only this much. The approach of resistance is the only way that a bully can and should be dealt with. If a person who is bullied ever panders or succumbs to the desires of the bully, then that will only empower the bully. The only approach is to stand firm, if required to be injured, but to continue to stand firm, and never bow down. In time, the bully — who is by its nature weak and pathetic — will break. The nature of a bully requires that its opponent capitulates in the face of the bully's "overwhelming power". What the world needs to understand regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran is that it is governed by Islam, that it only bows down and bends the knee to God, the Most High, and none other.

The event of the Grace-1/Adrian Darya-1 supertanker is one such example of standing up to the bully. The British government of Gibraltar passed a specific law allowing them to seize ships that were deemed to be breaking some



law, regardless of how grey the area or arbitrary the reason — and in this case based on 'intelligence' (in reality, hearsay), from the American Empire. Once it was required that the supertanker be released, the US tried once more to try to impound the ship, attempting to apply pressure on London to capitulate and force Gibraltar to hand over the ship. At this point, even London realized that the game was up. That they couldn't play this game any longer.

This was only because Iran had stayed firm throughout the episode. Britain knew what was — and is — at stake, and while the UK might make lots of anti-Iran propaganda, with the chaotic fiasco of Brexit looming, the British regime is unable to cope with any international adventure at this time. To quote an Iranian euphemism, the old Satan (Shaytan-e-Peer) has become even older and more decrepit and is more of a threat to itself than anyone else.

The British regime knew that it will work out negative for it — both in terms of its position with its European "allies" and the JCPOA, as well as its own shipping interests — that with Brexit looming, become more and more important. Britain cannot afford a war or even a minor skirmish with Iran — or anyone for that matter. Its economy is in tatters, its political system in absolute chaos on account of the self-inflicted chaos of Brexit.

It, therefore, had to back down, and allow the Adrian Darya-1 to go about its way, unhindered — after having inconvenienced it for a period. It failed to make Iran bend the knee, and it will always fail. This is a reality that the world needs to understand. Anyone who has already bent the knee to the Most High, cannot bend the knee to any other, let alone to the most debased. As for the "coalition of the willing" that the US is attempting to put together as a precursor to a military adventure against the Islamic Republic of Iran, well, this will — and indeed is — failing catastrophically. There are multiple reasons for this, but primary amongst them is as follows.

Any country, when looking at a military adventure, looks to its military staff. While politicians might well speak in saber-rattling terms, the military personnel, the generals, will take a colder more strategic and tactical look at the scenario. They will examine and understand the risks involved in a given adventure. In this regard, the countries of the world — including the US and so-called "Israel" — who are the chief warmongers against the Islamic Republic and the Resistance Axis — know full well, that they are unable to withstand any defense made by the Islamic Republic.

We can see a microcosm of this. When the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon was attacked by the Zionists with drones, (Hezbollah Secretary General) Seyed Hassan Nasrallah made a promise of a response. Since the moment that promise was made, there was chaos in the northern part of Occupied Palestine. The Zionists soldiers were terrified, the politicians were losing control of their bodily functions. They were petrified. This was further evidenced by the response — legitimate and completely legal response — made by the Islamic Resistance — Hezbollah — where videos are testimony to the abject terror that was cast into the hearts of the Zionist stormtroopers, such that in cases, they were totally losing control of their bodily functions.

Now, given that the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon is a close ally of the Islamic Republic, and that in comparison the Islamic Resistance military arm is but a fraction of both the capability and size of the Islamic Republic of Iran's

armed forces, even with all their might, the powers of the world know that defeating Iran is impossible. They have said as much — if they felt that it was possible, then sanctions would never have been used except as a means to "soften up the target" as was the case in Iraq. Iran in no way is Iraq. Also, let us not forget the influence of Iran and "just a few military advisers" with regard to Syria and Iraq and those countries' defense of themselves from the scourge of DAESH — a project that was backed fully and sponsored by the US Administration and the so-called "State of Israel" and bankrolled by the so-called "Saudi" regime.

A project that also failed catastrophically — regardless of what the US president might say to the world (and of course he has to say this — otherwise what face will he have left?!) — a project that cost trillions of US Dollars, that was destroyed by the faith, belief, strength, and resistance of the entire Resistance Axis (of course with support from Russia also). Another project is where they have tried to break the Resistance Axis in is Yemen. Again, a project that is causing so-called "Saudi" Arabia's economy to essentially die, that is yielding no results and even after nearly 5 years of constant war, the "Saudi" regime has achieved absolutely nothing — apart from the hate of the global population, and the massacre of thousands of innocents in Yemen. In terms of military objectives, it has achieved nothing, and indeed is finding that the Yemeni Resistance is getting stronger and making more gains with each passing day.

The countries of the world are not blind. They know what any adventure against the Islamic Republic of Iran will cost them. On top of that Seyed Hassan Nasrallah has clearly said that any adventure against Iran will set the region ablaze. This has multiple consequences, but chief amongst them for these Western countries is that the supply of oil and gas will be severely crippled, forcing the price of oil per barrel to sky-rocket. This is intolerable for these countries.

They are all in denial but for the most part Europe is in the starting throes of a recession, the UK is completely pointless, and about to self-implode. Japan and South Korea are in a trade war. The western world is in chaos, and the last thing they can afford or need is a war.

The only entity that requires war in order for its economy to at least give the illusion of recovery is the US. However, the people of the US are extremely war-weary and are tired of war. US soldiers are tired of constantly fighting wars in far-away lands and then being treated like garbage on their return. While Hollywood might be promoting war and violence, the average person in the US, at least from my research, is not in favor of any war anywhere, and indeed one of the slogans that the current US president, Donald J Trump, hypocritically came to power on was that he didn't want to engage in extra-territorial wars, but that he wanted to focus on "making America great again".

The US Administration wants a war, but it wants someone else to fight the war for them. At this time, I believe that it cannot find anyone (except perhaps so-called "Saudi Arabia" — but the problem with Saudi is that the Saudis can't tie their own shoe-laces, let alone handle a full-on war. The Yemenis with their slippers and stones are destroying the Saudis and their so-called "coalition", so what possible hope do these desert-dwelling illiterates have against the seasoned and well-trained military of the Islamic Republic of Iran?) to fight its war. As a result — I believe, when Imam Khamenei says there will be no war, he means like this. The primary reason for

the lack of appetite for war is because of the resistive approach that Iran has taken. All the world knows that Iran will not be a cakewalk. Any war with Iran will not be the same as the invasion of Iraq or Afghanistan. Rather any adventure in Iran will not only change the face of the region but it will change the face of the world.

No country is so stupid as to want to be involved in such a catastrophe, or indeed to want such a catastrophe. Had Iran not had a resistive approach, had Iran appeared weak, then for sure, they would not have realized how catastrophic any adventure against Iran would be, and they would have tried. Iran projecting its strength — politically and militarily — is extremely important. This is amongst the reasons why the US has explicitly targeted the ballistic missile program and space programs of the Islamic Republic of Iran. They ensure its independence and strength. This is something the US cannot tolerate. This is why the US will be unable to build any sort of viable coalition against Iran, and its adventures will remain but a pipe-dream, but one that will become its worst nightmare should it make the move to act upon any dream of an adventure in Iran. The generals in the US know this. This is also amongst the reasons why Imam Khamenei has said that there will be no war.

■ 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: The only reason that the Islamic Republic of Iran is still strong today is because of this mentality of resistance, and of not bowing to any except God, and standing tall, having honor and dignity and never compromising on core principles. This resistance approach is an eternal approach, it cannot fail, as long as there is loyalty to the Truth, submission to God, and strength in the face of threats, but compassion when dealing with the weak — then this will guarantee that the Islamic Republic of Iran not only weathers these illegal sanctions but that it rises above that — as indeed it is starting to do — and renders the entire policy of sanctions and economic warfare impotent.

Washington can do what it wants, but when I see this statement from the US that it wants to "exert maximum pressure" on Iran, I am reminded of Imam Khomeini, may God rest his pure soul, where he said clearly and with full confidence and belief that "America can't do a damn thing". This is the reality. I will finish with a simple story, an idea that I feel explains the situation between Islamic Iran and the American Empire very clearly. The American Empire is a spoilt teenager, it is barely out of nappies and has the arrogance of youth, in terms of geopolitical existence. It is less than 500 years old. Whereas Iran is a country that has a history of more than 3,000 years, and Islam itself in Iran is nearly 1,400 years old.

So, it is like an infant trying to beat up on a fully mature and experienced adult. The arrogant youth has no choice and will have to behave when it finally goes too far and is punished by the adult. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been very patient, and very astute and very calm in the face of the tantrums of the United States. Iran has operated with honor and dignity in all areas, while the US is without honor, it is bullish, and constantly tries to intimidate, constantly threatening violence. This is an approach taken by an entity that has no real power or dignity, it thinks with its fists. It is the approach of a spoilt brat, an unruly teenager who has never learned any form of discipline and lacks any form of decency or honor. The problem the US has is that in the face of the resilience of the Resistance Axis and the Resistance Ideology, its punches are meaningless and have little effect, and its threats are weak. It knows it cannot defeat the resistance, it will make noises, but it knows it can never defeat this movement.

For this reason it lies pathologically — the Israelis, and Saudis lie about Iran and the Resistance, look at the lies about Iran giving weapons to Yemen they make when they are destroyed by our brothers in Yemen, they make out like Iran has done this. This is the fear they have. This is more reason why Imam Khomeini's statement "America can't do a damn thing" rings true today, rang true yesterday and will continue to ring true. After all, we are taught and indeed know that Satan is destined to be the loser in the face of the Truth. This is an example — that also since we are in the nights of Muharram — that is taught in Karbala by Imam Hussein (AS), the fact that Truth will always prevail regardless of the perceived odds.

The political turmoil in Britain will continue

Corbyn's attempt at Johnson's resignation

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — The Labor Party continues to stress the need for Boris Johnson to resign as prime minister and hold re-election. Many analysts, however, believe that a change of government in Britain will not end the political crisis in the country. The riddle of Britain's exit from the European Union is so complicated that neither of the Labor and Conservative parties have the power to solve it. Here's a look at the latest news and analysis on the subject of British exit from Europe:

Boris Johnson could soon be forced to resign as prime minister

As Businessinsider reported, Boris Johnson could soon be forced to resign as prime minister. Here's why. Johnson became prime minister in July on a promise of taking the UK out of the European Union on October 31 with or without a deal. But last week that plan collapsed after opposition members of Parliament passed a law designed to force Johnson to seek a three-month delay to Brexit. Johnson immediately tried to overturn this by forcing an early general election before Britain's planned exit date. However, opposition parties will on Monday vote to veto Johnson's request when he makes it for a second time. This means that Johnson's plan has all but run out of road and he is likely to soon face a simple but terrible choice between two options — neither of which is good.

1. Break his promise to deliver Brexit on October 31

Opposition members of Parliament last week passed a law which when it receives royal assent on Monday will force whoever is prime minister on October 16 to request a three-month delay to Brexit. Without an early election, Johnson has no hope of overturning this law — meaning that if nothing else changes he would be legally obliged to break his promise to take Britain out of the EU, "do or die," on October 31. Doing so would risk a collapse in his support among Brexit voters and could even lead to a leadership challenge within his party. Because of this risk, Johnson has repeatedly insisted that there are "no circumstances" under which he would seek a delay to Brexit, saying on Thursday that he would sooner "be dead in a ditch" than comply with the law. Some Downing Street sources have suggested in recent days that the prime minister could simply break the law. However, the Attorney General and other senior ministers have insisted the prime minister has now assured them he will not do this. This means he really has only one other option.

2. Resign as prime minister

If opposition parties refuse to give Johnson an October election and if he decides he cannot break his promise to deliver Brexit, then Johnson very quickly runs out of other options. Last week, one senior minister told The Times that under those circumstances Johnson would opt instead to resign as prime minister. His official representative on Friday repeatedly refused to rule this out when asked by journalists at a regular briefing in Parliament. As even the Conservative commentator Paul Goodman points out on Monday: "If there is an escape from this trap other than resignation, we would love to know what it is."

Under this scenario, Johnson would step down and make way for opposition parties to form a government instead. Because of the defection of Conservative MP Phillip Lee and Johnson's decision to oust 21 Conservative



members of Parliament last week, the prime minister no longer has a working majority in the House of Commons. If Johnson did resign, the queen would have little choice but to look to opposition parties to try to form a government. Johnson would then become the leader of the opposition, and a new prime minister — drawn from the opposition — would take over.

As the leader of the largest opposition party, Jeremy Corbyn would then be best placed to lead this caretaker government. Other opposition parties are reluctant to make him prime minister even temporarily. But they could, in theory, agree to do so if he committed to calling an election as soon as he secures an extension to Brexit, as he has already offered to do. Alternatively, Corbyn could agree to allow another opposition politician to fill the role. This would be an utterly extraordinary series of events and in ordinary times would be dismissed as mere fantasy. However, these are not ordinary times, and such an outcome could work for both Johnson and Corbyn.

For Corbyn, this scenario would allow him to prevent a no-deal Brexit and potentially become prime minister, before going into a general election in which he would hope to win. For Johnson, it would allow him to avoid breaking his promise while blaming Labour for the Brexit delay. He would also then be in a good position to win the next election. So could this be where the UK ends up in the next few weeks? We will find out very soon.

On its official website, the Labor Party has announced its plan to exit Europe:

Why we're calling for a General Election to break the Brexit deadlock

The current system is broken. Nine years of Tory cuts and neglect have pushed our services and the lives of ordinary people to the limit.

Issues like high bills, rising debts and insecure work don't discriminate according to whether you voted Remain or Leave. Both are facing the same hardships and daily challenges, and both are up against it. But you're not against each other. We need to break the Brexit deadlock to fix the broken system — and the way to do this is with a General Election.

A General Election doesn't ignore voters, whichever way they voted. But a General Election could give the winning party a renewed mandate to negotiate a better deal for Britain and secure support for it in Parliament and across the country. It is the most practical, democratic way to unite the country and move forward. If breaking the Brexit deadlock with a General Election is not possible, then nothing is off the table — including campaigning for a public vote.

We believe we can negotiate a deal that

works for the many, not the elite few

The Tories' handling of Brexit has taken us from chaos to crisis. They have no answers or legislation to fix the many crises of their own making. Theresa May's bad deal panders to the fringes of her party and only works for an elite, privileged few — it's no surprise that parliament won't vote for it. Labour has a very different set of priorities because we represent the interests of the many. Combined with the election of a Labour Government, our alternative plan will allow us to make the fundamental changes that are so badly needed in our country while respecting those who voted both Leave and Remain. Our Brexit deal would gain broad support — uniting the country rather than dividing it further.

Our alternative plan for Brexit

Labour's alternative plan will put your job and your rights first:

A new customs union with an active industrial strategy will create manufacturing jobs in areas that have long been forgotten by the Tories.

A strong relationship with the single market will boost our economy, and a Labour government will make sure working people, not big corporations, see the benefits.

With our deal, worker and consumer rights are not up for negotiation. That means no falling behind on job security and pay. And no chlorinated chickens.

When it comes to EU nationals, our position is simple: your future here is secure.

And unlike the Tories, we won't turn our backs on the desperate refugees risking their lives to cross the English Channel.

Boris Johnson plans to force through Brexit deal in 10-day blitz

As Financial Times reported, Boris Johnson is planning to force a new Brexit deal through parliament in just 10 days — including holding late-night and weekend sittings — in a further sign of Downing Street's determination to negotiate an orderly exit from the EU.

According to Number 10 officials, Mr Johnson's team has drawn up detailed plans under which the prime minister would secure a deal with the EU at a Brussels summit on October 17-18, before pushing the new withdrawal deal through parliament at breakneck speed.

The pound rose 1.1 per cent against the US dollar to \$1.247 on Friday amid growing optimism that Mr Johnson has now decisively shifted away from the prospect of a no-deal exit and is focused on a compromise largely based on Theresa May's withdrawal agreement.

Officials in Dublin and Brussels say there are signs of movement from Mr Johnson as he searches for a compromise on the Irish backstop, the contentious insurance policy against a return to a hard border in Ireland,

although both sides remain far apart.

EU diplomats said that talks on Friday in Brussels between the European Commission and UK negotiators had been more productive than previous. An EU diplomatic note said that Britain seemed willing to stick with some of what had been agreed by Mrs May to prevent animal health checks at the Irish border, and so keep food and livestock moving freely on the island. The UK is even "considering" keeping Northern Ireland aligned with future EU rule changes, according to the note.

Diplomats cautioned, however, that important points remained unresolved, and that this would be only part of the solution for avoiding a hard Irish border. Britain has also yet to make written proposals and EU officials are worried about the lack of time left to secure any new agreement before the UK's scheduled departure date of October 31.

