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Value of trades at IME rises 6% in a week

TEHRAN — During weekdays ending up to September 19, while 503,221 tons of commodities worth over \$595 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), the market experienced a growth of 17 percent and six percent in its trading volume and value, respectively.

According to the report from IME International Affairs and Public Relations

Department, last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 186,082 tons of various products worth close to \$240 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 187,807 tons of steel, 4,335 tons of copper, 2,820 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrates, as well as 11 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers. **→4**

Iranian professors voice concerns over destruction of democracy in Britain

TEHRAN — 500 Iranian university professors have criticized the suspension of the British Parliament and the destruction of democracy in the country.

"Very few people in the modern world could believe that one of the most important claimants of democracy would destroy the house of democracy," the university professors said in an open letter published,

Fars reported on Saturday.

The letter was addressing professors and universities in the United Kingdom, and has been translated into eight different languages including English, Arabic, Urdu, French and Italian.

In the letter, they strongly criticized the suspension of Parliament in Britain, and the silencing of British MPs. **→3**

U.S. bases in Iraq will not be safe if Iran attacked: Iraqi MP

TEHRAN — Karim Alivi, a member of the Iraqi Parliament's National Security and Defense Committee and a commander of the Iraqi Badr Organization, has said that the United States' bases in Iraq will not be safe if Washington launches a war against Iran.

In an interview with the Baghdad al-Yaum (Baghdad Today), he said that the Iraqi people will stand beside Iran if a war breaks out, ISNA reported on Saturday.

U.S. war drums against Iran have become louder since the Yemeni drone attacks on Saudi oil installations on September 14, which Washington blames on Iran. Iran has called the claim a "maximum deception".

U.S. President Donald Trump has called on Pentagon officials to plan potential attacks. He tweeted that the U.S. was "locked and loaded" but was waiting for Saudi Arabia's rulers to decide on a path forward.



EDITORIAL

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A game that just has become attractive

John Bolton's dismissal from the White House, Netanyahu's defeat in the general elections in the occupied territories, and Saudi Arabia's confusion after destruction of a part of Aramco oil facilities have created a critical and hard situation for the Iran's regional and trans-regional enemies. In the meanwhile, European Troika (England, Germany and France) are observing a scene that its dimensions, permanence, transparency, extent, and depth are not known.

What really happened in the international arena? European actors practically remained silent in the face of applying maximum pressure on Iran by the U.S., and even accompanied it in some cases. Now, they consider the resolution of the crisis in U.S.-Iranian relations as a "strategic requirement". Is this change in policy due to "intrinsic transformation of Europeans?" or "facing with the reality of powerful Iran"?

The phenomena that have been taking place in recent weeks, are in favor of Axis of Resistance and international system. Each one of these phenomena has messages and components that should be considered in strategic and behavioral equations of our country's foreign policy. In the case of John Bolton's dismissal we are facing a "reaction-oriented" phenomenon rather than an "action-oriented" one. In other words, Bolton's unintended dismissal was in fact Trump's reaction to the current changes in the region.

One of these important changes was the endurance of Iran against U.S. maximum pressure, and also using "active resistance". John Bolton believed that by the end of November 2018, the strategy of maximum pressure will seriously affect the Iranian system or nation. In such circumstances, Iran should choose "minimal survival" or "collapse". This illusion of Bolton was like a strategic statement in the White House, and attracted the attention of Trump and his allies. Now, Trump must choose "minimal survival in power" or "failing in next year's election". **→13**

International Persian, non-Persian speech competition held in Tehran

By Abdul Wahid Haidari

KABUL — The finale of the Hamdel International Speech Competition was held at Tehran University on Wednesday afternoon with participation of foreign students from more than 12 countries.

Organised by Hamdel Student Association, an association of Afghan students in Iran, it was the third edition of the competition. The previous two editions were held in 2018 and 2017.

Many dignitaries graced the occasion, including Afghanistan's envoy to Tehran Abdul Ghafoor Liwal and the Head of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature Gholam Ali Haddad Adel.

The competition saw participation of students from many countries, both Persian and non-Persian speakers, including those from Afghanistan, China, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, Nigeria, Senegal, Palestine, Yemen, Hungary, Lebanon and India.

"Once while delivering a speech in my university, I felt I lacked something. Most of my Iranian and Afghan students had the same feeling," said Hamid Anwari, chief organizer of the competition. "Thereafter I decided to attend a speech and communication skills course and finally I decided to launch this international speech competition to help students overcome problems that I had faced during my university days."

About 376 participants from 12 countries, who are currently enrolled in different Iranian universities, took part in the competition. Almost 300 of them were Afghan students while the rest were from other countries.

The competition had two segments – Persian and non-Persian speeches. In the first segment, only Afghan students competed and underlined the challenges of war, insecurity, immigration

and other social problems in their eloquent and powerful speeches. One of the segments of the competition was on Dari dialect.

In the next segment, students from other 11 countries took part and spoke about myriad challenges and opportunities for students in their respective countries. The epic tragedy of Karbala and its aftermath was also one of the themes in their speeches.

Three students were chosen in each segment for the awards. In Persian speakers section, Khadija Sadat Hussaini grabbed the first position, followed by Masoma Mohammadi with second position and Ali Reza Mohammadi third.

In non-Persian speakers section, Wang Xu Ley from China finished with top honors, while Ibrahim Diahabi from Senegal was the first runner-up and Ibad Amin from Lebanon was the second runner-up. **→16**

Why is Aramco's operation a sign of transformation in strategic power equations?

By Amirhossein Rojebi

TEHRAN — The drones of Yemen's army and popular committees, in building which highly sophisticated technology was not used, hit Aramco facility by passing through multibillion-dollar defense equipment of Saudi Arabia. This attack disrupted %50 of production and export of Saudi Arabian oil.

Six special battalions of the U.S.-made Patriot anti-missile system, with the value of tens of billion dollars, are protecting oil facilities of Saudi Arabia.

Some reports indicate that Saudi Arabia has recently added a Patriot anti-missile system to the protective net of Abqaiq oil facilities. But reinforcing of defense systems in this huge oil complex could not resist against Yemeni's drone

strikes. There were significant military features in Yemeni's drones attack on Aramco on Saturday. Challenging super-advanced military systems by seemingly simpler and cheaper weapons has given rise to a new component in future representation of different countries' defense capabilities against each other.

The U.S. has so far been a powerful influence on the political, military, and economic processes and equations in the world by possessing military and economic powers. But the excessive use of sanctions, formation of confronting mechanisms in the world, and significant decline in U.S. military influence, which is largely based on hardware, have disrupted the functioning of the mentioned tools. As a result, the credit of this country and

its allies in the international arena has faded.

Today (Friday, September 9th), the National Security Council meeting in the White House is set to examine the reaction to Aramco's operation. Trump has said that he is not interested to take military action and asked the generals to provide better options. It is unlikely that the U.S. will be able to find a way out of continuous failures and restore its credit by using economic and military powers.

Understanding the transformation of power equations in international field requires U.S. officials' readiness to recognize real power blocks, and to accept their role and function. But, there is no indication of such approach in the current U.S. administration at the present time.



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General Salami says Iran will claim responsibility for anything it does

TEHRAN — Major General Hossein Salami, the head of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), threatened on Saturday that the armed forces will open fire at any country that trespasses into Iran's territories.

"We will hit anyone who intrudes into our borders and will openly announce it," Salami said.

The Guards chief was speaking at Tehran's Holy Defense and Islamic Revolution museum during the unveiling of an exhibition of introducing drones which had been captured after trespassing into Iranian airspace. **→2**



ARTICLE

Hana Saada
Journalist from Algeria

Is a new crisis looming in Egypt amid protests calling for El-Sisi ousting?

"Hey [Donald Trump], your favorite dictator is on his way to NYC, keep him there, Egyptians don't want him back," pro-democracy activist Iyad el-Baghdadi wrote on Twitter.

A series of demonstrations videos have been widely circulating online with many social media users changing their profile photos to plain red in solidarity with Egypt's protesters who piled into Cairo's Tahrir Square calling for the departure of President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, amid security forces quickly rushing to the scene dispersing them.

Similar demonstrations broke out in different cities in the country in a rare move unseen since years. Early in its reign, the Egyptian government imposed strict procedures and harsh crackdown on dissent in the wake of the military coup that ousted former President Mohammed Morsi in 2013, showing no mercy and tolerance with anti-coup protesters in Cairo.

Morsi, the standard-bearer for the Brotherhood's political aspirations, passed away, on June 17th, 2019, due to a heart attack while on trial after almost six years of 2013 military-backed coup which ousted him. The bloody coup gave emergence to the then former defense minister and supreme commander of the Egyptian Armed Forces, increasing the military's already substantial influence.

