



**U.S. values Arab oil more than Arab blood** **2**



**General warns broad response awaits any U.S. military move** **3**



**Iran beat S. Korea to book a place at Asian Volleyball C'hip final** **15**



**Winners of Ashura Book of the Year awards announced** **16**

# Trump begging for a meeting with Rouhani



See page 2

## Iran-Turkey trade possible to reach \$30b despite sanctions

**TEHRAN** — During the 27th meeting of Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Committee, which was held in Ankara from September 16 to 18, the two sides investigated different ways of reaching the targeted \$30-billion bilateral trade and reiterated that reaching this figure is possible despite the pressures of the U.S. sanctions.

During the meeting, the Iranian president's chief of staff, Mahmoud Vaezi, who

is the Iranian chairman of the committee, mentioned expediting the process of implementing bilateral agreements on trade and economic issues as the most prioritized objective of the joint committee and said Iran has no limitation for expanding and deepening cooperation with Turkey, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported. **→ 4**

## FBI's intimidation campaign against American freethinkers

**TEHRAN** — With an international conference on peace and truth about to open in Beirut, the FBI has launched an intimidation campaign against American academicians, veterans and activists who were invited to the conference in order to prevent their participation.

As the 7th round of the New Horizon Conference (NHC) is scheduled to open

on Monday in the Lebanese capital Beirut, dozens of international experts, peace activists and thinkers have been invited to attend the event, which is known for its criticism of capitalism and liberal hegemony.

The previous rounds of the conference have been marked with its anti-Zionism, and participants gathered from all corners of the world. **→ 3**

## Netanyahu 'played Trump using misinformation' several times: Tillerson

**TEHRAN** — Former U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has revealed that President Donald Trump was "played" by Machiavellian Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on several occasions.

Tillerson, who served in the Trump administration as the Secretary of State from February 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018, recounted on Tuesday during a panel interview with Harvard professors how

Netanyahu would use "misinformation" to trick Trump, whom Tillerson had on one occasion allegedly called a moron.

"They did that with the president on a couple of occasions, to persuade him that 'We're the good guys, they're the bad guys,'" Tillerson noted.

"We later exposed it to the president so he understood. 'You've been played,'" explained Tillerson. **→ 13**

## Pompeo pursues an essentially ideological foreign policy: Adib-Moghaddam

**EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW**  
By Javad Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — Professor Arshin Adib-Moghaddam, Chair of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the London Middle East Institute, believes that "the chief diplomat of the current(U.S.) administration, Michael Pompeo, continues to pursue an essentially ideological foreign policy, that is driven by a distinctively irrational approach to world politics in general, and Iran in particular."

Professor in Global Thought and Comparative Philosophies and Chair of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the London Middle East Institute also says "the government of Donald Trump has seriously deteriorated the image of the country and by extension its diplomatic power, exactly because of its severe human rights abuses at home and aggressiveness abroad."

Here 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: One thing is for sure: John Bolton will never again occupy a senior position in government. It says a lot, that he was considered too radical, even by President Trump. The future of Bolton will be at some right-wing think tank. As for the consequences for U.S. foreign policy: The chief diplomat of the current administration, Michael Pompeo, continues to pursue an essentially ideological foreign policy, that is driven by a distinctively irrational approach to world politics in general, and Iran in particular. The government of Donald Trump has seriously deteriorated the image of the country and by extension its diplomatic power, exactly because of its

severe human rights abuses at home and aggressiveness abroad.

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

A: The effects will be marginal, as some sections of the Iranian state continue to endanger the national security of the country by blocking necessary human rights reforms. National security is defined by a largely symbiotic and integrative relationship between state and society. This is not the case in Iran because some segments of the state continue to disregard the rights of Iranian citizens. This is the real national security threat to the country. If we would spend more time deliberating about these factors that have negatively affected Iran's standing in the world and hence its ability to project diplomatic power, it would be that much less important what the U.S. government does. **→ 11**

## Pro-Israel sentiments are well entrenched in U.S. policy circles: Fitzpatrick

By Javad Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — Mark Fitzpatrick, Associate Fellow of International Institute for Strategic Studies says that the pro-Israel sentiments are well entrenched in U.S. policy circles.

"Bolton's departure will not change this," Fitzpatrick told the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview.

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: The Trump Administration has been divided between what might be called interventionists

and isolationists. John Bolton was the most senior and effective member of the interventionist wing of the Republican Party. But there are many others with a similar mindset, particularly in the Congress, such as Senator Tom Cotton. It is too early to say whether they will become a minority with Bolton's departure. But we can say that his departure further consolidates power in the president himself. So I expect that Trump's isolationist impulses will be strengthened.

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

A: Ever since Secretary of Defense Mattis left, there have been few differences within the

Administration over Iran policy. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, among others, is a strong advocate of the maximum pressure policy. But Bolton was inclined toward use of force, whereas Trump is wary about becoming bogged down in another war in the Middle East. So with Bolton gone, it is somewhat less likely that the U.S. will attack Iran.

■ 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? **→ 11**

**PERSPECTIVE**  
**Hanif Ghaffari**  
Head of the Tehran Times  
Politics Desk

## The Saudi crown prince is frightened!

The crown prince of Saudi Arabia is having a terrible day. Thousands of Yemeni children are now trapped in a trap created by it. Undoubtedly what happened recently at the Aramco oil facility was a sign of Saudi Arabia's complete defeat in the Yemen war. Riyadh currently has no choice but to officially announce defeat in Saudi Arabia. Even US President Donald Trump no longer has the power to support the Saudis in Yemen anymore.

The reality is that Riyadh has been a source of terror and violence in the West Asian region for the last decade. Saudi Arabia initially tried to control Syria and Iraq by forming terrorist groups such as ISIS, but failed. The resistance front has taught hard lessons to Saudi Arabia and to people like Ben Salman in the region. The bravery and resistance of Yemenis has now forced UAE to leave the battlefield, even though the country has been among the main invaders of Yemen for years. After this, the fate of Saudi Arabia in Yemen war is completely clear. UAE's withdrawal from the Yemen war was the worst news ever to Saudi Arabia and now Riyadh can only await a bitter failure.

Now, more than ever, Saudis are alone in Yemen. In this situation, Riyadh has no choice other than accepting the defeat. According to a New York Times report, UAE has come to the conclusion that the Saudi-Emirati coalition has no chance of winning in Yemen, and has decided to leave the war-torn country, despite pressures from Saudi Arabia.

Many UAE officials have announced that the country is definitely leaving Yemen. An Emirati official, who did not want to reveal his name, has said that "Abu Dhabi aims to change its strategy in Yemen from war to peace," therefore, UAE forces will soon leave Al Hadida port and other parts of Yemen.

What is certain is that the Saudi Crown Prince and his companions have no choice but to declare defeat in Yemen. They were to take control of Yemen in less than two weeks! But the Yemeni people's resistance led them to accept a severe defeat in the country after 4 and a half years.

**ARTICLE**  
**Martin Love**  
Political analyst from  
North Carolina

## Absolution from crimes by deflection and deceit is never successful

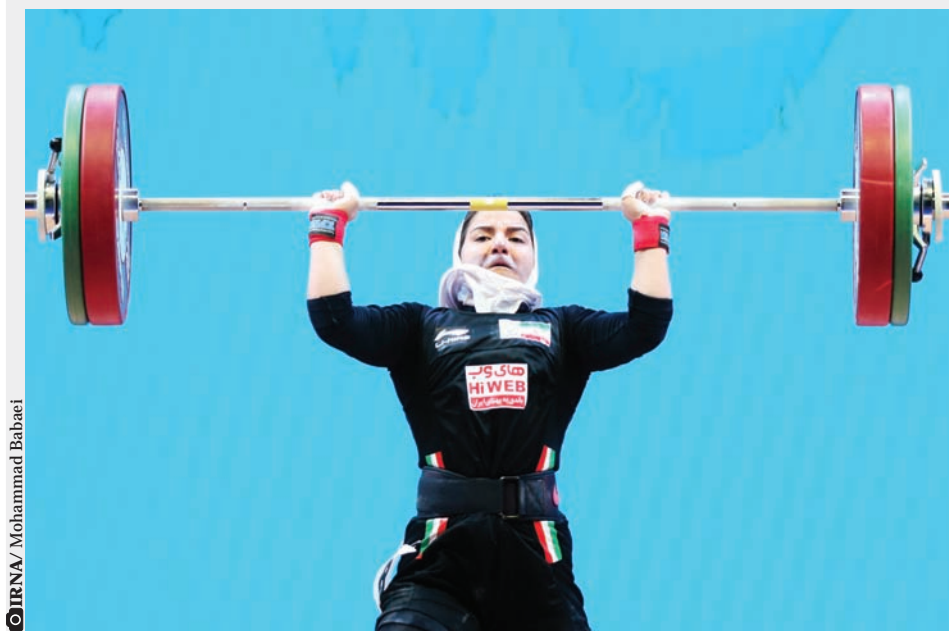
Vladimir Putin appears far and away smarter than any major Western "leader", especially Donald Trump and Mike Pompeo. Ansarullah appears to have attacked the Abqaiq oil processing plant in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia with drones or something, or claims it did. Maybe they fired off missiles of some sort that had adopted Iranian technology. It's a mystery, but whatever and whoever hit the plant, and it wasn't the homemade firecracker rockets that fly out of the Gaza Strip to land in some farm field around Sederot inside "Israel", whatever this "country" without defined borders really is geographically (it's never been reliably determined).

What hit the Saudi oil installations was well aimed or it aimed itself well and proved powerful enough to shut down half of Saudi oil production for a couple weeks more at least. And Putin masterfully and even tongue-in-cheek trolled the Saudis, offering to sell them the S-300 or S-400 missile defense systems. Priceless!

The Saudi regime is hopeless and helpless. After spending many billions of dollars on military equipment over years, and with virtually no "defense" against whatever it was exactly that bombed Abqaiq and Khurais, and with alleged military cover by the U.S., the Saudis nonetheless may still as well be driving mangy camels and not Ferraris, Lamborghinis or F-16s in the Eastern Province. Same goes for the UAE.

So far, Trump's response has been vague and has allowed others at least to blame Iran for the attacks, claiming the drones or whatever originated from somewhere in Iran, or maybe it was Iraq. Hell, maybe they flew from an Iranian missile base on the moon?

The truth is Trump and Pompeo and all the rest don't have a clue, and it is even quite possible — as claimed Robert J. Moriarty, arguably the best U.S. Navy/Marine fighter pilot during the Vietnam War and since the war an aviation record maker and holder — that the Israelis attacked Abqaiq and Khurais in an effort to spur the U.S. to gallop to the side of the Saudis and as the Zionists equally desire, attack Iran. Neither the Saudis nor the Zionists can fight anybody without gobs of U.S. assistance, and never really have. **→ 13**



© IRNA/ Mohammad Babaei

## Woman weightlifter Basami makes history

Poupak Basami made history by becoming the first Iranian woman to compete at an International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) World Championships.

The 27-year-old finished sixth in the women's 55 kilograms D session after managing a total of 158kg.

That was made up of 72kg in the snatch and 86kg in the clean and jerk.

Iran has sent four women to the Championships for the first time ever.

The prestigious competition started on Sept. 18 and will run for nine days in Pattaya, Thailand.



## Talks with U.S. impossible if it does not return to nuclear deal: MP

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Abolfazl Mousavi, an Iranian MP, has said that talks with the United States will be impossible if Washington does not return to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA.

“Even in case of repent and return to the JCPOA, talks will be held within the framework of the JCPOA and not Iran’s defense capabilities,” he told ISNA in an interview published on Friday. Mousavi noted that Iran-U.S. talks are impossible under the current condition.

## Trump begging for a meeting with Rouhani: Hezbollah chief

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said in a speech on Friday that U.S. President Donald Trump is begging for a meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

He also said the Yemeni attacks on the Saudi Aramco oil facilities on September 14 had a great international repercussion. The Hezbollah secretary general also said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did whatever was in his power to win the election but he failed.

To win the election, the Hezbollah chief said, Netanyahu ordered aerial attacks inside Iraq and tried to trigger a war against Lebanon with a support by the United States among other things.

He also said the result of parliamentary elections in Israel proved structural problems within the Zionist regime’s system as the regime is aging.

However, Nasrallah said, the result of the election is not important for the Hezbollah because the policies followed by the Israeli party and coalition leaders are all against Arabs, especially Palestinians.

## Trump sanctions Iran’s central bank

**(CNBC)** — President Donald Trump on Friday said he has ordered sanctions on Iran’s central bank at “the highest level.”

The president made the remarks to reporters in the Oval Office, where he and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison were scheduled to hold a bilateral meeting.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in the Oval that the central bank was Tehran’s last source of funds.

“This is very big,” Mnuchin said. “We’ve now cut off all source of funds to Iran.”

Trump, who had initially claimed the sanctions applied to Iran’s “national bank,” said the new penalties on Iran mark the “highest sanctions ever imposed on a country.”

The president’s remarks at the White House came two days after he announced via Twitter that he had instructed Mnuchin “to substantially increase Sanctions on the country of Iran!”

## U.S. fails to condemn Iran at UN over Aramco accusation

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The United States has failed to condemn Iran over Yemenis’ attacks on Saudi Arabia’s oil installations at the UN Security Council.

According to the Tasnim news agency, at a meeting of the council Russian representative questioned the U.S. claims that Iran was involved in the attacks on September 14.

Russian envoy said that there has not been enough investigation on the issue and it is too soon to issue a statement.

Washington has claimed that Iran was involved in the attacks, an accusation Iran has categorically rejected, calling it a “maximum deceit” after Washington’s “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran has failed.

According to Reuters, Russia and China have already warned against jumping to conclusions over who was behind the attack.

## Pompeo admits tensions with Iran result of Trump’s policies

**(FNA)** — As Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday defended the U.S. administration’s strategy toward Iran, he inadvertently acknowledged the recent tensions were a “direct result” of the President Donald Trump’s decision to pull Washington from the 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran.

Since Trump withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, Washington has engaged in a “maximum-pressure” campaign against Tehran, in an effort to cripple the Iranian economy with harsh sanctions. The end goal is to squeeze Iran into coming back to the negotiation table to agree to a more stringent version of the nuclear deal, as Washington claims. But so far, the U.S. administration’s hardline strategy has not been successful, and there’s little evidence this is changing.

Pompeo defended that approach to reporters traveling with him to Saudi Arabia, saying that “there is this theme that some suggest that the president’s strategy that we allowed isn’t working”, according to Business Insider.

“I would argue just the converse of that. I would argue that what you are seeing here is a direct result of us reversing the enormous failure of the JCPOA,” he added, referring to the formal name of the 2015 agreement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

The secretary of state was addressing the recent attack on two major Saudi oil facilities and facing questions on how the strike was possible despite Saudi investments in U.S. defense technology, as well as how such incidents could be deterred moving forward.

Though Pompeo conceded the attack was “of a scale we’ve just not seen before”, he made the case that without the Trump administration’s sanctions, Iran could have access to even more complex and dangerous weapons systems.

While the Houthi Ansarullah movement has stated that drones belong to Yemeni forces had targeted Saudi Arabia’s key oil facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais, the U.S. administration, without providing any reliable proof, has tried to build its case that Iran was behind the attacks. Tehran has strongly denied any involvement in the assaults.

Tensions mounted between Tehran and Washington last May, when Trump pulled the United States out of the JCPOA, and re-imposed harsh sanctions against the Islamic Republic in defiance of global criticism. The American leader and his hawkish advisers then-National Security Advisor John Bolton and Pompeo have since been stepping up pressure against Iranians.

# Army, IRGC hold joint aerial drills over Persian Gulf

**(Press TV)** — Fighter jets of the Islamic Republic of Iran Air Force (IRIAF) and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) have taken part in joint aerial drills over the Persian Gulf waters ahead of a massive parade slated for Sunday.

Various combat, tactical, reconnaissance, transport, and tanker aircraft of the IRIAF and the IRGC were present at the Friday morning drills.

The exercises, held for the second day, were aimed at increasing the preparedness of the military units for the massive drills due to be held on Sunday on the anniversary of Sacred Defense Week, which marks the beginning of the eight-year war imposed by former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein on Iran in 1980.

Earlier on Wednesday, Iranian warplanes took off from Shahid Abdolkarimi Airbase in the port city of Bandar Abbas in southern Iran on the first day of the preparatory drills.

Brigadier General Hamid Vahedi, the lieutenant commander of the IRIAF, said on Thursday the parades send the message of peace and friendship to neighboring countries.

In addition to the jet fighters, 200 frigates and speedboats will also display the country’s naval power during the Sunday parade.

“The parade will be held to display the



strengths and capabilities of the Armed Forces, and to boost unity and sympathy among the Army and IRGC forces,” General Vahedi said.

He praised the Islamic Republic’s role in maintaining the sustainable security of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, saying that only regional countries can secure the strategic bodies of water.

The parade is to be held at a time when the US is forming a naval mission, already joined

by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom, purportedly aimed at protecting shipping lanes in the Middle Eastern waterways.

The United States has been trying to persuade its allies to join the international coalition with the declared aim of providing “security” for merchant shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and other strategic shipping lanes in the Middle East.

## Zarif says U.S. values Arab oil more than Arab blood Iranian FM questions Pompeo’s coalition for ‘peaceful resolution’

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Thursday that the United States values oil more than the “blood” of the Arab people, criticizing Washington’s hypocrisy regarding the war on Yemen.

“Arab blood vs. Arab oil / A primer on U.S. policy: 4 yrs of indiscriminate bombardment of Yemen, 100,000 dead Yemenis, 20M malnourished Yemenis, 2.3M cholera cases, carte (blanche) for culprits,” he tweeted.

He added that however the “retaliatory Yemeni strike on oil storage tanks” was labeled by the Americans as an “unacceptable act of war”.

Yemenis hit two oil facilities in Saudi Arabia on September 14. However, certain U.S. States, including its Secretary of States Mike Pompeo, has blamed Iran for the attacks.

■ **Zarif questions Pompeo’s coalition for ‘peaceful resolution’**

In another tweet on Thursday, Zarif also questioned U.S. Secretary of States Mike Pompeo’s “coalition for peaceful resolution”, listing eight diplomatic initiatives by Iran since 1985.

For example, Zarif mentioned his “four-point plan” for ending the Yemeni crisis; the “regional non-aggression pact” proposed by him during a visit to Iraq in May, “World Against Terrorism” proposed by President Hassan Rouhani at the UN General Assembly in 2013; and “Dialogue Among Civilizations” by President Mohammad Khatami in 1997 and endorsed by the UN.

These are the list of initiatives Zarif posted on his Twitter account in response to Pompeo: “Coalition for Peaceful Resolution”?

Iran’s diplomatic initiatives:

’85 Security in Persian Gulf

’97 Dialogue Among Civilizations  
’13 World Against Violence  
’13 Syria Peace Plan  
’14 Regional Dialogue Forum  
’15 Yemen Peace Plan  
’17 Astana Process  
’19 Regional Non-Aggression Pact.”

In a visit to Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, Pompeo said that Washington is seeking to build a “coalition aimed at achieving peace and a peaceful resolution”.

Zarif has said “ending the war” is the “only solution for all” the disasters following the war on Yemen.

“Ending the war=only solution for all,” Zarif tweeted on September 17.

In April 2015, Zarif submitted a letter to Ban Ki-moon, then UN secretary general, outlining Iran’s four-point peace plan for Yemen.

The plan calls for an immediate ceasefire and end of all foreign military attacks, humanitarian assistance, a resumption of broad national dialogue and establishment of an inclusive national unity government.

Again in his tour of Saudi Arabia, which also included the UAE, Pompeo repeated his claims that Iran was behind the attacks on the Saudi oil plants.

Zarif has said 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.

The chief diplomat said blaming Iran for the dangers ensuing the Saudi-led war on Yemen “won’t end the disaster”.

Zarif said the United States is making such accusations against Iran probably because

Washington is embarrassed that that advanced weapons that it has sold to Saudi Arabia are failing to intercept drones and cruise missiles launched by the Yemenis.

“Perhaps it’s embarrassed that \$100s of blns of its arms didn’t intercept Yemeni fire,” Zarif wrote on his Twitter account.

According to reports, U.S. President Donald Trump has ordered the Pentagon to draw up plans for attacks against Iran at the behest of Saudi Arabia.

Iran has officially presented a letter to the Swiss embassy in Tehran strongly warning U.S. officials against their claims that Iran had a role in the attacks on the Saudi Aramco oil facilities.

The letter was submitted to the Swiss ambassador to Tehran whose country represents the U.S. interests in Iran.

In the letter, which was presented on Monday afternoon, Iran has insisted that it was not involved in the attack on the Saudi oil installations and that claims by Pompeo and President Donald Trump are sheer lies.

Also in an interview with the CNN on Thursday, Zarif raised the specter of “all-out war” in the event of the U.S. or Saudi military strikes.

“I make a very serious statement about defending our country. I am making a very serious statement that we don’t want to engage in a military confrontation,” said Zarif. He added that a military response based on “deception” about the weekend attacks would cause “a lot of casualties.”

“But we won’t blink to defend our territory,” he said.

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a top military adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, also warned on Friday that should the Amer-

Washington moved to set up the coalition after pinning the blame on Tehran for two attacks on oil tankers in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman in May and June. Tehran rejected the claims, saying the attacks seemed more to be false-flag operations meant to exert pressure on Iran.

Iran to give broad response to any US plot’ Meanwhile, a top military adviser to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and a senior IRGC general warned the US against any anti-Iran move, saying that the Islamic Republic would respond to any plot by the US from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean.

“If the Americans think of any plot, the Iranian nation will respond from the Mediterranean, to the Red Sea and to the Indian Ocean,” said General Yahya Rahim-Safavi.

He said any move against Iran will totally transform the region. “The Americans well know we enjoy a brave leadership and powerful Armed Forces.”

“Our policy is based on creation of peace and sustainable security in the region, and the withdrawal of foreign troops,” the senior general said.

“We hope our ultra-regional foes would know Iran is not after aggression and expansionism, and rather seeks peace and sustainable security,” he added.



icans think of orchestrating a plot against Iran, they will be faced with the Iranian nation’s response from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean.

Saudi Arabia launched military campaign against Yemen in March 2015 with the aim of eliminating the Yemeni opposition groups who had toppled the government of President Mansour Hadi.

Failing to achieve either of its goals, Riyadh has not stopped bombing Yemeni targets, creating a protracted conflict which has led to indescribable tragedies in the country.

On March 25, 2019, on the fourth anniversary of the Saudi-led war on Yemen, the United Nations released a report saying the war has caused “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis”.

It said about 24 million Yemenis -- about 80 percent of the population -- are in need of humanitarian assistance. The UN said millions more have been displaced by the fighting in Yemen.

UN officials also said the conflict has led to many civilian deaths and created food shortages. They also say it is destroying the health and education of an entire generation of Yemeni children.

## Russia calls anti-Iran claims ‘unsubstantiated’



because this is how things are due to history and geography.”

On September 14, Yemen’s Houthi Ansarullah fighters conducted strikes on two of Saudi Arabia’s oil facilities, in Abqaiq and Khurais. The attacks led to a halt in about

50 percent of the Arab kingdom’s crude and gas production, causing a surge in oil prices.

The Houthi movement officially took credit for the attacks, but U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo swiftly blamed Iran. Furthermore, U.S. President Donald Trump said a short while later that the U.S. was “locked and loaded” for a response at the behest of the Arab kingdom, although he later said that he wanted no conflict with any country.

Still later, the Pentagon reportedly prepared “response” options for the American president.

Tensions have significantly risen as a result of the accusations leveled against Iran, which Tehran has rejected, calling them an attempt by the White House to shift from a

failed campaign of “maximum pressure” to one of “maximum lying” and “deceit” against the Islamic Republic.

“Unsubstantiated accusations won’t help matters, they are only heightening already existing tensions in the region,” Lavrov further said, calling for “an impartial investigation” into the attacks.

Despite Iran’s denial, and Yemen’s claiming of responsibility, the U.S. accusation against Iran has prompted speculation that America may take military or other forms of action against Iran or Iranian interests.

Formerly, Japan, too, said Yemeni forces, not Iran, were behind the attacks on the Saudi oil fields.

## Zarif threatens ‘all-out war’ in case of military strike on Iran

*By staff and agencies*

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Thursday that a military strike against Iran by the United States or Saudi Arabia would result in “an all-out war” and that Saudi Arabia would have to fight “to the last American soldier.”

“I make a very serious statement about defending our country. I am making a very serious statement that we don’t want to engage in a military confrontation. But we won’t blink to defend our territory,” he told CNN.

Zarif said that Iran hoped to avoid conflict, adding that the country was willing to talk to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. But the possibility of a return to negotiations with the U.S., however, would not happen unless Washington provided full sanctions

relief as promised under the 2015 nuclear deal, Tehran’s top diplomat said.

He again rejected Tehran’s involvement in Yemenis’ attacks on Saudi Arabia’s oil facilities on September 14.

Zarif said Yemenis have taken the responsibility for the attack, have stepped up their military capabilities and are capable of conducting a sophisticated operation such as the one that knocked out half of the kingdom’s energy production.

War drums have become louder since the attack. U.S. President Donald Trump has called on Pentagon officials to plan potential responses. He tweeted that the U.S. was “locked and loaded” but was waiting for Saudi Arabia’s rulers to decide on a path forward.

However, according to the New York Times,

Trump has appeared reluctant to order military action.

Asked on Thursday about Zarif’s comments, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that Trump wanted to find a peaceful path forward.

“We’d like a peaceful resolution, indeed,” he told reporters.

■ **Returning to the negotiating table**

In the interview with CNN, Zarif dismissed the possibility of negotiating with the Trump administration, unless the U.S. were to give Iran the full sanctions relief promised under the nuclear deal.

“(The JCPOA) is an agreement that we reached with the United States. Why should we renegotiate? Why should we start something else which may again be invalid in a year and a half,” said Zarif.

“If they lift the sanctions that they re-imposed illegally then that’s a different situation,” said Zarif. “Then we would consider (talks).”

“They’ve done whatever they could and they haven’t been able to bring us to our knees,” he said.

Trump pulled out of the nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018. He has since imposed more than 1,000 individual sanctions on Tehran, which culminated with an oil embargo this May. Zarif himself is also sanctioned.

He says he longs for the days of “rational” policymaking.