On Monday, Mr Johnson will travel to Luxembourg to meet European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker to discuss the prospects for a deal — their first meeting since the Tory leader entered Downing Street in July.

Meanwhile Tory chief whip Mark Spencer has told headline Eurosceptic rebels they will be thrown out of the party if they reject any deal Mr Johnson negotiates in Brussels.

At the same time Mr Johnson is trying to charm some hardliners, inviting Eurosceptic MPs to Chequers, his country retreat, for drinks on Friday night. One MP appeared resigned to backing Mr Johnson if he secured a compromise deal: "He hasn't really got anywhere else to go. Let's see what he gets in Brussels."

Nikki da Costa, the prime minister's head of legislative affairs, has told colleagues she is confident that if a deal emerges from the next European Council, it could be passed into law before October 31.

"Nikki has told us she has a plan to pass a Brexit deal in 10 days flat," said one senior government official. "Parliament might be sitting every day and night, including the weekend, but she is confident we can leave on October 31 with a deal."

"It is technically possible to get the necessary legislation through in around 10 days — we have just seen MPs pass a bill in one day in the Commons," said Maddy Thimont Jack, from the Institute for Government think-tank. She added, however, that "rushing it through in this way means little time for proper scrutiny".

At their meeting on Monday, Mr Juncker is expected to push Mr Johnson to come forward with a detailed Brexit proposal, warning that time is short and that any solution must protect the all-Ireland economy and the EU's single market.

"Let's hope that this is a sign that the time of British Brexit wish-wash is finally coming to an end and that Number 10 is seriously interested in finding a solution," said one EU diplomat.

Many in Brussels are convinced that the only solution lies in returning to a "Northern Ireland-only" version of the backstop, an idea proposed by the EU in early 2018 but rejected by Mrs May.

That plan would scrap the alternative all-UK customs union with the EU which was rejected three times by MPs, and would require checks on goods crossing the Irish Sea.

Arlene Foster, leader of the Democratic Unionist party which supports the Tory government, described as "nonsense" suggestions she would be prepared to accept a border in the Irish Sea, but the party is nevertheless engaging in a search for a compromise.

Good riddance

TEHRAN (FNA) — On Tuesday, September 10, US President Donald Trump announced on Twitter that he had informed national security adviser John Bolton that his "services are no longer needed at the White House" and had "asked for his resignation," citing that he "disagreed strongly with many of his suggestions."



Bolton had joined Trump's national security team just over a year ago, and owing to his extensive ties within the American bureaucracy and ultra-belligerent, pro-war foreign policy outlook, had gained a reputation among the Washington, D.C. community for steering the President's decisions toward hawkish causes of action, perceived as a huge detriment on a number of issues.

As a result, it is not surprising to see that his departure is being met with celebration among foreign policy analysts and scholars. Bolton was a notorious neoconservative, but what does his departure signal now for American foreign policy?

The former UN ambassador was blamed extensively for a range of Trump policy failures pertaining to Iran, North Korea, Venezuela and Afghanistan. As a result, Trump's bid to jettison his influence may now (emphasis here) signal a shift toward reconciliation and diplomacy in these areas, setting the stage for him to "wrap things up" in the view of the 2020 election. However, one should not hold their breath: We don't know who he will appoint next.

John Bolton was appointed to the position of US national security adviser 18 months ago, following the departure of General H.R. McMaster. McMaster had been forced out of the job because of his disagreements with Trump, being deemed not hawkish enough, particularly on the matter of North Korea. Bolton was appointed his replacement and came with an established legacy and brand name. He was known and feared in Washington for his relentless pro-war views of foreign policy. Only months before his appointment, he had penned an op-ed setting out why the US ought to bomb North Korea to resolve the nuclear crisis.

In doing so, he was perceived as a man who did not follow orders but constantly sought to push his own agenda and exert influence over others. He was known for utilizing an extensively entrenched network of ties in the American bureaucracy to get his own way, including the usage of orchestrated tactics such as leaking information and undermining his colleagues, thus steering US foreign policy discourse. In every sense, he was a warmonger who knew how to oil the American machine to his own advantage. When appointing him, Trump sought to reassure supporters that he could control him, expressing the usual overconfidence in his own abilities.

However, that turned out not to be the case. Bolton's role was both dramatic and extremely disruptive to US foreign policy. First, he pushed Washington to the verge of war with Iran by manipulating intelligence reports on Iran and subsequently advocating pre-emptive strikes on the country. Secondly, he drove US foreign policy into a botched regime change attempt in Venezuela, also aiming to push it toward military action.

Thirdly, he was infamously blamed for ruining Trump's summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Hanoi, having urged the president to reject a deal abruptly in favor of demanding more unilateral terms on denuclearization, something which would receive the vocal condemnation of Pyongyang. After Bolton publicly vowed to place more pressure on North Korea, Trump began to marginalize him on the issue and even openly disagreed with him. Then finally, he was also perceived to be near the center of blame for the breakdown of talks with the Taliban, something which may have been the tipping point for his departure.

So that begs the question, what now? Bolton, like many other neocons, was in every instance, opposed to diplomacy and reconciliation and in favor of pressure, belligerence and confrontation. If his successor is in line with him, then the balance of opinion in the White House might never tilt even a bit, considering that policies are the product of the whole administration, most President Trump himself.

One must not hold his/her breath. While one of its worst offending members has gone, this is still as a whole a very erratic US administration which even prior to Bolton's influence held a strong preference for unilateral and coercion-based foreign policy. Let's we forget, it was Trump who walked out of the Iran nuclear deal and proved untrustworthy of talks. In any sense, the unpredictability and chaotic character of the Trump White House will continue, albeit without Bolton.

Trump's Foreign Policy is in chaos: U.S. Analyst

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — An American political analyst said the firing of John Bolton as US national security adviser signifies that "Trump's foreign policy is in chaos".

"Trump's foreign policy is in chaos because the war party sabotages every attempt he makes to negotiate a peaceful settlement to areas of conflict," E. Michael Jones, a political analyst in the US state of Indiana, told Tasnim.

Eugene Michael Jones is an American writer, former professor, media commentator and the current editor of Culture Wars magazine.

Following is the full text of the interview.

■ US President Donald Trump on Tuesday announced the firing of national security adviser John Bolton. What is the main reason behind this?

A: The immediate cause of his firing was Bolton's sabotaging of the talks with the Taliban, but tensions between Trump and Bolton have been building because of one failure of American foreign policy after another, but the main reason is that Bolton was pushing for a war with Iran which Trump did not want.

■ Bolton denied being fired and insisted that he had resigned. Democratic Senator Jack Reed said that "Bolton was wrong for



this job," but added that removing him "isn't going to fix the failures plaguing this administration's dysfunctional foreign policy." He further described the White House as being "in constant turmoil." It seems that the Trump administration is in chaos. What do you think?

A: Yes, Trump's foreign policy is in chaos because the war party sabotages every attempt he makes to negotiate a peaceful settlement to areas of conflict.

■ Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin underlined that Trump and top aides re-

main "completely aligned" on Washington's sanctions against Iran. However, Rob Malley, president of the International Crisis Group consultancy, said Bolton's departure could realign White House policy on Afghanistan, Iran, North Korea and Venezuela. What are your thoughts on this?

A: Trump sees the sanctions as a means to bring Iran to the negotiating table. Mnuchin and the Israel lobby see them as a way of destroying Iran. That's the difference between Trump and the Jews he has invited into his administration.

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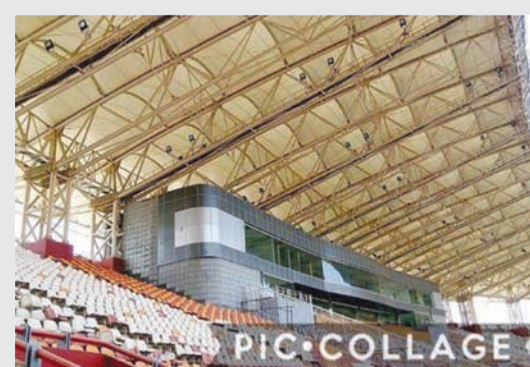
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Rare metallic asteroids might have erupted molten iron

The metallic asteroid Psyche has mystified scientists because it is less dense than it should be, given its iron-nickel composition. Now, a new theory could explain Psyche's low density and metallic surface.

Unlike most asteroids, Psyche appears to be composed largely of iron and nickel instead of rocky rubble. Metal-rich asteroids are thought to have formed when primordial planetesimals collided, stripping away much of the outer material and leaving behind the inner metallic cores, which then cooled and solidified from the outside-in. During this cooling process, an alloy of residual melted pockets of iron, nickel and lighter elements like sulfur, might have flowed to the surface through fluid-filled cracks called dikes, coating a topmost, rocky layer.

«We refer to these processes collectively as «ferrovolcanism,»» said Brandon C. Johnson, an associate professor of earth and atmospheric sciences at Purdue University.

The theory is detailed in a research paper appearing in the journal Nature Astronomy on Monday (Sept. 16). The paper was co-authored by Johnson; Michael M. Sori, an associate staff scientist at the University of Arizona's Lunar and Planetary Laboratory; and Alexander J. Evans, an assistant professor of earth, environmental, and planetary sciences at Brown University.

Meteorites called pallasites are thought to be a mixture of core and mantle material,



possibly blended together by ferrovolcanism. The pockets of liquid metal, mixed with sulfur, are less dense than surrounding solid material, producing an «excess pressure,» possibly causing the propagation of dikes and allowing ferrovolcanism to occur.

The researchers determined how far

these dikes would have to propagate to make volcanism possible.

«Our calculations suggest that ferrovolcanic eruptions may be possible for small, metal-rich bodies, especially for sulfur-rich melts and bodies with mantles thinner than about 35 kilometers or bodies

where the mantle has been locally thinned by large impact craters,» Johnson said.

An upcoming NASA space mission to Psyche will help scientists test this theory. The ferrovolcanic eruptions might explain Psyche's low density, which exists despite radar and other scientific evidence of a metallic surface composition. Psyche, the largest known metallic asteroid in the solar system, is located in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. Its density is estimated to be only about half that of an iron meteorite.

The researchers theorize that the asteroid might consist of two layers, where a metal core is surrounded by a lower density mantle of rocky material.

«Ferrovolcanism may have transported core material to the surface, causing the radar detections of metal,» Johnson said.

The research is ongoing, with future work harnessing more sophisticated modeling to study how ferrovolcanism might occur, and possibly probing Psyche's evolution.

No spacecraft has yet to visit a metallic asteroid, and the concept of ferrovolcanism is based on mathematical models. NASA plans to launch the space probe in 2022. The mission could allow scientists to confirm the theory and answer questions about the role of metallic asteroids in the evolution of the solar system.

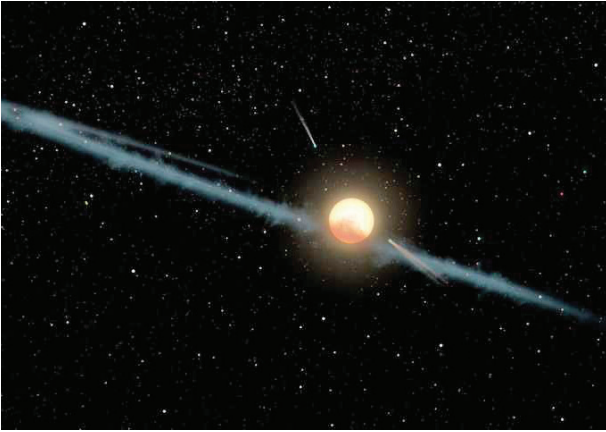
(Source: phys.org)

New observations help explain the dimming of Tabby's Star

For years, astronomers have looked up at the sky and speculated about the strange dimming behavior of Tabby's Star.

First identified more than a century ago, the star dips in brightness over days or weeks before recovering to its previous luminosity. At the same time, the star appears to be slowly losing its luster overall, leaving researchers scratching their heads.

Now, astronomers at Columbia University believe they've



developed an explanation for this oddity.

In a new paper published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society, astrophysicists Brian Metzger, Miguel Martinez and Nicholas Stone propose that the long-term dimming is the result of a disk of debris -- torn from a melting exomoon -- that is accumulating and orbiting the star, blocking its light as the material passes between the star and Earth.

«The exomoon is like a comet of ice that is evaporating and spewing off these rocks into space,» said Metzger, associate professor of astrophysics at Columbia University and principal investigator on the study. «Eventually the exomoon will completely evaporate, but it will take millions of years for the moon to be melted and consumed by the star. We're so lucky to see this evaporation event happen.»

Tabby's Star, also known as KIC 8462852 or Boyajian's Star, is named after Tabetha Boyajian, the Louisiana State University (LSU) astrophysicist who discovered the star's unusual dimming behavior in 2015. Boyajian found that Tabby's Star occasionally dips in brightness -- sometimes by just 1 percent and other times by as much as 22 percent -- over days or weeks before recovering its luster. A year later, LSU astronomer Bradley Schaefer discovered that the star's brightness is also becoming fainter overall with time, dimming by 14 percent between 1890 and 1899.

Scientists around the world have proposed a variety of theories, ranging from comet storms to alien «megastructures,» to explain the short-term dips in brightness, but very recently agreed on a much more mundane culprit -- dust.

As an exoplanet is destroyed by strong interactions or collisions with its parent star, Metzger explained, the exomoon orbiting the exoplanet can become vulnerable to the pull of the system's central star. The force can be so great that the star rips the exomoon away from its planet, causing the exomoon to either collide with a star or otherwise be ejected from the system.

In a small percentage of cases, however, the star steals the exomoon and places it into a new orbit around itself. In this new orbit, the icy, dusty exomoon is exposed to radiation from the star that rips apart its outer layers, creating dust clouds that are eventually blown out to the solar system. When those clouds of dust pass between the star and Earth, intermittent dips in brightness are observed.

This explains the short-term, inconsistent dimming of Tabby's Star, but researchers have had a harder time explaining the long-term overall fading.

The Columbia team suggests that Tabby's Star abducted an exomoon from a now long-gone, nearby planet and pulled it into orbit around itself, where it has been getting torn apart by stronger stellar radiation than existed in its former orbit. Chunks of the exomoon's dusty outer layers of ice, gas, and carbonaceous rock have been able to withstand the radiation blow-out pressure that ejects smaller-grain dust clouds, and the volatile, large-grain material has inherited the exomoon's new orbit around Tabby's Star, where it forms a disk that persistently blocks the star's light. The opaqueness of the disk can change slowly, as smaller-grain clouds pass through and larger particles stuck in orbit move from the disk toward Tabby's Star, eventually getting so hot that they melt and fall onto the star's surface.

Ultimately, after millions of years, the exomoon orbiting Tabby's Star will completely evaporate, the researchers suggest.

Martinez, a Columbia College alumnus (CC'19) and researcher working with Metzger, said the team's model is unique in its hypothesis of what drives the original planet toward the star in the first place. «It naturally results in the orphaned exomoons ending up on (highly eccentric) orbits with precisely the properties previous research had shown were needed to explain the dimming of Tabby's star,» Martinez said. «No other previous model was able to put all these pieces together.»

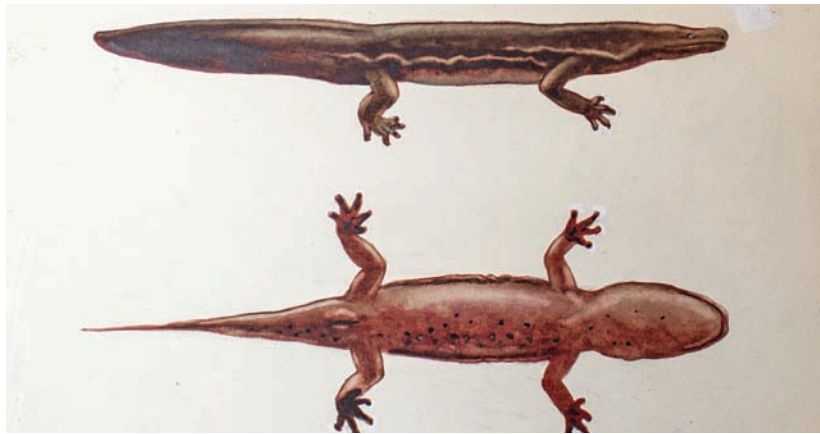
There are other stellar systems that demonstrate unusual brightness dips, Martinez said, and there may be other explanations for the flux that are equally compelling. Tabby's Star is unusual because it is very similar to Earth's sun but is exhibiting drastically different behavior. It is the only star like it among the one million stars observed by Kepler, but there are many million times more stars in the universe that have yet to be observed.