Meanwhile, and following the military's takeover under the leadership of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Egypt's current president, Morsi was imprisoned inside the notorious Scorpion section of Cairo's maximum security Tora prison, along with other Muslim Brotherhood leaders, who suffered from an intense crackdown. El-Sisi, also, blacklisted Morsi's the organization as a terrorist group.

Despite the restrictions imposed by el-Sisi in a bid to cement his hold, footages of anti-Sisi demonstrations across Egypt are still widely surfacing online, while the hashtag #MidanAl Tahrir (The Square) trending on Twitter in tandem with the events. More than 600,000 tweets about the protests have been posted. **→13**

Military batteries production line launched

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami launched on Saturday production line for advanced military batteries.

During an opening ceremony, the minister also unveiled eight new advanced military batteries.



The new batteries meet all international standards, the minister said. "Unveiling eight new advanced batteries is clear example of the resistance economy's achievements in line with observing Leader's guidelines in reducing dependence on foreigners and relying on domestic capabilities," he said.

He noted, "These products have been manufactured based on the most updated technologies and the latest standards in the world in the area of producing new generations of batteries."

According to the Fars news agency, the minister added by acquiring the know-how of advanced and modern military batteries, Iran will be able to offer superior logistical support in areas of field, aerial, marine, radar and electronic combats.

Iranian military officials have repeatedly said that the country's advances in building different military equipment are merely aimed at defending the country against any threat.

Washington must admit failure of sanction policy, Iran says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Saturday that Washington must admit failure of its sanction policy against Iran.

His comments came as U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that he has ordered sanctions on Iran's central bank at "the highest level."

Mousavi said, "The announced sanctions are not something new and are the previous sanctions imposed in a different way. The United States must admit that its policy of sanction against Iran has failed."

He described the U.S. foreign policy as "confused" and "frustrated" which is just based on "unilateralism, bullying and economic terrorism" and lacks "wise and dynamic initiatives" to settle issues peacefully.

"I hope the United States' officials will understand that they are not the only economic superpower anymore and that there are many countries which are interested in enjoying Iran's market and economic opportunities.

Mousavi urged the international community to devise a new economic and business system to reduce effects of the U.S. hostile actions.

According to CNBC, 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!"

Empty hands

Abdollah Hemmati, governor of Iran's central bank, also said late on Friday that the new sanctions prove Washington's inability to impose more pressures on the Islamic Republic.

"The U.S. administration's imposition of sanctions on the Central Bank of Iran again shows how empty their hands are in finding leverage against Iran," Hemmati stated.

"If such measures had been effective in pushing the cruel demands of that administration, the economic situation in the country (Iran) would be very different from the current one," he added, according to Tasnim.

"The repeated failures of the U.S. administration over the past year and a half show that these sanctions have become more ineffective than ever," the central banker said, adding that the Iranian economy has proven its resilience to sanctions.

"Desperate approach"

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the recent move showed Washington's "desperate approach" toward the Islamic Republic.

"The Americans have imposed any sanctions they could on the Islamic Republic. What they are doing now is sanctioning an entity which has been sanctioned before under a different pretext," Zarif told reporters in New York, according to Press TV.

Trump abandoned the nuclear deal in May 2018 and returned the previous sanctions and imposed new ones in line with what he refers to as a "maximum pressure".

"New sanctions intended to prevent central bank to finance import of food and medicine"

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Saturday that the United States' sanctions on the Central Bank of Iran shows "desperation" and failure of "maximum pressure".

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that he has ordered sanctions on Iran's central bank at "the highest level."

In a tweet, Zarif said that the sanctions displays "the preventing of CBI from financing import of food and medicine for our people".

He added that the sanctions also display "B_Team's fear of U.S. return to negotiation and "B_Team's efforts to drag into war".

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, who was fired on September 10.

Zarif had previously warned that the B-Team could goad Trump into a war with Tehran.

He said in a tweet in June that the "B-Team" scorns diplomacy but thirsts for war with Iran.

Revenues from fuel price rise should be given to low-income people: Rouhani

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President

Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday that revenues of a planned increase in fuel prices should be given to low-income people and those with fixed income.

"Revenues of increase in fuel price should be given to low-income people to make up for reduction in their purchasing power because of fluctuations in inflation," he said during a session of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination.

Rouhani, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani and Judiciary Chief Hojjatoleslam Ebrahim Raeisi attended the session.

First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri; Presidential Chief of Staff Mahmoud Vaezi; Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohammad Nahavandian; Economy Minister Farhad Dehpasand; central bank governor Abdolnasser Hemmati; Parliament Economic Committee Chairman Elias Hazrati; and the Parliament Budget and Planning Committee Chairman Gholamreza Tajgardoost also attended the meeting.

The previous session of the council was held on September 14 during which it was agreed to give more authority to the central bank to control the foreign currency market.

On August 31, the council approved regulations to implement oil projects.

In a session of the council on August 10, Rouhani said that solving problems must



be the main objective of policymaking and decision-making.

With an indirect reference to the reimposition of sanctions on Iran by the Trump administration, the president said, "Both the people and the government have passed difficult times, however, decisions can be taken in line with economic stability and progress and the people's prosperity."

Last year, the Trump administration abandoned the 2015 nuclear deal and restored

old sanctions and ordered new harsh ones. The move resulted in a great devaluation of national currency and high price rises. However, nearly after a year the economy is stabilizing.

Rouhani said his administration is making efforts to resolve the people's economic problems.

To counter the effects of sanctions, the government is taking compensatory measures.

Zarif: 'Even Saudis themselves don't believe the fiction of Iranian involvement' in Aramco attack

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister

Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Friday that "even the Saudis themselves don't believe the fiction of Iranian involvement" in the attacks on the Aramco oil facilities, citing Saudi Arabia's retaliation attack on Hodaideh in Yemen as a reason.

According to Press TV, Saudi Arabia announced on Friday that it had launched a military operation against Hodaideh because the port city was being used by Yemeni fighters to launch ballistic missiles and drones.

In a post on his Twitter account, Zarif said it was "curious" that the Saudis, who had blamed Iran for the September 14 air raids on two major Saudi oil facilities, had retaliated against Hodaideh in violation of a UN-brokered ceasefire agreement signed in Stockholm in December 2018.

"Since the Saudi regime has blamed Iran—baseless as that is—for the attacks on its oil facilities, curious that they retaliated against Hodaideh in Yemen today—breaking a UN ceasefire. It is clear that even the Saudis themselves don't believe the fiction of Iranian involvement."

A Yemeni military spokesman described the assault as a serious escalation and a reprisal for the Yemeni assault on the Saudi oil installations.



Both Riyadh and Washington are continuing to point the finger directly at Iran, with the U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, describing the attack as an act of war by Tehran. Donald Trump has also made a veiled military threats against Iran, saying the U.S. was "locked and loaded".

Tehran has vehemently rejected accusations of involvement in the raids as "lies" and warned of "an all-out war" in the event of military strikes against the country.

In a letter to the UN Security Council on Friday, Iranian Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi said, "It has become a standard practice of

certain officials of the United States who, following any incident -- no matter where and by whom -- without exception, immediately and without any investigation and evidence, declare Iran as the culprit."

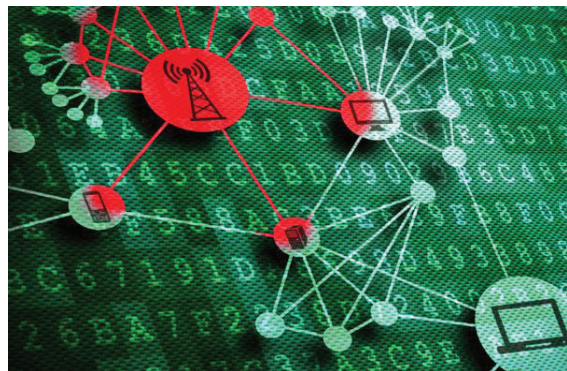
Takht Ravanchi added, "This 'maximum deception' campaign is in line with and a living example of the so-called 'maximum pressure' policy of the United States against Iran."

On Friday, Yemeni Ansarullah's president of the Supreme Political Council Mahdi al-Mashat said Yemenis were calling a halt on drone and missile attacks, hoping "the gesture would be answered" by the Saudis.

Al-Mashat said the peace plan was aimed at ending the conflict "through serious negotiations to achieve a comprehensive national reconciliation which does not exclude anyone".

The official, however, warned that the Yemenis "would not hesitate to launch a period of great pain" if their call for peace was ignored.