“What I miss is rationality. What I miss is prudence. I think the U.S. deserves to be more rational,” he said.



# General warns broad response awaits any U.S. military move

Should the U.S. think of a war, it will face a response from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, Rahim Safavi warns

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Should the Americans think of orchestrating a plot against Iran, they will be faced with the Iranian nation's response from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, says Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a top military adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

"The Americans [should] take the remarks of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah seriously .... Any anti-Iranian move will transform the [entire] region," Rahim Safavi said on Friday at the Friday prayers in Tehran.

"The Americans know well that we are endowed with a wise and courageous leader and powerful armed forces," he said. "Iran's policy is to establish peace and sustainable security in the West Asia region through the withdrawal of transgressive foreign forces."

General Rahim Safavi also advised U.S. President Donald Trump to learn from the fate of his predecessors, who tried in vain to exert their political will on the Iranian nation and government.

"Trump will go down in history with his pipe dream of subduing the Iranian nation," asserted Safavi, who was chief of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) from 1997 to 2007.

The Iranian general made the remarks a day after Washington said it was seeking to create an anti-Iran coalition. U.S. Secretary



of State Mike Pompeo had claimed that the initiative was "aimed at achieving peace."

Washington's so-called "coalition" announcement came in response to an attack led by Yemeni Armed Forces against Saudi Arabia's oil facilities.

The attack effectively halved the king-

dom's oil production.

The Yemenis officially took credit for the attacks, but Pompeo swiftly blamed Iran. Furthermore, U.S. President Donald Trump said that the U.S. was "locked and loaded" for a response at the behest of the Arab kingdom, although he later said that he wanted

no conflict with any country.

Tensions have significantly risen as a result of the accusations leveled against Iran, which Tehran has rejected, calling them an attempt by the White House to shift from a failed campaign of "maximum pressure" to one of "maximum deceit" against the Islamic Republic.

Despite Iran's denial and the Yemenis' claiming of responsibility, the U.S. accusation against Iran has prompted speculation that America may take military action against Iran or Iranian interests.

In a tweet on Thursday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the remnants of the B-Team plus its ambitious allies are trying to deceive President Trump into a war with Iran.

"For their own sake, they should pray that they won't get what they seek," he tweeted. "They're still paying for much smaller #Yemen war they were too arrogant to end 4yrs ago."

The "B-team" is a term thrown into popular usage by Zarif. It refers to a group of politicians who share an inclination toward potential war against Iran, and the letter "b" in their names. They include Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and, former U.S. national security advisor John Bolton.

## Zarif to Pompeo: You've got it all wrong

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says his American counterpart, Secretary of States Mike Pompeo, has it the other way around when it comes to who wishes to "fight to the last American".

"@SecPompeo has it the other way around," Zarif tweeted on Friday. "It's not #Iran that wishes to fight to the last American; rather, it is his #B\_Team hosts who seem to wish to fight Iran, to the last American."

"Iran has no desire for war, but we will, and always have, defend our people and our nation," he added.

Zarif has in the past said that a "B-Team" including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, and former U.S. national security advisor John Bolton could



goad the U.S. president into a conflict with Tehran.

The Iranian foreign minister was responding to a statement a day earlier by Pompeo during a visit to Abu Dhabi that: "While the foreign minister of Iran is threatening all-out war and to fight to the last American, we're here to build up a coalition aimed at achieving peace."

Pompeo, however, repeated his baseless claims of Iran being behind the recent attacks on two Saudi Aramco oil facilities that knocked out more than half of the kingdom's production.

He also threatened that Washington would impose more sanctions on Tehran.

Pompeo on Wednesday visited Saudi Arabia to hold talks with Washington's allies in Riyadh where he described the attack on Saudi oil facilities as "an act of war".

## 'Legal Capacities in Access to Justice for Victims of Terrorism' held in Geneva

**POLITICAL** **Geneva** — Media section of the Association for Defending Victims of Terrorism reported on Tuesday that the "Legal Capacities in Access to Justice for Victims of Terrorism" was held as a side event of the 42nd session HRC of the UN in Geneva. The side event was held by the Association for Defending Victims of Terrorism in cooperation with the Comisión Jurídica para el Autodesarrollo de los Pueblos Originarios Andinos (CA-PAJ), Geneva Academy and Iraqi Alliance of Disability and experts from Iran, the U.S., Hawaii, Maldives, Germany, Argentine in which some families of the victims of terror in Iran discussed the solutions in access to justice for victims of terrorism.

Eduardo Toledo, a legal advisor to Nurnberg Institute said after the Nurnberg Court, international law identified that persons can be part of the context, but it was not the case before that. "Before the court, international law was about states and international organizations. After the Nurnberg Court we understand that persons can be a part of the context of crime. After the Second World War, we created the international personality and these capacities are important for victims of terrorism. In the international criminal law, the problem was that at the beginning the victims were not recognized in the crimes. In Nurnberg the victims were not part of the trials. In the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda it was the same. But in the tradition of common law, victims can only participate as witnesses. In 1998, we had a revolution in the International Criminal Court and the victims started to have roles. Unfortunately, the International Criminal Court doesn't have procedures for terrorism but victims can go there for other crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, but they cannot go there and ask for justice for the crime of terrorism. The court that recognized terrorism as a crime was Lebanon."

H.E. Leon K. Siu, a Hawaiian political activist, stated that very rarely can the justice system undo the actual harm suffered by victims of any crime, but especially crimes suffered by victims of terrorism. "The issue of legal capacities is very important. Justice in this case is not to only bring the offender to justice, but the mechanism should be corrected. The worst thing for providing access to justice for the victims is not the fact that you cannot correct the mechanism, but it is the lack of response from

states, organizations, and the international community about the effects on victims of terrorism."

He continued "the very nature of terrorism, committing crimes against innocent civilians — is so heinous that bringing perpetrators to justice falls far short of the very concept of justice."

Ms. Maryam Shaheeda Mohamed, director of the Geneva Academy for Peace and Mediation, pointed to Ms. Bachelet's remarks at the opening of the 42nd session of the Human Rights Council and said "I want to talk about the rights of the civilians in conflicts. The Geneva Conventions are the principles which should be implemented in all communities. As the ICRC president has said, 'Do not target civilians, do not rape, torture or execute, do not target hospitals or schools, do not use illegal weapons, do not threaten, kidnap or kill those who help'. These are principles which resound with all of us. But, unfortunately, what we see in conflicts today is that they are being deliberately violated by an increasing number of states, as well as by numerous non-state actors."

She added that the main reason of violent extremism is due to poverty and lack of education. "Therefore, to end this, it can be proposed to provide aid and educational assistance to these countries and address SDGs. Worldwide, more than 2,000 people are killed as a consequence of armed violence daily."

"Human rights reflect the minimum standards necessary for people to live with dignity and equality. Under human rights treaties, governments have the primary responsibility to protect and promote human rights," she continued.

"According to the ranking of the most peaceful countries, the most peaceful countries are not necessarily the least religious. The least peaceful countries are not necessarily highly religious. The countries that had higher membership of religious groups tended to be slightly more peaceful."

"The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy directly addresses the issue of victims of terrorist acts in the preamble and under Pillar I, Pillar II and Pillar IV. The European Union (EU) has adopted several instruments regarding victims of terrorism," she concluded.

Curtis Doebller, an American international lawyer, emphasized that terrorism is not a new issue and "I have done so



much in this field. I was a member of a working group a few years ago. When we analysed the international and national instruments, we understood that there are 15 thousand definitions of terrorism. It means that there is no clear definition of terrorism in international law. Criminal law has always been in the sovereign states' domain. As our discussion focuses on the victims of terrorism, so we can talk about the victims of violation of human rights. In the international law, we mostly blame the states as the responsible of their acts. The ICC covers compensation for victims of different crimes and some of them which have common elements with some definition of terrorism, are also covered."

Mr. Thoreau Redcrow, a global conflict analyst, stated that "when we talk about terrorism, it is a complicated problem because there is no clear definition of terrorism. For example, there are different kinds of state terrorism. You can consider any act which causes horror as terrorism. Sometimes those who you believe are terrorists, are freedom fighters for others. Different states designate some groups as terrorists and remove others according to their political issues at a time. For example, the U.S. and the EU are among them. When they feel that they can use a group for their proxy interests, they omit it. For instance, the U.S. removed the Mujahedin-e Khalq (MEK) from the terrorist list, while they did not provide any explanation about it."

He concluded that from a legal perspective, the ICC, the UN, and some other states can create a mechanism about how to recognize terrorist groups. "When it is up to the states, the situation is different

because they have different points of view about who is terrorist and who is not."

Mansoureh Karami, widow of martyr Alimohammadi, said, "As a victim of terrorism, I ask the human rights organizations and NGOs to pay attention to the rights of 17,000 victims of terror in my country. Why a terrorist group that has killed more than 12,000 citizens of my country is delisted from the terrorist group and is active in Europe and the U.S. and does its anti-human activities. This is the right of victims of terrorism to know that why these terrorists are free in those countries. Officials in those countries should be responsible."

Zohre Haqqanahi, widow of martyr Mohammad Tavassoli, said, "We, the victims of terrorism, want justice and as representative of the victims' families want an efficient legal framework in access of the victims of terrorism to justice." She also asked the establishment for a fund for the support of victims of terrorism and juridical cooperation in extraditing and indicting the culprits and establishment of rehabilitation centers for victims.

The last speaker was Seyed Mohammad Ali Paknejad, son of martyr Reza Paknejad. He said failing to notice a crime in a part of the world, while in the other parts many parties are against that crime is neglecting the universal justice. "One of the best and effective ways in punishing, especially in the case of persons who have paved the way for criminals, is expressing regret. On the other side, states that help terrorists are accomplice. So, if terrorists know that after their crime they will not be responsible in other countries, they will have more incentive to do crimes."

## U.S. 'maximum pressure' on Iran is not working, says cleric

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Friday prayer leader Ayatollah Mohammad-Ali Movahedi Kermani says Washington's "maximum pressure" policy against Iran is not working.

"The United States assumes that it can bring the Iranian people to their knees by increasing its economic pressure, but everyone knows that their economic pressure has not been working," Movahedi Kermani said, addressing worshippers in Tehran on Friday.



"That is why they lie as much as they can," he added.

He said while the enemy seeks its goals by telling lies, "we should follow our policy of 'resistance economy'."

In similar remarks last week, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said 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.

Zarif's comments came as U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blamed Iran for the Yemeni drone attacks on oil installations in Saudi Arabia on September 14.

"Tehran is behind nearly 100 attacks on Saudi Arabia" and that "there is no evidence the attacks came from Yemen," Pompeo tweeted.

Pompeo added, "The United States will work with our partners and allies to ensure that energy markets remain well supplied and Iran is held accountable for its aggression."

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

Iran's four-point plan put forward in April 2015 is the remedy for the current situation, Zarif insisted.

## FBI's intimidation campaign against American freethinkers

**1 →** including a number of outspoken experts who protested the Israeli occupation and atrocities against Palestinian people, and some who criticized the United States for its endless wars which have left millions of casualties and calamities for humanity.

Another edition of the event had shed light on the role of Hollywood in propagating political interests of the hegemonic powers and in promoting and supporting the Zionist agenda through the language of art. This was indeed one of the main reasons the American administration decided to put the conference and its organizers on its list of sanctions back in February.

Now, with the conference beginning with a long list of figures of different nationalities — from as far as China to Russia and from the Middle East to Europe — U.S. officials, being unable to prevent it, have resorted to intimidation of the American invitees to prevent them from joining the event.

According to the organizers of the conference, the American guests have been facing threats and harassments from the FBI. The guests informed the organizers that the FBI security agents have appeared at their doorsteps, warning them of "dire consequences" if they "ever tried to the NHC again."

In mid-August, three of the guests broke the news in interviews with Press TV, revealing that they have been warned by the FBI of a wide range of punishments from \$50,000 in fine to years in prison. Former Pentagon official Michael Maloof, a former U.S. diplomat in Saudi Arabia J. Michael Springmann, and Scott Rickard, a former service member to the U.S. Air Force and NSA, were those telling Press TV that the aim of such bullying and threats was to "prevent Americans from learning about Iran, experiencing Iran, and exchanging ideas with anyone from Iran."

According to the organizers, all the American invitees had informed them that to avoid further intimidation from the American government, they had to cancel their trips to Lebanon and couldn't take part at the conference.

The sanctions against the New Horizon Organization were set in February 2019, targeting, among other individuals, media figure and chairman of the NHC Nader Talebzadeh and his wife. "It is both sad and hilarious," wrote Talebzadeh in his letter of opposition to the U.S. Treasury back then "that such a government with the claim of democracy and freedom of speech should go for harassment of his own citizens for taking part in a 'forum for free thought'."

The sanctions and intimidation against the conference comes despite the fact that the event is sponsored by custodianship of the Holy Shrine of Hazrat Massoumah in the Iranian city of Qom, which is a religious entity and promotes peace and prevention of war through such events aimed at raising awareness among the public across the world. Similarly, the 2018 conference was sponsored by custodianship of the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza in Mashhad, northeast of Iran.

Mr. Maloof earlier noted that they had attended the conference for dialogue and with a desire to build diplomatic bridges. "We're all still U.S. patriots, but we believe there's another way to go about things than looking at everything in Iran through the prism of Israel."



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	294166.6
IFX	3886.55

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,351 rials
GBP	52,372 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$63.84/b
WTI	\$58.77/b
OPEC Basket	\$64.57/b
Gold	\$1,504.90/oz
Silver	\$17.93/oz
Platinum	\$947.00/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

IDRO invests nearly \$12m in southeast Iran since March

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Industrial Development and Renovation Organization (IDRO) has invested over 500 billion rials (about \$11.9 million) for launching and completing industrial projects in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21, 2019), according to a deputy at the organization. Mohammadreza Abdollahi, the deputy director of IDRO for planning, said in line with the policies and plans of the Ministry of Industry for developing deprived regions, 700 billion rials (about \$16.6 million) is also predicted to be invested by this organization in the industrial projects of the province by the yearend, IRNA reported. The official further said that IDRO's projects in Sistan-Baluchestan are in need of foreign currency resources and supply of machinery.

China's economy faces a 'triple threat', economist says

China's preliminary third-quarter economic growth rate is the slowest ever forecast. And a "triple threat" of developmental factors could send the country into an even longer contraction, according to a Nomura economist.

According to market.businessinsider.com, the three primary threats are a projected decline in the nation's population starting in 2032, a middle-income trap, and the U.S.-China trade war.

The factors could wipe out China's manufacturing advantage and send multinational corporations to other nations for cheap labor, Nomura's Richard Koo wrote.

China's economy is grinding to its slowest levels of growth in decades.

The country's second-quarter growth of 6.2% was the slowest rate seen since it began reporting quarterly figures. The preliminary third-quarter estimate of 6% to 6.5% is the slowest ever forecast.

Though global stock markets have stabilized and trade talks with the U.S. have resumed after a two-month hiatus, China's economy faces trouble from several different sectors, Nomura Research Institute chief economist Richard Koo wrote in a Wednesday report.

■ The China's economic prowess

A large part of China's economic prowess comes from its ability to provide cheaper labor than other industrial nations at a massive scale. A "triple threat of growth-attenuating factors" could eliminate the country's manufacturing advantage and move critical foreign investment elsewhere, Koo wrote.

As China's rapid development has raised the economic tide for its nearly 1.4 billion citizens, wages have risen in turn. This "middle-income trap" jeopardizes the country's low-cost labor market, as manufacturing interest leaves China for cheaper nations, Koo said.

At current wage levels, China's return on capital for manufacturers is nearing levels seen in emerging manufacturing nations like Vietnam and Bangladesh. The U.S.-China trade war could exacerbate this migration and bring "huge negative implications for China."

"That, coupled with the hurdles faced by Chinese-made products in the U.S. and other markets, suggests a meaningful decline in domestic investment is likely going forward," Koo wrote.

Demographic data showed China's working population shrinking at the start of the 2010s, and the trend projects a net decline in population starting as soon as 2032, Koo wrote.

The combination of a middle-income trap and a looming population decline is "extremely rare" for a country of China's economic strength, the economist wrote.

"These two factors alone would pose a difficult challenge for any nation, and now China must also deal with the trade war initiated by the U.S. president."

■ The world's factory

With just 13 years before the projected pullback begins, the country should focus on developing its own intellectual property and pivot away from serving as the "world's factory," Koo added.

The trade dispute between two of the world's economic superpowers is well into its second year, and apart from delayed tariffs and pledges to continue talks, not much progress toward a resolution has been made.

China may have been too quick to pivot from foreign investment to domestic innovation with its Made in China 2025 plan, Koo said, and the trade war could damage the manufacturing industries that drove the Chinese economy for so long.

The "Chinese economy remains heavily dependent on foreign businesses not only for manufacturing know-how but also for overseas marketing and sales," the economist wrote. "In view of that, the authorities should have treated foreign capital far better than they did."

If the country hopes to recover and keep its foreign investment intact, it should come to a trade agreement with President Trump before the 2020 U.S. election, Koo said. If Trump loses, "it may well become impossible to separate geopolitics from trade issues."

'Banks to offer \$23.8b of loans to production units by Mar. 2020'

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Central Bank of Iran (CBI)'s governor announced that one quadrillion rials (about \$23.809 billion) of banking loans will be granted to the production units in the country by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2020), Mehr news agency reported on Thursday.

Writing on his Instagram page, Abdolnaser Hemmati said that the issue has been discussed during a meeting participated by the president, first vice president, finance and economic affairs minister and managing directors of the acting banks.

Like the other economic bodies of the country, Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has defined supporting production as its major plan in the current Iranian calendar year, which is named the Year of Pickup in Production, and in this regard CBI governor has several times stressed that supporting production units to flourish production is the priority of the country's banking system in current year.

In early May, the official outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country's economy



and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one of those plans.

To find the best ways for supporting production, CBI is regularly holding meetings with the representatives of private sector

'Iran-Turkey trade possible to reach \$30b despite U.S. sanctions'

**1 →** Despite all problems created by the U.S. illegal sanctions, the development path of Iran-Turkey ties will continue through more activity of the two sides' private sectors, the Iranian official noted.

Turkey's Energy Minister Fatih Dönmez, who is the Turkish chairman of the joint committee, for his part said that the target of \$30-billion trade is realistic and Turkish government will take all endeavors to preserve and expand economic ties with Iran and implement the agreements between the two sides.

"Turkish president and officials have several times announced it clearly that they do not accept the U.S. unilateral sanctions against Iran", the official further stressed.

During the meeting, which was participated by some representatives of ICCIMA and Iran-Turkey Joint Chamber of Commerce, cooperation between the two sides' private sectors, investment opportunities and holding different exhibitions in both countries in line with improving bilateral trade were discussed and reiterated.

Removing the barriers existing in the way of banking and

customs relations, laying the ground for new and effective cooperation and also more investment making by the two sides were the other issues debated during the 27th meeting of Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Committee.

The meeting was held during the visit of an Iranian high-ranking delegation to Turkey, accompanying Iranian President Hassan Rouhani who arrived in Ankara 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.

The delegation comprised of Iranian ministers of foreign affairs, defense, energy, agriculture, the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and some other Iranian senior officials.

■ Afghanistan-Iran-Turkey transport corridor to be established soon

Iranian Deputy Transport Minister Shahram Adamnejad announced that during the 27th meeting of the joint committee, the two sides agreed on the soon establishment of a transport corridor between Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey.



He also said that Tehran-Istanbul train route will be inaugurated soon.

The two sides declared their satisfaction about launching Tehran-Van and Tehran-Ankara trains and decided to investigate launching Tehran-Istanbul train as soon as possible in a meeting in Tehran, the Iranian official stated.

TEDPIX down 1.9% in a week

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), has fallen 5,764 points, or 1.9 percent, to 294,167 during the five working days of the past Iranian calendar week (Saturday to Wednesday), Tasnim news agency reported.

The report said that 37.66 billion securities worth 117.024 trillion rials (about \$2.786 billion) were traded through 3.7 million deals at TSE during the past week.

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

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

Meanwhile, as announced by Fariba Akhavan, the deputy managing director of Central Securities Depository



of Iran (CSDI), some 47,000 new trading codes were issued in Iran's stock market during the fifth month.

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

France urges Germany to act on economy sooner rather later

Germany should act sooner rather than later to revive its flagging economy, France's finance minister said on Thursday, as he struggled to hide frustration with the pace of Berlin's efforts to engineer a recovery.

As per reuters.com, French policymakers are growing anxious as Germany, Europe's largest economy, dithers over how to pull itself back from the brink of recession, and they want Berlin to do more with its budget surplus.

In a news conference alongside Germany's finance and economy ministers, French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said the two countries had agreed on a strategy to respond to the global economic slowdown and trade tensions, which are hitting Germany's export-driven economy particularly hard.

He said that the strategy was based on three pillars: "Keep reducing public debt where it is necessary. And it is the case in France; keep pursuing structural reforms, as we are doing in France; have budget policies that can take up the baton from monetary policy."

However, Le Maire said that while there was agreement on the approach there remained an open debate on the timeframe for action.

"I recognize perfectly well - Olaf Scholz and I talk a lot about it - that Germany has started spending more money, but there is still a debate on the timeframe," Le Maire said, referring to the German



finance minister.

"Germany is ready, we continue to believe that it's already right now necessary to activate this strategy," he added.

Seeking to underline Franco-German economic cooperation, Le Maire said a pilot plant in France to manufacture electric car batteries will go online in 2022, two years before a second factory opens in Germany, part of a pan-European project to rival Asia's dominance of the battery market.

France's Saft, a unit of oil and gas major Total (TOTF.PA), will lead the first consortium, Le Maire said.

Addressing the subsidy row between European planemaker Airbus (AIR.PA) and rival Boeing (BA.N), Le Maire said Paris and Berlin both hoped for an amicable solution while acknowledging the European Union may face U.S. sanctions.

"If the United States imposes sanctions, it must know that we are ready to respond, once again under the auspices of the World Trade Organization."

OECD slashes South Africa's growth forecast to 0.5 percent

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has slashed South Africa's growth forecast more than half to 0.5 percent for this year from the 1.2 percent it projected in May.

As stated by ioL.co.za, the OECD said escalating trade conflicts were taking an increasing toll on confidence and investment on the global economy.

It said that the global economy was projected to grow 2.9 percent in 2019 and 3 percent in 2020 – the weakest annual growth rates since the financial crisis, with downside risks continuing to mount.

In its latest global economic outlook, the OECD said South Africa's gross domestic product would also decline to 1 percent in 2020 from 1.7 percent.

The global policy forum said risks remain that U.S. - China trade tensions will intensify and spill into new areas, further disrupting supply networks, reducing and distorting trade, and weighing on confidence, growth and jobs.

The U.S. and China are South Africa's major trading partners.

"Weak global trade, lower metals prices and declining new orders are hampering exports and business investment, but low inflation and monetary policy easing should help support household spending," OECD said.

The OECD also raised concerns about South Africa's debt levels, saying that

and also with the economists.

In an Instagram post in July, the CBI governor announced the bank's new plan for supporting production.

Hemmati mentioned this plan as "Productive Financing Plan" which is to provide finance for the production activities.

In his post, the official wrote that based on this plan, the production chain's demand for the working capital will be met with the less inflation effect and the less expansion of credit.

The CBI governor went on to say that high production costs over the past year has sharply increased the need for working capital which has made providing finance more difficult; therefore, taking such condition into account, CBI is to define some plans for removing this problem.

CBI's plans take two major approaches, first is that they will lead to secure finance for production activities and provide the working capital needed for such activities; and the second one is that they will not be resulted in any deviation in the banking resources and also in higher inflation.



# India renews efforts to persuade U.S. into lifting Iranian oil sanctions

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** — Following the recent attacks on Saudi Aramco's oil installations, which have led to disruptions in supplies from Saudi Arabia, Indian authorities have renewed their efforts to persuade the United States to lift sanctions on imports of oil from Iran, Press TV reported.

A Tuesday report on the website of the Mint, an Indian financial newspaper, showed that India had held fresh talks with the government of the U.S. President Donald Trump on renewed energy imports from Iran.

India stopped crude imports from Iran on May 2 after the White House toughened its sanctions on Iran and removed waivers granted to India and several other countries.

New Delhi used to be Iran's second top buyer of oil before American sanctions were imposed in November with imports exceeding 20 million tons a year.

India's External Affairs Minister Subrahman-yam Jaishankar said on Tuesday that resuming oil imports from Iran had never turned into a "static" issue and authorities were trying to



find a solution to the problem.

"We are in dialogue with all suppliers including Iran," said Jaishankar, adding that India wanted to ensure that supplies of energy into the country would remain predictable and

forces, sent shockwaves across the global markets and caused a historic surge in prices while sparking serious concerns in energy-thirsty countries like India about the future of oil supplies.

While trying to revive imports from Iran, India has said it would seek a contract with Russia to secure a long-term supply of oil from the country.

Last months, Indian Ambassador to the U.S. Harsh Vardhan Shringla said the U.S. decision on ending waivers for the purchase of Iranian oil is hurting India's economy, Sputnik reported.

"It [the sanctions] was an important priority for the U.S. and we went along with it. But we also expect the United States to show similar sensibility when it comes to our priorities," Shringla told Sputnik on the sidelines of an event hosted by the Heritage Foundation in Washington.

"It has been a challenge to find alternative sources of oil at the same price and quality, and it has affected the bottom line in India," he said.

## Oil prices march to biggest weekly gain in months as Middle East tensions dominate

Oil prices were on track for a more-than-7% jump this week, their biggest in months, as early trading on Friday saw gains extended on fresh tensions in the Middle East after a key Saudi Arabian supply hub was knocked out in an attack last weekend.

As stated by reuters.com, Friday's rises came after a Saudi-led coalition launched a military operation north of Yemen's port city of Hodeidah, as the United States worked with Middle East and European nations to build a coalition to deter further threats after the Saudi attack.

Brent crude is on track to rise about 7.7% this week, the biggest weekly gain since January. The front-month November contract was at \$64.96 a barrel, up 56 cents, by 0212 GMT.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures were up 66 cents to \$58.79 a barrel, set to post a 7.1% gain for the

week, the largest weekly rise since June.

The "forward curve remains 'bid' as traders are hedging that the initial estimates for the duration of repairs (at damaged Saudi facilities), given the complex nature, could well underestimate the time required," said Stephen Innes, Asia Pacific market strategist at AxiTrader.