The challenge now is finding other stars like Tabby's that have abducted exomoons and have not yet finished annihilating them. If the team's explanation is correct, Metzger said, it indicates that moons are a common feature of exoplanetary systems, thereby providing a way to probe the existence of exomoons.

«We don't really have any evidence that moons exist outside of our solar system, but a moon being thrown off into its host star can't be that uncommon,» he said. «This is a contribution to the broadening of our knowledge of the exotic happenings in other solar systems that we wouldn't have known 20 or 30 years ago.»

(Source: Science Daily)

New species of giant salamander is world's biggest amphibian



Using DNA from museum specimens collected in the early 20th century, researchers from ZSL (Zoological Society of London) and London's Natural History Museum identified two new species of giant salamander—one of which they suspect is the world's biggest amphibian.

Chinese giant salamanders, now classified as Critically Endangered, were once widespread throughout central, southern and eastern China. They have previously been considered a single species (Andrias davidianus). However, new analysis of 17 historical museum specimens and tissue samples from wild salamanders challenges this assumption. The paper, published on Tuesday (17.09.2019) in the journal Ecology and Evolution, found three distinct genetic lineages in salamanders from different river systems and mountain ranges across China. These lineages are sufficiently genetically different that they represent separate species: Andrias davidianus, Andrias sligoi, and a third species which has yet to be named.

One of the newly identified species, the South China giant salamander (Andrias sligoi), was first proposed in the 1920s based on an unusual salamander from southern China that lived at the time at London Zoo. The idea was then abandoned but has been confirmed by today's study. The team used the same animal, now preserved as a specimen in the Natural History Museum after living for 20 years at the Zoo, to define the characteristics of the new species.

The other unnamed new species, from Huangshan (the Yellow Mountains), is still only known from tissue samples and has yet to be formally described.

The study's lead author, Professor Samuel Surly of ZSL's Institute of Zoology, said: «Our analysis reveals that Chinese giant salamander species diverged between 3.1 and 2.4 million years ago. These dates correspond to a period of mountain formation in China as the Tibetan Plateau

rose rapidly, which could have isolated giant salamander populations and led to the evolution of distinct species in different landscapes.

The decline in wild Chinese giant salamander numbers has been catastrophic, mainly due to recent overexploitation for food. We hope that this new understanding of their species diversity has arrived in time to support their successful conservation, but urgent measures are required to protect any viable giant salamander populations that might remain.

Salamanders are currently moved widely around China, for conservation translocation and to stock farms that cater for China's luxury food market. Conservation plans must now be updated to recognize the existence of multiple giant salamander species, and movement of these animals should be prohibited to reduce the risk of disease transfer, competition, and genetic hybridization.»

Chinese giant salamanders are the world's biggest amphibians. The authors suggest that the newly discovered South China giant salamander—which can reach nearly two meters—is the largest of the three and is therefore the largest of the 8,000 or so amphibian species alive today.

ZSL works in China to protect giant salamanders in the wild and to raise their profile through our exhibit at London Zoo, where zookeepers welcomed four juveniles in September 2016. The salamanders were seized by Border Force after an attempt to illegally import them. One of the salamanders, named Professor Lew, has since moved into a state-of-the-art tank in the Zoo's Reptile House, where visitors can come face-to-face with one of nature's giants. The three others are currently being cared for behind the scenes. Keepers will eventually introduce another animal to Professor Lew as a mate and the remaining two may then move to a different zoo, as the adults are highly territorial and need to be housed in separate enclosures.

(Source: phys.org)

'Frozen Dragon of the North': New species of flying creature the size of small plane



A flying dinosaur discovered buried in Canadian ice nearly 30 years ago has been confirmed by scientists as a new species.

With a suspected wingspan of up to 33 feet, the newly named Cryodrakon boreas (frozen dragon of the north) was one of the largest flying animals in the planet's history. It existed during the Cretaceous period, around 76 million years ago.

The partial skeleton was found in Dinosaur Provincial Park in southern Alberta in 1992, but had long been confused with another genus of pterosaur until further analysis, published in the Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology, showed the creature was unique.

«These are among the most popular and charismatic of all fossil animals,» said Michael Habib, research associate at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County's dinosaur institute.

«They have been inspiration for countless movie monsters, they were critical parts of global ecosystems worldwide during the age of dinosaurs, so they are key to understanding the ecology and extinctions of that time.»

«Just like flying animals today, [they] could carry important clues about how animals at the time responded to major changes in climate.»

Researchers settled upon the name «frozen dragon» as a nod to the now icy landscape in which the skeleton was discovered, but in reality it would have thrived in a temperate climate that supported lizards, turtles and small mammals.

Professor Habib, a fan of Game of Thrones, admitted he initially suggested calling the species Cryodrakon viserionin reference to one of the show's dragons, which was reborn in ice, according to National Geographic.

Despite its fearsome name, the dinosaur suffered many battle scars during its lifetime, with scarred bones and the tooth of a velociraptor-esque creature lodged in the remains.

Scientists believe that because of its muscular shape it was a ground hunter who used flight to burst away from danger or to seize its prey.

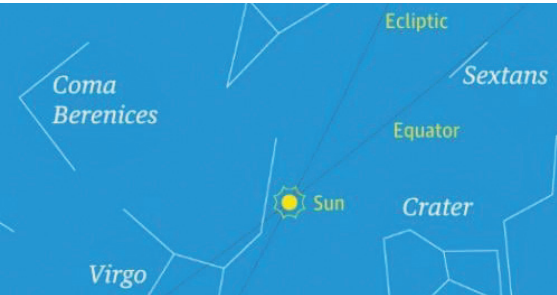
(Source: The Guardian)

Starwatch: Equinox marks the changing of the seasons

The September equinox takes place this week. Occurring on 23 September, it marks the end of summer and the beginning of autumn for the northern hemisphere and is called the autumnal equinox at northern latitudes. In the southern hemisphere, the situation is reversed and the moment marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring. The equinox is defined as the place in the sky where the sun's path, called the ecliptic, crosses the celestial equator, which is the projection of Earth's equator up into the sky. This crossing occurs in

Virgo and the sun will cross this point at 0850 BST on 23 September, as shown in the chart. At this moment, the sun will be moving from the northern sky into the southern sky. On this day around the world, everywhere will experience an almost even split of 12 hours day and 12 hours night. After this, the days shorten at northern latitudes and lengthen in the southern hemisphere. The next equinox will take place at 0350 GMT on 20 March 2020.

(Source: The Guardian)



UNWTO, Globalia launch second global tourism start-up competition

The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has joined Globalia, a tourism group in Spain and Latin America, to launch the second edition of the UNWTO Global Tourism Start-up Competition. After the success of the first edition, which attracted 3,000 applications from across the globe, the world's largest start-up competition for tourism has returned to identify ideas and innovators who will lead the transformation of the sector.

The new call for proposals was announced during the 23rd General Session of the UNWTO General Assembly in St Petersburg, Russian Federation. "With this competition we are exploring new terrain in tourism, innovation, entrepreneurship and sustainable development. We have succeeded in bringing together the most relevant stakeholders in the progress of our sector and its relevance on a global scale," said Zurab Pololikashvili, secretary general of UNWTO.

Javier Hidalgo, CEO of Globalia emphasised the collaborative effort of this second edition, with support from partners including Telefónica, Amadeus, Intu and Distrito Digital Valencia.

The new partners will actively engage in promoting the project's five categories in addition to choosing the best solutions and most disruptive projects based on new business models.

The call for proposals will be launched worldwide and will end on 15 November. The winners will be announced on 21 January 2020 during a gala event held during the Madrid International Tourism Fair (Fitur).

(Source: [traveldailymedia.com](#))

Trade war hitting Australian travel industry, tourism boss says

The fracturing of Australia's relationship with China and the prolonged U.S.-China trade war was impacting on the number of Chinese tourists visiting the country, Australia's new tourism boss has warned.

In her first major interview since she was appointed to the peak industry body for the AUS143 billion (\$98 billion) industry, Tourism Australia managing director Phillipa Harrison said the organization was trying to steer clear of the international spat between Australia's traditional ally, the U.S., and the significant trade partner of China.

But it was having an impact on the flow of tourists coming from China — which is Australia's No. 1 tourism market.

"As a tourism industry we did get a little bit of feedback the political situation was having a bit of an impact," Harrison said.

"But we haven't really seen that in a substantial way because most of the travelers who have come to Australia are free and independent travelers."

More than 1.4 million Chinese tourists visited Australia in the year to July, but the increase has slowed from double-digit growth to a flatlining 0.3% in 2018-19, partly due to the slowing Chinese domestic economy.

Harrison said she expected China to remain Australia's most important inbound tourism market — ahead of New Zealand, the U.S. and the United Kingdom — regardless of the geopolitical tensions.


"We can't control what happens on a political level. All we can do is make sure the Chinese travelers who have expressed an interest in coming to Australia know what we have to offer," she said.

"Beyond that we just don't get involved in the politics of it all. But we are very careful how we market in China."

The new Tourism Australia boss said the country's tourism industry, which employs one in 13 people in Australia, would continue to be a beacon of growth amid a faltering domestic economy.

"There is no doubt we are coming off five years of incredible growth and there are some other headwinds on the horizon [like Brexit, the US-China trade war and fuel price increases]," she said.

(Source: [caixinglobal.com](#))



ROUND THE GLOBE

Rapa Nui National Park

Rapa Nui National Park, the indigenous name of Easter Island, bears witness to a unique cultural phenomenon. It is a protected Chilean wildlife area which concentrates the legacy of the Rapa Nui culture.

This culture displayed extraordinary characteristics that are expressed in singular architecture and sculpture within the Polynesian context. Easter Island, the most remote inhabited island on the planet, is 3,700 kilometers from the coast of continental Chile and has an area of 16,628 hectares while the World Heritage property occupies an area of approximately seven thousand hectares, including four nearby islets.

The island was colonized toward the end of the first millennium of the Christian era by a small group of settlers from Eastern Polynesia, whose culture manifested itself between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries in great works such as the ahu—ceremonial platforms- and carved moai- colossal statues- representing ancestors.

Rapa Nui National Park most prominent attributes are the archaeological sites. It is estimated that there are about 900 statues, more than 300 ceremonial platforms and thousands of structures related to agriculture, funeral rites, housing and production, and other types of activities. Prominent among the archaeological pieces are the moai that range in height from 2 m to 20 m and are for the most part carved from the yellow-brown lava tuff, using simple picks (toki) made from hard basalt and then lowered down the slopes into previously dug holes.

(Source: [UNESCO](#))

Iran's most wild and beautiful places

Discover breathtaking landscapes that make up this captivating nation

By [Gulnaz Khan](#)

Iran is home to one of the oldest civilizations on Earth, where turquoise-domed mosques, glittering palaces, and the tombs of long gone poets reveal the mysteries and intrigues of the ancients.

Yet beneath the footprints of man lies an even lesser known, wilder Iran, brimming with remarkable geologic formations, ancient forests, and overgrown monuments that nature has reclaimed as its own.

■ **Badab-e Surt**

In the northern Mazandaran Province, a striking panorama of rust-colored travertine terraces cuts across the mountains. The stepped, limestone formations were created over thousands of years by the flowing and cooling of water from two mineral hot springs.

While travertine terraces are found in other places—like Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone and Pamukkale in Turkey—Badab-e Surt's distinctive coloring results from a high concentration of iron oxide sediments. Not only does it make for dreamy views, but one of the springs is thought to have healing properties due to its high salinity and mineral content.

■ **Mount Damavand**

Forty-one miles northeast of Tehran, Mount Damavand's iconic ivory-frosted cone soars 18,605 feet (5,671 meters) into the clouds, claiming the title highest peak in the Middle East.

Located in the Alborz mountain range, the 1.8 million-year-old dormant volcano is literally a thing of legends, immortalized in ancient Persian folklore and poetry. Climbers can take one of 16 major routes up Damavand in two to five days, navigating its rocky terrain, mineral hot springs, and rich flora and fauna.

Mount Damavand was nominated for World Heritage status in 2008 and remains on Iran's Tentative List.

■ **Dasht-e Lut**

In southeast Iran, the shifting sands of Lut Desert forge a living work of art. Between June and October, subtropical tempests sweep over the landscape, creating aeolian forms—corrugated ridges caused by wind erosion.

The same phenomenon has also been observed on other planets like Mars, giving it an otherworldly quality. In 2016, Dasht-e Lut was inscribed as Iran's first and only natural UNESCO World Heritage site for being "an exceptional example of ongoing geological processes." It's also one of the hottest places on Earth, according to NASA. In



Margoon Waterfall—meaning “snake like”—surges through Iran’s Fars province.



The rising sun illuminates the stacked terraces of Badab-e Surt, Iran.

2005, it reached a record temperature of 159.3°F (70.7°C), beating out the previous record held by El Azizia, Libya.

■ **Lake Urmia**

Nestled in the Iranian territory between East and West Azerbaijan, Lake Urmia was once the largest saltwater lake in the Middle East.

Over the past 45 years the lake has shrunk at an alarming speed due to decreased rainfall, agriculture, and irresponsible environmental practices—it now holds less than 10 percent of its original volume, an issue that has prompted thousands of Iranian protestors to take to the streets in recent years.

What remains of Urmia's salt-caked shores continues to increase in salinity as more water evaporates, promoting a breeding ground for a specific type of algae that periodically turns the emerald lake bright red.

■ **Turkmen Sahra**

Bordering Turkmenistan and the Caspian Sea, an endless tableau of rolling green hills announces Turkmen Sahra, a region of Golestan Province inhabited by seminomadic Iranian Turkmen.

Notable landmarks are the Khalid Nabi cemetery, known for hundreds of mysterious genitalia-shaped tombstones, and Gonbad-e Qabus, an 11th-century Ziyriad tower and UNESCO World Heritage site.

The structure is considered a testament of cross-cultural exchange, and “an outstanding example of early Islamic innovative structural design based on geometric formulae” that became a prototype for tomb towers across Iran, Anatolia, and Central Asia.

■ **Qeshm**

Off the southern coast of Iran in the Strait of Hormuz, Bandari villages, monumental forts, and ancient shrines dot the rocky coastline of Qeshm, whispering of a long, storied past.

The significance of the island—the largest in the Persian Gulf—dates back to the pre-Islamic era, when it was a strategic trade and navigation center, and consequently a

frequent target for invaders.

Today the islanders are primarily fisherman, salt miners, and date and melon farmers. The biodiverse isle is also home to salt caves, mangroves, coral reefs, turtle hatching sites, and the Hara forests—features that earned its place as Iran's first UNESCO Geopark.

■ **Margoon Waterfall**

Shiraz will forever be the birth and resting place of Iran's most beloved poet, Hafez, but just an hour west, the 197-foot (60-meter) Margoon Waterfall surges through the northwest Fars Province.

True to its name—which translates to “snake like” in Persian—water streams down its slopes in a serpentine fashion. The region is also home to several plant communities and wildlife, including eagles, bears, hyenas, and boars. Scientists have warned that unregulated tourism has led to the erosion of these ecosystems, and called for increased protections.

Gulnaz Khan is a writer based in Washington D.C. covering travel and culture.

(Source: [National Geographic](#))



A rock formation rises from the desert floor in Dasht-e Lut, Iran.

How to cure wanderlust when you can't travel

By [Melissa Kravitz](#)

Even full-time travelers sometimes need a break. By choice or, well, external circumstances, like a dwindling bank account. Travel is incredible, but it's also hard on your body and your budget.

Being stuck at home when you're dreaming of visiting the next place on your bucket list or returning to Europe to taste that life-changing tomato can feel pretty grim when you're used to circling the globe. We asked the experts the best ways to cure, or at least, semi-indulge your wanderlust when you really can't travel.

■ **1. Take a language class**

Immersing yourself in a new language (or a language you studied in school and subsequently forgot after final exams) can give you that mental escape or the different way of thinking you crave while exploring a new place.

"Language classes are a great way to travel without getting on a plane. In class, you're immersed in a foreign language and culture," said David Del Vecchio, owner of New York's travel-focused Idlewild Bookstore, which offers conversational language classes. "And for languages like Spanish especially, classes also increase your ability to understand and connect with people from other countries living right here in the U.S."

Streaming media (like podcasts or foreign TV series), reading in another language, and perhaps even discussing current events with a language partner can also offer "a great form of armchair travel," suggested Del Vecchio.

■ **2. Plan a bucket list trip**

When I was a teenager and feeling very stuck, my best friend and I made a "New York Binder" which highlighted all the tourist sites and America's Next Top Model shooting locations we wanted to visit once we saved enough money to pose under the bright lights of Times Square. Well, that trip never happened because I moved to New York, but the thrill and memory of planning it remains.