Saudi Arabia and its allies launched the war on Yemen in March 2015 in an attempt to reinstall the toppled government of Mansour Hadi who was toppled by the people. The Western-backed offensive, coupled with a naval blockade, has destroyed the country's infrastructure, and led to a massive humanitarian crisis.



Iran denies successful cyber attacks on oil sector

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — On Saturday, Iran denied its

oil infrastructure had been successfully

attacked by a cyber operation.

"Contrary to Western media claims, investigations done today show no successful cyber attack was made on the country's oil installations and other crucial infrastructure," the government's cyber security office stated.

NetBlocks, an organization that tracks internet outages, tweeted early Saturday that "network data show intermittent disruptions to internet connectivity in #Iran," AFP reported.

But it said the cause was unclear and impact limited, affecting "online industrial and government platforms"

and specific providers.

"Data are consistent with a cyber attack or unplanned technical incident on affected networks as opposed to a purposeful withdrawal or shutdown incident," it added.

Iran's Telecommunications Minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi has acknowledged in the past that Tehran has "been facing cyber terrorism -- such as Stuxnet."

The Stuxnet virus, discovered in 2010, is believed to have been engineered by Israel and the U.S. to damage nuclear facilities in Iran.

Iran at the time accused the U.S. and Israel of using the virus to target its centrifuges used for uranium enrichment.

U.S. 'maximum deception' in line with 'maximum pressure' policy, Iran says of Aramco attack

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Majid

Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, has said that the United States' campaign of "maximum deception" is in line with Washington's policy of "maximum pressure" against Iran.

"This 'maximum deception' campaign is in line with and a living example of the so-called 'maximum pressure' policy of the United States against," he wrote in a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres published by ISNA on Friday.

The letter by Ambassador Takht-Ravanchi came after the United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blamed Iran without any substantiated evidence for the September 14 drone strikes on the Saudi Aramco oil installations claimed by the Yemenis.

In a tweet on September 15, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also said that the U.S. 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.

Takht-Ravanchi said in the letter that following any incident, Washington declares Iran as the culprit immediately and without any investigation and evidence.

Following is full text of the letter:

I would also like to reiterated that Iran has not conducted any activity inconsistent with paragraph 3 of annex B to resolution 2231 (2015), and accordingly, it is determined to



resolutely continue its activities related to ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles, both of which are its inherent rights under international law and are necessary for securing its security as well as socioeconomic

interests, respectively.

At the same time, since Iran's activities related to space launch vehicles and ballistic missiles fall outside the purview or competence of resolution 2231 (2015) and its

Ambassador Takht-Ravanchi also says, Iran "is determined to resolutely continue its activities related to ballistic missiles and space launch vehicles, both of which are its inherent rights under international law and are necessary for securing its security as well as socioeconomic interests."

annexes, the Secretary-General is therefore expected to seriously avoid reporting on Iran's such activities in his next reports on the implementation of that resolution.

Seizing this opportunity, I would also like to categorically reject the allegations against Iran made by the Permanent Representative of the United States at the 8619th meeting of the Security Council on 16 September 2019 (S/PV.8619). It has become a standard practice of certain officials of the United States who, following any incident -- no matter where and by whom -- without exception, immediately and without any investigation and evidence, declare Iran as the culprit. This "maximum deception" campaign is in line with and a living example of the so-called "maximum pressure" policy of the United States against Iran. It is evident that no amount of smear campaign, disinformation and deception against Iran can change the realities about the illegal practices and irresponsible policies of the United States or distract attention away from its destructive policies, malign behavior and destabilizing measures, in particular in the Middle East. Instead of such futile attempts and baseless allegations, the United States must stop exporting an unprecedented amount of sophisticated weaponry to the Middle East, which are used including for death and destruction in Yemen by the closest regional allies of the United States.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

General Salami says Iran will claim responsibility for anything it does

Any country that attacks Iran will turn into ‘main battlefield’, IRGC chief warns

1 → Tensions between the U.S. and Iran have soared in recent days, after an attack led by Yemeni Armed Forces against Saudi Arabia’s oil facilities, for which Washington and Riyadh have blamed Iran.

Iran has denied involvement in the attack, and a fierce war of words has been playing out between the two sides, with U.S. President Donald Trump threatening that his forces were “locked and loaded”.

Salami warned that any country that attacks Iran will see its territory become the “main battlefield”.

The top general also said Iran was “ready for any type of scenario”.

“Whoever wants their land to become the main battlefield, go ahead,” Salami said.

He added, “We will never allow any war to encroach upon Iran’s territory.”

He reiterated that Iran will claim responsibility for anything it does.

During the ceremony on Saturday, the IRGC also showed the domestically manufactured Khordad 3 air defense battery, which was used to shoot down a U.S. Global Hawk drone on June 20.

“What are your drones doing in our airspace? We will shoot them down, shoot anything that encroaches on our airspace,” said Salami.

The commander called the downing of the spy drone a “sweet anecdote”, saying the incident demonstrated the collapse of the technological power of the United States in the world.

Addressing Washington, the general said, “Sometimes they talk of military options....but “a limited aggression will not remain limited.”

“We tend towards punishment and pursuit [of aggressors] and will not rest until the collapse of any aggressor,” he said. “So do not make a mistake and take these into your calculations.”

On June 20, the IRGC Aerospace unit downed an American RQ-4 Global Hawk drone



“A limited aggression will not remain limited,” the IRGC chief warns.

over the Strait of Hormuz after it violated Iranian airspace. Despite the U.S. claims that the drone had been flying over international waters, Iran said it had retrieved sections of the drone in its own territorial waters where it was shot down.

In comments made a few hours after the incident, Salami said the incident had a straightforward message that any foreign intrusion into Iranian territories would draw a crushing response.

■ Hajizadeh: Crushing response awaits those who dare make a mistake

In similar remarks during the opening of the exhibition on Saturday, Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the IRGC

Aerospace unit, said if the enemy dares to make a mistake, it will definitely face a “crushing response”.

Today, the largest drone collection of the world was unveiled at the Holy Defense and Islamic Revolution museum, he said. “This museum is a museum of learning a lesson for those who threaten the Iranian nation.”

“The enemies should learn a lesson and change their tone with the Iranian nation,” he added.

Earlier this month, Hajizadeh had revealed that Iran was ready to attack U.S. bases in the region if the Pentagon tried to retaliate after the drone downing.

“As was mentioned in previous interviews,

if they wanted to attack, we would have attacked U.S. bases with missiles, and we were ready, and we would have targeted the U.S. base in al-Udeid in Qatar or al-Dhafra in the Emirates or their ships in the Gulf of Oman or Arabian Sea, and if they had hit us, we would have hit them back,” General Hajizadeh said in an interview with the Nader’s Show, hosted by Nader Talebzadeh.

“Of course, they knew and had intelligence and were aware of the consequences of that eventuality,” he said. “But if that incident had occurred, the conflict would have continued and intensified.”

The IRGC general also asked the American people what their reactions would be if Iran sent its drones along the U.S. coasts. “In other words, if we send our drones and begin doing these things, would the U.S. tolerate it? Naturally, they wouldn’t tolerate it.”

Tensions started to build up between the U.S. and Iran after Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in May 2018, and imposed sanctions against Tehran in a bid to put maximum pressure on the Islamic Republic. Tehran has slammed the sanctions, which have affected the lives of Iranians, as “economic terrorism”.

■ Army chief: U.S. will be hit ten times if it hits Iran once

Meanwhile, Chief of the Iranian Army Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi said in an interview with Iran’s state TV that the U.S. will be hit ten times if it hits Iran once, ISNA reported on Saturday.

“The Americans sent a message recently that ‘we would hit one point and you don’t respond so that the quarrel ends’,” Mousavi said. “We responded that ‘if you hit once, you will be hit ten times.’”

He also said Iran does not care who the aggressor is and will respond firmly to anyone who tries to intrude into Iranian territories.

General: Iran, Russia, China to hold naval drills soon

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian, Russian and Chinese military forces will conduct joint naval drills in the international waters of the Indian Ocean and the Sea of Oman “in the near future”, an Iranian general said on Saturday.

“The drills pursue various objectives, namely sharing tactical and military experiences, but they can be political as well and are indicative of some kind of convergence among the participants,” said Brigadier General Ghadir Nezami, head of the international and diplomatic affairs of the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces.

Nezami underlined that the drills will be held for the first time since the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Press TV reported.

However, he made no mention of the exact date of the exercises.

Back in July, Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi unveiled plans for a joint naval drill with Russia in coming months with the aim of boosting mil-



itary cooperation between the two countries particularly with regard to naval forces.