Saudi Arabia's production dropped by almost half after an attack on Saturday crippled a major oil processing facility. Its oil minister has pledged to restore lost production by the end of this month, and bring capacity back to 12 million barrels per day by the end of November.

In the United States, meanwhile, torrential rain from Tropical Storm Imelda has forced a major refinery to cut production and shut a key oil pipeline, terminals and a ship channel in Texas.

Global markets are also keeping an eye on U.S.-China



trade negotiations in Washington, as officials from both sides resumed face-to-face talks for the first time in nearly two months on Thursday.

## Lessons should be learned from the Saudi Aramco attacks

Newly-appointed Saudi oil minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman has had a harsh introduction to his post. In the wake of Saturday morning's attacks on the critical Abqaiq oil processing plant, he reassured the market at a Jeddah press conference on Tuesday.

The lost supply may be less than first feared, but there are still important lessons to learn.

As per thenational.ae, some 5.7 million barrels per day of production capacity, from state oil giant Saudi Aramco's total 12 million bpd, were lost to the strikes on Abqaiq and the nearby Khurais oil-field.

Khurais is now pumping again, though it is not clear whether it is at full capacity.

Abqaiq, with normal capacity of 7 million bpd, is back to 2 million bpd operational, with its immediate pre-attack level of 4.9 million bpd planned to be regained by the end of September, and nearly full capacity restored at the end of November.

Indeed Aramco can meet customers' needs from storage during September, then restore sufficient production by the end of the month, that would be an impressive achievement and far better than seemed likely after the shocking images from Saturday.

Once full production and exports return to the market, oil prices should sink back towards pre-attack levels. Futures prices gained \$2 per barrel for nearby years, and \$1 per barrel for long-dated futures.

This represents a slightly elevated level of

concern over future threats to supply.

It is, though, much less dramatic than the tight market of 2007-8, when a much less volatile geopolitical situation was assessed to add a \$10 "fear premium" to oil prices.

We are still at a very early stage of assessing and understanding the attacks, their impact and recovery from them.

If the largest ever abrupt loss of oil production indeed proves transient, the oil market will have dodged a bullet – this time.

**■ Global energy supply**

This is the time to learn some key lessons, to improve the resilience of global energy supply. Firstly, Saudi Arabia and Aramco will, no doubt, be reviewing their defenses, the redundancy of key industry functions given the extraordinary concentration of equipment at Abqaiq, and the procedures for emergency response and repair.

Secondly, the confrontation between Iran on the one side, and the U.S. and its Persian Gulf supporters on the other, has heated up several notches.

There have already been attacks, albeit limited, on pipelines and tankers. Energy infrastructure could be at risk not just in Saudi Arabia, but in important producers such as Iraq.

Future strikes could be more devastating or more subtle, and could include cyberwar, like the Shamoon virus that struck Aramco in 2012.

Some vulnerabilities have been strengthened, such as building bypass pipelines to the Red Sea in Saudi Arabia and the UAE's Indian

Ocean coast, that bypass the Strait of Hormuz, always previously identified as a chokepoint.

Strategic stock holdings continue to be constructed, not just in Saudi Arabia, Fujairah and the Omani port of Duqm, but also close to consumers, as in India.

Nevertheless, those who threaten regional energy security have proved adept at finding new openings to exploit.

The international response has not been very coordinated. Donald Trump said that he had authorized a release from the U.S.'s Strategic Petroleum Reserve, "if needed, in a to-be-determined amount".

Meanwhile, the International Energy Agency, whose job it is to coordinate developed countries' response to energy supply shocks, said that "for now, markets are well-supplied", and did not immediately recommend a release of emergency stocks.

Despite this well-supplied market, spare capacity is concentrated and quite tight. Most of it, some 2 million barrels per day, was held in Saudi Arabia.

Another 700,000 bpd or so is spread between three Persian Gulf countries: the UAE, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

A further 500,000 bpd is in the Neutral Zone between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, shut off for four years by a political dispute, and would take several months to restart even following a deal.

**■ Russia's major production hiccup**

Russia, which suffered its own major pro-

duction hiccup in May with contamination of oil in its Druzhba pipeline to Europe, might have as much as 300,000 bpd spare.

That is essentially it. And spare capacity could be required to meet further losses from Venezuela's economic collapse, insecurity in Libya or Nigeria, or other surprises.

The deal on production limits between OPEC, Russia and some other non-OPEC producers has held for now, but needs some flexibility to cope with the unexpected.

And as analyst Anas Alhajji likes to remind us, "quality matters". U.S. light crude or Russian condensate is far from a perfect substitute for the medium-grade Saudi crudes processed at Abqaiq, or the heavy sludge that emerges from Venezuela.

Saudi domestic gas output was also badly hit by the attacks; gas has become an ever more critical but underappreciated part of the regional energy economy.

The market has been sanguine about the limitations of quality and quantity, partly because of confidence in the buoyancy of U.S. shale producers, partly because of a gloomy outlook for demand.

But serious disruptions and price spikes are not just bad news for consumers.

From the perspective of oil producers, they dent demand, and advance the attractions of non-oil technologies, such as electric vehicles.

Now is a good time to dampen the combustible mix of threats to regional energy.

## Renewables can lead the world's response to climate change

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) will deliver a clear message to policy makers, civil society leaders and business decision makers in New York during the 74th Session of the UN Assembly and the Climate Action Summit next week.

As stated by ewind.es, the agency will reinforce the fact that limiting climate change within the 11-year time frame specified by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is possible, but global energy investments must pivot away from fossil fuels and into low-carbon technologies such as renewables.

IRENA Director-General Francesco La Camera will participate in a series of high-level discussions from 22 – 24 September, involving heads of state and global decision makers from the worlds of policy, diplomacy and business. Mr. La Camera will engage on issues related to renewable energy investment and finance, the energy and climate resilience needs of small island developing states, progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and the role of youth in climate change.

As a central theme of his participation, the Director-General will put forward the case that renewable energy, coupled with energy efficiency, represents the only plausible and ready instrument to address carbon emissions. This message will anchor a campaign entitled "It's Possible" emphasizing that renewable energy can lead the world into a new age of sustainable development whilst urgently addressing climate change.

The campaign supports UN Secretary-General António Guterres calls for leaders to come to New York with concrete, realistic plans to enhance their Nationally Determined Contributions by 2020 in line with reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent over the next decade, and to net zero emissions by 2050. IRENA believes Nationally Determined Contributions can be significantly more ambitious and play a leading role in accelerating renewable energy development.

IRENA's role in transforming energy systems on small island developing states will feature at the Climate Action Summit during which Mr. La Camera will make an important intervention.

IRENA's SIDS Lighthouses initiative 2.0 launched at last year's UN General Assembly aims to enable a deeper transformation of SIDS energy systems by leveraging investment support. The initiative will serve to strengthen climate resilience and contribute to the attainment of the sustainable development goals.

Additionally, the Agency will present the findings of a new climate investment report highlighting the need for global energy investments to overwhelmingly pivot away from fossil fuels towards low-carbon technologies including renewables in the coming decades.

IRENA is expected to sign a number of agreements further strengthening its cooperation with intergovernmental organizations as it looks to move closer to on-the-ground implementation in partnership with member states.

## Australians can visualize and experience wind turbines via VR

Australia's Deakin University has partnered with a renewable energy developer to create a virtual reality (VR) tool that will help members of the public experience new wind farms before they are built.

As per opengovasia.com, according to a recent press release, the tool will allow people to visualize and interact with different wind turbine configurations and layouts and listen to any sounds they make.

Researchers in the CADET Virtual Reality Lab at the University's School of Engineering will be developing the tool.

The VR Lab's Director explained that the VR experience would help members of the community visualize how wind farms interact with the surrounding landscape.

Producing this kind of tool is exciting. Digital transformation is the use of new, fast and frequently changing digital technology such as Hybrid Cloud for Digital Transformation to solve problems.

In this case, virtual reality is used to support the transition towards renewable energy generation.

By wearing a VR headset, people can immerse themselves in the virtual environment and access relevant information at the same time.

For instance, they will be able to see the technology within the wind turbines and look up the amount of energy the turbines produce in given wind conditions.

The Mortlake South Wind Farm was one of six successful projects announced in September 2018 as part of the Victorian Government's Renewable Energy Target (VRET) reverse auction.

The 35 turbine wind farm will generate enough clean energy to power 115,000 homes a year and is scheduled to commence operation at the end of 2020.

## Exxon Mobil, Shell among groups picked to build five Pakistan LNG terminals

Pakistan has selected groups that include Exxon Mobil Corp and Royal Dutch Shell to build five liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals as it aims to triple imports and ease gas shortages.

According to reuters.com, the terminals could be in operation within two to three years, Omar Ayub Khan, Pakistan's minister of power and petroleum, said in an interview on Friday.

Pakistan is chronically short of gas for power production and to supply manufacturers such as fertilizer makers, hobbling the country's economy.

"It will make a significant dent in the gas shortage," Khan said.

The groups selected to build terminals are Tabeer Energy, a unit of Mitsubishi Corp; Exxon and Energias; Trafigura Group and Pakistan GasPort; Shell and Engro Corp; and Gunvor Group and Fatima.

It was not immediately clear if the companies involved had made final investment decisions to proceed.

The five must submit plan details to the ministry of ports and shipping by Nov. 5 for approval, but cabinet has already approved them, Khan said.

Pakistan's two LNG terminals currently have 1.2 billion cubic feet per day of capacity, and a third expected to come on line next year will add 600 million cubic feet per day, Khan said.

The country has sought bids for a 10-year LNG supply tender for the current terminals and the results will be announced in two to three weeks, Khan said.

It was unclear what capacity the five new terminals will have, but Khan said they could collectively triple Pakistan's LNG import capacity.

The arrests this summer of two LNG industry executives by the National Accountability Bureau raised some concerns about the risks of investing in Pakistan.

But Khan said the interest of five investment groups speaks for itself.



**■ A competitive market**

"That is a ringing endorsement that (Pakistan's) policies are clear and transparent," he said. "It's a competitive market."

The cost of building the terminals and finding buyers for the gas will be up to the groups, and they will pay Pakistan a royalty based on volume, Khan said.

Pakistan's contribution will be funding construction of a \$2 billion north-south pipeline to distribute the gas, and storage facilities, he said.

Pakistan's fertilizer industry has coped in the past year with a steep increase in government-set natural gas prices, Sher Shah Malik, executive director of Fertilizer Manufacturers of Pakistan Advisory Council, said in an interview on Thursday.

Gas is the main ingredient in production of urea fertilizer.

Two of Pakistan's urea plants lack gas to run regularly, and one closed last year, forcing Pakistan to import fertilizer.

Since LNG is often too expensive for making fertilizer, the government should also expand domestic gas exploration before reserves are depleted, Malik said.

Second Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

**NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN**  
**TENDER NO. : 01-31-9780010**

1398.3805

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
30	P/F "ROLLS-ROYCE" INDUSTRIAL AVON GAS GENERATORS AVONMK . 1533-34-76G/101G. REF. ROLLS-ROYCELT D	1978 NO

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

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

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

**FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT**  
**Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex**  
**Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran**  
**Tel. No.: 061 341 23455 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437**  
Public Relations [www.shana.ir](http://www.shana.ir) [www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir)  
تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۸/۶/۲۷ نوبت دوم ۹۸/۶/۳۰



## Japan's world cup is an economic stress test

**ASIATIMES** — Rugby event will be an ideal rehearsal for service sector as nation prepares for 2020 Tokyo Olympics

The Japanese love a mascot. Good luck finding a place — any place — that is more obsessed with cute, cuddly and often zany promotional characters. Cities, towns and prefectures introduce them. So do companies, non-profit organizations and the national police. Sports teams, too.

Rarely, though, do such mascots enjoy the ubiquity of “Ren” and “G,” the two lion-like creatures conjured up to promote the Rugby World Cup opening in Tokyo on Friday.

On the one hand, this colorful pair with button noses and long, flowing manes, depict Japan's softer side. On the other, their omnipresence around the nation speaks to Tokyo's bigger ambitions as 500,000 foreign fans funnel into a historically insular nation.

The focus these next two weeks is on the US\$4 billion-plus windfall that visiting rugby enthusiasts are expected to pump into the economy. At least 1.8 million tickets have been sold.

The real question that the event camouflages, however, is Japan's ability to harness this moment to achieve Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's broader efforts to recalibrate national growth engines away from the traditional economic engine, exports.

The Rugby World Cup, Asia's first, is a dress rehearsal for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, which begins 308 days after Japan faces off with Russia today. It is also a dry run, of sorts, for Abe's desire to raise Japan's competitive game. Over the last five years, Japan has enjoyed a tourism boom. In the first half of 2019, the country saw record inflows of nearly 17 million, up 4.6% from the previous year (also a record).

Some cities, in fact, already worry they're being overwhelmed — including the nation's flagship heritage destination, Kyoto. Concerns include traffic jams, overloaded train stations, litter, cultural differences — you name it. In June, the Japan Tourism Agency reported that more than 30% of cities face a shortage of accommodations and more than 38% suffer extreme traffic congestion. And this is well before influxes of rugby fans and Olympic ticket holders.

This embarrassment of riches has many causes. One is a 30% drop in the yen since 2012, which made Japan more affordable. Japan is as safe, efficient and clean a place as travelers will find. Prime Minister Abe's team deserves credit for simplifying visa procedures. It rolled out a tax-free shopping infrastructure that is surprisingly unbureaucratic by Japanese standards.

Yet a few growing pains are getting in the way.

One is the mindset. Talking with executives and perusing survey data, one gets the distinct impression that much of Japan Inc. sees today's tourism boom as transitory. Many figure that a yen surge, or the fickleness of consumer interest, might soon enough send tourists elsewhere.

This failure to commit means Japan has yet to tap the luxury travel market. Lots of inbound travel is related to tour packages that often reap bigger dividends in places where tourists are domiciled than Japan. Hence the determination by the Japan National Tourism Organization to address the “imbalance” between the number of arrivals and consumption.

High costs are still part of Japan's challenge. Asian travelers account for 75% of arrivals, with an increasing number from Southeast Asia. China, too. But even with the weakened yen and disinflationary forces, lodging and transportation in Japan can be a big drawback for travelers, reducing cash left over to splurge on shopping and souvenirs.

In June, tourism research site Skift.com reported that Japan wants to increase visitor expenditures to about \$74 billion annually by 2020 from about \$42 billion in 2018. The latter figure is based on roughly 31.2 million arrivals. Japan is targeting 40 million next year.

Those kinds of numbers are possible in a year in which Tokyo is hosting the Summer Games — perhaps even in a year in which Japan's hosts the Rugby World Cup. But what about 2021 and beyond?

The next month will be a vital testing ground. Take Airbnb, an online marketplace with which Japan has had a schizophrenic relationship. A 2017 crackdown on home-sharing apps and services ended in mid-2018. It remains to be seen, though, how cultural mores collide with sharing-economy efficiencies. Many neighborhoods and building associations are reluctant to allow locals to rent properties to foreigners on “security” grounds.

The force with local business groups, including hoteliers, remains strong. Just ask Uber and Lyft about their challenges cracking the Japan market. Yet these kinds of sharing apps are exactly the disruption needed as Abe seeks to slash Japan's reliance on exports.

Perhaps the strongest headwind for services is Japan's notoriously weak productivity. Since 2012, Abe has sought to reflate the economy with aggressive fiscal and monetary pump priming. At the same time, he did very little to reduce red tape or incentivize Japan Inc. to become more innovative and efficient.

This owes partly to a corporate welfare dynamic that Abe's Liberal Democratic Party likes to downplay. Business lobbies and bureaucrats worry stronger productivity might necessitate mass layoffs, weakening the socioeconomic fabric. On Abe's watch, Japan's ranking in the World Bank's ease-of-doing-business survey worsened markedly — to 39th in 2019 versus 20th in 2012.

Japan's unique style of service is its own conundrum. It's called *omotenashi* which the Japan National Tourist Organization defines as “the Japanese mindset of hospitality” with “an implicit understanding that there are no menial tasks if the result ensures a great experience for a guest.” It means adding more staff and more hours than needed — and that results in lower profit margins.

As Japan searches for a happy medium, the next two weeks of rugby matches seems an ideal moment for Japan to step out of its comfort zone. The short-term economic benefits are very welcome given the headlines zooming Japan's way. Exports fell a ninth straight month in August — this time by 8.2% — thanks to the deepening global trade war.

The real payoff should come in the long run — and there's some precedent worth considering. The 2002 football World Cup, the first in Asia and held jointly with South Korea, vastly increased the amount of international signage on Japan's streets, roads and in train stations. It also generated increased incentives for companies to add English-speaking staff. That event — mascots galore, or course — catalyzed the growth of Asian sport, helping to create a multibillion-dollar market.

Might Japan 2019 have a similarly epochal influence on the region? That's precisely what Abe's Japan is going for. And there's nothing cute about that.

By Stephanie Savell and Tom Engelhardt

**ANTIWAR** — Today's piece by Stephanie Savell, co-director of the invaluable Costs of War Project at Brown University's Watson Institute, goes hand-in-hand with the release of a new report by that very group, “The Human and Financial Costs of the Explosive Remnants of War in Afghanistan.” You can read the report itself by clicking here.

Just in case you hadn't heard the good news, the last man from the president's foreign policy “team” still standing, Trump whisperer Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, recently left National Security Advisor John Bolton in the dust. Bolton, who was axed or resigned, depending on who's telling the tale, can now write his memoirs (Wars I Meant to, But Never Got to, Fight), while raising money for Republican congressional candidates who are eager to start yet more conflicts across the planet.

Even before the abrupt cancellation of, and imbroiglio about, Trump's invitation to Taliban leaders to visit Camp David, which evidently precipitated Bolton's hasty departure, Pompeo had some genuinely good news to offer Americans about their 18-year-old war in Afghanistan. Not that it's over, of course, not yet, but that we've essentially won anyway! (Feel free to start chanting “USA! USA!” now.) Or rather, to quote the secretary of state, we “delivered” big time in that country and so have been highly “successful” in our mission there! As he put it in early September, “If you go back and look at the days following 9/11, the objectives set out were pretty clear: to go defeat al-Qaeda, the group that had launched the attack on the United States of America from Afghanistan. And today, al-Qaeda... doesn't even amount to a shadow of its former self in Afghanistan.”

So victory at last, not just over John Bolton but over al-Qaeda, too! Forget that al-Qaeda offshoots have sprouted and thrived from Africa to Syria, Yemen to Afghanistan in the course of the never-ending wars that began with the Afghan invasion. Forget as well that the American war there, particularly in the air, intensified in recent months amid peace talks — above all, the war of bombast in which Pompeo (like the president) recently bragged that we were hitting the Taliban big time, even as Trump declared peace talks with that movement's leaders “dead.”

“In just the last 10 days alone,” Pompeo said proudly, with an evident urge to revive the Vietnam-era body count, “we've killed over 1,000 Taliban.” Such bragging aside, the Afghan War is not only the longest in our history and getting longer by the day, but obviously a lost war as well. And while the president is still pondering the withdrawal of about 5,000 American troops from Afghanistan (putting U.S. forces more or less back where they were when his generals convinced him to send in 4,000 troops in mid-2017), military figures, active and retired, continue to promote an American presence there into eternity and the media continues to raise fears of a “premature” withdrawal from that country. All of this may seem perfectly normal in the age of Trump, but looked at another way, as TomDispatch regular Stephanie Savell, co-director of the Costs of War Project, does today, it also couldn't be sadder. In part, this is because, given the ordnance the U.S. has already expended in that country, the war there may never end for many Afghans. But let Savell explain. ~ Tom

I've never been to Afghanistan, but I am the mother of two young children. So when I imagine what life must be like there after 18 years of war, my mind conjures up the children most vividly — the ones who have been affected by the conflict — and their parents. I think of the 12-year-old boy who was carrying water to a military checkpoint in a remote part of that country, earning pennies to help sustain his family, whose legs were blown off by a landmine. Or the group of children at a wedding party, playing behind the house where the ceremony was taking place. One of them picked up an unexploded shell, fired from a helicopter, that hadn't detonated in battle. It blew up, killing two children, Basit and Haroon, and wounding 12 others. What must it be like to care for a five year old — the age of my oldest child — who is maimed and who needs to learn how to walk, play, and live again with ill-fitting prosthetics?

A major legacy of the U.S. war on terror in Afghanistan, which began in October 2001 and shows little sign of actually ending anytime soon, will be the “explosive remnants of war” — a term for all the landmines and unexploded bombs and other weaponry that have been left behind in the earth. This debris of America's endless war, still piling up, is devastating in many ways. It makes it so much harder for an agricultural population to sustain itself on the land. It wreaks havoc on Afghans' emotional wellbeing and sense of security. And it poses special hazards for children, who are regularly injured and killed by the left-behind explosives of an already devastating war as they play, herd livestock, or collect water and firewood.

Given the expected drawdown of American troops in Afghanistan — despite the recent



breakdown in peace negotiations with the Taliban, President Trump continues to indicate that he may pursue such a path — and the possibility of an official end to the U.S. war there, this topic is both pressing and relevant to public debate in America. Offering aid and reparations for the horrific ongoing costs of explosive military waste should be a priority on Washington's future agenda.

“The Human and Financial Costs of the Explosive Remnants of War in Afghanistan,” a new report issued today by the Costs of War project, which I co-direct, at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, offers a sense of the scale of the damage in Afghanistan. According to the report's authors, Suzanne Fiederlein and SaraJane Rzegocki of James Madison University, at least 5,442 people have been killed and 14,693 people have been injured by devices embedded in or left on the ground since the start of the US-led war in 2001.

Of those victims, the great majority are boys and men. A casualty analysis by the Danish Demining Group in 2017 suggested that boys are particularly vulnerable because of their day-to-day activities and chores, but women and girls, too, are increasingly becoming casualties of unexploded ordnance, particularly when traveling. In 2017, the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan expressed concern about a “65% jump in the number of children killed or wounded by explosive remnants as fighting has spread to heavily populated civilian areas.”

The U.S. has provided significant financial support for humanitarian mine-clearing programs in Afghanistan. In recent years, however, that funding has been dropping. According to the United Nations Mine Action Service, Afghanistan has made some genuine progress toward its goal of freeing itself of landmines and other unexploded debris by 2023. Yet international financial support for such activities has dropped to 41% of what it was in 2011. Even if the Afghan War truly ended tomorrow, a sustained commitment of financial aid over many years would be necessary to clear that country of all the ordnance sewn into its soil as a result of the last 18 years of America's war.

### ■ A Legacy of War

The new Costs of War report reveals that the leading weapons causing such damage have changed over time. Even before 2001, when the U.S.-led coalition invaded Afghanistan, that country stood near the top of the list of those afflicted by abandoned landmines. The devices remained from the 1980s conflict between the Soviet Union and extremist rebels, the mujahedeen (monafeghin), backed by Washington and funded and supported by the CIA.

In the wake of the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, international and Afghan clearance groups worked hard to clean up those minefields. Their efforts were, however, often thwarted by brutal new conflicts, including an Afghan civil war from 1992 to 1996 and the period from 1996 to 2001 in which the Taliban largely controlled the country. Still, over the past few decades, such groups managed to remove two million pieces of unexploded ordnance.

As the latest data indicates, landmines from the Soviet conflict have still been causing 7% of remnant-related casualties since 2010. Most of those hurt by explosive ordnance, however, are victims of the ongoing, complex armed conflict that emerged from the U.S.-led invasion — that is, a range of weapons used and left behind by American forces, Taliban fighters, and Islamic State-affiliated groups. These include grenades, projectile weapons, mortars, cluster munitions, and large bombs that failed to explode as intended, but are still live and prone to going off if touched or moved at a later date. Taliban and ISIS militants are also increasingly relying on improvised explosive devices (IEDs) set off by someone stepping on them or otherwise unwittingly activating them. If not triggered at the time of battle, they can kill or injure civilians long after, even in areas in which there is no longer active fighting.

Since 2015, casualties from explosive remnants of war and abandoned IEDs have been rising rapidly. One reason is an increase in fighting between the U.S.-backed

Afghan National Security Forces and both the Taliban and ISIS, as well as intensifying conflict between these extremist groups themselves. According to report author Suzanne Fiederlein, improvised explosive devices are growing more common in Afghanistan and other conflicts across the Middle East, partly thanks to the Internet, which has spread knowledge of how to build them. Such information, she writes, is “commonly available now, not just on dark-web sites. Such knowledge is also linked to the manufacture of more sophisticated and complex devices, such as anti-handling devices (booby traps).”

In addition, since 2017, the U.S. has dramatically increased its airstrikes against the Taliban and other militant groups in Afghanistan, while the Taliban itself, as it gains ever more territory, has expanded its attacks on government targets as well as on Afghan and international security forces. In the past year, as U.S. and Taliban officials have engaged in peace talks, both sides have only ramped up their aggression further, assumedly in order to strengthen their hands in the negotiations.

Finally, in recent years, as the American-led coalition has closed down bases in advance of a prospective U.S. military withdrawal, more and more Afghans have died or been injured by military waste exploding in abandoned areas once used by international security forces as firing ranges. From 2009 to 2015, the United Nations recorded 138 casualties from explosions in or around such former training facilities. Seventy-five percent of those victims were children.

### Living with Explosive Military Waste

It's important to grasp just how long explosive remnants of war can remain active in a landscape after a conflict ends. If unclear, they pose a danger to people living nearby or passing through for generations. In Belgium, for instance, more than a century later, significant numbers of explosive shells are still being removed from former World War I battlefields. Many countries struggle with this problem, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Colombia, Korea, Laos, and Vietnam, but Afghanistan has been one of the hardest hit.

As of 2018, roughly 1,780 square kilometers of that country are considered contaminated by military waste. As the Costs of War report points out, this is “roughly ten times the area of Washington, D.C., but spread across a country almost as large as Texas.” Danger zones include farms and grazing land, roads that people regularly use to get to markets, schools, and hospitals, and lands surrounding militant strongholds, allied military bases, and those former firing ranges.

From the research I've done, it's clear why people continue to use such contaminated lands. At the most basic level, it's a story of inequality. Many Afghans undoubtedly know which areas pose a threat. In addition, risk education programs have made progress in getting teachers, midwives, and police officers to spread awareness of how to recognize and avoid such dangers. However, poverty often forces Afghans to make terrible and terrifying decisions about the risk of injury and death.