Maybe you have a honeymoon in the near future (or not!) or maybe you've always wanted to go to Australia and finally have the time to read some guidebooks, watch a few documentaries, and compile a Google Doc or Pinterest board to structure your upcoming dream trip — even if it's not until 2022.

■ **3. Meet other travelers**

"One of the best things about travel is the

people that you meet because of the connections you make," said Debbie Arcangeles, host of the podcast "The Offbeat Life." "Try Bumble friends, check out Facebook groups, and attend travel meetups. You never know, maybe you'll find a new travel buddy for your next adventure."

You don't even have to leave your house to meet visitors to your town. Maggie Turansky, writer and co-founder of the website The World Was Here First, recommends hosting Airbnb or Couchsurfing guests when you're stuck at home. "Not only will you make some extra cash, but you have the opportunity to meet and chat with people from all over the world," she said.

■ **4. Taste a cuisine you've never experienced before**

"Just as how traveling is about broadening horizons and having a different experiences, the same concept applies for food. To have the holistic understanding of why people are who they are, we must not only see, but also feel, taste, and listen. So while food is nourishment, it's also a vehicle for compassion and comprehension," said chef and restaurateur Simone Tong, of New York's Little Tong Noodle Shop. "Eating and appreciating something new reduces our fear of a foreign place, there's a sense of familiarity when we've tasted a community's food before we visit that community — and there's a pre-incepted interest in the people, culture, and history as a result. Fundamentally, it makes us happy when we taste something different — there's a moment of enlightenment, of realizing that there is something else out there in the vast universe that we've suddenly grasped — and it's for that instant, the one that sparks an even greater hunger for understanding, that we taste new cuisines."

Think you're well acquainted with cuisines from around the world? Opt for a regional specialty, like lesser-known pasta dishes from Southern Italy or spicy curries from Northern Thailand or mixian noodles from China's Yunnan Province.

■ **5. Be a tourist in your own city**

Like Chandler Bing at the Statue of Liberty, you too can revel among visitors in your hometown. Shamelessly break out your selfie stick and plan your day as if you were seeing your city for the first time — get on that cheesy tourist bus, catch a tour of a renowned museum, hit up two lunch spots to see which has the best burger in town. You'll see what you see every day (or ignore, because you're too caught up in whatever

you're doing) from a visitor's eyes and you'll be surprised by how refreshing it can feel.

For a new perspective on your town, try Atlas Obscura's city guides, which point out unique and lesser-known "wonders hiding in plain sight" in destinations like Hollywood Boulevard and Times Square.

■ **6. Reminisce on a past trip**

Don't let the highs of former trips disappear just because you don't have a rival itinerary coming up. Online photo services like Artifact Uprising or Blurb allow you to arrange your photos from a special trip into a coffee-table worthy book that can help you relive that bucket list vacation. If you're crafty, consider scrapbooking photos and souvenirs like ticket stubs, paper menus, and other collected flat objects for a unique memory book.

■ **7. Mimic the hotel experience**

If room service is what makes or breaks a trip for you, order breakfast, lunch, and dinner delivery one day. If you love not being bothered while lounging in your hotel room, turn your phone on airplane mode, lower your shades, and consider buying new hotel-worthy pillows or sheets.

Design-savvy travelers can also replicate the hotel style for a wanderlust-worthy living space. "Incorporate an element of the unexpected," said Ave Bradley, senior vice president of design for Kimpton Hotels. "Whether it's wallpaper with a subtle surprise in the pattern or an irreverent artwork, like a playful portrait or piece with a cheeky message, we like to use design elements that inspire a second look. Incorporating that touch of whimsy keeps a space from ever feeling stale. Bringing in accent pieces and decorative objects that reflect who you are imparts a well-traveled aesthetic."

■ **8. Read a great travel book**

Get cozy and let a book transport you to a new destination — or several! Indulge in a humorous and epic worldwide trip around the world with protagonist Arthur Less in the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel Less by Andrew Sean Greer or immerse yourself in a series set abroad, like Kevin Kwan's Crazy Rich Asians trilogy or Elena Ferrante's Neapolitan Novels. Or go the nonfiction route with empowerment epics like Elizabeth Gilbert's Eat Pray Love or Cheryl Strayed's Wild.

Committing to a page-turner will take you places without ever having to leave the house. Better yet, start a travel-themed book

club, where you can discuss your travel reads with other home-bound travelers.

■ **9. Master an activity you can enjoy on vacation**

Are you used to passing up horseback riding, tennis, or scuba diving? Change that, stat. You don't need an ocean to learn to deep-water dive — a community pool will do, and many offer scuba certification classes — nor do you need a lush tennis court to take a lesson. Consider working with a trainer to build up stamina and strength for a big hiking trip or check out classes at your local REI to learn some handy outdoorsy skills.

■ **10. Change up your routine**

Monotony is often the bane of any travel lover's daily life. So don't let routine get to you! "When I'm home, there are times when serious PTSD (post travel depression) sets in, and I'm forced to find ways to scratch the itch," said frequent traveler and publicist Christina Cherry. "Wherever I'm going, whether it's to a coffee shop or the grocery store, I take a new route. I leave my front door — without the use of GPS — and I try to find my way. It gives me those same butterflies I get from traveling to the unknown. Will I get lost? See something new? Meet someone? I don't know. And I love it."

■ **11. Plan a day trip**

Avid travelers may forget the joy of traveling short distances for a short periods of time. A train or bus ride a couple of hours from where you live may take you to a charming historic town, State Park, or artistic installation you never would have seen otherwise.

"While you're dreaming of tropical beaches and exotic cities, don't forget that adventure can happen in any place and at any time. You don't have to be a million miles away from home to release your inner traveller," said Nikki Scott founder and editor of the website South East Asia Backpacker. "Appease your travel melancholy by exploring your own backyard, an activity that many wanderlusts fail to take advantage of."

■ **12. Take care of your future travel needs**

Getting a passport renewed isn't the most exciting activity, but renewing travel documents long before an upcoming, or even last minute (!) trip, will remove some stress for future you. Get that broken zipper on your suitcase fixed, research travel credit cards with rewards miles, repack your dopp kit, and do whatever looming tasks you typically hate doing before a trip.

(Source: [Yahoo News](#))

U.S. policy towards Iran not change very much result of Bolton's dismissal: Jahanpour

1 → He was apparently the main force behind the cancellation of the landmark INF (Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces) Treaty, which had been signed by President Reagan and President Gorbachev and had prevented the two superpowers from developing intermediate-range nuclear weapons which would have made a nuclear war more likely, with Europe being caught in the middle. The cancellation of that treaty has made the world a much more dangerous place.

The final straw was his hawkish stance towards Afghanistan and the Taliban. U.S. forces have been fighting in Afghanistan for 18 years with tens of thousands killed on both sides at a cost of over one trillion dollars. The result of all that sacrifice is that the Taliban is resurgent, occupying more than half of the country. If that war continues for another 18 years the situation will be the same or worse. It is clear that there is no military solution to the Afghan tragedy. President Trump's instinct was to withdraw U.S. forces and to reach some sort of the deal with the Taliban, something that Bolton opposed.

Therefore, he was a very hawkish person with very dangerous extreme views, and his dismissal certainly is a welcome move, but whether his firing will mean that the militant faction will become a minority faction in the Trump administration remains to be seen.

■ What effect will Bolton's dismissal have on U.S. policy toward Iran?

A: While Bolton adopted a negative and extremist stance towards many international issues, he harboured a special hostility towards Iran. His views of Iran mirrored those of Israel and Saudi Arabia, and maybe he was even less realistic than they were in his hostility. In a speech that he gave to the conference of the terrorist organisation, the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK), in 2017 he described them as a good alternative to the current Iranian government. He even promised he would celebrate their victory in Tehran with them before the year 2019. Meanwhile, he received tens of thousands of dollars in speaking fees from that organisation (or its backers).

In an op-ed that he wrote for the New York Times on March 26, 2015, entitled



"To Stop Iran's Bomb, Bomb Iran", he predicted, "Iran will not negotiate away its nuclear program. Nor will sanctions block its building a broad and deep weapons infrastructure... Time is terribly short, but a strike can still succeed." His prediction was of course false, because we noticed that Iran did reach an agreement with the U.S. government and with all the permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany and signed a nuclear deal that severely curtailed her peaceful nuclear programme, but even after that and after being appointed as the National Security Advisor he continued with his uncompromising stances.

■ With Bolton fired, it was speculated that Trump would pursue a diplomatic course with Iran. On the other hand, Yemeni attacks on Aramco have prompted Washington to declare that it is ready to fight Iran. What is your assessment of this situation?

A: Although Bolton led the most extreme stance against Iran in the Trump administration, he certainly was not the only person to hold such views towards Iran. The Houthi attack on Saudi oil refineries has shown that a number of senior U.S. officials, especially Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, have followed in his footsteps and have blamed Iran for the attacks, despite the fact that the Houthis have accepted responsibility for them. This shows that U.S. policy towards Iran

is not likely to change very much as the result of Bolton's dismissal.

U.S. hostility towards Iran is not limited to the Trump administration. Even under President Obama, the U.S. Congress adopted a very hostile stance towards Iran and opposed the landmark nuclear deal. So long as the so-called Neocons and pro-Israeli activists in various branches of the U.S. government, exert such a powerful influence on U.S. administrations of both parties, the hostility towards Iran will continue. What is needed is not just the dismissal of a few individuals, but a major reappraisal of U.S. policies, and of the failure of partisan and militant policies in the Middle East over the past few decades.

■ Recently, there has been some talk of a rapprochement with Iran, with even the possibility of a meeting between President Rouhani and President Trump. In view of this deep-rooted hostility, how do you assess the prospects for future relations between the two countries?

A: The Houthi attack on Saudi refineries has shown that even a small country with limited resources can do so much damage to a much bigger and more powerful country and can take out half of Saudi oil production with its enormous implications for that country, for oil markets, and for the global economy. Those who are sitting in glasshouses should not throw stones. If such a

small attack can have such a damaging effect, just imagine what would happen if a major war breaks out in the Persian Gulf and if Iran retaliates against the oil installations of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain etc. A recent study argued that within the first few days of a war with Iran, the region would sustain trillions of dollars of damage.

The same is also true of Iran and other regional states. This is why in the wake of this attack the West and particularly the United States can adopt one of two options. They can either start a military adventure with unforeseen consequences, or make a serious attempt at dialogue with the aim of bringing peace to Yemen, and more broadly to establish a regional security zone in the Middle East that would include all the countries of the region, including the PGCC, Iran, Iraq and others.

If a meeting between Iranian and American presidents was useful and desirable before the latest events, now that we have been able to stare into the abyss, such a meeting or at least serious bilateral negotiations are essential and necessary. Iran stretched out a hand of friendship to the West, agreed to a major nuclear deal that drastically curtailed her nuclear activities, in return for the lifting of sanctions. Although according to 15 IAEA reports, Iran has carried out all the requirements of the deal, she has not been able to enjoy the economic benefits of the deal due to the U.S.'s illegal extraterritorial sanctions.

As we see the total failure of the "maximum pressure" policy, and as we have been reminded of some of the possible consequences of a war between Iran and other regional states, it is more urgent than ever for realism to prevail on all sides and to deescalate the tension. The United States should lift the sanctions and should return to the JCPOA. Regional countries, including Iran and Saudi Arabia, should realise that they will not gain anything by intensifying hostilities, and the international community led by either the United Nations or the EU should start a process of mediation and negotiation to reach a fair and lasting agreement between Iran and the United States, and between Iran and the regional countries.

Pompeo will have less weight in Trump's national security team: expert

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Research Assistant at Princeton University's Program on Science and Global Security, says in the absence of Bolton, I think Pompeo, another Iran Hawk will have less weight in Trump's national security team.

Sina Azodi adds "Keep in mind that an ordinary president would usually cave into such pressures, but Trump as has been proven many times, is not an ordinary president."

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ What is your assessment of John Bolton's dismissal? Will the militant faction become a minority with this layoff?

A: On the dismissal of John Bolton, I have two theories; one is related to Afghanistan, where he had been in intense argument with President Trump over inviting the Taliban representatives to the Camp David, on (or tear the anniversary) of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He (correctly) had argued that this will not work well for the administration -

Other theory is his disagreement with Trump over extending olive branch to Iran and Trump's considering of the French proposal for extending a 15 billion dollar credit line to Iran to ease the sanctions; in addition to the possibility of a meeting with Rouhani.

Bolton has been a long Iran-hawk, has written on the



need to "bomb Iran, and has further appeared frequently on MEK events, receiving speaking fees from them. Needless to say that, while Trump claims that Bolton has been fired, Bolton says he offered his resignation first.

■ What effect will Bolton's dismissal have on U.S. foreign policy toward Iran?

A: In the absence of Bolton, I think Pompeo, another Iran Hawk will have less weight in Trump's national

security team. Keep in mind that an ordinary president would usually cave into such pressures, but Trump as has been proven many times, is not an ordinary president. At the end of the day, he goes by his gut feelings and not the advice. So on Iran, he is really interested in making a deal with Iranians and claiming the victory. Will he do it? We don't know because he just tweeted, falsely claiming that he never said the he would meet with Iranians without preconditions.

■ With Bolton fired, it was speculated that Trump would be on a diplomatic course with Iran. On the other hand, Yemeni attacks on Aramco have prompted Washington to declare that it is ready to fight Iran. What is your assessment of this situation?

A: On this question, I would argue that it is Trump making threats, because at the end of the day the President of the U.S. doesn't get to declare war on any country because the crown prince of Saudi Arabia says so (referring to his tweet last night). There is also the possibility that a third party wants to drag the U.S. into a war with Iran, using the U.S. blood and treasury.

■ Given the change of personality like Bolton, are Israeli policies in the U.S. State Department going to fade or shift?

A: I think that pro-Israeli policies are more embedded in the U.S., both in the Congress and the White House and change of personality cannot change the influence.

'U.S. might topple Saudi Arabia as the world's top oil exporter sooner than planned'

1 → Ogutcu went on to say, "For oil markets, it is the single worst sudden disruption ever, and while Saudi Arabia may be able to return some supply within days, the attacks highlight the vulnerability of the world's most important exporter. They also add further political risk to prices, raising the specter of more destabilization in the Middle East and the threat of U.S. retaliation against Iran. Even, with a price that could easily double, the Saudi remaining exports will still earn amounts close to what they earned before."

Commenting on who are the most beneficiaries of the tension in the region, he mentioned, "The Russians will be great beneficiaries of this escalating crisis as they will earn much more per barrel on their oil and gas exports. Of course, the United States, now the largest exporter in the world, will also benefit greatly. Remember, prior to this attack, the U.S. was planning to double its crude oil exports to 9 million barrels per day by 2024. That means the U.S. might topple Saudi Arabia as the world's top oil exporter sooner than planned.

The U.S. is pointing a finger to Iran as behind this attack and said it would provide evidence. Traditional U.S. allies are however not on-board. Geopolitics and great-power competition are playing a greater role these days, and while that may satisfy some narrow interests, it does not bode well for stable energy prices, or for the secure and dependable delivery of energy along global

supply chains.

Only China, which imports most of its crude from the Persian Gulf, will be financially hit at the tune of \$1.1 billion for each dollar increase per barrel. Thus, except for China, few of the players will seek to defuse the situation, all feeling that they have little to lose and much to gain. Hence, it would seem that the September 14 attack stands a strong chance of escalating into an all-out conflict.

The sanctions are already cutting \$42 billion/year of oil exports from Iran's economy. They have slashed Iran's oil production and exports to historic lows. Before the U.S. sanctions, Iran produced 3.8 million barrels/day and exported 2.5 million barrels. Oil made up 80% of Iran's exports. The U.S. ended sanctions waivers for major importers of Iranian oil in May 2019. Iran's oil exports were down about 2 million barrels and oil production hit its lowest levels since the Iran-Iraq war."

Regarding the Iran-Saudi Arabia relation in recent years, Ogutcu noted, "While Saudi Arabia supports economically squeezing the Iranian regime, they may not wish to see a war with Iran. While the context has changed in light of the weekend attack, the reasons have not. Saudi Arabia would find itself on the front line of an armed conflict, with Iran or its proxies to the east, south, and north. Such a conflict would also cripple plans for an Aramco IPO and would cause driving foreign investment



from the country.

Saudi Arabia has many long term reasons to showcase its resilience and de-escalate. Until now, Iran and Saudi Arabia were protected by the fear of mutual destruction of their main oil export assets, should one attack the other's facilities. Now that the Iranians have lost most of their export capacity due to the sanctions, this fear of mutual destruction is no longer there.