In his Saturday remarks, Nezami an-

nounced that Tehran would soon host delegations at the level of military chiefs and defense ministers from certain regional

countries, without further elaboration.

Pointing to a recent visit by Iranian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Major General Mohammad Baqeri to China, Nezami said joint military cooperation between Iran and China is on the rise, particularly in the field of manufacture, purchase and production of army equipment.

Tensions have been running high between Tehran and Washington since last year, when President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the 2015 multilateral nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and unleashed the “toughest ever” sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

Recently, the U.S. has taken a quasi-war-like posture against Iran and stepped up its provocative military moves in the Middle East, among them the June 20 incursion of an American spy drone into the Iranian airspace.

Saudi Arabia doesn’t need U.S. to defend itself, senator says

Rand Paul says: ‘Why do we always have to get involved?’

By staff and agency

Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle are urging President Donald Trump to step back from potential conflict with Iran following last weekend’s attack against vital Saudi Arabian oil infrastructure, which both Washington and Riyadh have blamed on Iran, Newsweek reported on Friday.

Iran has categorically rejected the claim that it was behind the attack, calling the accusation a “maximum deception” in line with the Trump administration “maximum pressure” campaign against Tehran.

Yemenis — currently fighting against a Saudi-led group as part of Yemen’s civil war — took responsibility for the attack, which caused a spike in oil prices and forced Saudi Arabia to shut down half of its oil production operations.

The initial U.S. reaction was bellicose, with Trump declaring the country “locked and loaded” to respond and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo branding the operation an “act of war.” But the administration now seems to be moving away from the military option.

This may ease the concerns of Republican and Democratic lawmakers, who had urged the White House not to escalate the situation and end up in an unwanted and costly conflict with the Iranians.

On Thursday, for example, GOP Kentucky Senator Rand Paul suggested that long-time ally Saudi Arabia does not necessarily need American protection, given the amount the conservative kingdom spends on its armed forces.

“If you add Saudi Arabia’s military budget to all their allies, all these (Persian) Gulf sheikdoms that surround Saudi Arabia, they spend eight times more on military than Iran,” Paul told the One America News Network Thursday.

“So they’re more than capable—I think—of holding off Iran, retaliating against Iran,” he added. “That’s the real question, why does it always have to be the U.S.? Why do we always have to get involved?”

The weekend’s attacks are spillover from the ongoing civil war in Yemen, in which the Saudi-led coalition is fighting against the Houthis on behalf of the deposed government.



“If you add Saudi Arabia’s military budget to all their allies, all these sheikdoms that surround Saudi Arabia, they spend eight times more on military than Iran,” Paul told the One America News Network Thursday.

The conflict has resulted in one of the worst humanitarian disasters in living memory, with more than 90,000 people killed, more than 3 million people displaced and some 14 million more at risk of starvation.

Paul has been involved in bipartisan efforts to end the fighting—and U.S. support for it—in Yemen.

“I’ve been an advocate of trying to find a diplomatic way to come to a resolution of the Yemeni civil war,” Paul said, noting that with the latest round of escalation “it doesn’t

look like we’re going more towards diplomacy.”

■ Trump Focuses on Defending Saudis

According to the New York Times, President Trump is sending a modest deployment of American troops to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, along with air and missile defense systems, in response to the attacks on Saudi oil facilities.

Defense Secretary Mark T. Esper called the decision, which came on Friday during a White House meeting with top national security officials, “defensive in nature.” Defense Department officials said the Pentagon would deploy additional antimissile batteries to Saudi Arabia and might also deploy additional warplanes. The aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln may extend its stay in the region as well, the officials said.

Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said the precise number of American troops headed to the region had not been determined, but that it would be a “moderate deployment” in the hundreds, not thousands.

At the White House on Friday, Trump boasted that he could order a retaliatory strike “in one minute,” and boasted equally that his current restraint should be seen as a sign of strength and toughness.

Although the administration is not ruling out military strikes, senior officials indicated that, for now, the president was content to remain within the parameters of defense, not offense. Pressed by reporters about whether the administration was still considering so-called kinetic action, or military strikes, Esper said, “That’s not where we are right now.”

The 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.”

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a top military adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, warned on Friday that 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.

Rouhani felicitates Armenia on Independence Day

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani has congratulated Armenia’s Independence Day in two separate messages to Armenian President Armen Sarkissian and Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

In his messages, President Rouhani expressed the hope that Iran-Armenia relations would grow considering the two sides’ close bonds and potential, Tasnim reported on Saturday.



He also wished welfare and prosperity for the people of Armenia.

In February, Prime Minister Pashinyan paid a visit to Iran and met with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

During the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei hailed Armenia as a good neighbor of Iran, stressing that the two nations should maintain friendly ties despite the U.S. plots.

“Contrary to what the U.S. desires, the ties between Iran and Armenia should be strong, persistent and friendly,” the Leader stressed.

Ayatollah Khamenei also described the increased cooperation and friendly relations as a duty to be conducted in favor of common interests of Iran and Armenia, saying, “Of course, the U.S. is completely unreliable and always tries to cause sedition, corruption, conflict and war; they are against the relations between Iran and Armenia and they oppose the interests of the nations. However, in response, we need to strengthen our relations and cooperation.”

B-Team took Trump for an ‘easy mark’: Zarif

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has referred to recent remarks by former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson about how Israelis have played U.S. President Donald Trump, saying Rex Tillerson’s remarks confirms that the B-Team took Trump for an “easy mark”.

“Even President Trump’s former Secretary of State now confirms what we have long pointed out: #B_Team took @realDonaldTrump for an easy mark who could be lied to and pushed to war—and the US military as their personal mercenary,” Zarif said in a tweet on Saturday.

“Some still do, despite his firing of one member,” he added.

Tillerson said on Wednesday that Israeli officials “played” President Trump in their conversations with him, warning that a “healthy amount of skepticism” is needed in dealings with Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The comments came during a panel discussion at Harvard University in which Tillerson, who was fired by Trump last year, touched on a variety of themes from his tenure, including Iran, his hiring freeze at the State Department and the unpredictable nature of Israel’s longest-serving prime minister, Netanyahu.

“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 said, according to the Harvard Gazette. “We later exposed it to the president so he understood, ‘You’ve been played.’”

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.

Bolton, a member of the B-Team, was fired on September 10.

Iranian professors voice concerns over destruction of democracy in Britain

1 → One of the longest sessions in the history of the British Parliament ended early on Tuesday morning in extraordinary scenes, with protests from placard-waving lawmakers and attempts to prevent the Speaker of the House from leaving his chair, CNN reported.

Opposition members of the House of Commons were furious at the five-week prorogation of Parliament, which critics say is an attempt by UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson to silence debate on Brexit and allow the country to slide towards a no-deal split from the European Union.

The government insists prorogation -- or suspension -- is constitutional and entirely normal for a new administration. But that has not satisfied members of parliament who have dealt Johnson six defeats in six days, blocking a no-deal Brexit and then rejecting a government motion for snap elections on Monday night, in what was the final vote of the parliamentary session.

The Iranian professors said the suspension of the British parliament is a clear sign of the collapse of the British democracy and is a violation of the British people’s rights.

At the end of the letter, they wished for the growth of the freedom-seeking spirits in Britain.



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	297712.6
IFX	3952.86

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,254 rials
GBP	52,424 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$63.20/b
WTI	\$58.09/b
OPEC Basket	\$64.39/b
Gold	\$1,518.50/oz
Silver	\$18.04/oz
Platinum	\$949.95/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

The do’s and don’ts of investing when economy slows and recession looms

By Richard Hartung

The Singapore economy struggled in the second quarter and the outlook has been downgraded.

While the stock market has remained somewhat resilient, a recession could tip it further downwards.

Investors can benefit from preparing for a slowing economy or even a recession.

The big news has indeed been that Singapore’s GDP shrank by 3.3 per cent from the first quarter to the second quarter this year, with year-on-year growth of 1.1 percent the slowest in a decade.

Growth in the construction and services sectors have been especially hard-hit, suggesting that businesses and consumers are both becoming more cautious.

The decade-low growth has led to concerns that Singapore may fall into a recession.

Moreover, securities firm Maybank Kim Eng noted that the Singapore market (STI) fell 5.9 percent in August, as investors fled risky assets amid an escalation in the U.S.-China trade war and an inversion in the U.S. yield curve, which has been a reliable predictor of recessions.

While the STI is still up more than 1 percent for the year, including dividends, the risk of further declines is significant.

While recessions happen periodically and are not unusual, investment advisory firm Motley Fool said that the individual impacts of a recession can be longer-lasting and may cause permanent financial damage to individuals who are not prepared for the short-term implications or cannot quickly get back on their feet.