Dilemmas of this sort are commonly faced in places marked by such legacies of conflict. Anthropologist David Henig, for instance, describes how rural villagers in the Bosnia-Herzegovina highlands still knowingly enter contaminated forest areas to gather firewood. For them, living with the danger of landmines left over from the Bosnian War of the 1990s is a matter of economic survival. Many Afghans face a similar plight. I can only suppose that the boy who stepped on a landmine while carrying water for soldiers would not have been earning money in that fashion if his family had any other way to scrape together an existence.

While people learn to live with the presence of explosive waste in their landscapes, doing so exacts a grim toll. Imagine the fear and emotional distress you might feel at merely passing through places where a misstep could kill you, no less your children. Henig recounts how one Bosnian woman, returning from a mined part of the forest

where she had filled her wagon with wood, broke down and cried, yelling feverishly, “Why, why do we have to do this?”

In Afghanistan, the Costs of War report points to the “deep psychological impact” of such long-lasting contamination: “For Afghans, the fear of being harmed by these weapons is magnified by knowing or seeing someone injured or killed.” People are terrorized and traumatized by the threat of explosions, and this continuous sense of foreboding must create an undertone of anxious melancholy that runs through every minute of the day.

Then there are the thousands of Afghans who live not only with the fear of such explosions, but also with the need to rebuild their lives after being maimed by one. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) physical rehabilitation program in Afghanistan manufactures over 19,000 artificial legs, arms, and other orthopedic devices each year. Groups like the ICRC and Handicap International post photos of children on their websites as they are being fitted with and trained to use prosthetic legs. In one, a boy of no more than five looks bleakly at the camera, his hands resting on two parallel bars at his sides, the stumps of his legs settled uncomfortably in new plastic devices. In another, Nilofar, a young woman in a wheelchair, prepares to shoot a basketball; hers is a remarkable story of recovery, of moving from complete paralysis, after a back injury due to an explosion, to partial mobility. Today she works for the ICRC's Kabul Orthopedic Center as a data entry operator, a job that has given her an income, a sense of purpose, and renewed hope.

The United Nations Mine Action Service has called for more long-term support for survivors of such wounds. They need such care to learn to walk on and use prosthetic limbs, as well as to deal with the depression and other psychological effects that accompany such injuries. According to the ICRC, they also require “a role in society and to recover dignity and self-respect.” All of the more than 800 staff at the seven ICRC orthopedic centers across Afghanistan are former patients. But there are thousands of others and no one can doubt that, in a war seemingly without end, there will be thousands more.

### Imperial Debris and U.S. Responsibility

Scholars have called landmines and other explosive remnants of war “imperial debris” — the detritus, in particular, of imperial America and its expansive global military footprint, including its forever wars around this planet. Even if U.S. troops are finally withdrawn, as Afghans encounter such debris from the war on terror and find their lives eternally shaped by it, the association with the American project in their country will remain alive for years into the future, as such weaponry keeps right on killing. In the process, it will undoubtedly seed hatred of the United States for generations to come.

Sadly, American funding for the humanitarian mine-clearing program in Afghanistan has been in decline since 2012. Afghanistan today has some of the best-trained demining technicians on the planet, but the scale of the problem is massive and the money available for it far too modest. The very goal of achieving mine-free status by 2023, a project once expected to cost \$647.5 million, is likely unattainable, even if the fighting ends, because funding targets have fallen so far short of being fulfilled.

The U.S. has been the single largest donor to that program, making \$452 million in contributions since 2002. Since 2012, however, it's been another story, as Washington has dispatched much of its funding and resources for such programs to Iraq and Syria instead. In fiscal year 2018, the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan raised just \$51 million of its \$99 million funding goal and only an estimated \$20 million of that came from Washington, less than half what it gave between 2010 and 2012.

Americans have an obligation to clear explosive hazards in that country, a large portion of which are of U.S. origin. Given the taxpayer dollars Washington has already spent on or committed to the war on terror through fiscal year 2019 — \$5.9 trillion, according to the estimate of the Costs of War project — what it's donated to deal with imperial debris in Afghanistan is scarcely more than a drop in the bucket. A multiyear funding commitment to clear the explosive remnants of the war on terror there would be one small way to carry out a tiny portion of America's responsibility to the Afghan people after so many years of destruction.

Someday, Afghanistan stands every chance of becoming America's forgotten war. The conflict will be anything but forgotten in that country, however, and therein lies one of the saddest stories of all.

Stephanie Savell, a TomDispatch regular, is co-director of the Costs of War Project at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs. An anthropologist, she conducts research on security and activism in the U.S. and in Brazil. She co-authored *The Civic Imagination: Making a Difference in American Political Life*.



# What is the outcome of the Biden war and his rivals? Confused politicians and inconsistent polls

By Saeed Sobhani

**TEHRAN** — Opinion polls in the United States show that up to now, former Vice President Joe Biden has outperformed other Democratic candidates. However, there are conflicting surveys in this regard. Many US analysts believe that Biden's victory in the Democratic Party cannot be definite from now on. Here's a look at the latest US election news and polls:

As John Cassidy wrote in Newyorker, ince last week's Democratic debate, political observers have been keenly awaiting the results of the latest round of polling, and we now have plenty of new data to chew on. Five national polls this week indicate that Joe Biden has retained his lead in what looks like a three-horse race—and his numbers have actually moved up a bit. Elizabeth Warren remains in second place, but a new poll indicates that she is in the lead in Iowa, where the 2020 primary will begin. Bernie Sanders retains a good deal of support nationally, too, although his path to the nomination looks increasingly challenging. Everybody else is still way back.

In the past few days, Politico/Morning Consult, NBC News/the Wall Street Journal, SurveyUSA, The Economist/You Gov, and Fox News have each released national polls. Biden was ahead in all five of them, and in three the margin was double digits. On Thursday morning, the former Vice-President was 10.5 percentage points ahead of Elizabeth Warren in the Real Clear Politics poll average, which combines the results of a number of individual surveys, and 12.3 points ahead of Bernie Sanders. (The next closest challenger, Pete Buttigieg, was more than twenty points behind Biden.)

There's an old saying in polling that you should follow the trend. On August 19th, the R.C.P. poll average showed Biden's support at 28.8 per cent; on September 12th, he was at 26.8 per cent; on Thursday morning, he was at twenty-eight per cent. The trend line has moved down in the past month, but in the past week it has edged up, despite the post-debate controversy about Biden's rambling (and, in the view of some commentators, racist) answer to a question about reparations. As SurveyUSA noted when releasing its results, "Record player or no record player, Joe Biden remains Joe Biden at this hour, drawing 33% of the vote in a crowd-field, almost exactly as he has done in previous SurveyUSA polling."

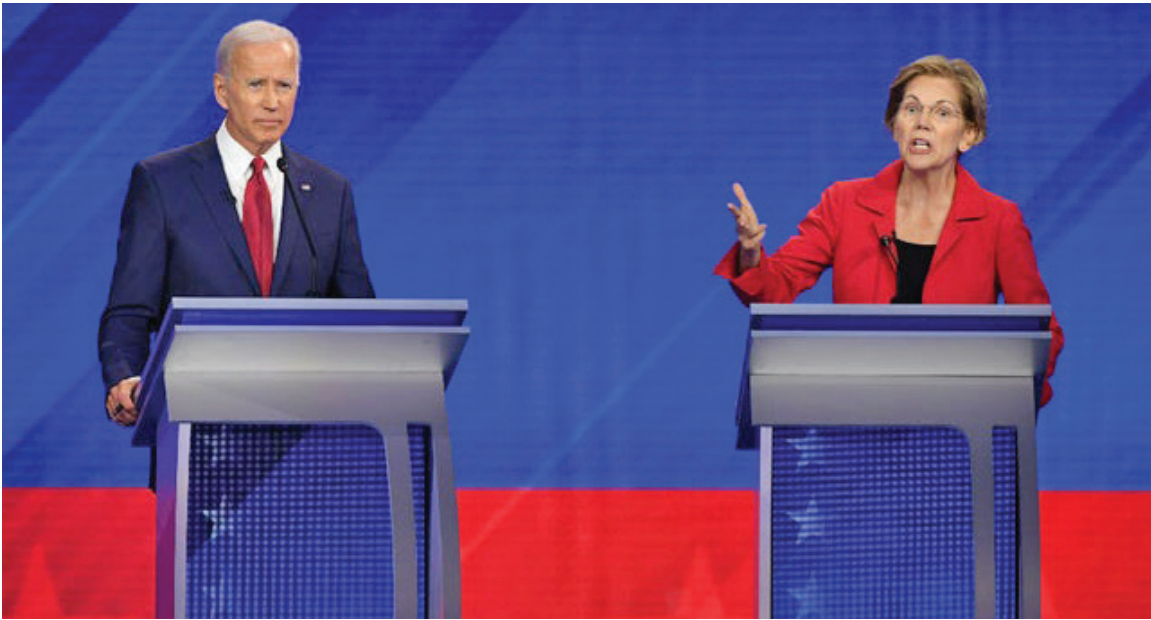
Breakdowns of the Democratic electorate, including one from The Economist that is particularly easy to follow, show Biden with a substantial lead among moderates, older voters, black and Hispanic voters, and people who didn't attend college. Among voters under forty-five and those with college degrees, Warren and Sanders are both ahead of him. Despite his gaffes, Biden remains well ahead on the question of perceived electability. According to the SurveyUSA poll, forty-five per cent of likely Democratic Primary voters think that Warren would defeat Donald Trump in the general election, and forty-three per cent think that Sanders would win. Sixty-one per cent of respondents think that Biden would beat Trump.

The immediate challenge to Biden isn't that his support is dropping nationally but that Warren is consolidating support from voters who previously expressed preferences for candidates outside the top three or who weren't sure whom to back. The Massachusetts senator has been trending up since April. In the NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, her support has jumped six points since July, from nineteen per cent to twenty-five per cent. Biden's numbers are up in this poll, too, and Sanders's support has stayed pretty steady. Warren appears to have picked up most of her newfound supporters from Kamala Harris and out of the "Not sure" category. Harris has tumbled from thirteen per cent to five per cent. The tally of undecideds has fallen from eight per cent to two per cent.

The latest polls from Iowa, where the caucuses will be held on February 3rd, illustrate Warren's momentum at the local level. In a survey of likely caucus goers by Iowa State University/Civiqs, twenty-four per cent of the respondents expressed support for Warren, compared to sixteen per cent for both Biden and Sanders. The second poll, from Focus on Rural America, showed Biden leading Warren by the narrow margin of twenty-five per cent to twenty-three per cent, with Pete Buttigieg in third place, at twelve per cent. If Warren were to win in Iowa and New Hampshire, where she also appears to be making up ground, she would obviously be in a very strong position.

Campaigns, in gauging their candidate's progress, don't merely look at the headline figures from the polls. They monitor all sorts of things, including the amount of excitement about their candidates and the size of their potential voter pools. In the NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll, thirty-five per cent of respondents registered enthusiasm about Warren, compared to twenty-five per cent for Sanders, and twenty-three per cent for Biden. Potential reach is a bit trickier to measure. The Economist/YouGov survey asked people to list all the candidates whom they were considering voting for. Fifty-three per cent of respondents included Warren on their list, fifty-one per cent included Biden, and forty-one per cent included Sanders. Both of these findings suggest that Warren's campaign may have the most room to grow.

At a moment when Sanders is overhauling his campaign's leadership in Iowa and New Hampshire—and the site PredictWise is giving him just a one-in-nine chance of winning the nomination—he will also take some encouragement from the latest national polls. Three months ago, on June 19th, the R.C.P. poll average had Sanders at fifteen per cent; on Wednesday, he was at 16.3 per cent. In two of this week's national surveys—those from Politico/Morning Consult and Fox



News—Sanders was in second place, narrowly ahead of Warren. An Emerson poll in California showed him tied for the lead with Biden, although another California survey showed Biden with a nine-point advantage.

One message from these polls is that Sanders still has a firm base. His supporters tend to be younger, less affluent, and less firmly attached to the Democratic Party than Warren's supporters are. The challenge facing Sanders, a formidable one, is to expand beyond his core when so many self-identified liberal Democrats are backing Warren—thirty-six per cent in the NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll. He's certainly trying. On Wednesday, he rolled out a \$2.5 trillion "Housing for All" plan, which includes building more affordable housing, expanding rental assistance, and introducing a national rent-control standard.

Taken together, Warren and Sanders now have quite a bit more support than Biden does, the polls suggest. Among younger and college-educated voters, it's not even close. (In the under-thirty demographic, just nine per cent favor Biden, according to The Economist's analysis.) When Warren appeared on Rachel Maddow's MSNBC show on Tuesday night, the host asked how Warren and Sanders could avoid splitting the progressive vote and allowing a more centrist candidate to get the nomination. Warren said that she'd "been friends with Bernie what feels like forever" and added that competition was healthy. That didn't really answer the question. In the past few weeks, there has been a lot of attention paid to the Biden-Warren matchup. Going forward, the Warren-Sanders dynamic could be equally important.

The polls are in: here's who won — and lost — last week's debate

Also The Vox reported that Joe Biden and Elizabeth Warren are the top two candidates in the presidential race, according to most polls taken since last week's debate. Of the five national polls taken since then, all show the former vice president continuing to lead, and four show Warren in second place — and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders in third. (The fifth poll shows Sanders in second and Warren in third.)

A poll from NBC News and the Wall Street Journal shows Warren 11 points ahead of Sanders, but polls from HarrisX, SurveyUSA, and YouGov show her leading him by 1 to 4 points, and a Morning Consult poll shows her trailing Sanders by 2. On average, that's a 3.2 percent margin for Warren over Sanders. That's bigger than before, but it's not clear whether it will hold up (or expand) in the coming weeks. As for the other candidates, the worst news is for California Sen. Kamala Harris. Every new national poll shows her clearly falling behind the top three candidates. In fact, she's barely ahead of South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg in two polls, tied with him in a third, and trails him in the other two. And beyond the top five, Andrew Yang, Beto O'Rourke, and Cory Booker all have about 3 percent support each in national polls since the debate — a slight improvement for all three but not enough to bump any of them up to the top tier of candidates.

The big picture is that the debate may have solidified the shape of the field — with Biden in first and Warren and Sanders probably in that order behind him. But one big question going forward is whether Warren will manage to put some distance between herself and Sanders, emerging as the clear second-place candidate rather than essentially tied with Sanders (as polling averages currently show).

What about early state polls?

All of this parsing of national primary polls is interesting enough, but there is no national primary; the contest instead will be shaped by early state results, starting with the Iowa caucuses. Polling in Iowa, though, has been sparse in recent months. There have been some polls showing Warren actually winning there, but they tend to be from online pollsters without a track record of polling the caucuses so it's unclear how much confidence we should place in them. Other polls continue to show Biden ahead.

The gold standard of Iowa polling is Ann Selzer's Des Moines Register poll, which was reportedly in the field in recent days, so that should be an interesting result when it comes out. For now, though, we have two Iowa polls that were conducted after the debate. One, an online poll by Civiqs conducted for Iowa State University, shows Warren winning there with 24 percent, substantially ahead of the tied-for-second Biden and Sanders with 16 percent each, Buttigieg with 13 percent, and Harris 5 percent. The other, a phone poll by David Binder Research for a Democratic group

called Focus on Rural America, shows Biden winning with 25 percent, Warren close behind with 23 percent, Buttigieg in third with 12 percent, Sanders down in fourth with 9 percent, and, surprisingly, Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar in fifth with 8 percent.

Both of these results are interesting, but each tells a different story, and neither are from nonpartisan polling organizations with a long track record. Hopefully, the Des Moines Register poll will come out soon and provide us with some more clarity.

There have been a few California polls as well

Changing gears, there have also been two polls of California conducted since the debate. This year, California's primary will be on Super Tuesday (March 3). That places the nation's most populous (and delegate-heavy) contest right after the early states, and due to early voting in California, voters there can cast their ballots weeks in advance. SurveyUSA has a result that more or less mirrors national trends, showing Biden with 27 percent, Sanders with 18 percent, Warren with 16 percent, and Harris with 13 percent.

Emerson College, though, has a more unusual result, with Sanders and Biden tied at 26 percent, Warren at 20 percent, and Harris (the home-state candidate) all the way down at 6 percent. There was also another poll by Capitol Weekly showing Warren winning, Sanders in second, and Biden in third — but it was mostly conducted before the debate. So basically, who the heck knows what is going on in California.

Poll: Biden beats Warren by 16 points in head-to-head match-up

But The Hill reported that Former Vice President Joe Biden beats Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) by 16 percentage points in a theoretical head-to-head primary match-up in a Fox News poll released Wednesday evening. When likely Democratic primary voters were given a choice between only Biden and Warren, 53 percent chose Biden, compared to 37 percent who went with Warren. Seven percent didn't know which to choose. Given a choice between all the 2020 Democrats, Biden earned the support of 29 percent, while Warren had 16 percent, putting her behind Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) at 18 percent, an all-time high for him. No other candidate had double-digit support. Warren and Sanders have been closing the gap on Biden's lead over the past few months.

Polls still show Biden leading the crowded Democratic presidential field, and voters have repeatedly indicated they want to vote for the candidate most likely to beat President Trump. In the Fox News poll, 42 percent think that candidate is Biden, while 17 percent picked Sanders and 12 percent chose Warren.

The Fox News poll included 1,008 registered voters. For questions directed at likely Democratic primary voters, the margin of error is plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

## U.S. Congress, secessionists deceive HK

**GLOBALTIMES** — U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and some House members on Wednesday met Hong Kong's extreme opposition, including Joshua Wong Chi-fung and Denise Ho Wan-see. Pelosi and the House members touted Hong Kong's protests and



expressed their support for the Hong Kong protesters' demands, including so-called universal suffrage. Wong and Ho said they are at "the forefront of this great noble fight for universal values." Republican Representative Michael McCaul said that "America stands with you."

The US Congress is interfering in China's domestic affairs. In 2018, these people accused China of infiltrating the US through Confucius Institutes and media activities. These politicians are much too overbearing and unreasonable. It would be useless to try to talk sense into these selfish and narrow-minded people.

These people are ideological maniacs full of prejudice and even hatred against China. They want to take China down but are not willing to pay the price. They are busy forming an anti-China forefront in the Chinese mainland's surrounding countries and regions, at the price of local people's interests. They have seen such hope from some Hongkongers' emotions.

Wong and other extreme oppositionists are pushing Hong Kong to become "volunteers" in the US containment of China. Hong Kong's ordinary people will lose their future after a confrontation that destroys all sides. Only a few people in the limelight can easily win Western countries' special protection. They turn ordinary people's interests into their personal political bargain chips.

If some Hongkongers are deceived by the US and turn the protests into a political confrontation that demands absolute universal suffrage, then they are doomed to fail. Hong Kong is a special administrative region (SAR) of China. Making systematic arrangements for "universal suffrage" based on the Basic Law and preventing an SAR government that opposes the central government is a bottom line that can't be crossed.

Traitors like Jimmy Lai Chee-ying, Martin Lee Chu-ming and Wong have already linked their interests to anti-China forces in the US and the West. If such traitors are in charge of Hong Kong's constitutional authority, the city will be out of the central government's control and will be part of the sphere of Washington's influence, becoming a "new Guam."

There must be a political bottom line for Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy. Some US elites and Hong Kong extremists try to use the so-called US democracy and freedom to disturb people's understanding of the bottom line and to deceive Hong Kong people. Their plot must be frustrated.

Obviously, universal interests do not exist in the US, or any other country and region. There are always conflicts between universal values and universal interests. The values and political structure of the Philippines, Haiti and Ukraine's Catholic region are similar to that of the US. But where are their common interests? Where are their peoples' rights to a good living? Where is Washington's assistance to these countries and regions?

If Hong Kong becomes the forefront of defending Western values, who would compensate Hong Kong's current and future losses? Washington wants Hongkongers to worship Western democratic fantasy so that Americans can benefit from it. Some US House members treat Hong Kong maliciously.

Hong Kong is not a country. Hong Kong has no major political disputes, and life in Hong Kong is freer than in Western societies. Western anti-China forces and Hong Kong's extreme opposition have politicized the city. This is the new shackles that Hong Kong must shake off.

### Second Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

### NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN TENDER NO. :01-31-9480005

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
04	PARTS FOR" COOPER-BESSEMER" GAS TURBINE TYPE COBERRA-182 SERIAL NOS . SN-401.2.3.4.5 AND 6 RT RP FITTED TO COMPRESSOR TYPE RB7-6B.SERIAL NOS 1045-48-51-53 RC	60 Nos

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

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 3,299 EURO or 417, 556,806 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

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

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

**FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT**  
**Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex**  
**Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran**  
**Tel. No.: 061 341 23455 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437**  
Public Relations [www.shana.ir](http://www.shana.ir) [www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir)  
تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹/۶/۲۷ نوبت دوم ۹/۶/۳۰



# Pars Diplomatic Real Estate

## Apartment

Apt in Fereshteh  
280 sq.m, 3 master bedrooms  
with Jacuzzi, furn, spj gathering  
room, parking  
**\$4000**

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Shahrak Qarb  
18th floor, 214 sq.m, 3 Bdrs  
furn, elevator, renovated  
storage, parking, **\$3200**  
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Farmanieh  
brand new, 4th floor, 108 sq.m  
2 Bdrs. furn, equipped kitchen  
elevator, parking  
**\$2000**

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Zafaranih  
2nd floor, 155 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.  
furn, equipped kitchen, 3 bath  
rooms, yard, 2 parking spots  
**Price: negotiable**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Mahmoodieh  
ground floor, 230 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.  
unfurn, 350 sq.m, good light  
equipped kitchen, spj, gym  
gathering room parking  
**Price: negotiable**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Luxury Apt in Zafaranih  
12th floor, 270 sq.m, 3 Bdrs.  
furn, equipped kitchen, spj  
coffee shop, roof garden  
parking, **\$4000**

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

## Villa

Triplex Villa in Jordan  
1380 sq.m land, 2000 sq.m built  
up, furn, outdoor swimming pool,  
yard, parking  
4-side entrances

**Price: Negotiable**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Villa in Mahmoodieh  
Triplex villa, 620 sq.m land  
800 sq.m built up, 10 Bdrs.  
unfurn, balcony, 8 bath rooms  
2-side entrances, lots of parking  
**\$7000**

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

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

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Super Luxury Villa  
in Shahrak Qarb  
brand new, 800 sq.m land  
700 sq.m built up, 4master  
bedrooms, super luxury furn  
spj, massage room, beautiful roof  
garden, play ground for kids, city  
view, parking  
**Price negotiable**

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Villa in Zafaranih  
brand new, 105 sq.m, 2 Bdrs. with  
one75 sq.m suit, unfurn  
parking  
**totally \$1400**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156



Holder of

ISO 9001:2008

ISO 10004:2012

ISO 10002:2014

From Oxford Cert Universal

**Best Consultation  
Best Services, Best Result**

Intl. Department Manager "Tina 09128103205"

Tel: 22662452-8, Fax: 22667173

**Hot Line: 28141**  
info@parsdiplomatic.com

**www.parsdiplomatic.com**

## Building & Office

Super luxury Office  
in Mirdamad  
administrative office license  
4 offices, each office 590 sq.m  
elevator, parking

**Price: negotiable**

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Office in Zafaranih  
brand new, 4th floor, 200 sq.m  
2 Bdrs., furn, 2 parking spots  
**Price: negotiable**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole building in Jordan  
administrative office license  
5 floors, units between 500 sq.m &  
700 sq.m, lobby, lots of parking

**Price: negotiable**

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole Building in Zafar  
3 floors, each apt 200 sq.m  
elevator, parking, storage  
**\$3800 totally**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Whole building in  
Vanak - Molla Sadra  
administrative office license  
10 floors, 10 units, each unit 400  
sq.m, elevator, lots of parking

**\$15 per sq.m**

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Whole building in  
Shahrak Qarb  
apts, 220 sq.m built up 4  
from 75 sq.m to 150 sq.m  
6 parking spots, **\$4000**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

## Ideal Offers

Apt in Mirdamad  
1st floor, 110 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.  
furn, parking, **\$800**  
Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Motahari St.  
4th floor, 99 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.  
furn, renovated, parking  
**\$1000**

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Qeytarieh  
105 sq.m, 2 Bdrs., furn equipped  
kitchen, elevator parking, near  
Qeytarieh park  
**\$1000**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Apt in Vanak  
3rd floor, 90 sq.m, 1 Bdr.  
furn, renovated, parking  
**\$1100**

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Park Way  
9th floor, 135 sq.m, 2 Bdrs.  
furn, spj, elevator, parking  
**Price: negotiable**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

Office in Sheykh Bahayi  
brand new, 5th floor, 98 sq.m  
3 Bdrs., 2 parking spots  
**\$850**

Ms.Sara: 09128103207

Apt in Mahmoodieh  
1st floor, 90 sq.m, 1 Bdr.  
furn, spj, beautiful yard  
**\$1000**

Mr.Shayan: 09128440156

مالکین محترم

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

بهترین مشاوره، برترین سرویس، بالاترین رضایت

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

مالکین محترم

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

**SHANON**  
Shanon\_tari@yahoo.com  
+989121907875  
Tel : 88510081

<b>Kamranieh (\$2500)</b> 250sq.m, 3bdrs, S/p S, J, pkg, & F.F	<b>Niavaran Apts (\$1800)</b> 2bdrs, F.F (\$2200) 3bdrs, F.F	<b>Darrous Villa (\$5000)</b> 1400sq.m, 5bdrd S/p, pkg, & F.F
<b>Vanak (\$1300)</b> 120sq.m, 2bdrs Fully Furn	<b>Darrous (\$2600) 4bdrs</b> <b>Velenjak (\$2800) 4bdrs</b> with S/p, S, J, & balcony	<b>Elahieh bldg</b> 4storey, 12bdrs (\$7000)

### Intercity travel service

Car&driver, residence,...