How Washington and Riyadh choose to respond (for now limited to rhetoric) will show exactly whether this is a flash in the pan or a step-change in Persian Gulf tensions."

US defense failure... Why U.S. has to blame Iran over oil attacks

By Finian Cunningham

The devastating blitz on Saudi Arabia's oil industry has led to a flurry of accusations from US officials blaming Iran. The reason for the finger-pointing is simple: Washington's spectacular failure to protect its Saudi ally.

The Trump administration needs to scapegoat Iran for the latest military assault on Saudi Arabia because to acknowledge that the Houthi rebels mounted such an audacious assault on the oil kingdom's heartland would be an admission of American inadequacy.

Saudi Arabia has spent billions of dollars in recent years purchasing US Patriot missile defense systems and supposedly cutting-edge radar technology from the Pentagon. If the Yemeni rebels can fly combat drones up to 1,000 kilometers into Saudi territory and knock out the linchpin production sites in the kingdom's oil industry, then that should be a matter of huge embarrassment for US "protectors."

American defense of Saudi Arabia is germane to their historical relationship. Saudi oil exports nominated in dollars for trade – the biggest on the planet – are vital for maintaining the petrodollar global market, which is in turn crucial for American economic power. In return, the US is obligated to be a protector of the Saudi monarchy, which comes with the lucrative added benefit of selling the kingdom weapons worth billions of dollars every year.

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Saudi Arabia has the world's third biggest military budget, behind the US and China. With an annual spend of around \$68 billion, it is the world's number one in terms of percentage of gross domestic product (8.8 per cent). Most of the Saudi arms are sourced from the US, with Patriot missile systems in particular being a recent big-ticket item.

Yet for all that financial largesse and the finest American military technology, the oil kingdom just witnessed a potentially crippling wave of air assaults on its vital oil industry. Saudi oil production at its mammoth refinery complex at Abqaiq, 205 miles (330 kms) east of the capital Riyadh, was down 50 per cent after it was engulfed by flames following air strikes. One of the Saudi's biggest oilfields, at Khurais, also in the Eastern Province, was also partially closed.

There are credible reports that the damage is much more serious than the Saudi officials are conceding. These key industrial sites may take weeks to repair.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo got it half right when he claimed, "Iran launched an unprecedented attack on the world's energy supply".

Yes, it is unprecedented. But Pompeo and other US officials have most likely got it wrong about blaming Iran.

Some Trump administration officials told US media that "cruise missiles" were responsible for the giant fireballs seen over the Saudi oil facilities. One was quoted anonymously as saying: "There's no doubt that Iran is responsible for this... there's no escaping it. There is no other candidate."

In a hurried effort to substantiate accusations against Iran, satellite images were released which show what appears to be the aftermath of the air strike on the Abqaiq refinery complex. US officials claim the location of the explosions indicate the weapons originated not from Yemen to the south, but from either Iran or Iraq.

Even the normally dutiful New York Times expressed doubt about that claim, commenting in its report: "The satellite photographs released on Sunday did not appear as clear cut as officials suggested, with some appearing to show damage on the western side of facilities, not from the direction of Iran or Iraq."

The accusations made by Pompeo and others are assertions in place of substantiated claims.

It is noteworthy that President Donald Trump refrained from openly blaming Iran by name, merely hinting at the possibility. If Pompeo is so adamant in fingering Iran, why didn't Trump? Also, the president made a telling remark when he said he was "waiting for verification" from Saudi Arabia "as to who they believe was the cause of the attack." Again, if US officials are explicitly accusing Iran then why is Trump saying he wants "verification" from the Saudis?

For its part, Iran has flatly dismissed the allegations that it had any involvement, saying that statements by Pompeo were "blind" and tantamount to setting up a conflict.

Iraq's Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi also rejected claims that his country's territory might have been used by pro-Iranian Shia militants to launch the air strikes.

The Houthi rebels in Yemen have issued unambiguous statements claiming responsibility for the air raids on the Saudi oil installations. They were specific that the weapons were drones, not missiles, adding with details that 10 unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) were deployed.

Notably too, most US media reported initially that the attacks were by drones flown from Yemen. Associated Press reported a level of sophistication in the attacks whereby drones were used first to disable the US Patriot radar systems before other UAVs proceeded to execute the air strikes.

It therefore seems that US officials are attempting to switch the story by blaming Iran. It is reckless scapegoating because the logical consequence could elicit a military attack against Iran, in which event Tehran has warned it is ready for war.

The rationale for blaming Iran is that the Yemeni rebels (which Iran supports politically) are just not capable of using drones with such dramatic success against the Saudi oil industry. The culprit must be Iran, so the rationale goes. This is a follow-on from alleged sabotage by Iran against oil tankers in the Persian Gulf earlier this summer.

However, a timeline shows that the Houthis are more than capable of launching ever-more powerful ballistic missiles and deeper penetrating drones into Saudi territory. The rebels have been using drones from the beginning of the war which the US-backed Saudi-UAE coalition launched on the southern Arabian country in March 2015.

Over the past four years, the Houthi aerial firepower has gradually improved. Earlier, the Saudis, with American defense systems, were able to intercept drones and missiles from Yemen. But over the last year, the rebels have increased their success rate for hitting targets in the Saudi interior, including the capital Riyadh.

In May this year, Houthi drones hit Saudi Arabia's crucial east-west pipeline. Then in August, drones and ballistic missiles were reported to have struck the Shaybah oil field near the border with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), as well as the Dammam exporting complex in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province.

The Yemenis claim they are taking the war to Saudi Arabia and the UAE after years of relentless air strikes on their homeland which have resulted in nearly 90,000 dead. A recent UN report censured the US, Britain and France for possible complicity in war crimes through their military support for the Saudi coalition.

There must be trepidation among the monarchs in Saudi Arabia and the UAE that the rebels from war-torn and starving Yemen are now coming after them with drones that could demolish their oil economies. What's more, the much-vaunted American protector is not able to deliver on its strategic bargain, despite billions of dollars of Pentagon weaponry. That's why Washington has to find an excuse by casting Iran as the villain.

(Source: RT.com)

Each fatal accident brings \$1.2m loss: Traffic Police chief

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The country burdens heavy loss of 51 billion rials (around \$1.2 million) per fatal road crash, Seyed Kamal Hadianfar, Traffic Police chief has announced.

He explained that during the first 4 months of this year (started March 21), 53 percent of people get killed immediately at the crash scene, while 6 percent of deaths happened on the way to hospitals.



“Some 40 percent of the injured also lost life in the hospitals,” he regretted, Tasnim reported on Monday.

Since the beginning of summer, traffic-related accidents increased by 0.7 percent, he said, adding, trips also increased by 5 percent during the aforesaid period compared to spring.

Over the first 4 months of this year, car rollovers reached 25.7 percent which in some days raised up to 49 percent, he stated, adding, 59 percent of drivers, 27 percent of motorcycle riders, 7.3 percent of light-duty trucks and 0.09 percent of public transportation drivers were to blame for the accidents.

Elsewhere in his remarks, he noted that over the past five months, some 1.1 million driving licenses have been issued which dropped by 11 percent compared to the same period last year.

Each fatal accidents incurs a loss of 51 billion rials (about \$1.2 million) for the country, he said, adding, traffic-related accidents claim lives of 45-65 Iranians per day.

He went on to regret that last year road crashes casualties amounted to 17,365 which brought huge economic burden of nearly 850 trillion rials (around \$20 billion) for the country.

This year, some 113,000 fatal crashes happened in the country which demonstrates a 116 percent increase compared to the same period last year, he highlighted.

He further called on related organizations to cooperate in this regard and raise public awareness as well as taking steps to reduce road casualties.

Nearly 1.25 million people die in road crashes each year, on average 3,287 deaths a day. An additional 20-50 million are injured or disabled. More than half of all road traffic deaths occur among young adults aged 15-44, according to World Health Organization.

Road traffic injuries cause considerable economic losses to individuals, their families, and to nations as a whole. These losses arise from the cost of treatment as well as lost productivity for those killed or disabled by their injuries, and for family members who need to take time off work or school to care for the injured. Road traffic crashes cost most countries 3% of their gross domestic product.

WHO highlights that road traffic injuries can be prevented. Governments need to take action to address road safety in a holistic manner. This requires involvement from multiple sectors such as transport, police, health, education, and actions that address the safety of roads, vehicles, and road users.

Effective interventions include designing safer infrastructure and incorporating road safety features into land-use and transport planning, improving the safety features of vehicles, improving post-crash care for victims of road crashes, setting and enforcing laws relating to key risks, and raising public awareness.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Spanish Minister visits North Africa

(October 1, 2001)

The Spanish foreign minister, Josep Pique, is in Morocco for a two-day tour of North Africa that will include talks on the American-led coalition against terrorism, with the leaders of Morocco, Algeria and Libya. This report from David Bamford. Relations between Morocco and Spain have been at **a low ebb** for some months now, first because of a breakdown in talks over Spanish fishing rights and, more recently, over the illegal immigration issue. The gathering by the United States of its European and Arab allies **in the wake of** the attacks on New York and Washington has given the Spanish foreign minister, Josep Pique, the opportunity to come to Morocco **without losing face**, despite the recent highly-undiplomatic **slanging match** between Mr Pique and the Moroccan king, Mohammed VI.

Later, Mr Pique goes on to Algeria, to discuss last week's arrests of Algerian Islamists militants living in Spain. After that, he goes on to Tripoli. The Spanish are **making a great deal of their role** in bringing the Libyan leader, Colonel Gaddafi, **on board the coalition** to stop global terrorism. In fact, they've been **pushing on an open door**, with the colonel **all too willing** to be seen to have **shed** his past links with **dubious** radical organizations.

Words
a low ebb: in a bad state
in the wake of: following
without losing face: with no loss of dignity, without embarrassment
slanging match: loud public argument
making a great deal of their role: emphasizing their role
on board the coalition: have joined the coalition
pushing on an open door: a very easy argument to win
all too willing: very glad, eager
shed: got rid of
dubious: unrespectable

(Source: BBC)



4,000 in drought-ridden areas provided with social services

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS) has dispatched volunteer teams to provide social services to the people residing in drought-stricken provinces of Sistan-Baluchestan, South Khorasan and Hormozgan, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The long standing 20-year-old drought in the region is forcing many to have to provide their water from tank trucks delivering water to the areas.

To ease water scarcity in those areas, a campaign called Nazr-e Ab (literally meaning water donation), started on August 1 to September 11 in drought-ridden provinces aiming at soliciting water donations for the regions suffering severe water scarcity and people can participate with donating bottled water, water tanks or cash, nationwide.

Along with the campaign, volunteer teams also are sent to areas affected by severe water shortages promote social and cultural activities among children and adolescents, such as training courses on first aid, counseling, health tips, life skills, entrepreneurship, sports, as well as group games, theater, art workshops and etc, Ali Ganj Karimi, an official with the IRCS said.

Also, stationery, school uniforms, toys, school bags, painting supplies were distributed among children and adolescents who cannot



afford to pay for cultural and recreational activities, he added.

The campaign was first held last year (starting on August 5, 2018) in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan which went into trouble after Hamoun wetland drained and the rainless sky left many in dire need

of drinking water.

It has two main aspects; the first one centers on water supply issues including desalination of water, rehabilitation of qanats, improving wells and water quality, filtering and sanitation of reservoirs. And the second aspect focuses on social and health issues including

450 cochlear implants conducted in 5 months: deputy health minister

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Some 450 cochlear implants have been conducted on the children diagnosed with hearing impairment during the first 5 months of the year (started March 21), Qasem Jan-Babaei, deputy health minister, has announced.

A cochlear implant is a small, complex electronic device that can help to provide a sense of sound to a person who is profoundly hearing impaired or severely hard-of-hearing. The implant consists of an external portion that sits behind the ear and a second portion that is surgically placed under the skin.

Pointing to the 11 governmental cochlear implant centers across the country, he noted that it is planned to set up more of such centers in the deprived areas of the country to facilitate cochlear implant for the financially struggling residents.

On average 1,200 to 1,500 cochlear implants are done in Iran annually, he said, IRNA news agency reported on Tuesday.

He went on to say that over 90 percent of the surgery and treatment costs of hearing loss are paid by the Ministry of Health, adding, over the past five months the ministry has done 450 cochlear implants.

The patients who refer to the cochlear implant centers are first provided with necessary treatments such as hearing aids and in case of no improvement the patient will undergo surgery, he concluded.

Mohammad Farhadi, head of the national committee for hearing health, has said that about 3,400 infants out of one million and 300 newborns in Iran were



diagnosed with hearing impairment during the Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018).

About 520 thousand hearing impaired citizens are living in Iran and 1,500 infants suffering from profound hearing loss are born in the country annually, he added.

Also, Saeed Mahmoudian, head of the department of hearing health affiliated with the Ministry of Health, announced in July that cochlear implantation costs about 400 million rials (nearly \$9,000) in Iran, which is partially paid by the government and charitable foundations.

Around 466 million people worldwide have disabling hearing loss, and 34 million of these are children, World Health Organization deafness and hearing loss report states. It is estimated that by 2050 over 900 million people will suffer disabling hearing loss.

Hearing loss may be caused by genetic causes, complications at birth, certain infectious diseases, chronic ear infections, the use of particular drugs, exposure to excessive noise, and ageing. However, 60 percent of childhood hearing loss is due to preventable causes.

EMS organization offers almost 4m services annually

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Emergency Medical Services Organization of Iran carries out over 3.8 million deliveries annually to provide appropriate pre-hospital care and timely transfer of patients to hospitals, Pir-Hossein Kolivand, head of Emergency Medical Services Organization has stated.

The average time for emergency ambulances to reach the accident scene in metropolitan areas is up to 15 minutes due to traffic congestion, he told IRNA on Tuesday.

“We took several measures to reduce traffic accidents or fatalities using the country’s emergency facility,” he highlighted, adding, first of which was equipping the air medical

fleet that with 37 helicopters within 3 years.

In the Iranian calendar year 1395 (March 2016-March 2017), there were only 7 helicopters in the medical services fleet, which increased to 44 by now, he explained.

“Over the past 3 years, we could save some 27,000 individuals injured in traffic-related accidents delivering them to hospitals immediately,” he also highlighted, adding, it played a significant role in reducing the road crashes fatalities.

He went on to note that currently there are 3,300 emergency medical centers which have been 2,000 three years ago. Comparing the number of ambulances operating in the

Half of tigers rescued from Thai temple have died, officials say

More than half of the 147 tigers confiscated from a Thai temple have died, park officials have said, blaming genetic problems linked to inbreeding at the once money-spinning tourist attraction.

For years, the Wat Pha Luang Ta Bua temple in the western province of Kanchanaburi attracted hordes of tourists who could be photographed – for a fee – next to scores of tigers.

But in 2016 park officials began a lengthy operation to remove the big cats amid allegations of mismanagement and claims the creatures were being exploited.

Dozens of dead cubs were found in freezers, sparking claims the carcasses were being sold by a temple rumoured to have raked in hundreds of thousands of pounds a year from visitors.

Tiger parts can fetch enormous sums in China and Vietnam, where some people falsely believe them to have medicinal properties.

The surviving adults were taken to two breeding stations in nearby Ratchaburi province but only 61 of the 147 have survived so far, parks officials said.

“It could be linked to inbreeding,” said Pattarapol Maneon of the department of national parks, wildlife and plant conservation. “They had genetic problems which posed risks to body and immune systems.” Many suffered from tongue paralysis, breathing problems and lack of appetite that led to fatal seizures.

“Most of the tigers were already in a distressed state stemming from the transportation and change of location ... later their



health problems emerged,” said Sunthorn Chaiwattana, another department official. Legal cases against the temple are continuing.

Conservationists questioned whether authorities had looked after the seized animals appropriately, with small, cramped cages enabling the spread of disease.

“To be very honest, who would be ready to take in so many tigers at once?” said Edwin Wiek, the founder of the Wildlife Friends Foundation Thailand.

Conditions at the enclosures were “not good enough to house so many tigers and the setup was wrong”, he added.

Tens of millions visit Thailand every year, and a lucrative wildlife tourism industry has grown in step with visitor numbers. But critics say cash often trumps animal welfare at many attractions.

For a price, visitors can ride and bathe with elephants, hold monkeys and pose for selfies with tigers. Animal rights groups have long criticised the industry, with chained-up animals kept in small quarters with inadequate veterinary care, or forced to perform tricks for tourists.

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

Water drenches 18,000 ha of Hamoun-e Sabori wetland

Hamoun-e Sabori wetland on the Iran-Afghanistan border has been saturated, as rainwater flowed over 18,000 hectares of the wetland, Mohammad Reza Alimoradi, head of marine affairs at the Sistan-Baluchestan provincial department of environment has announced.