The two things that will have the biggest impact on consumers’ ability to emerge unscathed are to build up emergency savings and pay off high-interest debt.

From an investment perspective, financial management firm Vanguard Australia suggests that investors focus on saving more, spending less and controlling investment costs.

Investors should also adhere to “time-tested principles” such as maintaining a long-term focus, having a disciplined asset allocation and conducting periodic portfolio rebalances.

Varieties of sectors

By ensuring that their assets are allocated across a variety of sectors, including both stocks and bonds, investors can take a somewhat more conservative stance and still benefit when the market moves up.

What investors should not do is to sell low and buy high.

A key risk, Motley Fool says, is to panic and sell stocks or mutual funds.

While stock markets have lost as much as 30 percent in recent recessions, investors need to realize that large drops are completely normal.

Selling stocks rarely results in savvy “buying at the bottom” for most people — and the stock market starts to recover before people are ready to reinvest, so they miss out on the market’s recovery.

By taking a “buy and hold” approach rather than selling, investors can avoid the mistake of selling at the worst time and missing out on the market’s recovery.

Portfolio management firm Betterment said that during every stock market drop, you will hear explanations about why the market sold off and how you can protect yourself from losses. “If you put that advice to work, you’re likely to do more harm than good by locking in losses. Making decisions in the heat of the moment rarely goes well. Instead, write out a downturn plan, and stick to it.”

Your investment strategy should be one that has been proven to stand the test of time and economic cycles, Singapore personal finance website Dollars and Sense suggests.

During a downturn, long-term investors can benefit from a well-diversified portfolio spread across asset classes, sectors and regions.

Index funds tied to the United States S&P 500 or the Dow Jones indices, for instance, have survived economic downturns.

“Diversify your portfolio across cash, CPF, bonds, shares and properties,” Dollars and Sense advises.

Again, though, experts warn that timing the market so that you sell before shares drop and buy back in at the right time is nearly impossible.

Instead, reassess whether you are still comfortable with your investments, particularly in riskier areas of the market that you may have moved into recently to increase returns, and decide whether you need to reallocate for the longer term.

The asset allocation may vary depending on your stage in life and risk profile.

If you’re comfortable taking more risk or are younger and can take a longer-term perspective for your investments, for example, you may prefer a portfolio with a higher percentage of share from different sectors.

(Source: todayonline.com)

‘Iran to become a major rail manufacturer in region’

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The value of non-oil exports from Isfahan Province has risen 180 percent during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22) from the same period of time in the past year, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade

Minister Reza Rahmani told reporters on Saturday.

The minister made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony to inaugurate a cargo terminal in Isfahan Shahid Beheshti International Airport which was participated also by Transport Minister

Mohammad Eslami, Shata reported.

Rahmani also put the weight of non-oil exports from the province during the four-month period of this year at 2.452 million tons which is 37 percent more than that of the same time span in the previous year.

He said that the 180-percent rise in the value of non-oil exports from this province is a unique success in the country, adding, “Exports from Isfahan Province will be accelerated through the cargo terminal of Shahid Beheshti International Airport which was inaugurated today.”

Non-oil exports from Isfahan Province up 180% in 4 months on year

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Value of trades at IME rises 6% in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — During weekdays ending on September 19, while 503,221 tons of commodities worth over \$595 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), the market experienced a growth of 17 percent and six percent in its trading volume and value, respectively.

According to the report from IME International Affairs and Public Relations Department, last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 186,082 tons of various products worth close to \$240 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 187,807 tons of steel, 4,335 tons of copper, 2,820 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrates, as well as 11 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 316,739 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$361 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 103,000 tons of VB feed stock, 80,714 tons of bitumen, 74,658 tons of polymer products, 26,236 tons of chemical products, 2,525 tons of insulation, 24,900 tons of lube cut oil, 345 tons of base oil, 2,400 tons of slaps waxes as well as 2,230 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 400 tons of commodities was traded on the side market of IME.



On June 24, during the meeting of IME shareholders, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad said that this exchange has prepared ten macro plans to improve its performance during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020).

He mentioned development of underlying assets through existing instruments, development of financial instruments for commodity-backed securities, expansion of market size and depth, increasing cooperation with other organizations,

IMF praises New Zealand economy

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) says the New Zealand economy is operating at “close to potential”, but warns the future outlook is “tilted to the downside”.

As per newshub.co.nz, in its latest review of how New Zealand is doing, the IMF praised its low unemployment figures and rising wages, crediting boosts to the minimum wage.

“New Zealand’s economic expansion is still solid,” it said.

“Despite the loss of momentum in economic activity and a cooling in housing markets, output has remained close to

potential, and the unemployment rate has continued to decline.

“Broader price and wage pressures have not yet emerged even though the economy has operated close to capacity for some time.”

GDP growth has cooled off in the past couple of years, which the IMF put down to the end of post-quake reconstruction in Christchurch, a drop-off in net migration and the end of the Auckland housing boom.

“Downside risks to the economic outlook in New Zealand have increased, however, reflecting higher downside risks to the global economic outlook,” the IMF said.

By Mark John

Prodded by worries about the worst global economic outlook in a decade and electorates still smarting from years of austerity, euro zone governments are starting to loosen their budgetary purse strings.

Don’t expect “new deal” investment programs to transform the region’s economy, however, or even the fiscal shot in the arm that European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi says is needed at least, not until things get much worse.

“There is a shift towards talking about stimulus but there is no dramatic leap forward,” said Philippe Legrain, adviser to the European Commission during the aftermath of Europe’s 2009 sovereign debt crisis and author of the book “European Spring”, a diagnosis of Europe’s economic failings.

“There is no sense of urgency so far ... that might happen when the euro zone enters recession.”

Economists now see a one-in-four chance of a euro zone recession in the coming year. The possibility of a no-deal Brexit in the coming weeks or months should also be concentrating minds across the 19 countries that use the euro.

Advocates of pro-growth policies are pegging their hopes on France’s Emmanuel Macron emerging as the region’s pre-eminent politician and incoming ECB chief Christine Lagarde doubling down on Draghi’s lobbying of debt-averse northern governments.

The protracted austerity

Europe’s response to the crisis of a decade ago protracted austerity combined with massive central bank stimulus and still-unfinished banking reforms saved the euro but has left many of its economies numbed. Euro zone growth was just 0.2 percent in the second quarter of 2019.

While the ECB’s 2.6 trillion euro stimulus program may have helped kick-start a post-crisis recovery of sorts, deep cuts to public spending are blamed for exacerbating poverty and shredding Europe’s welfare safety nets.

Stung by the rise of anti-establishment parties across the continent, and with regional powerhouse Germany on the brink of recession, governments are starting to act.

In Angela Merkel’s last months as German chancellor, pol-



Christine Lagarde

iticians in Berlin are for the first time in years publicly questioning a self-imposed balanced budget rule and exploring ways to spend off-budget.

In its first budget since the “yellow vest” street protests began last year, France will this week offer 9 billion euros (£7.9 billion) of tax cuts and put on hold some earlier debt-cutting promises.

The “priority now is to address the totally justified anger of those who are not making ends meet,” Budget Minister Gerald Darmanin told Le Parisien daily.

Even more eye-catching was last week’s announcement by the Netherlands, one of the euro zone’s fiercest advocates of fiscal probity, of new spending on health and housing. An ambitious national investment fund will be launched there next year.

And Italy’s new government has signaled it will deliver an expansionary 2020 budget while it drums up support for its campaign to re-focus the EU’s budget rules to promote growth.

The game-changing shift

But hard evidence of a game-changing shift remains absent, even as record-low debt costs have opened the door to an estimated 140 billion euros of spending by the end of 2021.

Merkel on Friday had the chance to use domestic concern about climate change as cover to issue new debt to re-set the economy on a green path and inject some short-term stimulus.



The Islamic Republic of Iran Railways says Iran needs an average of 300,000-

400,000 tons of rails per year to meet the needs of this key transport sector.

and strengthening IME brand as some of the mentioned macro plans.

Soltani-Nejad has previously announced that IME accounted for 39 percent of the value of the total trades in the Iranian capital market during the past Iranian calendar year.

He put the value of IME trades at 1.78 quadrillion rials (about \$42.3 billion) in the past year.

The value of trades at IME rose 52 percent in the past calendar year from its previous year.

Over 24.84 million tons of commodities valued at 884.3 trillion rials (about \$21.05 billion) were traded at the physical market of IME, showing seven percent fall in the amount and 77 percent rise in the worth of trades year on year.

Applying new financial instruments in Iranian capital market was one of the achievements of the country’s exchange markets during the past year.