Suitable for your budget

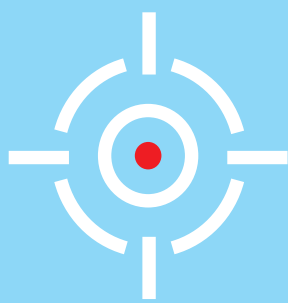
24 hour reservation

Tell & what's app

**0098 919 819 95 19**

TEHRAN TIMES

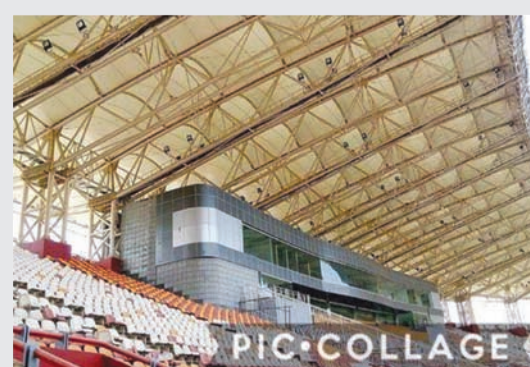
Iran's Leading  
International Daily  
Advertising Dept



Tel:

**021 - 430 51 450**

## Modern Stadium of Martyrs of Khuzestan Football Club (KSC)



**Don't Waste Your Time**

Visit our website to choose your desired rental Properties

**www.DeltaHOME.ir**

The Most Specialized Website for Foreigners

**HOME**  
Real Estate

Member of DELTA Real Estate Group  
(021) 88888865

**maharaja**  
Indian Restaurant

**FIRST INDIAN RESTAURANT  
IN IRAN**

**PRIVATE PARKING LOT**

Jahan Hotel (Exelsior) - Rahimzade Alley - Taleqani  
Crossroads - Valiasr St. Tel: **66476855**



# Distant asteroid calamity shaped life on Earth 466 million years ago

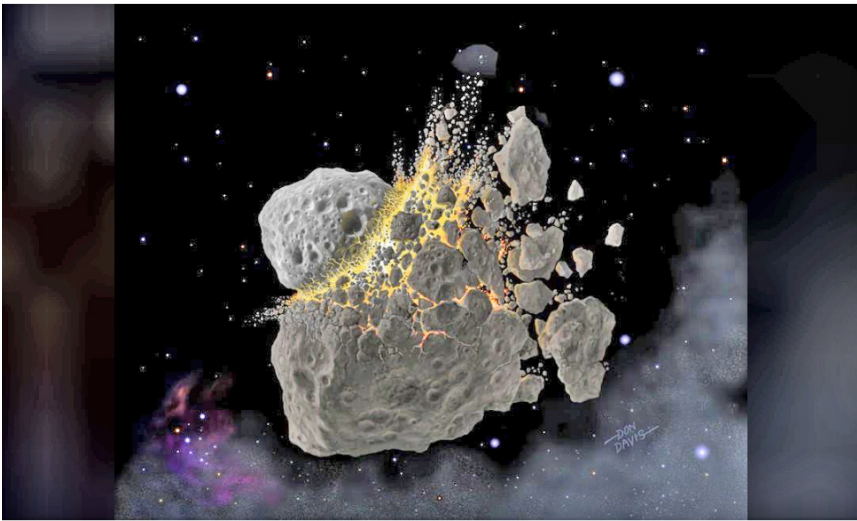
The cataclysmic asteroid impact off Mexico's coast that doomed the dinosaurs 66 million years ago was not the only time an astronomical event shaped the history of life on Earth.

Scientists on Wednesday said dust spawned by a gigantic collision in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter 400 million years earlier triggered an ice age on Earth that ushered in a significant increase in marine biodiversity.

The event, occurring when life was concentrated in the seas and far before vertebrates first walked on land, set in motion evolutionary changes in invertebrates fundamental to marine ecosystems as they adapted to global cooling, they said.

The inner solar system was filled with enormous amounts of dust after an asteroid more than 90 miles (150 km) in diameter was struck by a smaller object perhaps 12 miles (20 km) wide, the researchers said. It was the solar system's largest-known breakup event in the past 2 billion years.

Solar radiation reaching Earth's surface was reduced for at least 2 million years by the dust in space and in the planet's atmosphere,



said study co-author Philipp Heck, an associate curator at the Field Museum in Chicago.

Another cooling mechanism was that the iron-rich meteoritic dust fertilized large parts of the ocean surface leading to increased plankton productivity and

drawdown of atmospheric carbon dioxide, added Birger Schmitz, a geology professor at Lund University in Sweden and lead author of the research published in the journal Science Advances.

"In the last few decades, researchers have

begun to understand that evolution of life on Earth is dependent on astronomical events also," Schmitz said.

After noting the dinosaur-demise event caused by an asteroid perhaps 6 miles (10 km) wide, Schmitz added, "For the first time, scientists can now present another example of how an extraterrestrial event formed life on Earth."

The researchers found traces of dust in sedimentary rocks formed at the time containing special helium isotopes and rare minerals that revealed its extraterrestrial origin.

Invertebrate groups that experienced diversification included horseshoe crab-like trilobites, clams, clam-like brachiopods and a group called gastropods that included snails and slugs.

The cooling event unfolded gradually, enabling marine life during the Ordovician Period to adapt, unlike the sudden impact that erased the dinosaurs. Earth's climate changed from being tropical to semitropical worldwide to becoming divided into climate zones as it is today with frozen poles and tropical conditions at the equator.

(Source: Reuters)

## Common childhood illness may have killed off Neanderthals



The mystery of why Neanderthals died out may have been solved, and rather than some sort of cataclysmic event, scientists now say it could have been something as simple as a common childhood illness.

A new study has suggested that ear infections were responsible for their extinction.

Today they can be simply treated with modern medicines like antibiotics, but the Neanderthals contracted many complications from ear infections, including respiratory infections, hearing loss and pneumonia.

The study published in The Anatomical Record journal, found that the ears of Neanderthals were comparable to those of human children and did not change with age, as children's do.

"It may sound far-fetched, but when we, for the first time, reconstructed the Eustachian tubes of Neanderthals, we discovered that they are remarkably similar to those of human infants," said one of the authors Professor Samuel Marquez of the Downstate Health Sciences University in New York.

"Middle ear infections are nearly ubiquitous among infants because the

flat angle of an infant's Eustachian tube is prone to retain the otitis media bacteria that cause these infections -- the same flat angle we found in Neanderthals."

Generally considered to have been a distinct human species (Homo neanderthalensis), Neanderthals once inhabited a region stretching from Siberia in the east to Iberia in the west, and from Britain in the north to Iraq in the south.

They first appear around 450,000 years ago and then die out as humans started to settle in Eurasia 60,000 years ago.

While the shape of a human child's ear begins to change around the age of five, meaning that they are less likely to contract ear infections, this did not happen with Neanderthals, the study found.

"It's not just the threat of dying of an infection," Dr. Marquez said. "If you are constantly ill, you would not be as fit and effective in competing with your Homo sapien cousins for food and other resources."

He added: "In a world of survival of the fittest, it is no wonder that modern man, not Neanderthal, prevailed."

(Source: The Independent)

## NASA's new launch pad can shoot out 1,000,000 gallons of water a minute



Whenever there's a high-profile NASA mission on the horizon you can expect to hear about the various tests leading up to an eventual launch. Firing huge rocket engines is cool, and testing new instruments on a rover is pretty exciting, too, but spewing a bunch of water across a launch pad? Well, it's a little less glamorous, but still needs to be done.

The mobile launch pad for the upcoming Artemis I mission, called Pad 39B, will be the last piece of solid ground that astronauts will stand on before embarking on a mission to the lunar surface. As such, NASA has to ensure that all of its systems are in perfect working order well in advance of the big day, and a recent water flow test shows that things are shaping up nicely.

The test, which lasted just 30 seconds, resulted in some 450,000 gallons of water being dumped onto the parts of the launch pad that will experience the most extreme stresses, including the blast deck and flame deflector. The water flow system has a peak flow rate of over

1 million gallons per minute, aiding in dampening noise and vibrations created by the SLS rocket which will eventually be perched above.

"SLS will create about 176 decibels at liftoff, which is significantly louder than a jetliner," Nick Moss, Deputy Project Manager for the launchpad, explained in a statement. "The sheets of water created by the flow will curb that sound by knocking it down a few decibels."

The SLS -- or Space Launch System -- will be incredibly powerful, but it's not exactly ready for show time yet. NASA has been forced to push back the ready date multiple times, and those repeated delays have threatened the timeline of the Artemis mission significantly.

NASA is still planning on having a crewed mission to the Moon ready to go by 2024. Tests like this one show that some aspects of that forecast are reasonable, but NASA meeting the launch deadline mandated by the current administration is anything but certain.

(Source: msn)

## Carp have been farmed in China for 8,000 years, researchers say

By Brooks Hays

Aquaculture has deep historical roots in China. New analysis of ancient fish bones suggest humans in China were managing carp aquaculture as long as 8,000 years ago.

Scientists published their findings this week in the journal Ecology and Evolution.

There is historical evidence of carp farming. The Shijing, the oldest existing collection of Chinese poetry, describes carp being raised in a pond as early as 1140 BC. Other East Asian historical records mention carp being reared in artificial ponds and paddy fields during the first millennium BC.

When scientists discovered fish bones at an Early Neolithic Jiahu site in Henan Province, China, they suspected the carcasses evidenced an aquaculture operation. The archeological site has previously revealed evidence of rice and pig domestication, as well the early development of fermented beverages and bone flutes.

For the latest research, scientists analyzed the body-length distributions among the hundreds of fish fossils recovered at the Early Neolithic Jiahu site. Scientists found different fish fossil collections corresponding to different Neolithic periods. The researchers compared the body-length distributions from each period to one another, as well as to the body-length distributions among modern carp raised in Matsukawa Village, Japan.



The distributions of the later two Neolithic periods showed a single unimodal pattern of body-length distribution peaking close to carp maturity. In other words, the bones suggest the fish were farmed and then harvested when the fish were fully grown.

The fish bones from the earliest Neolithic period, dating from 6200 to 5700 BC, revealed a different pattern, one with two peaks -- a bimodal distribution. The first peak corresponded with sexual maturity and the second correlated with physical maturity.

"In such fisheries, a large number of cyprinids were caught during the spawning season and processed as preserved food," researchers wrote in the journal Nature. "At the same time, some carp were kept alive and released into confined, human

the asteroid generates, which reveals its internal structure. Hayabusa 2 arrived at Ryugu on 27 June 2018. It has already released three small rovers to the surface and performed two touchdowns to collect surface material.

Following the deployment of its final onboard lander, which is scheduled for

October, the spacecraft will leave the asteroid and begin its return to Earth. Due to arrive in December 2020, Hayabusa 2 will release a capsule containing the asteroid samples it has collected. This capsule will re-enter Earth's atmosphere and use parachutes to land in Australia.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Alien enthusiasts descend on Nevada desert near secretive U.S. base

Scores of UFO enthusiasts converged on rural Nevada on Thursday for a pilgrimage of sorts to the U.S. installation known as Area 51, long rumored to house government secrets about alien life, as law enforcement officials beefed up security around the military base.

Visitors descended early in the day on the tiny desert town of Rachel, a short distance from the military site, in response to a recent, viral social-media invitation to "storm" Area 51 on Friday, raising concerns by local authorities of unruly crowds overwhelming the community.



Situated about 150 miles (240 km) north of Las Vegas, the remote hamlet of just 50 year-round residents lacks a grocery store or even a gasoline station.

Thursday's visitors established a small encampment outside Rachel's only business - the extraterrestrial-themed Little A'Le'Inn motel and restaurant - parking themselves in cars, tents and RVs. Some tourists hung inflatable aliens from their campers.

One couple, Nicholas Bohlen and Cayla McVey, both sporting UFO tattoos, traveled to Rachel from the Los Angeles suburb of Fullerton with enough food to last for a week of car-camping.

"It's evolved into a peaceful gathering, a sharing of life stories," McVey told Reuters, sizing up the crowd. "I think you are going to get a group of people that are prepared, respectful and they know what they're getting themselves into."

Music began Thursday night and will continue for two more days. It remained unclear if there would be a mass trek to the grounds of Area 51 on Friday.

The military site was shrouded in secrecy for decades, stoking conspiracy theories that it housed the remnants of a flying saucer and the bodies of its alien crew from the crash of an unidentified flying object in Roswell, New Mexico, in 1947. The U.S. government did not confirm the base existed until 2013, when it released CIA archives saying the site was used to test top-secret spy planes.

Rachel and its surroundings have nevertheless celebrated their place in UFO lore as a tourist draw. A 98-mile (158-km) road running through the area is dubbed the Extraterrestrial Highway, a purported hotbed of UFO sightings.

In June, California college student Matty Roberts posted a facetious Facebook invitation exhorting the public at large to run into Area 51 on foot to "see them aliens."

When more than 1 million people expressed interest, the U.S. Air Force admonished curiosity seekers not to breach the gates at the military base, which it said is still used to test combat aircraft and train personnel.

Roberts then teamed up with Connie West, co-owner of the Little A'Le'Inn, to plan a music festival in Rachel dubbed "Alienstock."

In early September, however, Roberts disassociated himself from the Rachel event, saying it was poorly organized and he feared it could devolve into a public safety crisis. Instead, he helped stage an alternative Alienstock set to take place Thursday night in Las Vegas.

West said the event in Rachel would go on as planned.

About 40 miles (64 km) to the east, the small town of Hiko planned an event called "Storm Area 51 Basecamp" at a gift shop dubbed the Alien Research Center. Organizers promised musicians, artists and "prominent ufologists," and by Thursday had sold 3,200 tickets, according to Linda Looney, the shop's manager.

"This whole thing has been a shock to this little community," she said, adding that organizers had hired 15 security guards and a private ambulance and ordered 80 portable toilets. "It's going to be really cool. I'm excited."

The influx of alien hunters prompted Lincoln County, which encompasses both Rachel and Hiko, to draft an emergency declaration that could be invoked to call in help from the state.

The sheriff's office said visitors should expect "a large presence of law enforcement." Authorities urged everyone to bring ample supplies of food, water and fuel.

(Source: Reuters)

## Study: North American bird population has declined by 2.9 billion since 1970

By Daniel Uri

North America's bird population has declined by nearly 3 billion in the last five decades, according to a study published Thursday.

The study, published in the journal Science showed a loss of 2.9 billion birds in the United States and Canada since 1970 a total decline of about 29 percent in the population over that time.

"Species extinctions have defined the global biodiversity crisis, but extinction begins with loss in abundance of individuals that can result in compositional and functional changes of ecosystems," the study states.

Researchers analyzed range-wide population estimates of 529 species of birds and included biomass estimates from weather radar to track birds during their biannual migrations in order to calculate how populations have changed.

The decline was most severe in birds found in grasslands such as sparrows, warblers, blackbirds and finches as their populations fell 53 percent in the past half-century.

Nearly three-quarters of all grassland species are experiencing a decline in population as these areas are prone to habitat loss and exposure to toxic pesticides in part due to the presence of farmlands.

"You only need to fly across the country to see that we've drastically changed the face of the earth," said Peter Marra, senior other of the study and director of the Georgetown Environment Initiative at Georgetown University.

Use of pesticides has harmed birds by contaminating the seeds they eat, which causes them to lose weight and makes it more difficult to migrate. It has also led to a decline in the insect population, removing birds' primary source of prey.



UNWTO picks new affiliate members from Iran

**TOURISM d e s k** TEHRAN — The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has recently elected five affiliate members from Iran.

Aras Free Economic Zone, Abbasabad Lands Rehabilitation Company, Tochal Complex, Mana-Seyr-Pardis Iranian travel agency, along with the Qeshm Free Zone Organization, have joined the UN World Tourism Organization, ISNA reported on Wednesday.



Travelers visit natural attractions on Qeshm Island, southern Iran.

The decisions were officially made at the 23rd General Assembly of the United Nations World Tourism Organization, which was held in St. Petersburg, Russia, from September 9 to 13.

Hamidreza Momeni, the CEO of the Qeshm Free Zone Organization, said on Wednesday that the membership of the five affiliate members was first proposed at the 110th session of the Executive Council of the UN World Tourism Organization, which was held in Baku in June.

Qeshm Island embraces a wide range of ecotourism attractions such as the Hara marine forests and about 60 villages dotted mostly across its rocky coastlines. The island has an abundance of wildlife, including birds, reptiles, dolphins and turtles as well.

St. Petersburg was named as a venue for the world's largest tourism event following a vote at the 22nd UNWTO session in 2017. The next General Assembly will be hosted in Marrakech in 2021.

Delta flight descends nearly 30,000 feet in minutes following ‘cabin pressurization irregularity’

A Delta Air Lines flight headed for Fort Lauderdale, Fla., was diverted on Wednesday due to a “cabin pressurization irregularity” that reportedly forced pilots to make a quick, controlled descent, Delta said.

Flight 2353, which originated in Atlanta, was forced to make an emergency landing in Tampa at around 5 p.m., approximately an hour and a half after takeoff, flight records show.

The plane also descended from 39,000 feet to 10,000 feet in the span of 7 minutes, per Flight Aware.

In photos and video taken from inside the cabin, oxygen masks — which were manually deployed by the crew — could be seen hanging from the cabin’s ceiling.

A passenger aboard the plane described the scene as both scary and chaotic.

“Air masks, the oxygen masks dropped from the top of the plane. Chaos sort of ensued amongst the passengers,” Harris DeWoskin, told WSB-TV.

“There was a scary 60 to 90 seconds where we really didn’t know what was going on. At 15,000 feet in the air, it’s a scary moment for sure,” he added.

Delta has since apologized for the incident in a statement shared with Fox News.

“We apologize to our customers on flight 2353 from Atlanta to Fort Lauderdale, which diverted to Tampa out of an abundance of caution and landed without incident following a cabin pressurization irregularity en route,” the airline stated.

(Source: MSN)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Stone Town of Zanzibar

The Stone Town of Zanzibar is a fine example of the Swahili coastal trading towns of East Africa. Zanzibar itself is a semi-autonomous region in Tanzania. This type of town developed on the coast of East Africa, further expanded under Arab, Indian, and European influences, but retained its indigenous elements, to form an urban cultural unit unique to this region.



A UNESCO World Heritage, the Stone Town of Zanzibar retains its urban fabric and townscape virtually intact and contains many fine buildings that reflect its particular culture, which has brought together and homogenized disparate elements of the cultures of Africa, the Arab region, India, and Europe over more than a millennium.

The buildings of the Stone Town, executed principally in coralline ragstone and mangrove timber, set in a thick lime mortar and then plastered and lime-washed, reflect a complex fusion of Swahili, Indian, Arab and European influences in building traditions and town planning.

The major buildings date from the 18th and 19th centuries and include monuments such as the Old Fort; the Old Dispensary; St. Joseph’s Roman Catholic Cathedral; Christ Church Anglican Cathedral; the Malindi Bannara Mosque.

In particular the Stone town’s is also marked by being the site where slave-trading was finally terminated.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran, Austria seek to expand tourism ties

**TOURISM d e s k** TEHRAN — Iranian and Austrian officials on Wednesday discussed ways to expand tourism ties through promoting sustainable ecotourism and holding a joint symposium in this regard.

“Iran and Austria can expand cooperation on exchanging tourists and professors, as the sector cannot be put under [U.S.-led] sanctions,” said Alexander Rieger, deputy head of mission of the Austrian Embassy in Tehran, addressing a news conference on International Sustainable Eco-tourism Symposium, Mehr reported.

The symposium is scheduled to be held in Tehran on September 25 and 26.

Talking on similarities that Iran and Austria have in tourism, Rieger said that the two nations can have a good cooperation in this sector without being worried about the U.S. sanctions.

He informed that a group of officials from Austria and five EU countries have visited some of Iran’s ecotourism sites to become familiar with the Iranian culture in various parts of the country, the report said.

Rieger presides over the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) and he is also head of the Austrian Cultural Forum in Tehran.

On July 31, 2018, and on the occasion of the



Damavand Anniversary Project 2018, some 100 Austrian and Iranian mountaineers together with a group of European ambassadors jointly ascended the Mount Damavand. The two-day event marked the 175th anniversary

of the first Austrian ascent of Mount Damavand by the botanist and scholar Theodor Kotschy in 1843, Mehr added.

The event sent a strong signal that Europe and Iran are making good on their promises

New round of restoration starts on 14th-century educational complex

**HERITAGE d e s k** TEHRAN — The third round of restoration work has recently commenced on Rab’-e Rashidi, a 14th-century educational complex in East Azarbaijan province, northwest Iran.

The project is carried out by a panel of international cultural heritage experts, archaeologists and restorers from Iran, the German Archaeological Institute, the Otto-Friedrich University in Bamberg, and the Louvre Museum in Paris, provincial tourism chief Morteza Abdar said, IRNA reported

Currently, experts are working on six archaeological trenches to probe architectural remains, which date from 8th to 10th centuries AH, the official added.

The Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Center in collaboration with Tabriz Islamic Art University completed the first phase of the international project to lay

the groundwork for a UNESCO recognition.

Archaeological speculations, geophysical surveys, 3D laser scans, and endoscopy of the ancient structure were carried out during the first phase.

Situated in the northwestern city of Tabriz, Rab’-e Rashidi includes several archaeological layers that date from Ilkhanid, Safavid and Qajar eras. It is said that students from Iran, China, Egypt, and Syria studied there under the supervision of physicians, intellectuals, scientists and Islamic scholars.

The ancient complex embraces a paper factory, a library, a hospital (Dar-al-Shafa), a Quranic center (Dar-al-Quran), residential facilities for teachers, students’ quarters and a caravanserai amongst other facilities.

Iran keeps an eye on possible inscription of the site on the UNESCO World Heritage list by 2025.

Iran maintains visa waiver program for Omani nationals

**TOURISM d e s k** TEHRAN — The cabinet of ministers on Wednesday approved to maintain a visa waiver program for Omani nationals which had been ratified last September for a one-year period.

“The government took the decision in light of the friendly atmosphere in relations between the two nations and also in line with the reciprocal action of Oman for facilitating the entry of Iranian nationals,” IRIB reported.

Last September, and in a unilateral measure, the Islamic Republic approved that Omani citizens can



visit the country without a visa, considering the good relations between the two countries.

Government spokesman Ali Rabiei announced earlier in June that Iran has decided not to stamp the passports of foreign tourists to help them skip the U.S. travel ban.

“President Hassan Rouhani assigned the airport police not to stamp passports of foreign tourists. Taking into consideration the fact that America is practicing the economic terrorism plans, and people who travel to Iran may feel a bit afraid that they may be pressured by America,” Rabiei told reporters.

Booking.com ‘misleading’ travelers despite legal warning, say campaigners

Booking.com has defended itself against accusations that it’s continuing to use pressure selling tactics, despite a crackdown by UK regulators.

In February, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) announced that six hotel booking sites -- Expedia, Booking.com, ebookers, Hotels.com, Agoda and Trivago -- had been the subject of enforcement action due to “serious concerns” around “misleading” selling tactics.

Pressure selling, misleading discount claims, and pushing hotels which pay commission further up the rankings could confuse guests and be in breach of consumer protection law, the CMA said.

As a result, all six sites agreed to take action to be clearer about discounts, the number of other guests considering the property, and the number of rooms left. The final price of a room must be included in the headline price.

The sites were given until September 1 to comply.

But spot checks carried out after the deadline by UK consumer group Which? showed that while the other sites have complied, Booking.com was still in breach of the rules.

Although it has made some changes to its site -- including making it more explicit where some hotels have moved up the rankings after paying commission -- it has “not gone far enough,” the group said.

Five out of 10 of its “only one room left on our site” claims were incorrect, the investigation found.

Which? looked at five UK destinations and five European destinations until it found examples of “one room left” claims. They then clicked through to see if the claims were legitimate.

■ Failure to comply

In one example, the Booking.com listing for The Banjo B&B in Liverpool warned

“one room left” on a “budget double room.” But when researchers clicked through, they found four identical budget doubles on sale at the same price of £49.

The site was showing the same issue when CNN checked on Thursday.

For a dummy booking on October 9, The Banjo showed “only 1 room left on our site!” But when CNN clicked through to book, it showed four identical budget double rooms, two at the same price of £26, and two at £32. Other hotel listings had similar results.

The spot checks showed that the other sites flagged by the CMA had changed their listings. Agoda, for example, has changed its wording to read, “We have only one [room] left at this price.”

Last week, the CMA announced that a further 25 accommodation booking sites, including Airbnb, Google, and major hotel chains, had agreed to comply with its guidance. Six hotel chains -- Accor, IHG, Hilton,

Radisson and Wyndham -- have requested more time to make the technical changes required to ensure that UK-based customers will always be shown the full cost of a room upfront.

The CMA said in February that it would take action “if we find evidence that firms are breaking consumer law.”

Which? Travel’s Naomi Leach said Booking.com needed to take immediate action.

“We found clear evidence that Booking.com has not yet sufficiently cleaned up its act and is flouting the rules on pressure-selling, which could lead to millions of consumers being rushed into making a booking,” she said.

“It must now provide cast iron guarantees that it won’t continue to mislead holiday-makers with these unscrupulous practices, otherwise the regulator will have to step in with strong action to bring it into line.”

(Source: CNN)

Chinese woman pleads guilty in ‘birth tourism’ case

A Chinese woman has pleaded guilty in the U.S. to federal charges of running a “birth tourism” scheme for Chinese nationals who paid so their children would be born American citizens.

Dongyuan Li admitted her company assisted wealthy Chinese nationals in getting to the U.S. to give birth.

Ms Li would give clients training on how to bypass U.S. immigration control and hide their pregnancies.

She amassed more than \$3m (£2.4m) in wire transfers.

Ms Li, who is due to be sentenced in December, could face up to 15 years in jail.

■ What was the scheme?

Ms Li admitted that between 2013 and 2015, her company You Win USA Vacation Services would charge Chinese nationals - including government officials - between \$40,000 and \$80,000 for coaching in how to have a baby in the U.S.

With that came the benefits of American citizenship.

On its website, the company boasted more than 500 customers. It said that being American was the “most attractive nationality” and it would ensure “priority for

jobs in U.S. government”.

Ms Li told clients to initially fly from China to Hawaii due to the belief it would be easier to get past U.S. customs. From there they could fly to Los Angeles where they would be housed in apartments.

She also admitted that the clients were coached on how to get through the US consulate interview in China, including by falsely stating that they were going to stay in the U.S. for two weeks.

In reality, they planned to stay for up to three months to give birth.

■ What are the charges?

Ms Li pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit immigration fraud and one count of visa fraud.