“Water entered 18,000 hectares of the wetland in the country, after the afghan part has been soaked in water,” Alimoradi said, IRNA reported on Saturday.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“-fest”

■ **Meaning:** gathering
■ **For example:** It's a horror mystery, rather than a **gorefest**.

PHRASAL VERB

Narrow something down

■ **Meaning:** to reduce the number of things included in a range
■ **For example:** The police have narrowed down their list of suspects.

IDIOM

Cream rises to the top

■ **Explanation:** Someone or something exceptionally good will eventually attract attention or stand out from the rest
■ **For example:** I knew you'd succeed. As the saying goes: 'cream rises to the top'!

۱۸ هزار هکتار از بستر هامون صابوری آبگیری شد

رئیس اداره دریایی اداره کل حفاظت محیط زیست سیستان و بلوچستان گفت: ۱۸ هزار هکتار از بستر هامون صابوری ایران در جریان بارش های اخیر آبگیری شد.

محمد رضا علیمردادی روز شنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: این اتفاق پس از آبگیری کامل هامون صابوری افغانستان به سمت صابوری ایران صورت گرفته است.

Iraq launches fifth phase of Will of Victory operation against Daesh remnants

TEHRAN — Iraq has launched a new operation against the sleeper cells of the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group to secure areas in the central parts of the country as well as a sector of the vast western desert leading to the border with Saudi Arabia.

The media bureau of the volunteer forces, better known by the Arabic name Hashd al-Sha'abi, announced in a statement that the fifth phase of Will of Victory operation began early on Monday morning, and would push to clear the remote territory between the provinces of Karbala, Najaf and Anbar.

The statement added that members of the Iraqi army, police and units of the Hashd Sha'abi – supported by Iraqi Air Force warplanes – are all taking part in the offensive.

On August 27, the Iraqi military announced the conclusion of the fourth phase of the Will of Victory operation in western Iraq.

A statement by the media office of the Joint Operations Command said on August 5 that the Iraqi army, police and Hashd al-Sha'abi units, backed by the Iraqi Air Force fighter jets, had launched the third phase of the major offensive in the eastern Diyala



province and Nineveh province in the north.

The statement said the troops had begun search operations in rural areas near the towns of Miqdadiyah, Jalawla and Khanaqin in Diyala province.

Also in Nineveh province, the troops

launched an operation to clear the rugged areas of al-Atshanah and the mountain ranges of Badush and Sheikh Ibrahim in west and northwest of the provincial capital city of Mosul.

The second-in-command of the Joint

Operations Command (JOC), Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Rasheed Yarallah, said in a statement on July 20 that Iraqi military forces had launched the second phase of the Will of Victory operation to hunt down Daesh remnants north of Baghdad and areas nearby.

The statement noted that the offensive aims to “beef up security and stability in areas north of Baghdad and surrounding areas in the provinces of Diyala, Salahuddin and Anbar.”

It said that units from the Baghdad Operations Command, command operations from Diyala, Samarra and Anbar, the Federal Police Command, rapid response teams, Hashd al-Sha'abi fighters and the special forces regiment of the Operations Department of the Chief of Staff of the Army as well as the Special Task Force of the Directorate of Military Intelligence were participating in the offensive.

According to Press TV, Iraq's army and the voluntary forces began the first phase of the Will of Victory operation early on July 7, the military said in a statement, adding that the operation was aimed at securing the province of Anbar and the central and northern regions of Salahuddin and Nineveh.

Ghani ‘unhurt’ as blast kills dozens at Afghan president’s rally

Taliban kill at least 48 in bloody day ahead of Afghan polls

➔ The explosions came after US President Donald Trump abruptly ended talks with the Taliban earlier this month over a deal that would have allowed the US to begin withdrawing troops from its longest war.

In a statement sent to media claiming responsibility for both blasts, Taliban spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid said the attack near Ghani's rally was deliberately aimed at disrupting the September 28 elections.

“We already warned people not to attend election rallies, if they suffer any losses that is their own responsibility,” the statement said.

An AFP image from the scene near Ghani's rally, roughly an hour's drive north of Kabul, showed the remains of a burnt motorcycle, with a body on top, covered by a blanket and next to a badly damaged police car.

Women and children were among the casualties, Parwan hospital director Abdul Qasim Sangin told AFP.

The president, who was speaking to his supporters at the time of the blast, was unhurt but later condemned the attack, saying the incident proved the Taliban had no real interest in reconciliation.

“As the Taliban continue their crimes, they once again prove that they are not interested in peace and stability in Afghanistan,” said Ghani in a statement.

■ **Talks ‘dead’**

Sixty kilometres away in Kabul, a shopkeeper, Rahimullah, said he had been sitting inside his shop when the second blast came.

“The wave broke all the windows,” he told AFP.

“I rushed outside and saw several bodies just across the street. This is the second time in less than a month that a blast has broken our windows. I just fixed them a week ago.”

The UN's mission in Afghanistan also slammed the Taliban, accusing them of showing “despicable disregard for civilian life & fundamental human right to participate in democratic process”.

The elections will see Ghani face off against his own Chief Executive, Abdullah Abdullah, and more than a dozen other candidates, including former warlords, ex-spies, and one-time members of the country's former communist regime.

For weeks, the election had been sidelined by the U.S.-Taliban talks, with many Afghans and observers expecting the vote to be cancelled if a deal was agreed. Even candidates



did little in the way of campaigning.

But with the deal off, Ghani and his rivals have begun the race.

Yemeni missile hits gathering of mercenaries in Saudi Arabia’s Asir province

TEHRAN — Yemeni forces have targeted gathering of mercenaries fighting for the Riyadh regime in Saudi Arabia's southwestern province of Asir with a domestically-manufactured missile.

Citing an unnamed military source, Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah news website reported that Yemeni missile defense units successfully hit one gathering of Saudi mercenaries near the Alab crossing with a Zelzal-1 (Earthquake-1) missile on Monday.

The strike followed another attack by Yemeni troops on the same area on Sun-

day, al-Masirah said, adding that Yemeni missile defense units have dealt blows to the mercenaries and their positions near the crossing with at least seven Zelzal-1 missiles over the past two days.

In a separate report on Monday, al-Masirah, citing an unnamed military source, said Yemeni forces targeted another gathering of the same sort in Mas camp in Yemen's central province of Ma'rib with a volley of rockets.

It added that Yemeni snipers also managed to shoot dead at least nine mercenaries in Yemen's northwestern province of Hajjah

earlier in the day.

On Saturday, Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah fighters conducted drone strikes on Saudi Arabia's two oil facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais, reducing output of mainly light crude grades by 5.7 million barrels. The attacks led to a halt in about 50 percent of the Arab kingdom's crude and gas production, causing a record surge in oil prices.

Earlier on Monday, the spokesman for the Yemeni armed forces, General Yahya Sare'a, said in a statement that the Yemeni army and its allied forces “assure the Saudi

regime that our long hand can reach any place we want at any time we choose.”

According to Press TV, Yemeni forces regularly target positions inside Saudi Arabia in retaliation for the Saudi war, which began in March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall the country's Riyadh-allied former regime and crush the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement.

The Western-backed military aggression, coupled with a naval blockade, has killed tens of thousands of Yemenis, destroyed the country's infrastructure and led to a massive humanitarian crisis.

Saudi officials detain another Hamas leader in crackdown on Palestinian movement

TEHRAN — Saudi authorities have reportedly arrested another senior Hamas leader, as the conservative kingdom steps up its crackdown and repressive measures against the Palestinian resistance movement as well as those seeking to collect donations for people living in the impoverished Gaza Strip.

Palestinian political and family sources told Arabic-language al-Khaleej Online news website on Sunday that Saudi officials have detained Saudi Arabian citizen Abu Ubaydah Khayri Hafiz al-Agha – the son of one of the most prominent founders of Hamas, identified as Khayri al-Agha, who died of natural causes in Saudi Arabia in 2014.

The source added that Saudi authorities had put Agha in Dhahban Central Prison, which is a maximum security prison facility located near the Red Sea port city of Jeddah.

The director general of al-Zaytouna Center for Studies and Consultations, Dr. Mohsen Mohammad Saleh, told Khaleej Online that Agha is being kept behind bars for more than a year and a half, without any specific information about the reason for his detention.

On Saturday, Hamas called on Saudi authorities to immediately release its high-ranking official Muhammad al-Khudari, who was detained in the country five months



ago without any clear charges.

Khudari, who has been living in Saudi Arabia for over 30 years, represented Hamas between mid-1990s and 2003 in Saudi Arabia. He has held other important positions in the Palestinian resistance movement as well.

Back on June 3, Lebanese Arabic-language daily news-

paper al-Akhbar, citing informed sources who requested anonymity, reported that Saudi officials had been holding dozens of Saudi nationals and Palestinian expatriates in detention for months over affiliation to Hamas.

The report added that the most prominent figure among those arrested was Dr. Khudari.

Al-Ahbar went on to say that the campaign of arrests coincided with the closure and tight control of bank accounts, and a ban on sending any money from Saudi Arabia to the Gaza Strip.

Over the past two years, Saudi authorities have deported more than 100 Palestinians from the kingdom, mostly on charges of supporting Hamas financially, politically or through social networking sites.

According to Press TV, The Riyadh regime has imposed strict control over Palestinian funds in Saudi Arabia since the end of 2017.

All remittances of Palestinian expatriates are being tightly controlled, under the pretext that these funds could be diverted indirectly and through other countries to Hamas.

Money transfer offices are asking the Palestinians to bring forward strong arguments for conversion, and do not allow the ceiling of one's money transfer to exceed \$3,000.

UK Supreme Court begins hearing on parliament suspension

TEHRAN — All eyes were on Britain's highest court on Tuesday as judges began hearing arguments centred on Prime Minister Boris Johnson's controversial suspension of parliament.

Last week, the prime minister prorogued parliament ahead of his government's scheduled Queen's Speech on October 14 - a highly ceremonial occasion in which the British monarch outlines the government's legislative programme.

But critics have accused the Conservative leader of using the five-week suspension to avoid democratic scrutiny as he bids to deliver his pledge to bring the United Kingdom out of the European Union by October 31, with or without a deal.

The UK Supreme Court will now have the final say on the legality of the prorogation, after judges in England and Scotland came to contrasting conclusions.

A ruling is expected by Thursday afternoon at the earliest, but may be delivered on Friday or early next week.

■ **‘A legal question’**

Last week, more than 70 British parliamentarians sensationally won their legal challenge in Scotland after three appeal judges sitting in Edinburgh declared the suspension unlawful, reversing the decision of an earlier sitting Scottish judge.

This followed a verdict in the English High Court that threw out a similar challenge brought by prominent an-

ti-Brexit campaigner Gina Miller, ruling in favour of government lawyers' arguments that the prorogation was a political, not a legal, matter.

Miller's legal team said on Tuesday they believed “the divisional court was wrong to conclude that the issues in this case are non-justiciable”, however.

“Identifying whether a power has been used for a valid purpose is a legal question, it is not a political question,” Lord Pannick told the Supreme Court. “It's a question for the courts, and the rule of law so demands.”

Analysts, meanwhile, said a defeat for the government over the case could have major implications for Johnson's

premiership and parliament's role amid Britain's rapidly unravelling Brexit chaos.

“The Supreme Court will essentially determine whether it believes the prime minister behaved unlawfully - as the [Scottish appeal court] determined - in which case the most immediate impact will be on the reputation of the premier,” James Mitchell, a public policy professor at The University of Edinburgh, told Al Jazeera.

“Such a ruling would feed the opposition parties' narrative that has focused on charges of Johnson's dishonesty... parliament would have to be recalled in the event of such a court judgment.”

Iraqi PM: Iraq would not harm its neighbors

TEHRAN — Iraq would never harm any of its Arab neighbors, the Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul Mahdi said on Tuesday.

He added that the country is acting responsibly to ensure the region's best interests are maintained.

“We are acting responsibly towards the current regional crisis to maintain the region's best interests,” he said.

Jordan’s king: Israel annexing settlements would be disaster

TEHRAN — Jordan's King Abdullah II says if Israel goes ahead with the idea of annexing all the settlements in the occupied West Bank it would be a “disaster” for attempts to find any two-state solution with the Palestinians.

Speaking after talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel Tuesday, Abdullah said he was “extremely concerned” about Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's vow to annex all the occupied West Bank settlements.

He says it will “directly impact” the relationship between Israel and Jordan, and Israel and Egypt, and that “these types of statements are ... a disaster to any attempt to move forward to the two-state solution.”

Merkel agreed, calling Netanyahu's vow “unhelpful.”

Abdullah added that “we're looking on this with tremendous concern.”

Israel captured the West Bank and east Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 war, AP reported.

India says it expects control Pakistani Kashmir one day

TEHRAN — India's foreign minister said Tuesday that the part of Kashmir controlled by Pakistan belongs to India, and that he expects India to gain physical control over it one day, intensifying the rhetoric over the territorial row.

India rules the heavily populated Kashmir Valley while Pakistan controls a wedge of territory in the west that New Delhi describes as Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

“Our position on PoK is, has always been, and will always be very clear. PoK is part of India and we expect one day that we will have the jurisdiction, physical jurisdiction over it,” Foreign Minister Subrahmanyan Jaishankar told a news conference to lay out the government's foreign policy achievements since it came to power in May, Reuters reported.

Nusra terrorists continue preventing civilians from leaving Idlib

TEHRAN — The Jabhat al-Nusra terrorist group, formerly known as al-Nusra Front, has for the fourth consecutive day prevented citizens from leaving via the Abu al-Duhur corridor in the north-western province of Idlib, Syria's state-run media outlet says.

The official SANA news agency reported on Monday that the corridor, which was prepared and secured by the Syrian army for the safe passage of civilians, has been blocked by the terrorist outfit over the past four days.

SANA added that authorities in cooperation with Syrian government forces, however, continue to take all measures to receive civilians aiming to leave the terrorist-held areas in Idlib via the corridor.

The terrorists use civilians in villages and cities in the north-western province as human shields.

Idlib remains the only large area in the hands of foreign-backed terrorists after the Syrian army, backed by Iran and Russia, managed to wrest back control of almost all of the country's land, undoing militants' gains.

The government forces have gained more ground against Takfiri militants in the southern edge of Idlib in their latest offensive that was launched last month.

According to Press TV, on August 5, the Syrian army declared in a statement the start of an offensive against foreign-sponsored militants in Idlib after those positioned in the de-escalation zone failed to honor a ceasefire brokered by Russia and Turkey and continued to target civilian neighborhoods.

The Syrian army warned civilians to leave Idlib before the campaign began to flush terrorists out of the region.

NATO Secretary General in Iraq: training national forces is a key tool in fighting terrorism

TEHRAN — Training national forces is one of NATO's “best tools” in the fight against terrorism, the alliance's chief said on Tuesday.

“#NATO's training & advisory support here makes Iraq & NATO Allies safer by helping prevent the return of Daesh. Training national forces is one of our best tools in the fight against terrorism,” Jens Stoltenberg said on Twitter.

Stoltenberg's remarks came after a meeting with Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi in Iraq, where the two discussed NATO's new training mission in the country, as well as regional security.

After a decision at the 2018 NATO summit, hundreds of trainers and support staff from NATO allies and partners were stationed in Iraq, providing advice and support to the National Operations Center, Defense Ministry and Office of the National Security Adviser.

“Mr. Stoltenberg highlighted that NATO's assistance is helping Iraq to form a core group of instructors and trainers, boosting skills in areas like countering improvised explosive devices, military medicine, and military communications,” NATO said in a statement.

During the meeting, Stoltenberg underlined NATO's full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Iraq.

Later on Tuesday, he will meet with Iraqi Defense Minister Najah al-Shammari, and is expected to deliver remarks at the Iraqi Defense University.

Liverpool none the wiser over Club World Cup opponents after draw

European champions Liverpool were left waiting to see who they will face in the Club World Cup semi-finals after Monday's draw pitted them against four potential opponents.

Despite being six-times European champions, Liverpool have never won the world club title in any of its many guises with their most recent attempt ending in a shock 1-0 defeat by Sao Paulo in the 2005 final in Japan.

On Monday, they were drawn to face the winners of the quarter-final between CONCACAF champions Monterrey of Mexico and either Al Sadd, champions of hosts Qatar, or Hienghene Sport, Oceania title holders, who meet in a preliminary round match.

However, if Al Sadd win the Asian Champions League, which is at the quarter-final stage, they would be replaced in the preliminary round by the Asian runners-up, and move straight into the quarter-finals.