In this due, IME launched “option” in early March 2019 in an approach to diversify financing methods for agricultural products.

Option is a contract which gives the buyer (the owner or holder of the option) the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an underlying asset or instrument at a specified strike price prior to or on a specified date, depending on the form of the option.

is worth investigating,” he told interest.co.nz in June.

National Party leader Simon Bridges attacked the Government over this week’s GDP figures, which showed 2.1 percent growth over the 12 months to June - ahead of the OECD average of 1.6 percent.

“Kiwis are paying the price for Labor’s weak and incompetent approach to the economy,” he wrote on Twitter on Thursday.

“GDP is down yet again and the PM and Grant Robertson continue to blame everyone but themselves. Labor is failing to deliver, plain and simple.”

But the plan announced, offering a headline figure of 50 billion euros of new measures but in a budget-neutral package spread over four years, fell short of some expectations.

“We think any boost to demand would be too small to make much difference to short-term growth prospects in the euro-zone as a whole,” Andrew Kenningham of Capital Economics wrote in a note entitled “Wishful thinking about German fiscal policy”.

He noted that the package fell well short of the stimulus announced by Merkel’s coalition in 2009/10, worth 1.5% of GDP.

And while there was much excitement at media reports that the Dutch government would funnel 50 billion euros — 6% of GDP — into its proposed investment fund, the final announcement omitted any specific figure.

The “Dutch did not give Draghi a mind-blowing farewell present,” noted Marcel Klok, senior economist at ING bank.

Euro zone finance ministers agreed this month that fiscal policy must “play a part” in countering the downturn but made clear they planned no coordinated stimulus like the 200 billion euro package agreed in 2008 after Lehman Brothers collapsed.

Helping the Eurozone nations

Christian Odendahl of the Center for European Reform said it was clear from resistance within the bloc to a common budget to help out euro zone nations in difficulty that there is limited appetite to shake up the current EU framework.

Moreover Italy’s push for “green” investments to be exempted from national deficits has got short shrift in Brussels, a source close to the matter said, adding that any flexibility would be no more than 0.25 GDP points of the structural deficit.

“I’m not sure the review of fiscal rules will get far,” said Odendahl. The “political dynamic in Europe has not shifted.”

Some think that may change if the French get their way. As the close of the Merkel era allows Macron to emerge as the region’s de facto leader, France is already pushing the idea of a “growth compact” while expressing vocally its concerns about the German slowdown.

Many expect his compatriot Lagarde to amplify Draghi’s call for fiscal support when she arrives at the ECB next month.

“She will have to do a lot beyond simple monetary policy to persuade governments to play their role,” said Legrain.

(Source: euronews.com)

NIGTC indigenizes new technology to maintain high pressure pipelines

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Gas Transmission Company (NIGTC) has localized the technological know-how of repairing high pressure gas pipelines using composite wrapping, Shana reported on Saturday.

“For the first time, the knowledge of high-pressure gas pipeline repairs using composite technology has become indigenized by capable Iranian knowledge-based companies,” NIGTC’s Managing Director Saied Tavakoli told the oil ministry’s news portal.

According to the official, considering the U.S. sanctions on the country’s oil and gas industry, indigenizing this technology was put on the agenda since two years ago.

“Repairing high-pressure gas pipelines using composite wrapping was previously monopolized by U.S. and European companies,” he said.

The official noted that the mentioned companies couldn’t provide any services to Iran because of the sanctions. “So NIGTC decided to invest on the potentials and



capabilities of domestic companies and it paid off well.”

Back in July, NIGTC had announced that

Iranian experts also achieved the know-how for producing vibration monitoring and protection systems for gas transmission lines.

According to Tavakoli, the domestically-made vibration monitoring and protection systems would be 20 more cost-efficient than foreign samples, IRNA reported.

In May 2018, Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from an international deal with Iran, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and in November the sanctions were reimposed on the country’s energy sector.

Since then, most of the foreign companies and manufacturers of industry equipment which were collaborating with Iran, cut their ties threatened by the consequences of having economic ties with Tehran.

In this regard, the country has been taking all necessary measures to push through the situation and withstand the pressures imposed by the sanction.

Therefore, moving toward domestic production and manufacturing all the necessary equipment inside the country has become a top priority for the Iranian government in the past few years.

IRENEX to hold 9th round of heavy crude oil offering on Tuesday

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) will offer two million barrels of heavy crude oil at Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) on Tuesday, ISNA reported.

The base price for this round of offering, which is the ninth round, is \$54.33 per barrel.

According to Iran’s current year budget law, NIOC is obliged to offer two million barrels of heavy crude oil, two million barrels of light crude and two million barrels of gas condensate every month.

NIOC, however has been offering various grades of crude oil almost every week, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year.

As decided by NIOC in collaboration with IRENEX, buyers can receive their cargo up to three months after the transaction, and the delivery of the cargo in other regions is subject to NIOC approval.

Since the U.S.’s withdrew from Iran’s nuclear pact in May 2018, vowing to drive Iran’s oil exports down to zero, the Islamic Republic has been taking various measures to counter the U.S. actions and to keep its oil exports levels as high as possible.

One of the main strategies that Iran chose to execute to help its oil exports afloat has been trying new ways to diversify the mechanism of oil sales, one of which is offering oil at the country’s stock market.

NIOC offered light crude oil at IRENEX first on October

28, 2018 just few days before new U.S. sanctions on Iran’s petroleum sector took effect (November 4). In the first round, NIOC could sell some 280,000 barrels of crude oil at \$74.85 per barrel. With the daily supply amount of one million barrels, the market wrapped up by selling eight 35,000-barrel cargos of oil on the day.

Offering gas condensate at IRENEX came after the successful offering of crude oil at this market. The first offering was done on February 13, which failed to attract customers.

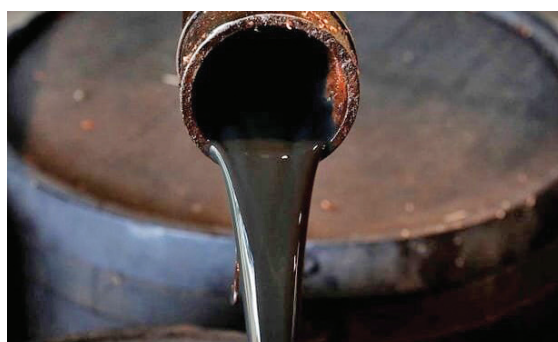
And then the turn came to heavy crude. Offering heavy crude at IRENEX came after NIOC offered light crude at this stock market in eight round.

National Iranian Oil Company sold 70,000 barrels of heavy crude oil at IRENEX for the first time on April 30. In the first round one million barrels of heavy crude was offered at a base price of \$60.68.

NIOC’s representative in IRENEX has said that the company will continue offering oil at IRENEX, Mehr news agency reported.

“Offering oil and gas condensate in the international ring of IRENEX has become a legal obligation, and it will definitely be a lasting move,” Amir Hossein Tebyanian said in a press conference hosted by Mehr news agency at the place of the agency in early July.

Briefing the press about the procedures and processes of NIOC’s oil and gas condensate offerings at IRENEX, the official noted that physical sales of oil at IRENEX is just the first step



and the main goal is to activate other financial instruments, and offer Iranian crude in the regional stock markets.

“We will continue offering oil at the IRENEX in order to institutionalize the necessary procedures which are a prerequisite for improving IRENEX to the level of world class stock exchanges,” he said.

According to the official, IRENEX was initially founded in an attempt to permit the Iranian private sector export crude oil since Washington aims to cut Iran’s oil sales.

However now, foreign buyers have also expressed willingness to engage in IRENEX oil offerings and welcoming the idea, NIOC is preparing necessary bases for them to be able to do so.

The world is installing a ton of renewables, but coal could screw things up

By Yessenia Funes

The International Energy Agency (IEA) expects the capacity for renewable energy to grow by almost 12 percent this year. Gotta love us some solar and wind energy! The problem is, the world is still having a dirty love affair with coal.

The agency released these new projects Friday, noting that this growth is the fastest the industry has seen since 2015. The findings are much welcome: Renewables saw virtually no growth between 2017 and 2018. And in the era of the climate crisis, the industry needs to grow if our energy grid can shift toward cleaner energy without government intervention.

This year’s increase amounts to some 200 gigawatts. However, as the IEA makes clear, the capacity for renewables needs to grow more than 300 gigawatts a year by 2030 globally if we’re going to actually meet the goals the Paris Agreement lays out.



“These latest numbers give us many reasons to celebrate: Renewable electricity additions are now growing at their fastest pace in four years after a disappointing 2018,” said IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol, in a statement. “We are witnessing a drastic decline in the cost of solar power together with strong growth in onshore wind, and offshore wind is showing encouraging signs.”