As part of her plea deal with federal authorities, Ms Li gave up assets including \$850,000, her house worth more than \$500,000 and several Mercedes Benz cars.

■ Why was it illegal?

While it is not illegal to visit the U.S. and give birth, making false visa claims is.



Authorities said Ms Li was promoting the benefits of having babies in the U.S., which would include helping to get family members immigration rights.

U.S. President Donald Trump has talked of revoking birthright citizenship.

(Source: BBC)



# Leaks, fake news, and hidden agendas

By Jon Rappoport

Thousands of articles have been written about the so-called Russian hack of the US election. The term “Russian hack” suggests the Russkies actually found a way to subvert the results of voting machines.

But of course, no convincing evidence has been presented to support such a charge. In fact, when you drill down a few inches below the surface, you find this charge instead: Russia hacked into email accounts and scooped up Hillary, DNC, and Podesta emails, and passed them to WikiLeaks, who then published them.

But no chain of evidence supporting that claim has been presented to the public, either. Even assuming the assertion is true, an important factor is intentionally being ignored: the content of those leaked emails.

In other words, if making all this content publicly available cost Hillary the election, and if no one is seriously questioning the authenticity of the emails, then the truth undermined Hillary. However, no major media outlet is reporting the story from that angle.

After all, how would this headline look? True content of leaked emails sinks Hillary Clinton. Or this? Hillary couldn’t refute content of leaked emails and so she lost the election.

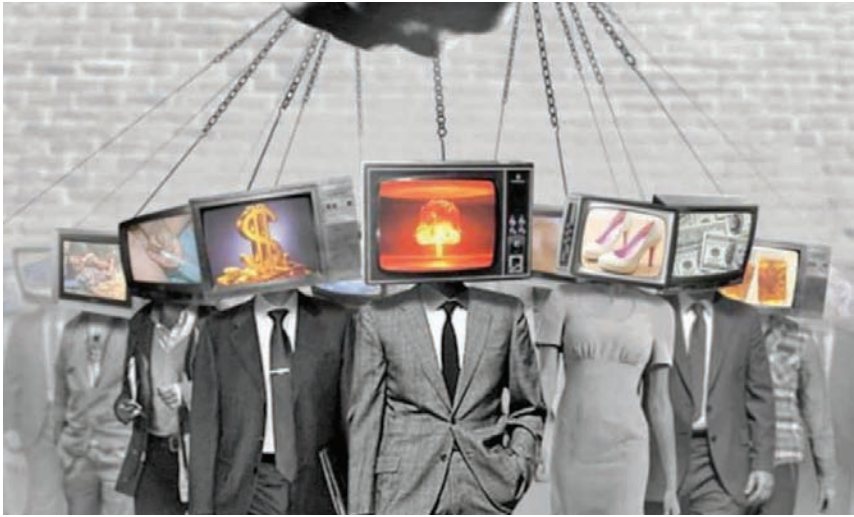
Those headlines would attract millions of clicks. Why weren’t they printed? Big news outlets didn’t want readers to think about the story from that perspective.

Why not? Why was the heavy emphasis put on the hacking of the emails? To obscure the importance of their content: for example, DNC collusion to obstruct and undermine the campaign of Bernie Sanders.

“Let’s make the story all about who we claim stole the emails, rather than what the emails contained.”

When a tape surfaced in which Trump spoke about women who were eager to have sex with famous men, did major media make the story all about who had the tape and who released it to the press? No.

Perhaps you remember this 2009 email-hack controversy. Wikipedia sums it up: “The Climatic Research Unit email controversy (also known as “Climategate”) began in November 2009 with the hacking of a server



at the Climatic Research Unit (CRU) at the University of East Anglia (UEA) by an external attacker, copying thousands of emails and computer files, the Climatic Research Unit documents, to various internet locations several weeks before the Copenhagen Summit on climate change.”

One of the most revealing elements in the email exchanges: an obvious attempt to sideline scientific critics of global warming. But major media quickly began to reframe the story. It was all about illegal hacking, and investigations were launched to determine the criminal. The contents of the emails were brushed off as “proprietary work product” and “misleading” because “context was missing.”

Big news media decide whether to focus on the WHO or the WHAT, in each case. “Should we give primary coverage to the leaker or what he leaked?”

But that is not a choice you are making. It’s a choice being made for you.

Government agencies and spokespeople leak news to the press all the time. In these instances, of course, the press doesn’t turn around and launch a probe aimed at exposing the WHO and discovering WHY a particular tidbit was passed along for publication. Newspapers and television news departments simply run with the stories.

“Okay, Bob. Here’s a little gem for you.

The White House and the Congress are co-operating on this one. In the next few days, a piece of legislation is going to be inserted into a current bill in the House. It’ll establish a working group to combat ‘fake news’ operations that confuse the public...”

## Bottom of Form

Does Bob, the reporter, bite the hand that feeds him? Does he write a story accusing his source of trying to knock out independent news competitors? Of course not. Bob plays along.

Sometimes, both the WHO and the WHAT are censored. Such was the case with CDC whistleblower, William Thompson, who confessed publicly, in August of 2014, that he and colleagues at the CDC committed fraud in a 2004 study of the MMR vaccine, by covering up the vaccine’s connection to autism. Thompson admitted the study was cooked. The mainstream press put a chokehold on the story. Aside from scattered references, and official denials, the story faded quickly. The leaker AND what he was leaking remained in the shadows. Independent news outlets (such as this one) kept the story percolating.

You can find examples of government actors spying on Trump—in these instances, the press decides to focus on the WHAT, the content gained from spying; and downplays the WHO, the people who green-lighted the

surveillance.

There is no logic in the mainstream approach to leaks and leakers. The WHO and WHAT are decided on the basis of serving official interests and agendas—and repressing the public interest.

The NSA, with its gargantuan reach into the lives of the population (including government officials), has enough content to keep the press busy for the next 50 years reporting NSA leaks; but the NSA decides when, and for what reasons, to hold back what it knows. Or to leak bits and pieces through cut-outs.

The leaks-game is played over and over, and the rules of the game are shifted, depending on unrevealed agendas. Who do we want to expose this time? Who do we want to come out looking like a winner? Who are our friends at the CIA supporting?

Editors are there to keep reporters in line and correct oversights. Not in so many words, an editor would let a reporter know: “You picked the wrong source this time, Bob. Your guy is telling a story we don’t want to promote. Find a different source with a better take, in line with our agenda to attack (fill in a name).”

That’s what the editor means. But he might simply say: “Bob, that source of yours...I don’t trust him anymore. I’ve been hearing odd things about him. Don’t use him for this piece.” The reporter gets the message.

This technique of casual ad hominem criticism and rumor even extends to the realm of science. In 1987, a prestigious molecular biologist, Peter Duesberg, “leaked” what many virologists privately knew: the evidence for HIV as the cause of AIDS was full of gaping holes. Duesberg published a paper in the journal, Cancer Research, exposing the con.

Overnight, a whisper-campaign against Duesberg spread through the research community—and into the press. “We always knew Duesberg was an odd duck. He likes publicity. He hates authority. He runs his mouth off. He doesn’t care about evidence. He’ll take a contrary position just to stand out.”

The game of leaks, sources, and fake news takes many shapes.

Welcome to mainstream news.

(Source: Activistpost.com)

## NYT prints govt-funded propaganda about government-funded propaganda

By Adam Johnson

An op-ed by the president of the right-wing human rights group Freedom House, published in the New York Times Monday (12/11/17)—later boosted by New York Times chief White House correspondent Peter Baker—warned of the menace of “commentators, trolls, bots, false news sites and propaganda,” and their negative effects on democracy. Missing from its analysis was any account of how the government that funds their organization—86 percent of Freedom House’s budget comes from the US government, primarily the State Department and USAID—uses social media to stir unrest and undermine governments worldwide.

What the reader was left with was a very selective, curated impression that online social media manipulation is something done exclusively by brown and black people and those dastardly Slavs. The column condemns “surreptitious techniques pioneered in Moscow and Beijing to use the internet to drown out dissent and undermine free elections,” going on to cite online skullduggery in the Philippines, Kenya, Turkey, Mexico and Iran.

Missing from the piece by Freedom House’s Michael Abramowitz is any mention—much less discussion—of numerous reports detailing online manipulation by US and allied governments and Western PR firms.



No mention of the Defense Department’s \$100 million program Operation Earnest Voice software that “creates fake online identities to spread pro-American propaganda.” No mention of the US Air Force’s 2010 solicitation of “persona management” software designed to create hundreds of sock puppets, “replete with background, history, supporting details and cyber presences that are technically, culturally and geographically consistent.” No mention of USAID (the same government agency, incidentally, that funds Freedom House) secretly creating an entire social media platform to “stir unrest” in Cuba. No mention of the US State Department’s newly-created \$160 million Global Engagement Center, targeting English-language audiences with unattributed Facebook videos combating, in part, “Russia propaganda.”

Nor was there mention of the UK’s “team of Facebook warriors,” “skilled in psychological operations and use of social media to engage in unconventional warfare in the information age.” Or reference to the half-dozen reports of Israeli troll farms promoting pro-Israel propaganda online.

Though the op-ed had a particular focus on “governing parties” using covert online tools to “inflate their popular support and essentially endorse themselves”—warning that this “devastating new threat to democracy” is used to “undermine elections, political debate and virtually every other aspect of governing”—there was no acknowledgement of the fact that the Hillary Clinton campaign spent \$1 million in the 2016 primary to promote its candidate using unattributed social media personas. Nor was there mention of a torrent of pro-Trump bots that infected the 2016 campaign on social media.

None of this merits mention, much less investigation. Instead, the piece primarily consists of little insight or larger discussion as to the scope of the problem. “The United States and other democracies” are positioned as the victims of online manipulation, never its author. Amidst platitudes about “the future of democracy” and “malevolent actors,” the West’s place as noble defenders of Real Information online is simply taken for granted, with, by implication, their ideological satellites—like Freedom House—as neutral arbiters of what is and isn’t propaganda, never practitioners of propaganda themselves.

The US Department of Defense admitted in 2011 that it runs fake social media accounts in Farsi; the vast majority of Farsi speakers live in Iran. What were these accounts doing? Did they influence any elections there? Does Freedom House ask the question, much less attempt to answer it? Of course not; Iran can only be guilty of “[manipulating] discussions... on social media,” never the victim of it.

Should the New York Times have disclosed that the author of a piece about government propaganda runs a group overwhelmingly funded by the US government? The reader could theoretically do research on their own time to find out who backs the benign-sounding “Freedom House” (who doesn’t love freedom?), but this is a fairly tall order for the average media consumer, doubly so when one considers the whole point of the piece is criticizing unattributed propaganda.

Also missing from Freedom House’s cartoon narrative of Good Western Democracies vs. Bad Governments in the Global South is the issue of sophistication. One of the reasons groups like Freedom House know about clandestine attempts by these governments and affiliated parties to influence online messaging is they’re mostly bad at it. Hacky, easily identifiable bots, sloppy knock-off websites, transparent “fake news.” The software solicited by the US Air Force in 2010, which would allow each user to control up to ten social media personas at once “without fear of being discovered by sophisticated adversaries,” would presumably be much more difficult to detect.

Social media manipulation is a major problem in urgent need of robust discussion. But outlets like the New York Times—and others, such as Buzzfeed—that focus only on attempts by Official US Enemies, and never direct any criticism inwards, aren’t concerned with having an earnest discussion of the problem. They are, instead, using the specter of online manipulation to smear those in bad standing with the US State Department while deflecting any conversation about what the most powerful country in the history of the world may be up to online.

(Source: FAIR.org)

## Facebook’s new propaganda partners

By Alan MacLeod

Media giant Facebook recently announced (Reuters, 9/19/18) it would combat “fake news” by partnering with two propaganda organizations founded and funded by the US government: the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI). The social media platform was already working closely with the NATO-sponsored Atlantic Council think tank (FAIR.org, 5/21/18).

In a previous FAIR article (8/22/18), I noted that the “fake news” issue was being used as a pretext to attack the left and progressive news sites. Changes to Facebook’s algorithm have reduced traffic significantly for progressive outlets like Common Dreams (5/3/18), while the pages of Venezuelan government—backed TeleSur English and the independent Venezuelanalysis were shut down without warning, and only reinstated after a public outcry.

The Washington, DC—based NDI and IRI are staffed with senior Democratic and Republican politicians; the NDI is chaired by former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, while the late Sen. John McCain was the longtime IRI chair. Both groups were created in 1983 as arms of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a Cold War enterprise backed by then-CIA director William Casey (Jacobin, 3/7/18). That these two US government creations, along with a NATO offshoot like the Atlantic Council, are used by Facebook to distinguish real from fake news is effectively state censorship.

Facebook’s collaboration with the NED organizations is particularly troubling, as both have aggressively pursued regime change against leftist governments overseas. The NDI undermined the Sandinista government of Nicaragua in the 1980s, and continues to do so to this day, while the IRI claimed a key role in the 2002 coup against leftist President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, announcing that it had

served as a bridge between the nation’s political parties and all civil society groups to help Venezuelans forge a new democratic future.... We stand ready to continue our partnership with the courageous Venezuelan people.

The Reuters report (9/19/18) mentioned that Facebook

### Facebook expands fake election news fight, but falsehoods still rampant

Joseph Menn

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - Facebook Inc on Wednesday said it would team with two U.S. non-profits to slow the global spread of misinformation that could influence elections, acknowledging that fake news sites were still read by millions.



Reuters (9/19/18) described two branches of the National Endowment for Democracy, set up by the Reagan administration during the Cold War to promote US foreign policy objectives, as “two US nonprofits.”

was anxious to better curate what Brazilians saw on their feeds in the run-up to their presidential elections, which pits far-right Jair Bolsonaro against leftist Fernando Haddad. The US government has a long history of undermining democracy in Brazil, from supporting a coup in 1964 against the progressive Goulart administration to continually spying on leftist President Dilma Rousseff (BBC, 7/4/15) in the run-up to the parliamentary coup against her in 2016 (CounterSpin, 6/2/17).

Soon after it partnered with the Atlantic Council, Facebook moved to delete accounts and pages connected with Iranian broadcasting channels (CNBC, 8/23/18), while The Intercept (12/30/17) reported that in 2017 the social media platform met with Israeli government officials to discuss which

Palestinian voices it should censor. Ninety-five percent of Israeli government requests for deletion were granted. Thus the US government and its allies are effectively using the platform to silence dissenting opinion, both at home and on the world stage, controlling what Facebook’s 2 billion users see and do not see.

Progressives should be deeply skeptical that these moves have anything to do with their stated objective of promoting democracy. Bloomberg Businessweek (9/29/17) reported that the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party went to Facebook headquarters for discussions with US companies about how it could use the platform for recruitment and micro-targeting in the 2017 elections. AfD tripled its previous vote share, becoming the third-largest party in Germany, the far right’s best showing since World War II.

Public trust in government is at 18 percent—an all-time low (Pew, 12/14/17). There is similar mistrust of Facebook, with only 20 percent of Americans agreeing social media sites do a good job separating fact from fiction. And yet, worldwide, Facebook is a crucial news source. Fifty-two percent of Brazilians, 61 percent of Mexicans, and 51 percent of Italians and Turks use the platform for news; 39 percent of the US gets their news from the site.

This means that, despite the fact that even its own public mistrusts it, the US government has effectively become the arbiter of what the world sees and hears, with the ability to marginalize or simply delete news from organizations or countries that do not share its opinions. This power could be used at sensitive times, like elections. This is not an idle threat. The US created an entire fake social network for Cubans that aimed to stir unrest and overthrow the Cuban government, according to the Guardian (4/3/14).

That a single corporation has such a monopoly over the flow of worldwide news is already problematic, but the increasing meshing of corporate and US government control over the means of communication is particularly worrying. All those who believe in free and open exchange of information should oppose Facebook becoming a tool of US foreign policy.

(Source: FAIR.org)

## Pompeo pursues an essentially ideological foreign policy: Adib-Moghaddam

➡ ■ It was speculated that Trump would be on a diplomatic course with Iran after dismissal of Bolton. 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: Diplomacy that is effective requires strategic acumen that is steeped in a sophisticated political culture that the current administration in the United States simply lacks. The situation is as bad as it has been for the people of this region for decades now. This is the only area in the world where there continues to be endemic civil wars, structural

insecurities etc. This is partially because of external interferences, but primarily because of the lack of democratic accountability of the regional states. The current situation will pass. There will be no war, more talk about a potential encounter between Iran and the United States, but in the end all of this won’t resolve the real problem of this region, that is authoritarianism, and the lack of citizens’ rights.

■ Since Pompeo has a Bolton-like approach, can Trump change Pompeo as well?

A: History shows that President such as Trump get socialized in office, and that they

pursue less antagonistic policies when they get re-elected. This is likely to be the case with Donald Trump if he gets a second vote. The fact remains, that the personnel of this administration is unlikely to engage Iran in a meaningful way. Any dialogue, however, will de-escalate the current situation which is intolerable for all the citizens of this troubled region.

Q: Given the change of a person like Bolton, will Israeli policies in the U.S. State Department fade or shift?

A: These policies are not dependent on personnel. They are constituted by a vast



array of institutional and politico-cultural constellations as I set out in my forthcoming study.

at staying in Trump’s good graces. I doubt he will leave.

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

A: The pro-Israel sentiments are well entrenched in U.S. policy circles. Bolton’s departure will not change this.

## Pro-Israel sentiments are well entrenched in U.S. policy circles: Fitzpatrick

➡ A: The attacks on Aramco make it politically impossible for Trump to pursue a diplomatic course right now. Given that he seemed inclined to support French President Macron’s proposal for a \$15bn trade credit, the timing of the attacks is curious. I wonder if it was conducted by a group that does not want to see

Iran engaging with Trump.

■ Since Pompeo has a Bolton-like approach, can Trump change Pompeo as well?

A: Although Pompeo has similar views about Iran, he is more willing to bend his views to align with those of President Trump. Pompeo has been very successful



## Vast ice slabs in Greenland may cause sea levels to rise even more

Thick, impenetrable “ice slabs” are expanding on the inside of Greenland’s ice sheet and causing vast amounts of meltwater to spill into the ocean, scientists have discovered.

Normally the ice is porous which means it is able to reabsorb meltwater. But new research has revealed that the ice slabs are expanding as the climate warms.

To date, run off from has added less than a millimetre to global sea levels. But by 2100 this could be raised by an additional three inches in a high emission scenario, according to the study published in the journal Nature.



In 2000, Greenland’s runoff zone – the region of ice sheet where runoff contributes to sea level rise – was the size of the US state of New Mexico. Between 2001 and 2013 this region expanded at a pace of two American football pitches every minute.

As the Earth’s temperatures climb, the run off zone is expected to continue to expand.

“Even under moderate climate projections, ice slabs could double the size of the runoff zone by 2100. Under higher emissions scenarios, the runoff zone nearly triples in size,” said lead researcher Mike MacFerrin from the University of Colorado Boulder.

This could contribute to between an extra half inch to three inches of sea-level rise, the study found. This is in addition to other sources of sea-level rise in Greenland such as calving icebergs.

“As the climate continues to warm, these ice slabs will continue to grow and enhance other meltwater feedbacks,” said co-author Mahsa Moussavi, a researcher from the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC). “It’s a snowball effect: more melting creates more ice slabs, which create more melting, which, creates again more ice slabs.”

Normally meltwater percolates downwards, freezing before it runs off into the sea. However, as Arctic melting becomes more extreme these ice layers expand and solidify into mammoth slabs up to 16 metres thick which creates an impermeable layer just beneath the surface.

Meltwater cannot pass through these shelves so it flows downhill along them until it reaches the ocean.

In July 2012 snow and ice melted from 97 per cent of Greenland’s ice sheet surface, an event not been seen before during the 33-year satellite record, according to data from the NSIDC. This spring, a record-breaking 80 billion tons of Greenland ice melted.

Ice slabs were first discovered in 2012. Scientists have monitored them by driving snowmobiles across southwest Greenland with radars to measure their size.

Understanding Arctic feedbacks like this is crucial to understanding how a warming climate will change vulnerable cities.

“Interestingly, decades ago scientists hypothesised what meltwater in a warming climate could do to Greenland’s snow layers, based on measurements and theory,” said Horst Machguth, a researcher at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland, and second author on the paper. “Our results show that their hypotheses were close to what is playing out in Greenland today.”

“Humans have a choice about which way this goes,” Dr MacFerrin said.

(Source: The Independent)

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### U.S. threatens more strikes on Afghanistan

(October 8, 2001)

The United States has said it will carry out further air assaults on Afghanistan after launching an initial series of strikes on Sunday night. They are aimed at military targets, including Taliban strongholds and camps used by the Al Qaida network of Osama Bin Laden. Food aid drops are also part of the plan. This report from Paul Reynolds: President Bush said the attacks will be **sustained, comprehensive** and **relentless**. They will take place largely at night initially and will concentrate on weakening the Taliban and destroying the Bin Laden camps. The hope is that the Taliban **will in due course be overthrown, thereby** removing the protection Osama Bin Laden enjoys. The American Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, said that Bin Laden was not a specific target at this stage, and President Bush avoided mentioning him by name. But he and his **network** are **the prizes the Americans seek**. Quick results are not necessarily expected and the first **damage assessment reports** have yet to be made. One important aspect of the campaign, possibly **unique in warfare**, is the dropping of relief supplies as well - a policy of bread and bombs. The plan called for two cargo planes to drop 37,000 yellow plastic food packets to **displaced people**.

■ **words**  
**sustained:** if an action is sustained, it continues for a period of time  
**comprehensive:** including everything that is needed or relevant  
**relentless:** if your actions are relentless, it means that you are determined to do something, you refuse to give up even if what you are doing is seen as unpleasant or cruel  
**will in due course be overthrown:** will be removed from power when the time is right (if you say something will happen in due course, you mean that you cannot make it happen any quicker)  
**thereby:** as a result of this (a formal word)  
**network:** a large number of people who have a connection with each other and work towards the same objective  
**the prizes the Americans seek:** here - the people the Americans want to find (you can refer to a very important person as a prize)  
**damage assessment reports:** official documents which calculate or estimate the extent of the harmful effects of the air strikes  
**unique in warfare:** never before seen in a war  
**displaced people:** people who have been forced to leave their homes

(Source: BBC)

# International Day of Peace: “Climate Action” under spotlight

Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September. The General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.

The United Nations Member States adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 because they understood that it would not be possible to build a peaceful world if steps were not taken to achieve economic and social development for all people everywhere, and ensure that their rights were protected.

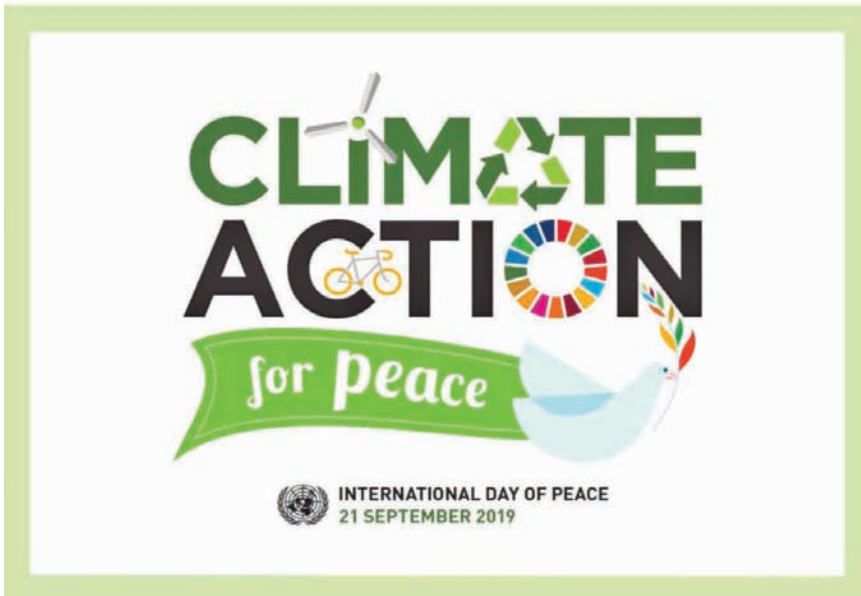
The Sustainable Goals cover a broad range of issues, including poverty, hunger, health, education, climate change, gender equality, water, sanitation, energy, environment and social justice.

Sustainable Development Goal 13 “Climate Action” is a call for immediate action by all to lower greenhouse emissions, build resilience and improve education on climate change.

Affordable, scalable solutions such as renewable energy, clean technologies are available to enable countries to leapfrog to greener, more resilient economies.

■ **2019 Theme: “Climate Action for Peace”**

The theme draws attention to the impor-



ance of combatting climate change as a way to protect and promote peace throughout the world.

Climate change causes clear threats to international peace and security. Natural disasters displace three times as many people as conflicts, forcing millions to leave

their homes and seek safety elsewhere. The salinization of water and crops is endangering food security, and the impact on public health is escalating.

The growing tensions over resources and mass movements of people are affecting every country on every continent.

## Climate crisis leaving 2 million people a week needing aid: Red Cross

Two million people a week need humanitarian aid today because of the climate emergency, the Red Cross has warned, as extreme weather takes an “intolerable” toll in human suffering.

The number of people in need of interventions will double in the next three decades – from 108 million a year today to 200 million – if governments fail to act, stretching international humanitarian relief efforts to breaking point and beyond, the global charity said.

Costs would rise too: by the end of the next decade, the current contribution of between \$3.5bn and \$12bn (£2.8bn to £9.6bn) a year from funders would need to rise to at least \$20bn a year, to keep pace with a predicted surge in the number of people afflicted by disasters such as storms, floods, droughts and other extreme weather events. The estimates were made in a report from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), entitled The Cost of Doing Nothing, presented to the UN on Thursday evening.

Francesco Rocca, president of the IFRC, said: “This confirms the impact that climate change is having, and will continue to have, on some of the world’s most vulnerable people. The cost of doing nothing is high, and it’s the most vulnerable who will have to pay if we don’t act. This is intolerable.”

He spoke of the strain that climate-related disasters were already placing on humanitarian agencies and donors.



“Globally, most humanitarian appeals are already underfunded and have been for a number of years. It doesn’t seem realistic to expect that the system will be able to accommodate such a massive increase in need,” he said. “Something needs to change.”