In the other semi-final, the eventual South American champions will face either Tunisian side Esperance, the African champions, or the eventual Asian Champions League winners.

The Club World Cup, to be staged in Qatar in December, will be the penultimate edition of the tournament in its current form. From 2021, it will become a 24-team event staged every four years rather than a seven-team contest held annually.

Liverpool won the old European Cup in 1977 and 1978 but declined to play in the old two-leg Intercontinental Cup final against Boca Juniors, the champions of South America.

In 1981, they lost to Flamengo in a single match played in Tokyo and in 1984 were beaten by Independiente.

In 2005, with the title now decided by a seven-team tournament, they reached the final where they lost to Sao Paulo.

(Source: Reuters)

Mings clashes with Villa team-mate El Ghazi in West Ham draw

Aston Villa duo Tyrone Mings and Anwar El Ghazi were involved in a furious clash and West Ham defender Arthur Masuaku was sent off in a separate incident during Monday's fiery o-o draw.

Mings and El Ghazi lost their cool in the first half at Villa Park and had to be dragged away by team-mates after West Ham nearly took the lead.

The pair escaped punishment for their row, but Masuaku was not so fortunate as he saw red for a second booking after half-time.

Villa were unable to make their numerical advantage pay off and had to settle for a stalemate that left the spotlight on the bust-up between Mings and El Ghazi.

Villa defender Mings had blocked a cross that he felt Dutch midfielder El Ghazi allowed to come in too easily.

El Ghazi was angry enough with the criticism to brush his head against Mings' forehead as the pair went face to face.

They were pulled away by team-mates but stood glaring at each other inside the penalty area as Mings pointed an accusing finger at El Ghazi.

Referee Mike Dean urged them to calm down after consulting VAR to check there was not a red card offence and play eventually resumed with Villa manager Dean Smith wearing a bemused expression on the touchline.

Smith insisted the row hadn't caused a rift in the squad and claimed it was quickly resolved by his players.

"That's a heat of the moment thing. I didn't even talk to them at half-time, it had already been sorted," Smith said.

(Source: Mirror)

Tattooed Samoans don skin suits in Japan

Samoan rugby players will wear skin suits to keep traditional Pacific islander tattoos under wraps during the World Cup in Japan to avoid offending their hosts.

For the Japanese, tattoos have long been associated with members of 'yakuza' crime syndicates, and inked tourists may be met with disapproval and sometimes banned from gyms, bathhouses or traditional hot-spring resorts.

But tattoos are also a fundamental part of the Pacific identity back home for the Samoans.

"We have to respect the culture of the land we are in wherever we go. We have our own culture as well but we are not in Samoa now," team manager Va'elua Aloia Alesana told the World Cup website.

"There are some training venues that have allowed us to show our tattoos and some places where we can't, and for those places, we've been given 'skins' to wear to cover our tattoos.

"The extra skins are only for when we go to the (swimming) pools though. At the training we can wear our normal clothes."

Last December, World Rugby advised both players and supporters to cover up tattoos during the tournament.

The Samoan players will not wear the skin suits during matches or during training sessions, only donning the suits in public places.

(Source: ESPN)

Ter Stegen hits back at Neuer for "inappropriate" statements

Marc-André ter Stegen will travel back to Germany tomorrow for FC Barcelona's clash against Borussia Dortmund. Apart from the highlighted game, ter Stegen will have the spotlight on him off the pitch as well due to his recent dispute with Manuel Neuer.

Ter Stegen publicly expressed his disappointment that he was not starting against Germany's game against Northern Ireland. Calling the trip with the national team a "tough blow," ter Stegen admitted he was unhappy with his current situation on the national team situation.

As a direct consequence, Manuel Neuer responded by stating that the "team is the most important thing," hinting that ter Stegen's comments do not help the squad harmony.

In a press conference before the Borussia Dortmund clash against Barca, ter Stegen was not shy to elaborate on his feelings on the matter:

"Of course, I have something to say about that. You can't call for competition and expect the players who don't play to be happy about it. No one has to say anything about my feelings, that's my personal opinion. If you look at the last few years, how I have conducted myself, then such statements are inappropriate!"

So, round 3 has started. Ter Stegen is defending himself after Neuer's comments. There are not many national teams that would bench a player such as ter Stegen but Germany's head coach Jogi Löw has not wavered. The last word in this conversational duel seems far from being spoken.

(Source: Bavarian Football)

New cars, tattoos: the lifestyles of India's kabaddi millionaires

Siddharth Desai grew up in humble surroundings but now he's living the life of a millionaire sportsman, driving a souped-up jeep and taking selfies with fans -- and it's all thanks to kabaddi.

The ancient game has undergone a glitzy makeover through the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL), creating a new group of sports stars in a country traditionally obsessed with cricket.

Kabaddi -- which roughly translates to "holding hands" -- is a tag-meets-rugby contact sport widely believed to have originated in the South Asian nation thousands of years ago.

Siddharth and his elder brother Suraj Desai went from playing kabaddi in the dust in their village in the state of Maharashtra, to wrestling on indoor mats in front of a TV audience of millions.

"Even if you work for 50 years of your life, you will never get a financial benefit like you do while playing one year of PKL," the 27-year-old raider, the proud owner of an orange-and-black 4x4 off-roader, told AFP.

"Nobody knew me before season six but now people want to touch me, media wants to interview me. People want to take selfies with me."

The franchise-based professional league was launched by Star Sports in 2014. Players were auctioned, like in the hugely successful Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket tournament, with businesses and Bollywood stars paying big money players for their city or state-based teams.

Siddharth, who was paid \$50,000 last season with U Mumba, was snapped up by



Telugu Titans for a record \$201,444 this year. Together with endorsements, kabaddi has made him a wealthy man.

The previously shy village boy now dreams of buying a new house where his parents and his married brother can enjoy the finer things in life.

"After the start of Pro Kabaddi everyone is looking at kabaddi at a career option," said Siddharth. "Now I like to go indulge in my hobbies which include playing the guitar and music. I will probably get a tattoo done."

Missing Kenyan children found after AS Roma social media campaign



Two missing Kenyan children who featured in a social media campaign run by Italian soccer side AS Roma have been found, the club said.

On Sunday, a 13-year-old boy was found and reunited with his family, while on Tuesday, an eight-year-old girl was found.

The image of the missing boy was posted on Twitter alongside a picture of the club's new summer signing, Henrikh Mkhitaryan, following his loan move from Arsenal, while the girl appeared in Chris Smalling's transfer announcement in August.

In a campaign that started this summer, the Serie A team partnered with charities National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), Telefono Azzurro, Missing People and Missing Child Kenya.

With every transfer announcement Roma made, the club shared two videos of missing children -- one from the US and one from Italy, initially.

A girl from London who appeared alongside the signing of Turkish defender Mert Cetin and a boy from Belgium shown with the transfer announcement of Davide



Zappacosta have also been found as part of the campaign.

Roma was inspired to launch this initiative by US rock band Soul Asylum -- who used the music video for "Runaway Train" to promote the search of 36 missing children.

While Roma has received praise for raising awareness through its social media, the club's head of strategy, Paul Rogers, emphasized the campaign has nothing to do with "self-promotion."

"It's not about Roma trying to be original or to get a pat on the back, it's actually more about how we can do as much as possible to try raise awareness," Rogers told CNN Sport earlier this summer.

"If we can help in any small way in maybe finding someone who has a piece of information that might result in someone getting back in contact with one of the charities, then it would be a great thing."

Mkhitaryan scored on his Serie A debut for Roma in a 4-2 victory over Sassuolo, which happened to be the same day that the Kenyan boy was found.

(Source: CNN)

Neymar's PSG Champions League suspension cut



Neymar's Champions League ban for insulting match officials on social media has been reduced from three games to two following an appeal, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) ruled on Tuesday.

The world's most expensive player following his move from Barcelona to Paris Saint-Germain for 222 million euros in 2017 will miss the fixtures against Real Madrid on Wednesday and Galatasaray in two weeks' time due to the original ban from UEFA.

However, he will now be free to face Belgian side Bruges on October 22.

"The Sole Arbitrator partially upheld the appeal and reduced the suspension imposed by UEFA on Neymar Jr. to two (2) UEFA competition matches for which he would otherwise be eligible," CAS said in a statement.

The Brazilian criticised the referee and his assistants after PSG's last-16 collapse against Manchester United in March which he watched from the stands due to injury.

United were awarded a penalty deep into injury time after a protracted VAR decision, which Marcus Rashford scored

tackles and vicious ankle-wrenches.

It's an entertaining sport for TV and promoters have completed the look with slick, Bollywood-style presentation of the competition and players off the court.

Keen to follow the glamorous IPL, PKL's organizers set about re-vamping the images of the players, who mostly hail from Indian villages.

"We groomed them, got them new haircuts and trained them on how to be on TV," PKL commissioner Anupam Goswami told AFP.

"We also made sure that the field of play looks slightly aspirational."

The success of the first few seasons led Chinese smartphone-maker to VIVO sign up as PKL's title sponsor in a reported \$42 million deal.

The tie-up made PKL the second-largest league in India in terms of sponsorship money after the IPL, which also has VIVO as their lead sponsor.

One of the PKL's foreign stars, U Mumba's former Iran captain Fazel Atrachali, says the league has given players the chance to have a lucrative career.

"When you have money in your sport then your mind is not busy on other things," Atrachali told AFP.

Goswami said that, putting aside the massive salaries of top players in sports like basketball or football, annual wages of \$100,000 for a kabaddi player are "very respectable".

"The bottom salary is seven lakh (\$9,860 per season) which is a salary of a mid-level occupation in our country," he added.

(Source: AFP)

US swimmer criss-crosses English Channel in 54-hour feat



Endurance swimmer Lewis Pugh wrote on Twitter that her achievement was "extraordinary, amazing, super-human".

"Just when we think we've reached the limit of human endurance, someone shatters the records," he wrote.

■ 'Pain and fear'

In a post on Saturday before setting off, Thomas wrote: "This swim is dedicated to all the survivors out there."

"This is for those of us who have prayed for our lives, who have wondered with despair about what comes next, and

have battled through pain and fear to overcome," she wrote.

The marathon swimmer received the cancer diagnosis four months after an unprecedented August 2017 non-stop solo swim of 104.6 miles in Lake Champlain on the US-Canada border.

She underwent treatment for the aggressive form of breast cancer -- which had already begun spreading to the lymph nodes under one of her arms -- in the summer of 2018, according to a fundraising website for a documentary about her achievements.

"I was at the peak of my athletic accomplishments... and then I got diagnosed with cancer," Thomas said in a video posted on the Kickstarter website.

"It's part of who I am now, part of my story. I just hope it never comes back but if it does, to know that I did everything I wanted to do in life."

In the video Thomas, who finished her first open-water event in 2007 and had previously made two Channel swims in 2012 and 2016, said swimming across the Dover Strait had been a lifelong dream and "just as hard as climbing Mount Everest".

"When you're a kid you just dream of swimming the English Channel."

(Source: Eurosport)

Iran aims to improve performance in 2020 Paralympics: Hadi Rezaei

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran's chef de mission Hadi Rezaei predicted Iran will improve performance in Tokyo.

Iran sent a record number of competitors to Rio 2016, being represented by 110 athletes in 12 sports.

The Iranian athletes won eight gold, nine silver and seven bronze medals and finished in 15th place.

Iran's best performance at the Paralympic Games since they made their debut at Seoul in 1988 was at London 2012 when they finished 11th with a total of 24 medals, including 10 gold.

Now, Rezaei predicts Iran will improve performance at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

"According to the survey, we can win 11 gold, 13 silver and 10 bronze medals in Tokyo. We've earned 34 quota places so far. We are going to send 103 athletes to Tokyo 2020 and winning medal is obviously at the top of our priorities," he added.

"Around 3,000 reporters have registered to cover the Games and it shows that how important is the event. The 2016 Rio Paralympic Games were covered by 1,500 reporters," Rezaei stated.

"Tokyo prepares for the biggest Paralympics yet. About 100,000 workers will take part in the telework trial program led by the government and the organizing committee of the Tokyo Games to reduce traffic congestion during the Games," Rezaei said.

"Iran's National Paralympic Committee is very supportive of athletes and some athletes will partake at the Paralympic Games to gain experience for the 2022 Asian para Games in Hangzhou, China," he concluded.

The Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games are set to be the biggest and best yet with around 4,400 Para athletes from more than 160 countries taking part in 22 sports.



Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers seize two bronzes at World Wrestling C'ships



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers Alireza Nejati and Mohammad Ali Gerai won two bronze medals at the 2019 Wrestling World Championships (WWC) in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan on Tuesday.

Nejati defeated Uzbekistan's Elmurat Tasmuradov 7-5 at the 60kg bronze medal match. Mirambek Ainagulov of Kazakhstan also claimed the bronze medal after defeating Lenur Temirov from Ukraine.

Kenichiro Fumita of Japan won the gold medal, beating Russian Sergey Emelin 10-5 in the final match.

Gerai defeated Armenian Karapet Chalyan 9-6 to win the bronze medal at the 77kg.

Uzbekistan's Jalgasbay Berdimuratov also won a bronze medal after defeating Askhat Dilmukhamedov from Kazakhstan.

Hungarian Tamás Lorincz won the gold medal by beating Alex Bjurberg Kessidis from Sweden 8-0 in the final match.

Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Saeid Abdvali had claimed a bronze medal at the 82kg weight class on Sunday.

The top six finishers in each weight class will earn the Olympics berth.

The 2019 World Wrestling Championships are being held in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan from 14 September to 22 September, 2019.

About 1,000 wrestlers from 102 countries compete in the competition.

Iran sink China at Asian Volleyball Championship



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran overpowered China in straight sets (25-18, 25-23, 25-17) at the 2019 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship at the 12,000-seater Azadi Sports Complex here on Tuesday.

Iran started the campaign with a 3-0 win over Sri Lanka and then defeated Qatar with the same result.

Iran were stunned by Australia and lost to the team 3-1 in Pool A.

Iran are in Pool E along with Australia, China and India.

Team Melli will meet India on Wednesday.

Pool F consists of Japan, South Korea, Chinese Taipei and Pakistan.

The event is a biennial international volleyball tournament organized by the Asian volleyball governing body, the Asian Volleyball Federation (AVC). The tournament is being held from Sept. 13 to 21.

Top eight teams of this tournament will qualify for the 2020 Asian Olympic Qualification Tournament, which will be held in Jiangmen, China from 7 to 12 January 2020, where the winners will qualify to the 2020 men's Olympic volleyball tournament.

Beijing 2022: Paralympic and Olympic mascots unveiled

The Beijing Organizing Committee for the 2022 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games (BOCOG) launched the much-anticipated official Games mascots, Bing Dwen Dwen and Shuey Rhon Rhon, in a glittering ceremony attended by more than 10,000 people at the Shougang Ice Hockey Arena on Tuesday.

■ Glowing Lantern as Paralympic Mascot

In the presence of Para athletes and other dignitaries, Shuey Rhon Rhon was introduced to the audience as the official mascot for the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games.

Shuey Rhon Rhon is a Chinese lantern child who is looking forward to welcome friends from around the globe for the mega event. Exuding positivity, the glow emanating from its heart symbolizes the inspiring warmth, friendship, courage, and perseverance of Para athletes that lights up the dreams of millions every day.

The Chinese lantern is a millennia-old cultural symbol associated with harvest, celebration, prosperity and brightness. Red is the most auspicious and festive color of the country and is all the more fitting given the Games will coincide with Chinese New Year celebrations in February and March 2022.

The overall design on Shuey Rhon Rhon draws from traditional Chinese papercut, Ruyi ornaments, features doves, Beijing's iconic Temple of Heaven, snow to symbolize peace, friendship and happiness.

Shuey has the same pronunciation as, the Chinese character for snow. The first Rhon in the mascot's Chinese name means 'to include, to tolerate', while the second Rhon means 'to melt, to fuse' and 'warm.' The name expresses the well wish that there could be more inclusion for people with impairments more dialogue and understanding between cultures of the world.

Chen Jining, Mayor of Beijing and BOCOG Executive President, speaking on the occasion said: "The mascots carry the enthusiasm of 1.3 billion Chinese people towards Beijing 2022 and send warm invitations for people of



the world to visit for the Games."

IPC President Andrew Parsons said: "The Paralympic mascot Shuey Rhon Rhon will become the face of the Beijing 2022 Paralympic Winter Games lighting up the lives of billions around the world who will watch in awe as Para athletes inspire and excite the world."

■ Behind the unveiling

The unveiling of the mascots marks the culmination of a journey that began in August 2018, when BOCOG launched a global design competition for the mascots.