Around the world, we’re seeing more investment in renewable energy — whether it’s the largest offshore wind farm that

came online in the UK earlier this year or the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe launching a solar farm in North Dakota. Even multinational corporations are signing on.

Google just announced Thursday it will purchase 1,600 megawatts (or 1.6 gigawatts) of wind and solar, which would be the largest purchase of clean energy from a single company. It’s encouraging, especially as the science shows that time is running out to address the climate crisis.

Still, this only one side of the coin. Another report out Thursday reminds us that many countries are still growing their dependence on coal.

■ The coal expansion

Germany-based environmental group Urgewald published an update to its list that tracks coal expansion and found that if all the planned coal projects actually happen, they’ll add more than 579 gigawatts to the global grid. That’s a nearly 29 percent increase to current coal capacity — and that’s

the complete opposite of what is needed to prevent further climate disaster.

However, in countries such as Bangladesh, Vietnam, and Indonesia, coal is often the most affordable option for increasing energy access.

This energy is only affordable, though, because our current economic system fails to account for the externalities of extracting and burning coal.

There are health costs related to pollution, as well as costs related to killing our planet! Yet our economic models fail to examine these impacts. A study published earlier this year found that, in the U.S., replacing coal plants with solar facilities would save us money.

Put simply, world powers got a lot of work to do. As leaders meet next week to talk climate change at the UN Climate Action Summit, let’s hope they figure out a way to ensure that all energy infrastructure moving forward is good for both the planet and public health.

(Source: earth.gizmodo.com)

EDF Renewables commissions the 27 MW Les Taillades wind farm in the Lozère department



Continuing its expansion in France, EDF Renewables has commissioned Les Taillades, a wind farm with 27 MW installed capacity located in the Lozère department. This new wind power facility is perfectly aligned with the EDF Group’s Cap 2030 strategy, which aims to double the EDF Group’s renewable energy capacity in France and worldwide to 50 GW net by 2030. The new wind farm consists of nine 3 MW wind turbines located at an altitude of 1,400m in the Les Taillades hills.

As per evwind.es, the area lies in the Chasseradès and Bastide-Puylaurent municipalities in the Massif de la Gardille, north of Mont Lozère and the Cévennes. The energy generated by the facility will be equivalent to the annual electricity consumption of 30,000 people, or close to 40% of Lozère’s population.

Several local businesses were involved in the construction project thanks to the social and environmental charter put in

place by EDF Renewables. Up to 100 people worked on building the facility, which took more than 20 months to complete. Local officials have paid tribute to the EDF Group’s commitment and that of its subsidiary EDF Renewables to the area’s economic development and energy transition.

Close attention has been paid to environmental and local concerns throughout the project to integrate the wind farm successfully. For example, a local community project — due to be signed shortly — by EDF Renewables and the Mont-Lozère community of municipalities aims to energize and add value to the local (landscape, architectural and tourist) heritage.

EDF Renewables owns 528.5 MW in installed capacity (483.4 MW in wind and 45.1 MWp in solar energy) in the Occitanie region, making it an active contributor to the region’s and France’s energy transition.

EDF Renewables is a leading international player in renewable energies, with gross installed capacity of 12.5 GW worldwide. Its development is mainly focused on wind and solar photovoltaic power. EDF Renewables operates mostly in Europe and North America but is continuing to grow by moving into promising emerging regions such as Brazil, China, India, South Africa and the Middle East. The company has strong positions in offshore wind power, but also in other areas of the renewable energies industry such distributed energy and energy storage. EDF Renewables develops, builds, operates and maintains renewable energies projects, both for itself and for third parties. Most of its international subsidiaries bear the EDF Renewables brand. EDF Renewables is the EDF Group subsidiary specializing in developing solar and wind power.

Tehran to host 3rd FUELEX expo on Sept. 22-25

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** — The 3rd International Exhibition of Fuel Stations and Related Industries (FUELEX) is due to be held during September 22-25, at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds, IRIB reported.

According to Managing Director of Iran International Exhibitions Company Bahman Hosseinzadeh, the exhibition is aimed at supporting domestic production, resilient economy and linking the country’s academic sector with the industry.

The 2nd edition of the exhibition was held in February 21-24, at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

Over 60 domestic companies and 12 foreign exhibitors from various countries including Japan, Malaysia, and Turkey participated in the second edition of the exhibition.

With 115 million liters per day of gasoline production, Iran is one of the biggest producers of the commodity in the region and world, according to Hosseinzadeh. “More than 100 million liters of oil products are distributed through fuel stations nationwide on a daily basis,” he said.



China is now the dominant factor in global energy production, report says

An examination of the role China now plays in the global power generation industry is useful because the vast scale decisions are taken on have impacts that are felt far beyond the country’s borders.

As per stockmarketpioneer.com, recently installed as the leading energy consumer, overtaking the United States, and soon to be the globe’s largest economy, Chinese policy and investment wields extensive influence over the global power generation industry.

Such is the extent of government spending power and development of power generation capabilities, China is now the dominant factor regarding the use of coal, both at home and abroad, renewable energy and in dealing with soaring power demands made by an increasingly affluent and aspirational population.

A report published by UN Environment, the Frankfurt School-UNEP Collaborating Center, and Bloomberg New Energy Finance found since 2004 global investment into green energy sources totaled \$2.9tn.

Since 2016 investment expanded by 31% according to the report: elsewhere in Europe and the United States spending declined by 36% and 6% respectively. The growth in spending compared to elsewhere in the world is reflective of the relative economic success of China.

According to the Natural Resources Defense Council, a U.S.-based non-profit environmental advocacy group, Chinese institutions are the largest investor of overseas coal power-plants.

Approximately \$15bn was ploughed into coal power-plants between 2013 and 2016, mostly through international development funds.

Throughout the Asia-Pacific region China is the dominant investor, accounting for half of Vietnam’s total foreign coal finance.

International expansion was initiated by a need felt by Beijing to develop international influence and ties with other countries to be used as leverage in other facets of diplomatic relations.

■ Construction of new power plants

China often provides loans to Chinese investors to facilitate the construction of new power plants via bilateral agreements with other governments.

In going elsewhere China has to some extent alleviated the overcapacity problem in coal-fired power-plants — although the reasons for overcapacity are legion

Many governments have welcomed coal-fired power station construction as a means of producing comparatively cheap energy.

Despite agreements such as the Paris Climate Change Accord (in which governments around the world agreed to limit carbon emissions) the allure of cheap energy remains strong.

The plants being built are not regarded as being efficient and rely upon technology that has been around for quite some time.

Since taking the industry overseas, Chinese companies have become very efficient at installing the power plants and getting them online in a short space of time.

However, the near inevitable impact of cheap energy on the more expensive renewable alternatives is that the reduction in cost of wind turbines and other technologies witnessed in recent years is now of much less significance.

First Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-8746063

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

Items	Material Description	Qty
P/F “ BORSIG” CENTRIFUGAL GAS COMPRESSOR TYPE: GC 355/8.S/N 23-1714 7		20NO
4		12 ST
1	P/F “ BORSIG” CENTRIFUGAL GAS COMPRESSOR TYPE: GC 355/2.S/N 23-1755/56	5 NO
2	P/F “ BORSIG” CENTRIFUGAL GAS COMPRESSOR TYPE: GC 355/4.S/N 23-1757/58	20 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. 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 4,715 EURO or 225, 567,716 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

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

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

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

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Benjamin Netanyahu's time is up

By Jonathan Cook

ANTIWAR — For most Israelis, the general election on Tuesday was about one thing and one thing only. Not the economy, nor the occupation, nor even corruption scandals. It was about Benjamin Netanyahu. Should he head yet another far-right government, or should his 10-year divisive rule come to an end?

Barring a last-minute upset as the final ballot papers are counted, Israelis have made their verdict clear: Netanyahu's time is up. In April's inconclusive election, which led to this rerun, Netanyahu's Likud party tied with its main opponent in the Blue and White party, led by retired general Benny Gantz. This time Gantz appears to have nudged ahead, with 32 seats to Netanyahu's 31 in the 120-member parliament. Both parties fared worse than they did in April, when they each secured 35 seats.



But much more significantly, Netanyahu appears to have fallen short of the 61-seat majority he needs to form yet another far-right government comprising settler and religious parties. His failure is all the more glaring, given that he conducted by far the ugliest — and most reckless — campaign in Israeli history. That was because the stakes were sky-high.

Only a government of the far-right — one entirely beholden to Netanyahu — could be relied on to pass legislation guaranteeing him immunity from a legal process due to begin next month. Without it, he is likely to be indicted on multiple charges of fraud and breach of trust.