Yet with adequate spending, efforts to increase the resilience of vulnerable people and action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the number of people caught up in climate-related disasters could be cut drastically, the report found. Timely adaptation to the likely effects of climate change, and lower levels of global heating, would mean just 10 million people would need humanitarian aid a year because

## Scientists struggle to explain strangely shaped Antarctic ozone hole

The ozone hole that opens every year over the Antarctic is on course to be the smallest in three decades, scientists have said.

Researchers say the hole is also a particularly unusual shape this year, being heavily skewed towards South America instead of centring on the South Pole.

The rare shape – never before observed – indicates a significant distortion to the usual polar vortex, which maintains low temperatures in the stratosphere.

The hole is currently well under half the area that usually opens up by mid-September, and may have already reached its maximum size, a little smaller in area than the Antarctic continent.

Ozone, also known as trioxxygen, is a gas formed in the upper atmosphere when electrical charges in the atmosphere combine with ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun. The ozone layer absorbs the majority of the sun’s harmful UV radiation.

The hole disappears and reforms every year over the Antarctic due to the unique weather patterns that create incredibly cold circling winds above the pole.

According to the British Antarctic Survey, the hole had reached an area of 11 million square kilometres in early September, when the annual “spring warming” event kicked in much earlier than usual.

In 2018, the hole reached a maximum area of 22.9 square kilometres.

The bizarre shift in the ozone pattern is only the second time such a change in the hole’s behaviour has been observed.

In 2002, the polar vortex split in two, creating two separate ozone holes over the continent.

Anna Jones a scientist at the British Antarctic Survey told The Independent the shape of the hole this year was “very unusual”.

She said: “Very occasionally in the Antarctic you will get disturbances. And I don’t think anybody knows what’s triggered it this year. This is a pretty new phenomenon. It could be a multiple collection of factors.”

Satellite records for the polar vortex in Antarctica go back to the late 1970s, but the 2002 split vortex is the only other major change.

“Scientists haven’t quite figured it out yet... there are various things they can look at, but it’s certainly very unusual,” Dr Jones said.

Explaining how the polar vortex normally works, she said: “Over Antarctica you have a very strong westerly wind system which sets up over the winter. You get very cold temperatures over the Antarctic continent and the winds are very fast, which holds it in place.

“The winds are driven by the temperature difference between equatorial temperatures and polar temperatures. This is what you expect over the Antarctic. Sometimes – and it is very unusual – you get distortions to these winds.

“In Antarctica you have a continent surrounded by a flat ocean. You don’t have a lot of stuff at ground level, so the air can flow around without anything getting in its way.

“In the Arctic, it’s the opposite. You have an ocean surrounded by landmasses with mountains. Any air that flows around the Arctic will hit these landmasses and you’ll get waves which propagate up into the stratosphere, so you don’t get the strength of the vortex you get in the Antarctic.”

Describing the shape of the 2019 hole as a “blip”, Dr Jones said the key to reducing the size of the ozone hole in the long term was continuing to clampdown on the illegal man-made chemicals causing the destruction. She also warned people living in South America could now be at risk from dangerous UV radiation as the ozone has thinned.

“The key thing is that the gases that destroy ozone are still around, still in the atmosphere,” she said.

“They destroy ozone – one of the reasons you get the

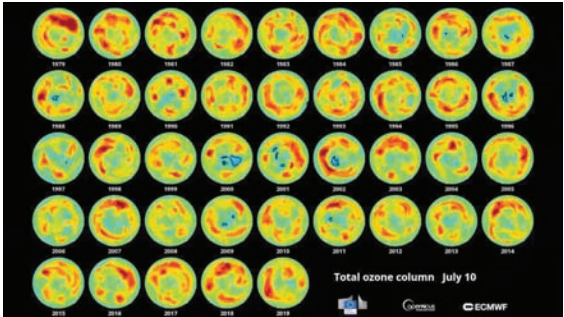
of climate-related problems in 2050, a fraction of the 100 million afflicted today.

Some of the measures needed to prevent disaster are relatively low-tech, and cheap to put in place. Early warning systems for floods and storms, and access to weather forecasts in remote regions can all improve preparedness. Restoring natural features such as mangrove swamps and wetlands can protect against coastal and river flooding, while regrowing tree cover on hillsides can prevent landslides.

Rocca said: “There is a chance to do something. By investing in climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction, including through efforts to improve early warning and anticipatory humanitarian action, the world can avoid a future marked by escalating suffering and ballooning humanitarian response costs. But we have to act now.”

A spokesperson for the UK’s Department for International Development said the climate emergency was already high on the agenda, with overseas aid money being spent on projects aimed at preventing climate-related disasters. “Climate change is the greatest challenge the world is facing and it will hit the poorest the hardest,” they said. “Tackling climate change and protecting our environment is a top priority. We are working to make the poorest communities better prepared for disasters and more able to deal with their aftermath.”

(Source: The Guardian)



hole over Antarctica is because it’s so cold over Antarctica due to the very strong vortex. This causes polar stratospheric clouds, which are sort of icy surfaces and they are an important ingredient in causing the destruction of the ozone over Antarctica.

(Source: The Independent)

First Announcement

N.I.S.O.C

1398.3807

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9780020

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
01	PARTS FOR ROLLS ROYCE “INDUSTRIAL AVON GAS GENERATORS AVONMK. 1533-3476G 101G. INTERNAL WHEELCASE AND CENTRE BEARING BEARING ASSY-BALL MAIN CENTRE.P/N:AG 58259	20 Nos

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

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit .a bid bond of 6,353 EURO or 891, 565,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

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

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

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex

Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran

Tel. No.: 061 341 23455 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437

Public Relations [www.shana.ir](http://www.shana.ir) [www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir)

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۸/۶/۳۰ نوبت دوم ۹۸/۷/۲



# Damascus: Some UNSC permanent members politicize humanitarian situation in Syria

**TEHRAN** — Syria says some permanent member states of the United Nations Security Council continue to abuse the body's mechanisms to politicize the humanitarian situation in the Arab country.

Syria's Ambassador to the United Nations Bashar al-Jaafari made the remark at a UNSC session on Thursday, saying those countries take advantage of the situation in Syria to undermine the country's safety and stability and support terrorism, Syria's official news agency SANA reported.

The senior diplomat added that improving the humanitarian situation in the Arab country and solving the difficulties facing Syrians need full commitment, respect for country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and support for efforts of the government and its allies to eliminate the remaining terror groups.

Jaafari also called for an immediate end to the illegitimate presence of foreign troops in Syria, and a halt to the war crimes being committed by the U.S.-led military coalition.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Syrian diplomat said that foreign-backed terror groups in the northwestern province of Idlib continue to use civilians as human shields and prevent them for days from passing through the Abu al-Duhur corridor to reach areas liberated by Syrian government troops.

Jaafari added that U.S.-backed terror groups still refuse to allow residents at al-Rukban refugee camp to leave there, forcibly seizing large amounts of humanitarian aid and transporting it to their positions in the



militant-held al-Tanf area.

Large parts of Idlib and portions of the neighboring Hama province constitute the last major militant stronghold in Syria. Foreign-backed militants in these regions regularly conduct attacks against Syrian army troops and positions, Russia's bases and civilian districts.

The Syrian army troops and their allied forces, backed by Russia's air cover, are resolute to liberate the militant-held areas in the two provinces through offensives launched weeks ago.

The U.S. and Turkey agreed on August

7 to set up a buffer zone to the east of the Euphrates River between the Turkish border and Syrian areas controlled by U.S.-backed Kurdish militias, which Ankara views as terrorists affiliated with the homegrown Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militant group.

The zone is claimed to be aimed at settling around one million displaced Syrians.

The Syrian government — which is opposed to Turkish and U.S. military activities on its soil — has slammed the U.S.-Turkish agreement, labeling it as a violation of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well

as international law.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Israeli regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri terrorist groups that are wreaking havoc in the country.

**■ Russia, China veto Security Council resolution on Syria ceasefire**

During Thursday session of the UN Security Council, both Russia and China voted against a resolution, which called for a ceasefire in Syria's war-torn Idlib province.

Russia's negative vote came after its UN ambassador tried unsuccessfully to include an exception for "anti-terrorist operations" in Idlib ceasefire resolution.

Ambassadors of Belgium, Kuwait and Germany had strongly urged that the resolution should not be vetoed, calling it a "purely humanitarian" measure, AFP reported.

The vetoed resolution said that all involved parties must cease hostilities "to avoid a further deterioration of the already catastrophic humanitarian situation in Idlib Governorate, beginning at noon Damascus time on 21 September."

Russia and China opposed the resolution by presenting an alternative resolution, demanding truce in northwest Syria with the exception of military offensives against UN-blacklisted militant groups. The resolution, however, failed to get the minimum nine votes needed on Thursday. Only Russia and China voted in favor of their own text.

## Stung by Aramco attack, Saudis lunch Hudaydah blitz



**TEHRAN** — The Saudi-led coalition has launched a military operation against the Yemeni port city of Hudaydah in violation of a 2018 UN-brokered ceasefire agreement.

Coalition spokesman Colonel Turki al-Malki claimed that the Friday raid had destroyed four sites which were "used in assembling remote-controlled boats and sea mines" and carrying out attacks in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

He also claimed that the port city was being used by the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement to launch ballistic missiles and drones.

In a statement, the Houthi movement warned Saudi Arabia against a dangerous escalation of the situation around Hudaydah. The offensive threatens a UN-brokered ceasefire accord in the Red Sea port, Houthi spokesman Mohammed Abdul-Salam said.

"The concentrated raids on Hudaydah constitutes a dangerous escalation that could blow up the Sweden agreement," he said on Twitter. "The coalition will bear the responsibility of this escalation which is also a test to the United Nations."

In December 2018, representatives from Ansarullah and the Riyadh-sponsored government of Abd Rabbu Mansur Hadi reached a truce deal during UN-mediated peace talks in Sweden.

Under the deal, they agreed to the withdrawal of their troops and the deployment of UN monitors to the port city of Hudaydah, a lifeline for millions of Yemenis.

According to Press TV, the Saudis have been enforcing a tight naval blockade on Yemen, particularly on Hudaydah, which acts as a lifeline for the impoverished nation, since August 2015, five months after it started the war.

The Friday raid on Hudaydah came less than a week after the Yemeni forces launched retaliatory drone attacks on two plants at the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry, including the world's biggest petroleum processing facility.

Attacks by 10 Yemeni drones on the key oil facilities at Abqaiq and Khurais shut down about 50 percent of the kingdom's crude and gas production, cutting the state oil giant's crude oil supply by around 5.7 million barrels per day.

## Gantz rejects Netanyahu's unity offer, vows own coalition



**TEHRAN** — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's strongest rival, Benny Gantz, has thrown out his offer for a coalition, after their battle in the regime's latest general elections ended up in a deadlock.

Gantz's centrist Blue and White party is slightly ahead of Netanyahu's Likud in the second round of voting this year, which was held Tuesday. However, they both lack the numbers of seats in the 120-member parliament to form a ruling bloc.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader, urged Gantz, the former military chief of the regime, to meet him Thursday, because he had pledged to form a right-wing government led by Likud.

"But to my regret, the election results show that this is impossible," Netanyahu said in a video message on Thursday. "Benny, we must set up a broad unity government, as soon as today."

Gantz, in response, said without mentioning Netanyahu and his request that he himself was going to form a "liberal" coalition, implying that he would not be-

come allies with Netanyahu.

Moshe Yaalon, another top leader of the Blue and White, gave a more detailed response later in the day, saying his party was not willing to join forces with Likud mainly because of the looming corruption charges against Netanyahu.

"We will not enter a coalition led by Netanyahu," Yaalon said.

"The time has come for you to tell Netanyahu: 'Thank you for all you've done,'" Yaalon urged Likud members, who are yet to show signs of rebellion against the PM. The swift rejection left Netanyahu "surprised and disappointed," prompting him to repeat the call.

"It's what the public expects of us," Netanyahu said later in the day.

Gantz had taken a similar position over the course of the campaign and suggested several times that an alliance would only be possible if Likud dumped Netanyahu, Press TV reported.

The election came five months after an inconclusive vote in August, where Netanyahu once again failed to form a majority government.

## U.S. drone kills 30 Afghan civilians instead of Daesh terrorists

**TEHRAN** — A U.S. drone strike that was supposed to take out members of the Daesh terrorist group in Afghanistan has instead killed at least 30 farm workers who were taking a break after a day's labor, officials say.

The attack on Wednesday night also injured 40 people as it targeted tents pitched near pine nut fields at the mountainous Wazir Tangi in eastern Nangarhar province, three officials confirmed to Reuters on Thursday.

"The workers had lit a bonfire and were sitting together when a drone targeted them," tribal elder Malik Rahat Gul told Reuters over the phone.

The owner of the fields said at least 150 workers were resting when the attack happened. Many of them remained missing, he added.

A survivor, meanwhile, said about 200 laborers were sleeping in five tents near the farm when the attack took place.

"Some of us managed to escape, some were injured but many were killed," said Juma Gul, a resident of the north-eastern province of Kunar.

The attack was confirmed by Afghanistan's Defense Min-

istry as well as a senior U.S. official in Kabul. However, they did not share details of civilian casualties.

"U.S. forces conducted a drone strike against Daesh terrorists in Nangarhar," Colonel Sonny Leggett, a spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said. "We are aware of allegations of the death of non-combatants and are working with local officials to determine the facts."

The attack outraged local residents in Nangarhar, who urged Washington to apologize and pay compensation to the families of the victims.

A large group of local men held a protest against the attack on Thursday morning as they helped carry the victims' bodies to Jalalabad city and then to the burial site.

"Such mistakes cannot be justified. American forces must realize (they) will never win the war by killing innocent civilians," said a Jalalabad residence. According to Press TV, Attaullah Khogyani, a spokesman for the provincial governor, said the strike was meant to target Daesh militants who often use farmlands for training and recruitment. About 14,000 U.S. troops are in Afghanistan, allegedly



to train and advise Afghan security forces and prepare them to take on the Taliban and Daesh.

The attack on Wednesday night preceded another deadly attack by the Taliban militant group, which killed at least 20 people in the southern Afghan province of Zabul.

## N. Korea chief negotiator welcomes Trump's suggestion for 'new method'

**TEHRAN** — North Korea praised President Donald Trump Friday for saying Washington may pursue an unspecified "new method" in nuclear negotiations with Pyongyang.

Those talks have been stalled for months by disagreements over trade-offs between sanctions relief and disarmament steps.

In a statement released by state media,

North Korean diplomat Kim Myong Gil, who will be leading planned working-level talks with Washington, also praised Trump's decision to fire his hawkish former National Security Adviser John Bolton, who advocated the "Libya model" of unilateral denuclearization as a template for North Korea.

Kim said he is optimistic about negotia-

tions with the United States, which the North earlier said could resume in a few weeks.

Pyeongyang has repeatedly demanded that Washington reconsider its stance following the collapse of a February summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and Trump.

"(I) would like to welcome the wise political decision of President Trump to approach the

DPRK-U.S. relations from a more practical point of view now that a nasty trouble-maker who used to face everything out of his anachronistic way of thinking has disappeared from the U.S. administration," said Kim, the diplomat, referring to North Korea by its formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Daily Star reported.

## Netanyahu 'played Trump using misinformation' several times: Tillerson

**➔1** He added, "It bothers me that an ally that's that close and important to us would do that to us."

Tillerson warned that exercising skepticism was necessary when dealing with Netanyahu.

Netanyahu is "a bit Machiavellian," he told the panel. "In dealing with Bibi, it's always useful to carry a healthy amount of skepticism in your discussions with him."

The former top U.S. diplomat and CEO of ExxonMobil had previously revealed that he was also at loggerheads with Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner, who was secretly conducting diplomatic talks on sensitive matters in the Middle East.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu, who is a close ally of Trump, faces an uncertain future due to his failure in winning the Israeli elections.

Palestinians joined by Muslims from across the globe have condemned the Israeli occupation.

It makes no difference to them which party wins in the Israeli elections since both Netanyahu of the right-wing Likud party and his main challenger centrist Benny Gantz of the Blue and White alliance, both back the occupation of the Palestinian territories.

## Absolution from crimes by deflection and deceit is never successful

**➔1** False flags are nothing to the Zionists and they are good at creating them: the most notable being the attack in June 1967 on the U.S. Navy frigate "Liberty" in the Mediterranean cruising west of Gaza and north of Sinai during the Six Day War To this day the Navy veterans who are still alive and who served on the Liberty are treated like lepers by the U.S. Veterans Administration — such is the unholy grip the Jews have about the public ever being properly informed that the bombing and strafing of the Liberty was a premeditated Israeli attack in which dozens of sailors died. Those fine veterans know too much, it seems, just like Julian Assange of Wikileaks fame who is now officially a Western political prisoner, not a criminal, at Belmarsh dungeon in London, and he may actually be dying.

Let's face it: the Saudis are inept and the Israelis, stripped of their high-tech war tech (and nukes as threats), are only good for, for example, shooting and killing elderly Palestinian women (or children in Gaza) as they did this week at Kalandia checkpoint north of Jerusalem: the hapless woman, 50, apparently entered the wrong "lane" in the incredible, cruel maze of the checkpoint and was summarily murdered. The Zionist soldiers and police said she was wielding a knife, which as usual was a fabrication. She was 10 meters from anyone when she was gunned down and certainly no threat to anyone.

And it's not as if any country is entirely free at least of some oppression of citizens, Iran included, just as no individual person is ever entirely cleansed of occasional bad actions. But the reiteration of assaults on Iran does not justify in any proportional way even a tiny fraction of the much more severe and horrific postures and deeds of the U.S. and Israel and the Saudis. We see, for example, a raft of what has been called "Whataboutism" by Western apologists in the media, as if this absolves perps of obvious crimes.

Among the worst of Zionist apologists happens to be columnists Bret Stephens and Bari Weiss, both Zionists, at the New York Times. Whenever anyone questions them about Israeli apartheid crimes, they are inclined to say: "But 'what about' (for example) the way the Chinese treat the minority Muslim Uighers, or the way Modi in India is currently treating Muslims in Indian controlled parts of Kashmir?" Now we have the spectacle that a desperate Netanyahu may well be "out" as Israeli Prime Minister, this cat's nine lives perhaps used up. No doubt he fears he's finally going to be indicted for corruption, and may go to prison.

Absolution by way of deflection and deceit is absurd and can never be finally won. And the most remarkable aspect of such hypocrisy, hubris and exceptionalism is that almost the entire world is seeing through this very tiresome game and neither Washington nor Tel Aviv nor Riyadh (and some others) realize it enough yet to change course. But the day is somewhere ahead eventually when they will have to realize it. At any rate, this is part the reason why Trump has been unsuccessful in virtually all his foreign policy initiatives to date.

Foreign Minister Javad Zarif seems of the same caliber, generally, as Putin, and has so far navigated the stresses that Iran has been subject to with class and even, like Putin, with some humor. Good thing he did not resign earlier this year, as he suggested he might.

## Yemenis countering world's strongest, wealthiest countries: Houthi

**TEHRAN** — Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, chairman of the Supreme Revolutionary Committee of Yemen, has said that the war-wracked country is countering the world's "strongest and wealthiest" countries in its fight against the Saudi war.

Al-Houthi stressed that Yemen would strive to counter aggression on "all levels" and that it was time "to ward off the enemy," Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network reported.

Al-Houthi also slammed countries participating in the war on Yemen, adding that if they "were seeking the freedom of the Yemeni nation, they wouldn't seek to partition [the country] and kill [the people]."

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating western-backed war on Yemen in March 2015 with the goal of bringing the government of former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement.

Resistance by Yemen's armed forces, led by the Ansarullah, has, however, pushed the Saudi war to a stalemate, with Yemeni forces increasingly using sophisticated home-made weaponry in retaliatory strikes against the coalition.

According to Press TV, over the weekend, attacks by Yemeni drones on the key Saudi oil facilities of Abqaiq and Khurais shut down about 50 percent of the kingdom's crude and gas production, cutting the state oil giant's crude oil supply by around 5.7 million barrels per day.

Speaking to al-Masirah, al-Houthi also lauded what he described as the Yemeni people's high level of "political insight", adding that the country's military commanders were most aware of "what is planned against the nation."



## Tottenham Hotspur FC completes £637 million stadium refinancing

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club has completed a 637 million pound stadium refinancing package that included a bond issue to U.S. investors and a term loan, the company said in a statement.

The English football club said on Friday it has raised 525 million pounds from issue of long-term bonds to U.S. investors through a private placement, and another 112 million pounds from a loan from Bank of America Merrill Lynch, who also managed the bond issue.

The refinancing package has an average maturity of 23 years and a weighted average coupon of 2.66%, the club said in a statement.

The company was originally targeting to raise 400 million pounds from the bond issue, a source told Reuters last month.

(Source: Goal)

## Fifth missing child found via Roma social media campaign

Roma's missing children social media campaign has helped find a second girl from London.

It means the Italian club has helped find five children since partnering with UK charity Missing People in July.

The charity has provided Roma with 20 different cases to feature in the campaign, which has been promoted when announcing transfer signings.

Two Kenyan children were found when Roma signed Henrikh Mkhitaryan and Chris Smalling.

Previously, a girl from London and a boy from Belgium were found after the arrivals of Mert Cetin and Davide Zappacosta.

Missing People chief executive Jo Youle said it was "fantastic news".

"We are really thankful to our friends at AS Roma for sharing their transfer videos featuring the missing children on social media," she added.

"With the help of their millions of fans, it has raised awareness of missing children and young people to a wide audience."

The 16-year-old from London, who can no longer be identified for legal reasons, went missing on 12 July and appeared in more Roma announcement videos than any other child this summer.

After first being featured in the video to announce the Zappacosta signing, the teenager was then included again by Roma in the announcement videos for the arrivals of Smalling, from Manchester United, and Mkhitaryan, from Arsenal, to increase awareness of her disappearance in England.

After the close of the transfer window, a new video highlighting all of the English missing children featured in the campaign was published - with the 16-year-old shown first.

The campaign was inspired by rock band Soul Asylum's video for their 1992 song Runaway Train, which highlighted the faces and names of missing children, and similar to those printed on millions of milk cartons in the USA during the 1980s and '90s.

(Source: BBC)

## Ansu Fati can now play with Spain

The 2019/20 season has already been a whirlwind experience for 16-year-old Ansu Fati, with his first few senior appearances for Barcelona bringing goals and assists, and things appear to be getting even better for the teenager as it's now been determined he can play for Spain.

Fati was born in Guinea-Bissau but has been in Spain for a significant period of time, and he has been waiting for the Spanish government to make his nationalisation to be made official.

At noon on Friday the documentation was rubber stamped and made official, ensuring that Fati can represent La Roja at the Under-17 World Cup set to be played in Brazil later in October.

Spain's Council of Ministers oversaw the process and confirmed Fati's new passport and the player has already committed to playing for Spain ahead of Guinea-Bissau and Portugal.

The process of making him a Spanish national has taken more than three months, however La Roja now has one of the continent's most promising talents secured within their ranks.

With Lionel Messi now back in the first team, it remains to be seen how much football Fati will get at senior level, however he would miss around a month of domestic football if he travels to Brazil for the U-17 World Cup, which would rule him out of the Clasico.

(Source: Marca)

## Barcelona need 172 million euros from player sales

Last season, Barcelona set themselves a target of 145 million euros in player sales in order to balance their books.

They needed to make an extra 14 million euros on the 131 million euros that they'd spent in order to be in profit for the season.

This season, the threshold for sales is even higher.

The budget for 2019/20 is 1.047 billion euros - the highest of any sporting club in the world and that means an increase in revenue is needed.

The sales of Malcom, Marc Cucurella and the loan of Philippe Coutinho have already covered 60 million of the 172 million euro target, but there is still 100 million euros left to go.

The Catalan club also have to reduce their wage spend having seen a 32 million euro increase in salaries in the 2018/19 campaign compared to 2017/18.

Their predicted wage spend of 642 million euros is another reason to sell players in order to comply with FIFA's regulations.

(Source: AS)

# “I don’t want to go back to Madrid because they have a manager” – Mourinho

Jose Mourinho has spoken to the media as Zinedine Zidane's seat heats up on the bench at Real Madrid. On Friday, Deportes Cuatro spoke to the former Real Madrid, Manchester United and Chelsea manager about the situation facing Zidane and what the future holds for the Portuguese coach.

Real Madrid: "They're third or fourth, no? Close to being first. It's not bad. If you look at it pragmatically, if you focus on the table, they're right there. Now, they play Sevilla and if they win, they go ahead of them. Barcelona are behind them and Atlético are a point ahead..."

A candidate to take over at Madrid? "There are two types of rumours. One, when one speaks about Zidane, who is one of ours and it hurts us when our teams aren't going well. You have to live with it. Zidane is in football all his life and he knows it. The other type of rumour is to put my name in there and I don't like that. There are problems in many places, but another thing is respect."

Return to Madrid: "I wouldn't like to return because they have a manager and I can't coach a team who have a manager. You can speak with respect about the club but also about the manager who isn't just anyone. I am out of it. I'm not just blowing smoke. I would like that things turn out well and everything gets fixed."

Complicated situations: "Madrid, Bar-



celona, Atlético, Manchester United and Chelsea...when you have massive expectations, it's difficult and tough. And for this, they say there are good players and managers who aren't giving everything, because it takes more than just talent, you also have to have a certain special personality."

Reutrn to the bank: "It will be when it



is. On Sunday, I'll go to my job on Sky with Chelsea on. I do it once a month, I don't want to do it every day. I enjoy it because I can offer a different perspective having been on the bench. Now, I am in German classes in case one day I end up there or so I can speak one day in this language for a Champions League game. It will be my sixth language."

### ■Pérez eyes Xabi to replace Zidane

The fallout may have intensified at Real Madrid following the Parisien embarrassment on Wednesday evening, however, this is something that has been rumbling for some time. Zinedine Zidane's position, even this early in the new campaign, is on thin ice, and another former Bernabéu star is being eyed as his successor, according to Mundo Deportivo.

The 3-0 Champions League defeat to a weakened PSG highlighted much of what is wrong with this current Madrid side. Individual mistakes can happen, injuries and lack of match sharpness can play their part, but it was the lack of collective responsibility and organisation that stood out for much of the game. These aspects tend to find blame in the coaching area, something fans have made clear. What made matters worse was that two of the missing stars for the hosts, who Florentino Pérez had wanted for Zidane's post-Cristiano Ronaldo revolution, were fully enjoying the moment in the stands.