A total of 5,816 submissions were received from 35 countries. This was reviewed by Chinese and international experts comprehensively before making the final selection.. The final Paralympic and Olympic mascots chosen were designed by teams from the Guangzhou Academy of Fine Arts and Jilin University of Arts, respectively.

Affirming Beijing 2022's commitment to sustainability, many of the licensed mascot products to be on sale will be made with new environmentally friendly materials instead of plastic.

■ From 2008 to 2022: Advancing a Legacy

With a vision of 'Joyful Rendezvous upon Pure Ice

and Snow', Beijing 2022 is building on the legacies of the landmark Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games and expects to encourage millions of people across China to embrace winter sports.

The Paralympic and Olympics mascots will serve as spirited symbols of the Games that will take place in the three zones of central Beijing, the capital's suburban district of Yanqing, and Zhangjiakou in nearby Hebei province.

Beijing 2022 is committed to deliver a green and sustainable Games, which will integrate with and boost the region's long-term economic transformation.

In a ground-breaking move, Beijing 2022's speed skating venue, figure skating and short track venue as well as ice hockey training venues will use natural CO2 refrigerants in their ice-making systems. Other venues will use refrigerants with a low Global Warming Potential.

Of the 13 competition and non-competition venues in the Beijing zone, 11 will use legacies from Beijing 2008. Solid post-Games utilization plans have also been made for mountain venues in Yanqing and Zhangjiakou, which has become one of the most popular skiing destinations in China.

The Shougang Ice Hockey Arena where the mascot launch ceremony was held is a special and brand-new venue renovated from an old industrial facility. Shougang is one of the largest steel factories in China and shut down production in its Beijing plant before the 2008 Olympic Games for environmental reasons.

Shougang Industrial Park in the west of the city now houses BOCOG's headquarters and is rapidly transforming into an avant-garde space filled with office buildings, museums, sports venues, and recreational facilities. Beijing 2022's snowboard and freestyle skiing big air venue is also being built in the park, next to a lake and four cooling towers.

(Source: Paralympic)

Persepolis six-year-old fan dies: report

PLDC — An six-year-old boy has reportedly died of an electric shock at the Azadi Stadium.

The Persepolis little fan has died when he wanted to pass the gate.

However, some say that he has died after touching broken electric cable on the scaffolding.

Persepolis defeated Sanat Naft 1-0 in Iran professional league (IPL) on Monday.

I chose Ha Noi FC to gain new experiences, says Iranian footballer

IRNA — Sajjad Moshkelopour, center back at the Iranian Paykan Football Club, who has been playing at Vietnam's Ha Noi FC, says he chose the Vietnamese club because to gain new experiences.

"A friend of mine told me about the Ha Noi's offer. I consulted and thought a lot before I chose this club. My priority wasn't financial issues. I wanted to get new experience in my sport life. That's why I chose Ha Noi FC," Moshkelopour told IRNA on Monday.

The Iranian footballer, who will return to Iran in a fortnight after his contract with the Vietnamese club comes to an end, says the Vietnam League 1 doesn't enjoy high football standards.

He was transferred to the Vietnamese club in July in a bid to give the Purple-Yellows a boost before their AFC Cup competitions.

"The Vietnamese play faster rather than physically which is how the Iranians play football," he added in the interview.

The Purple-Yellows are all set to defend their V.League title enjoying a seven point lead over second-placed Ho Chi Minh City FC with just three games left in the Vietnamese top division.

Persepolis beat Sanat Naft: IPL

TASNIM — Persepolis football team earned a confidence boosting win over Sanat Naft on Monday.

With one week ahead of Tehran derby, Mohammad Hossein Kananizadegan scored a long-range goal in the 57th minute in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Persepolis made several scoring chances but its strikers lacked the cutting edge.

At the end of Iran Professional League (IPL) week three, Persepolis sits fourth with six points.

Padideh are top of the table with nine points, followed by Sepahan and Saipa both with seven points.

Iran futsal team to participate at Caspian Cup

TASNIM — Iran national futsal team will take part at the Caspian Cup 2019 International Tournament.

The Caspian Cup 2019 International Tournament will be held in Astrakhan, Russia from September 22 to 25.

Iran will play Azerbaijan, Russia and Kazakhstan in the tournament.

The Iranian national futsal team are preparing for the 2020 AFC Futsal Championship Qualifiers and also 2020 FIFA Futsal World Cup.

Iran finished third at the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016 after a 4-3 penalty shootout win over Portugal following a 2-2 draw.

Xavi: We had an unbelievable match

Head coach Xavi Hernandez hailed what he described was one of Al Sadd's best matches of the year after the Qatar champions advanced to the 2019 AFC Champions League semi-finals on Monday.

Trailing 2-1 from the first leg in Riyadh last month, Xavi said Al Sadd produced the great performance required as the Doha-based club defeated Saudi Arabia's Al Nassr 3-1 at the Jassim bin Hamad Stadium to advance to their second successive AFC Champions League semi-finals.

"We are happy with the victory and the performance as it was an unbelievable match," said Xavi. "We didn't have a good performance in the first leg but today we achieved our goal.

"We deserve to qualify because our performance was great," added the former Spanish international midfielder. "Al Sadd players showed great winning mentality tonight."

"We controlled the match and that's why I wasn't worried about the result," he said. "This was one of the best matches that we have played this season."

Al Sadd levelled the tie on aggregate through Akram Afif in the 26th minute but Al Nassr looked to have taken control of the driver's seat when Moroccan forward Abderrazak Hamdallah scored 12 minutes before the break.

Hassan Al Haydos, however, scored with a screamer in the 59th minute and Algerian international Baghdad Bounedjah sealed victory from the penalty spot seven minutes from the end.

Xavi praised the performance of Qatar national team captain Al Haydos, who was a constant thorn for Al Nassr.

"Al Haydos is a role model and I told him that he's a special one," said Xavi about the 28-year-old player. "He is a leader on the pitch and he's one of the best players in West Asia, not only in Qatar."

After calling time on his phenomenal playing career at the end of last season, Xavi was appointed Al Sadd head coach and the Spain and Barcelona legend is happy with what he has achieved so far.

"I took charge of Al Sadd a month and a half ago and I'm happy with what I have achieved," he said. "I want to thank the fans who supported us tonight as they were one of the key reasons for this victory."

(Source: the-afc)

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Selfishness is an envious agent against wisdom.

Imam Ali (AS)

“Elephant Safari” wins DIGIPIX Gold Award in India

A R T **TEHRAN** — Amin Dehqan from Iran has won the DIGIPIX Gold Award at the 1st Creative Digipix International Salon, a photo contest organized by the Fédération Internationale de l’Art Photographique (FIAP) in India.



“Elephant Safari” by Amin Dehqan won the DIGIPIX Gold Award in India.

Dehqan won the award for his photo “Elephant Safari” depicting groups of tourists riding elephants in the Photo Travel section, the organizers have announced.

The awards will be handed to the winners during a ceremony set for November 30.

A jury composed of photographers Debdas Bhunia, Subrata Das and Santosh Jana selected the photos competing in different categories, including nature, wildlife and photojournalism.

Tehran bookstore to host reading session of Sally Nicholls’ “Ways to Live Forever”

C U L T U R E **TEHRAN** — Book aficionados will come together at Khaneve Ketab Peydayesh, a major bookstore in Tehran, today to attend a reading session of British children’s book author Sally Nicholls’ debut novel “Ways to Live Forever”.

Persian translators of the book Elaheh Moradi and Milad Bababnejad are scheduled to attend the meeting, which will be organized by the publisher Peydayesh.

“Ways to Live Forever” is a heart-wrenching and gripping story about Sam, an eleven-year-old boy. “Sam has leukemia and this book is his diary. In it he writes lists, pictures, stories, facts and lots of questions. The diary is full of funny stories about day-to-day life with leukemia and all of the things he plans and wants to do before his death,” The Guardian wrote about the book.

“The story grips you, page after page, and you feel more and more wrapped up in the story. It is not only Nicholls’ style of writing that brings this book together but also her characters, tragedies and interesting layout. The book grabs all of your emotions and throws them all over the place, so make sure you have some tissues when you read the last chapter,” it added.

The book won the 2008 Waterstone’s Children’s Book Prize in Britain, the 2008 Glen Dimplex (Irish) New Writers Award, 2008 German Luchs des Jahres and 2009 Bristol-based Concorde Children’s Book Award.

Contemporary Istanbul displays works by Iranian artists

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Contemporary Istanbul (CI), a leading annual art fair in Turkey, hosted the Iranian galleries Khak and Mohsen during its 14th edition, the organizers have announced.

Works by Mojtaba Amini, Mohammad Mosavat, Behrang Samadzadegan, Amir-Hossein Zanjani, Kambiz Sabri, Sasan Abri, Gohar Dashti, Arya Tabandepur and several other artists were showcased by the galleries at the art fair, which was held from September 12 to 15.

Over 70 galleries from 23 countries, including France, Germany, the United States, Portugal, Greece, Russia, Spain and Austria, put over 1400 artworks by 510 artists on view during the event organized at the Istanbul Congress Center and the Rumeli Hall at the Istanbul Lutfi Kirdar Convention and Exhibition Center.

Collectors, artists, art enthusiasts, academics and critics from across the world also attended the Contemporary Istanbul.

“Gold Runner”, “Truck” shine at Duhok film festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Turaj Aslani’s drama “Gold Runner” and his fellow filmmaker Kambuzia Partovi’s movie “Truck” won awards at the 7th edition of the Duhok International Film Festival in Iraq, the organizers announced on Monday.

“Gold Runner” received the New Talent Award for World Cinema while “Truck” was presented with the FIPRESCI Award for the Best Kurdish Feature Film. “Truck” star Saeid Aqakhani was also named best actor for his role in the film.

“Gold Runner” is about Reza, a gold runner who delivers gold pieces after work to retailers. Delivering the gold as usual one day, he is held up by a group of gang members who hit him and steal the gold pieces. The owner of the retail business demands repayment, but Reza has no way to pay him back. Hearing from his friend Louie that there is an expensive jewel somewhere in the floor of a traditional toilet in the workshop, Reza uses the money from the aid group to bid on the workshop at an auction.

“Truck” recounts the story of a Yazidi woman who becomes homeless after the Iraqi ethnic and religious minority is attacked by Daesh forces in the summer of 2014.

In addition, Minu Sharifpur was selected as best actress for her role in Iranian director Salem Salavati’s movie “At Dawn”.

The film tells the story of Shakhawan, whose sister has been killed by a young boy. The killer’s retaliation has been postponed twice due to the gathering of the villagers and their request for Shakhawan and his family’s forgiveness.

“Xalko”, co-directed by Sami Mermer from Canada and Hind Benchekroun from Morocco, was crowned best feature film while the awards for best director and best screenwriter were



Iranian director Turaj Aslani poses after receiving the New Talent Award for his movie “Gold Runner” at the 7th Duhok International Film Festival in Iraq on September 16, 2019.

given to Turkish filmmaker Serhat Karaaslan for his film “Passed by Censor”.

The special jury award for the best international film was presented to “Flesh

Out” by Italian filmmaker Michela Occhipinti.

Ida Panahandeh, the Iranian director of the acclaimed movie “Israfil”, which was the winner of the New Talent Award for World

Cinema at the 6th edition of the Duhok festival, was on the jury panel of the event organized in the Iraqi town of Duhok from September 9 to 16.

Iranian photographer Babak Mehrafshar wins Gold Medal at Turkish contest



“Magnificence of Desert” by Iranian photographer Babak Mehrafshar the FIAP Gold Medal at the Skylife International Photography Contest in Turkey.

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iranian photographer Babak Mehrafshar has won the FIAP Gold Medal at the Skylife International Photography Contest in Turkey.

He received the honor for his long-shot picture “Magnificence of Desert” depicting a man walking in a desert, the organizers have announced.

Es’haq Aqai also from Iran won the Bronze Medal of the contest with his photo “My Grandmother”. The Grand Prize of the contest was given to Chinese photographer Fei Xie for “My Heart Is Flying”.

The awards ceremony will be organized on September 26.

The Skylife International Photography Contest is organized by Turkish Airlines.

“Rona, Azim’s Mother” named best at Sweden Sama film festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — “Rona, Azim’s Mother”, a co-production between Afghanistan and Iran by Tehran-based Afghan brothers Jamshid and Navid Mahmudi, received the best film award in the Afghan film category at the Sama International Film Festival in Stockholm, Sweden.

Starring Iranian actors Mohsen Tanabandeh and Mojtaba Pirzadeh, the film is about Azim, an Afghan refugee who works as a janitor in Tehran. While helping his mother and his brother’s family plan to smuggle themselves into Germany, he feels betrayed by his brother when he abandons their mother.

“The Camel Boy”, a co-production between Afghanistan and France by Afghan director Shabnam Zaryab, won the best short film award in this section.

The film is about a little boy, who is forced to enter the world of camel racing. He is scared but the hope of seeing his mother again gives him the strength to overcome his fears.

In the foreign film section of the festival, “A Call to Father” by Serik Aprimov from Kazakhstan was named best film, while “Buttermilk” by Zainobiddin Muso from Tajikistan



A scene from “Rona, Azim’s Mother” directed by Jamshid and Navid Mahmudi.

received the best short film award in this category.

“A Call to Father” is about a six-year-old boy who lives in a formerly prosperous mining village, but after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the mine was closed

Kamkars to perform at Kurdistan Intl. Peace Carnival in Slemani



A poster for the Kamkars concert, which will be held at the Kurdistan International Peace Carnival.

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Kamkars, Iran’s leading Kurdish family music ensemble, will be performing at the Kurdistan International Peace Carnival, which will be held in Slemani, Iraq on September 21.

Organized by the Middle East Sustainable Peace Organization – MESPO, the carnival will celebrate the International

Week of Peace and the International Day of Peace.

Groups from over 50 countries across the world will give musical and theatrical performances during the carnival, which also features art and food exhibitions.

The Kamkars is scheduled to perform in Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan on September 24.

and his father and mother are left without work. The boy has ADHD, his mother hates him and his father can’t protect him.

“Dreaming of Denmark” by Michael Graversen from Denmark was crowned best documentary in this section.

The film follows the fate of one of the many unaccompanied minor Afghan refugees who is living in Denmark and nervously awaiting acceptance for permanent residency.

Four Iranian short films, including “Empty View” by Ali Zare Qanatnoi and “Maybe One Day” by Jaber Motaharizadeh, were also screened during the festival, which was held from September 13 to 15.

“I Am a Foreigner Too” by Nasim Ostovar and “Elephantbird”, a co-production between Iran and Afghanistan by Iranian director Amir Masud Soheili, were also among the films.

The Sama International Film Festival intends to develop and support creative cinema in Afghanistan. The festival screens works by Afghan filmmakers as well as some foreign filmmakers that have made films regarding Afghanistan and also good films from the countries with the same language.

Who calls the tunes in space? Brad Pitt asks NASA astronaut

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — Brad Pitt traded laughs on Monday in a call to the International Space Station with a NASA astronaut, who somersaulted during the zero-gravity interview ahead of this week’s release of the actor’s new film, the space thriller “Ad Astra.”

Pitt peppered astronaut Nick Hague with dozens of questions about what life was like in space. He interviewed Hague from Washington via a transmission line from NASA’s Mission Control Center in Houston.

“Most important question: Who controls

the jam box?” Pitt asked, referring to the space station’s music.

“We have a rotating playlist, we take turns. And it’s nice because we have the international flair as well,” Hague replied. “Getting to hear some traditional music from Russia over dinner is a nice change, exposure.”

Pitt plays astronaut Roy McBride, who travels to the outer edges of the solar system to find his missing father, confronting a mystery along the way that threatens humanity’s existence back on Earth. “Ad Astra”, whose Latin title means “to the stars”, opens in U.S.

theaters on Friday.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration was given an early copy of the movie’s script to provide visual and technical expertise, according to its film and TV liaison, Bert Ulrich. Detailed images of Mars from NASA’s Jet Propulsion Laboratory informed the film’s recreation of Martian landscapes, he said. “The script did not have a NASA storyline, but there were ways that we could still help them,” Ulrich said in an interview, adding that the film shows some parallels to NASA’s Moon-to-Mars Artemis

program, such as the way characters use the moon to travel further to Mars.

After asking questions like how realistic his zero-gravity movements were in a studio environment - as Hague performed one for him - Pitt said he had one last question “and I need to call on your expertise.”

“Who was more believable, Clooney or Pitt?” the actor asked, referring to George Clooney, a good friend who played an astronaut in the 2013 film “Gravity” and has starred with Pitt in a number of other films.

“You were, absolutely,” Hague replied.