Los Blancos' president plays a huge role at the club on various levels, and that includes his involvement in making player signings, not just the cheque writing but also the decision making. His plan was to buy up the great young talent and sprinkle them with a Galáctico or two. This is yet to pay dividends.

(Source: AS)

## Players’ union wants matches postponed in extreme heat



The world players' union FIFPRO says it is time to stop matches being played in extreme heat after seeing some of its members struggle in torrid conditions at the African Nations Cup and in Spain's La Liga during the summer.

FIFPRO, already concerned at the possibility of 2026 World Cup matches being played in suffocating conditions in cities such as Atlanta and Dallas, has asked FIFA to stipulate a temperature limit at which matches would have to be postponed.

"We would like to have this cut-off point above which the match does not go ahead, and it doesn't matter if it is the World Cup final or a league match," FIFPRO medical officer Vincent Goutteborge told Reuters. "It should be postponed."

FIFA says its guidelines allow for cooling breaks in the 25th and 70th minute of matches when the Wet Bulb Globe Temperature (WBGT), a combination of factors including air temperature, humidity, sun direction, cloud cover and stadium location, exceeds 32 Celsius, or 28 Celsius for under-20s and lower categories.

However, FIFPRO said it would like to see cooling breaks at 28 Celsius and no play at all if the WBGT exceeds 32 Celsius.

"The guidelines do not do enough to protect the health of the players and allow them to perform at their best," said Goutteborge.

FIFPRO was particularly concerned by some Spanish league matches played at midday in late August and African Nations Cup games in Egypt in June and July.

"Some matches were scheduled to be played in the sun where there was an air temperature of 34/35 Celsius and the humidity was over 50 percent," he said, adding that FIFPRO also gets complaints from players in North and South America over midday kickoffs in hot, humid conditions.

Goutteborge said it also a matter of allowing players to perform at their best.

"It's crazy to give employees this kind of bad environment because they cannot perform to their optimal level and this is also not fair on the spectators who want to see the players at their best," he said.

(Source: Reuters)

## Jurgen Klopp unfazed by Liverpool’s defensive lapses



Jurgen Klopp says Liverpool have not changed their defensive approach despite their record of only one clean sheet in their eight games so far this season.

The European champions are five points clear at the top of the Premier League after five straight wins but the backline has been breached in four of those matches.

And two late goals conceded in Naples in midweek meant their Champions League campaign started in disappointing fashion.

Klopp's men started last season's league campaign with three clean sheets and conceded just 22 Premier League goals all season, missing out on their first top-flight title since 1990 by a single point.

But Klopp said at his pre-Chelsea press conference on Friday that the change was down to circumstances rather than system.

"No, there is no difference," he said at Liverpool's training ground. "We didn't focus more on offensive things and forget the defensive things."

"The goals happened completely strangely. There would have been a second clean sheet against Southampton if we don't concede that goal, there could

have been different clean sheets in other games.

"Of course it's not exactly what we wanted but we don't collect clean sheets. We want to win football games and we are still early in the season."

Klopp, whose side travel to Frank Lampard's Chelsea on Sunday, was asked about the importance of Virgil van Dijk and whether he had concerns about any potential injuries ruling the Dutchman out for a period of time.

"That's the reason why we have four center-halves," he said.

"It's not easy for the 'in the moment number four', not playing and sometimes not involved in the squad, but in the moment if something happens, like it was last year, not only one thing happens, a couple of things happen and then you end up with one center-half and a defensive midfielder, which we did against Bayern."

"I can imagine something like that is not easy but the other guys, I have said it a lot of times, from my point of view we have four world-class center-halves."

(Source: AFP)

## Victorious Japan kick off Asia’s first Rugby World Cup in style

Hosts Japan kicked off the first Rugby World Cup in Asia with victory Friday as the game seeks to attract new converts outside its traditional heartlands in Europe and the southern hemisphere.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was among the home fans decked out in red and white replica shirts as Kotaro Matsushima's hat-trick ensured a 30-10, bonus-point win over Russia at Tokyo Stadium.

The opening ceremony saw children representing the 20 competing teams belting out the World Rugby anthem "World in Union" before former All Black skipper Richie McCaw brought in the glittering Webb Ellis Cup.

Prince Akishino officially declared the tournament open, with World Rugby chief Bill Beaumont saying: "This is the moment we've all been waiting for... We can all be very proud tonight. You have made history."

The six-week tournament, which culminates on November 2, promises to be one of the most open in history, with several teams considered capable of denying New Zealand an unprecedented third straight title.

Organisers hope stars such as All Black Beauden Barrett, Ireland's Johnny Sexton or South Africa's Siya Kolisi will spark enthusiasm for the game in Japan and Asia more broadly.

The early signs are good, with officials saying the tournament should be close to a complete sell-out and a staggering 15,000 fans turning out on a public holiday just to watch Wales train.

"I often watch football and basketball but I don't watch rugby," salaryman Hirohide Kawase, 54, told AFP at the



public viewing in Tokyo's glitzy Ginza district.

"So I thought this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity."

The global rugby showpiece will serve as a tasty amuse-bouche for Japan as it prepares to host the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics.

Officials claim that a promotional drive has inspired 1.8 million new rugby participants since 2016, one million of those in Japan.

But there are also reasons to believe the game in Japan is in need of support, with declining gates for club rugby matches and the country's only Super Rugby franchise, the Tokyo-based Sunwolves, booted out of the competition for commercial and logistical reasons.

### ■'Miracle of Brighton'

Much will depend on the success of the home team,

which is aiming to build on the win against Russia to reach the quarter-finals for the very first time.

Japan served up the biggest shock in World Cup history in 2015 when they beat the mighty Springboks 34-32 in a match dubbed the "miracle of Brighton" that has even inspired a movie.

This time, however, no one is taking the Brave Blossoms lightly and they will do well to get out of a pool dominated by Ireland and Scotland.

The All Blacks remain the team to beat and their crunch encounter with South Africa on Saturday will go a long way to determining the outcome of Pool B -- and maybe the next home of the Webb Ellis Cup.

Ireland come into the competition as the world's number one side, but they often flatter to deceive when it comes to the World Cup and have never ventured beyond the quarter-finals.

Much rests on the shoulders of fly-half Sexton who at 34 is no longer in the first flush of youth and has suffered an alarming dip in form.

England, coached by Eddie Jones -- who led Japan to that famous win over the Springboks -- will also fancy their chances but they have been drawn in a tough Pool C alongside bitter Six Nations rivals France and the ever-dangerous Argentina.

Jones named a full-strength team for the opening match against Tonga, showing he is not taking the Pacific islanders lightly.

(Source: AFP)



# Iran beat S. Korea to book a place at Asian Volleyball C'ship final

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran defeated South Korea 3-1 (22-25, 25-23, 25-22, 25-22) to book a place at the 2019 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship at the 12,000-seater Azadi Sports Complex here on Friday.

Team Melli will meet the winners of Japan and Australia match on Saturday.

In the fourth set, the players engaged in a fight at the court.

"I am ashamed of what happened in the fourth set. This victory is like a defeat for me. We didn't play well but had positive energy. But I am sad for what happened in this match," Iran coach Igor Kolakovic said.

"It's for the first time in my life I saw physical challenge during a match. It can be interesting in boxing but not in volleyball. Behaviors of some of players were disappointing," he added.

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.



## Iran move five spots up in FIBA world rankings



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Following an eye-catching performance in the 2019 FIBA World Cup that ended earlier this week, Iran national basketball team moved five spots up in FIBA men's world rankings.

Team Melli, who qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games as the best Asian team, sit 22nd in the ranking.

The U.S. basketball have kept their No. 1 spot in the FIBA world men's rankings, even after a disappointing seventh-place showing in the World Cup. They have held the No. 1 ranking since winning the

2010 world championship.

World Cup champions Spain stayed No. 2, Australia leaped eight spots to No. 3, World Cup finalists Argentina rose one spot to No. 4 and World Cup bronze medalists France fell two slots to No. 5.

The FIBA World Ranking Men, presented by NIKE, will next be updated following February's Continental Cup Qualifiers. It takes into consideration rating points of games played in top official FIBA competitions and their qualifiers over the course of an eight-year period.

## Women have to be allowed into football stadiums in Iran: FIFA



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — The head of football's world governing body said in a statement that FIFA's position is "clear and firm" and that women "have to be allowed" into football stadiums in Iran.

Statement by the FIFA President on stadium ban for women in Iran:

I am hopeful that the Iranian Federation and the Iranian authorities were receptive to our repeated calls to address this unacceptable situation.

I contacted them several times in the recent past and so has the FIFA admin-

istration. We have a delegation of FIFA members in Iran at the moment and I am looking forward to hearing good news from them.

Our position is clear and firm. Women have to be allowed into football stadiums in Iran.

We understand there are steps and processes that need to be taken before this is done in a proper and safe way but now is the moment to change things and FIFA is expecting positive developments starting in the next Iran home match in October.

## Faghani to join the Hyundai A-League as a Full-time Referee

Football Federation Australia (FFA) confirmed that one of the top referees in the world, Alireza Faghani, will become a full-time, contracted referee for the upcoming Hyundai A-League 2019/20 Season.

Faghani recently made the decision to migrate to Australia from the Islamic Republic of Iran for family reasons and as a result FFA offered him a contract to officiate in the Hyundai A-League

An extremely well respected international match official, Faghani most recently refereed two (2) matches at the AFC Asian Cup 2019 as well as four (4) matches at the 2018 FIFA World Cup including the third place play-off match between Belgium and England, two (2) matches at the 2017 FIFA Confederations Cup and also the gold medal match at the 2016 Olympic Games Men's Football tournament between Germany and Brazil. He was named the AFC Referee of the Year twice in 2016 & 2018 and is probably best remembered by Australians as the referee for the AFC Asian Cup 2015 Final between the Caltex Socceroos and Korea Republic in Sydney.

He will join Chris Beath, Shaun Evans and Alex King who are also full-time referees for the Hyundai A-League 2019/20 Season.

FFA Chairman and Chair of the FFA Referees Com-



mittee, Chris Nikou, was thrilled to be able announce that Faghani would be joining the Hyundai A-League referees panel for the upcoming season.

"It is a great honor for us to have a referee of the caliber of Alireza Faghani joining the Hyundai A-League and I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Strebe Delovski – President of the PFRA who was critical to facilitating this appointment given the strength of their professional relationship," said Nikou.

"It was extremely fortuitous for us that Alireza and

his family had chosen to move to Australia and it was a very easy decision for us to make to offer him a position as a match official in the Hyundai A-League.

"His international experience will be a huge asset for the competition and, in addition, he will be able to mentor our young, up and coming match officials as well.

"We look forward to seeing Alireza in action for the upcoming Hyundai A-League season," concluded Nikou.

Alireza was excited about the new challenge of refereeing in the Hyundai A-League.

"Once my family made the decision to move to Australia, it was fantastic that the opportunity to referee in the Hyundai A-League came about," said Faghani.

"It was a very big decision to leave our home country, but I am extremely thankful that I am still able to referee professionally in one of the top domestic leagues in Asia and also continue my career as an international match official.

"I have refereed many times in Australia and with Australian clubs so I am very familiar with the players and venues.

"My family and I are very much looking forward to moving to Australia and starting the next chapter of our lives," concluded Faghani.

(Source: A-League.com.au)

## Guus Hiddink sidelined as China's Olympic coach



**BELJING (AFP)** — China has dismissed respected Dutchman Guus Hiddink as coach of its Olympic football team after a disappointing year in charge.

In a statement on Thursday (Sept 19), the China Football Association (CFA) said that former head coach of the Chinese women's team Hao Wei would take over the key role for the men's team.

The CFA said it was setting up a four-member group to be in charge of the Olympic qualifiers, with Hiddink's name notably absent.

The statement said the new leadership was "in view of the previous inadequate preparations for the Chinese U-22 National Men's Football Team" and was "in order

to further strengthen team preparations and improve team building and management level".

The 72-year-old Hiddink was appointed as head of the Olympic team last September, joining veteran Italian coach Marcello Lippi in taking a major role in China's aggressive push to finally become a force in international football.

But after an uninspiring series of performances, Hiddink's youth team lost 2-0 against Vietnam in a friendly at home earlier this month.

China's Under-21s will be expected to make up the bulk of their squad for the Olympics, where the age group is Under-23. State news agency Xinhua said on

Thursday night that "despite his illustrious coaching career, the Dutch veteran is far from (a) success in China with only four wins out of the twelve matches".

Football-fan President Xi Jinping has grand ambitions of China hosting and even winning a World Cup.

But efforts to boost the performance of China's national team have been largely unsuccessful, and highlighted how much work there is to be done.

Despite its clout as a global sporting and financial power, China have qualified for the World Cup only once, leading to a change in policy that now allows naturalised foreign-born players to play for the national team.

## Team Melli unchanged in FIFA ranking

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national football team have remained unchanged at number 23 in the latest FIFA ranking released on Thursday.

Iran still are the best Asian football team in Asia while Japan moved up two spots to 31st.

Korea Republic, at 37th, remained as the Continent's third highest ranked side, while Australia moved up two spots to 44.

Belgium remain top of the ranking, followed by France, Brazil, England and Portugal.

The next FIFA World Ranking will be released on October 24.

## Sardar Azmoun suffers ankle injury

**PLDC** — Zenit St. Petersburg striker Sardar Azmoun has suffered ankle ligament injury, the Russian club announced.

Azmoun handed his team the lead at Lyon in the 41st minute of their Group G clash in UEFA Champions League but was forced off injured shortly after the break.

Now, the Russian club has announced that Azmoun will be a doubt for the match against Rubin Kazan in week 10 of the Russian Premier League.

According to sport-express.ru, Azmoun has suffered an ankle ligament injury.

## Esteghlal striker Diabaté misses Tehran derby

**TASNIM** — Esteghlal football team forward Cheick Tidiane Diabaté will be reportedly absent in the match against Persepolis.

Esteghlal will meet its arch-rival Persepolis on Sunday in Tehran's Azadi Stadium in week four of Iran professional League in the match.

The team's doctor Kaveh Sotoudeh announced that the Malian striker will be absent in this match after he was injured in the match against Naft Masjed Soleyman.

According to him, Diabaté suffers from rib injury and cannot play in Tehran derby.

## Stockholm loses Diamond League status

**STOCKHOLM (Reuters)** — Stockholm's prestigious Bauhaus Galan athletics meeting will lose its Diamond League status, organisers announced on Friday, citing a decision by the sport's governing IAAF to re-organise the season.

"We now have the possibility to arrange exactly the competition we want, without being steered by directives from the Diamond League," meet director Jan Kowalski said in a press release.

"We can decide what events to have in the Bauhaus Gala ourselves, and not have a number of events assigned to us as previously."

The meeting recently signed a new five-year deal with sponsors Bauhaus, which guarantees them the economic resources needed to continue, organisers said.

As part of a general overhaul of the Diamond League series, the IAAF is cutting the number of events to 13, including a new single-night final in Zurich.

The proposed changes are set to be ratified by IAAF officials in their meetings next week ahead of the world championships in Doha.

## MLS denies Sacramento expansion bid finalized

Major League Soccer has denied a report on Thursday that Sacramento, California is set to land the eventual 29th team in the league.

Earlier on Thursday, CBSSports.com cited a source saying it was "100 percent done" that California's capital city was set to be granted an expansion MLS team.



St. Louis was awarded a franchise in the league last month, with the club to begin play in 2022. The CBSSports.com report had indicated that the Sacramento franchise would also start that year.

However, MLS issued a statement that read: "Contrary to the erroneous report at CBSSports.com, Major League Soccer has not finalized an agreement to bring an expansion team to Sacramento. We remain in advanced discussions with Ron Burkle and Matt Alvarez regarding a team for Sacramento, and we will share more details at the appropriate time."

In addition to St. Louis, three other cities have been awarded an MLS franchise while not yet taking the field. Inter Miami CF and Nashville SC will enter the league in 2020, with those two teams taking part in the expansion draft on Nov. 19 this year. Austin FC will debut in 2021.

MLS commissioner Don Garber already has expressed his desire for a 30-team league. Other potential cities for an MLS franchise, according to numerous media reports, include Charlotte, Las Vegas, Phoenix, Detroit, Raleigh, San Diego and Indianapolis.

Sacramento Republic FC plays in the second-tier USL with an agreement earlier this year to have a controlling interest purchased by Burkle, a Los Angeles businessman and Pittsburgh Penguins part owner.

A 22,000-seat stadium is in the works near downtown Sacramento, with construction likely to begin next year.

(Source: ESPN)



INTERNATIONAL DAILY  
www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Ali Asgari  
■ Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895  
editor@tehrantimes.com  
» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000  
» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450  
» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807  
» Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603  
» www.eshtarak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.  
Tel: 88911433  
» Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com  
» Printed at: Jame Jam Barta Borna - 44197737

Tehrantimes79

Tehrantimesdaily

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran  
P.O. Box: 14155-4843  
Zip Code: 1599814713



GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Hold your pact firmly and never speak of  
reconciliation with those who violate the pact.

Imam Ali (AS)

## WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

### Painting

■ An exhibition of paintings by Maryam Sharifi is underway at White Line Gallery.

The exhibit named "Sweet Imaginations" will run until September 30 at the gallery located at 22 Parvin Alley, off Jam-e Jam St. off Vali-e Asr Ave.

■ Samira Darya, Zahra Qarakhani, Ahura Mohammadi, Manuchehr Motabar, Ali Golestaneh, Mostafa Soltani and eight more artists are displaying their paintings in an exhibition at Artibition Gallery. The exhibit entitled "The Connection between Architecture and Painting" runs until September 30 at the gallery located at Qandi Alley, Sasanipur St., Golnabi St., off Shariati Ave.

■ Golestan Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Farshid Razavi.

The exhibit will run until September 29 at the gallery located at 34 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.

■ Paintings by Mojdeh Hassani are on display in an exhibition at Shalman Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Cold Silence" will be running until September 25 at the gallery that can be found at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.

■ A collection of paintings by Erfan Shahyad is on display in an exhibition at Vista Gallery. The exhibit named "Moment" will run until October 1 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

■ An exhibition of paintings by Amir-Nasser Akhlaqi is currently on view in an exhibition at Homa Gallery.

Entitled "A Hunger for Disorder", the exhibit runs until September 30 at the gallery located at No. 8, Forth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

■ Iman Afsarian is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition at Asar Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "About Dust, Shadow, Glass and Water" runs until October 18 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 16 Barforushan St., Iranshahr St.

■ Paintings by Daryush Qarezad are on display in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery.

The exhibit named "Another Time" will run until October 1 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.

■ Saleh Gallery is hosting an exhibition of paintings by Maahyaar Charmchi.

The exhibit titled "The Game" will be running until September 25 at the gallery located at 148 Karim Khan Ave.

### Drawing

■ A collection of drawings by Mania Jalali is on view in an exhibition at Saye Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Private Zone" will run until September 25 at the gallery that can be found at 3 Aqakhani Alley, Omidvar St. in the Niavaran neighborhood.

### Photo

■ Ebrahiminejad Gallery will be organizing an exhibition of photos by a group of photographers on Sunday to celebrate the Sacred Defense Week.

The exhibit will continue until October 7 at the gallery located at 72 Ahang St., off Mahallati Highway.

# Winners of Ashura Book of the Year awards announced

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — The winners of the Dibil Khuzai Awards – Ashura Book of the Year in various categories were honored during a special ceremony at the House of Humanities Thinkers in Tehran on Wednesday.

The Dibil Khuzai Foundation, a center established by the office of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, launched the awards in 2018 to honor books on Imam Hussein (AS) and Ashura, the 10th day of Muharram, the day upon which Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred in Karbala in 680 CE.

The awards were named after Dibil bin Ali al-Khuzai, a famous Shia poet who lived during the 8th century.

The Dibil Khuzai Awards ceremony was attended by a large number literati and cultural officials, including Hojjatolislam Mohammad Qomi, the director of the Islamic Ideology Dissemination Organization (IIDO).

"The History of Elegy Composing in Lucknow" written by Kalb Abbas about the history of elegy compositions on the tragedy of Ashura in the Indian town of Lucknow received the award in the Literary Research Section.

In the Dramatic Literature Section, "Taziehnameh", a book on the Iranian passion play tazieh by Gholamali Nadalazadeh, won the award.

"Kashub", a book by Nafiseh Morshedzadeh that narrates opinions of 23 Iranian writers about the story of Ashura, won the award in the Non-Fiction Literature Section.

The Fiction Section award went to "Summons" by Ali Moazzeni. The story is about a journalist who received "an



An unidentified winner (R) receives his award from IIDO director Hojjatolislam Mohammad Qomi during the Dibil Khuzai Awards – Ashura Book of the Year at the House of Humanities Thinkers in Tehran on September 18, 2019.

order" to visit Karbala, which is home to the shrines of Imam Hussein (AS) and his brother, Hazrat Abbas (AS).

In the Nohay Section, "The Grandeur

of Blossom", a collection of elegy compositions on the Ashura tragedy by Mohsen Hafezi, was honored.

"The Month of Purple" by Abdorreza

Rezainia received the award in the Poetry Section.

Books on the categories of art, history and children's literature were also honored.

## Persian studies center opens at Yessenov University in Kazakhstan

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — A Persian studies center has opened at Yessenov University in the Kazakh city of Aktau, the Persian service of IRNA reported on Friday.

The center opened Wednesday to commemorate Iran's National Day of Poetry and Literature.

10 students from different nations have registered in the Persian language course, which will begin next week. Iranology is the next course to be added later.

The center has been established by the Embassy of Iran Astana in collaboration with the university, and has been named "Molana" after the Persian poet and mystic Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207-1273).

Speaking at the ceremony, Iran's consul general in Aktau, Habibollah Malakutifar, called language a window to the culture of all nations and said that the center helps boost cultural and academic ties between Yessenov University and the universities of Iran.

He also said that Iranian universities are also ready to establish relations with Yessenov University.

Officials from Yessenov University also attended the ceremony.

Located in the Caspian region, Yessenov University is one of the youngest universities in Kazakhstan with a variety of courses.

## Yari film festival announces lineup

**A R T TEHRAN** — A lineup of 12 short and feature films will go on screen at the 19th edition of the Iranian Film Festival in the Swedish capital of Stockholm on October 12 and 13.

"Orange Days" by Arash Lahuti, "Dressage" by Puya Badkubeh and "Reza" by Alireza Motamedi are among the films.

"Orange Days" tells the story of Aban, the only female contractor in the cutthroat and male-dominated orange harvesting industry, who enters a competition to win a large contract.

"Dressage" is about Golsa and her friends who rob a corner shop. But while evaluating the booty, they are dismayed to realize that they forgot to take the security camera footage. One of them must return to the crime scene and retrieve it. The vote falls on Golsa, who bravely completes the mission. Her friends' behavior makes her think, and she hides the hard drive somewhere in secret. But her accomplices and their well-to-do families, worried about their social standing, put more and more pressure on Golsa.

"Reza" tells the story of a divorced man named Reza who is trying to adapt to his new life after a divorce while he finds a new romance.



A scene from "Orange Days" by Arash Lahuti.

The lineup also includes "The Dark Room" by Ruhollah Hejazi, "Hat-Trick" by Ramtin Lavafi and "Invasion" by Shahram Mokri.

"The Dark Room" is about Haleh and Farhad, who together with their 5-year-old son, Amir, have been recently moved into a new complex. Amir gets lost in the desert in front of the complex, however, his parents find him soon. Later, Amir tells his father

that someone has seen his body and this makes Farhad very upset, and he searches for a suspect who has sexually harassed his little boy.

"Hat-Trick" is about Farzad, a young man who hits something with his car while returning from a party with his wife and two friends. After a long discussion, they leave the scene all confused and frightened, and go to the house of one of their friends to think it over and do the right thing. But their initial talk about the accident is soon replaced by discussions of hidden secrets.

"Invasion" is about Saman who has been murdered and the police are investigating in a club, the scene of the crime. They have arrested Ali as the murder suspect and are trying to uncover the method used in the murder. However, the case becomes quite complicated and the friends of the murdered person are not very cooperative.

The lineup of short films will be announced in the near future.

The festival is organized every year by Yari, an Uppsala-based charity organization that helps street children in Iran to go to school and also raises funds for the construction of schools and libraries for children.

## Avant-garde artist Masud Arabshahi dies at 84

**A R T TEHRAN** — Masud Arabshahi, one of the pioneers of Iranian conceptual art, died of heart failure at a Tehran hospital on Wednesday. He was 84, his wife Giti has announced.

Arabshahi was born in Tehran in September 1935. He studied design and painting when he was a teenager and at the same time he was interested in traditional crafts, arts and ancient Persian heritage.

The fascination, which always stayed with him, led him to the widespread exploration of patterns and codes, and ancient artifacts from the ancient

history of Iran and his experience with pottery helped him on this path.

During the 1940s, when he was finishing his studies in the field of architecture at the Faculty of Decorative Arts of Tehran, he began work on bas reliefs and showcased his artworks in Iran, the United States and several countries in Europe.

He held about 20 solo exhibits in Iran, France and the U.S. He also took part in over 40 exhibits in Iran, France and the U.S., Tunisia, Italy, England and Switzerland. His works were honored during several art events.



Masud Arabshahi in an undated photo.

## BOOKSHELF

**Title:** National dialogue from Sheikh Ali Al Salman's perspective

**Publisher:** Bahrain Interfaith Center

**Summary:**

Since February 2011, the Kingdom of Bahrain has witnessed peaceful protests for democratic change and freedom from tyranny.

The Bahraini people are still struggling peacefully for their fundamental rights to

freedom, dignity, and equality, despite the intensified crackdown to silence the voices.

This research paper's aim is to shed light on the vision of the political opposition leader, Sheikh Ali Salman, regarding the dialogue and national reconciliation to get out of the political crisis and to strengthen security and peace, which prevents further internal disturbance in the country.

He was sentenced to life imprisonment for supporting the demands of freedom, justice, and dignity. Sheikh Ali Salman is the Secretary-General of the National Islamic Society (Al-Wefaq), the largest licensed political opposition association established in 2001 and was liquidated in 2018 by a final judgment as part of the series of repression of public freedoms.