So desperate was Netanyahu to avoid that fate, according to reports published in the Israeli media on election day, that he was only a hair's breadth away from launching a war on Gaza last week as a way to postpone the election.

Israel's chief law officer, attorney general Avichai Mendelblit, stepped in to halt the attack when he discovered the security cabinet had approved it only after Netanyahu concealed the army command's major reservations.

Netanyahu also tried to bribe right-wing voters by promising last week that he would annex much of the West Bank immediately after the election — a stunt that blatantly violated campaigning laws, according to Mendelblit.

Facebook was forced to shut down Netanyahu's page on two occasions for hate speech — in one case after it sent out a message that "Arabs want to annihilate us all — women, children and men". That sentiment appeared to include the 20 per cent of the Israeli population who are Palestinian citizens.

Netanyahu incited against the country's Palestinian minority in other ways, not least by constantly suggesting that their votes constituted fraud and that they were trying to "steal the election". He even tried to force through a law allowing his Likud party activists to film in Arab polling stations — as they covertly did in April's election — in an un concealed attempt at voter intimidation. The move appeared to have backfired, with Palestinian citizens turning out in larger numbers than they did in April.

US President Donald Trump, meanwhile, intervened on Netanyahu's behalf by announcing the possibility of a defense pact requiring the US to come to Israel's aid in the event of a regional confrontation. None of it helped.

Netanyahu's only hope of political survival — and possible avoidance of jail time — depends on his working the political magic he is famed for. That may prove a tall order. To pass the 61-seat threshold, he must persuade Avigdor Lieberman and his ultra-nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu party to support him.

Netanyahu and Lieberman, who is a settler, are normally ideological allies. But these are not normal times. Netanyahu had to restage the election this week after Lieberman, sensing the prime minister's weakness, refused in April to sit alongside religious parties in a Netanyahu-led government.

Netanyahu might try to lure the fickle Lieberman back with an irresistible offer, such as the two of them rotating the prime ministership. But Lieberman risks huge public opprobrium if, after putting the country through a deeply unpopular rerun election, he now does what he refused on principle to do five months ago.

Lieberman has nearly doubled his party's seats to nine, by insisting that he is the champion of the secular Israeli public. Most importantly for Lieberman, he finds himself once again in the role of kingmaker. It is almost certain he will shape the character of the next government. And whoever he anoints as prime minister will be indebted to him. The deadlock that blocked the formation of a government in April still stands. Israel faces the likelihood of weeks of frantic horse-trading and even the possibility of a third election.

Nonetheless, from the perspective of Palestinians — whether those under occupation or those living in Israel as third-class citizens — the next Israeli government is going to be a hardline right one. On paper, Gantz is best placed to form a government of what is preposterously labeled the "center-left". But given that its backbone will comprise Blue and White, led by a bevy of hawkish generals, and Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu, it would, in practice, be nearly as right wing as Netanyahu's.

Gantz even accused Netanyahu of stealing his idea in announcing last week that he would annex large parts of the West Bank. The difficulty is that such a coalition would depend on the support of the 13 Joint List legislators representing Israel's large Palestinian minority. That is something Lieberman has rejected out of hand, calling the idea "absurd" early on Wednesday as results were filtering in. Gantz appears only a little more accommodating.

The solution could be a national unity government comprising much of the right: Gantz's Blue and White teamed up with Likud and Lieberman. Both Gantz and Lieberman indicated that was their preferred choice on Wednesday. The question then would be whether Netanyahu can worm his way into such a government, or whether Gantz demands his ousting as a price for Likud's inclusion. Netanyahu's hand in such circumstances would not be strong, especially if he is immersed in a protracted legal battle on corruption charges. There are already rumblings of an uprising in Likud to depose him.

One interesting outcome of a unity government is that it could provoke a constitutional crisis by making the Joint List, the third-largest party, the official opposition. That is the same Joint List described by Netanyahu as a "dangerous anti-Zionist" party.

Ayman Odeh would become the first leader of the Palestinian minority to attend regular briefings by the prime minister and security chiefs. Netanyahu will continue as caretaker prime minister for several more weeks — until a new government is formed. If he stays true to form, there is plenty of mischief he can instigate in the meantime.

Jonathan Cook won the Martha Gellhorn Special Prize for Journalism. His latest books are *Israel and the Clash of Civilizations: Iraq, Iran and the Plan to Remake the Middle East* (Pluto Press) and *Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair* (Zed Books). His website is www.jonathan-cook.net. This originally appeared on The National.

The West fails to social engineer South Sudan



extraordinary honey pot that does as much to corrupt and disable as enrich and empower. Great is the necessity of freeing South Sudan's limited economy. The country is not even ranked by the Economic Freedom of the World and Index of Economic Freedom reviews. Yet there isn't much that can be done economically while South Sudan struggles to escape from civil war.

How Christian Churches Are Trying to Save South Sudan

The Ethnic Tensions Haunting Africa's Newest Powerhouse

Equally problematic is the political system, which has also suffered from the descent into violent chaos. Freedom House rates the country as "unfree," at the bottom in terms of political rights and civil liberties. The "civil war has stifled ordinary politics and created a climate of fear," the group explains, while elites "have presided over rampant corruption, economic collapse, and atrocities against civilians, journalists, and aid workers." Human Rights Watch notes, "All parties to the conflict committed serious abuse, including indiscriminate attacks against civilians including aid workers, unlawful killings, beatings, arbitrary detentions, torture, sexual violence, recruitment and use of child soldiers, looting and destruction of civilian property."

The State Department was no more positive in its assessment, emphasizing that the problems go beyond the government. Notes their report: "Opposition forces also perpetrated serious human rights abuses, which, according to the United Nations, included unlawful killings, abductions, rape, sexual slavery, and forced recruitment."

Such abuses are not evident to a visitor to Juba, which is stable, if heavily patrolled by armed security personnel. More serious problems occur in conflict areas. Thankfully, the worst of the fighting is in abeyance. The latest ceasefire and power-sharing agreement—there have been many over the years—appear to be holding. Yet few believe there is sufficient time to build a

coalition government and integrate rebel forces into the army before the November deadline. When I was in Juba, Kiir met with his former deputy Machar for the first time since April. Opposition representative Henry Odwar reported: "We touched on issues of constitutional amendment, the draft that is going to be presented to the parliament and we also discussed the few security laws. We also talked about the issue of non-signatory parties." Few specifics were decided, though the two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to create a transitional administration within two months.

Much could go wrong. Journalist Julian Hattem warned that the peace is fragile: "Key provisions of the agreement about demobilizing fighters and redrawing internal political lines remain unfulfilled. There are mounting fears that the deal's eventual breakdown could lead to a return to large-scale violence in South Sudan." Still, neither side appears to desire a return to arms.

Equally significant was the meeting, which also took place while I was in town, between Kiir and Sudanese Prime Minister Aballa Hamdok. Apparently they reaffirmed their nations' dual commitment to stop meddling in each other's political disputes and military conflicts. Khartoum once supported Machar, though it eventually backed off, and Bashir's overthrow shifted power toward civilians concerned more with improving living standards than playing geopolitical games. South Sudan had reciprocated, once aiding insurgents battling Khartoum, later dropping its support. Such mutual forbearance improves chances for peace and stability.

However, the situation is greatly complicated by additional opposition figures, most importantly one-time Kiir ally Thomas Cirillo of the Opposition Alliance. Kiir and Machar do not speak for them; indeed, sporadic clashes involving other forces continue around the country. Giving everyone a stake in the political process remains a challenge. It's difficult to turn warlords into politicians, as Afghanistan has demonstrated.

Warned the International Crisis Group last year, the peace accord "does not end the country's deep crisis. It neither resolves the power struggle between President Salva Kiir and erstwhile rebel leader Riek Machar nor outlines a final political settlement for the country. Rather, it establishes a wobbly Kiir-Machar truce and grafts it onto the previous failed peace terms without delivering much benefit to other groups that have been shut out of power. The new deal has lessened fighting, a welcome outcome, but it could break down over any number of outstanding disputes." Getting this far has required intensive international involvement, especially by other African states; it will likely take even more to successfully implement the agreement.

Westerners can help prepare the South Sudanese for nationhood, but the country's future is in its own people's hands. I visited South Sudan with the group Hardwired, founded by Tina Ramirez, a former congressional aide. Hardwired emphasizes building understanding and support for religious tolerance and liberty. It has been active around the world in such varied locations as Kurdistan and Nigeria. One of Hardwired's objectives, including in South Sudan, is teachers, who help prepare the next generation.

In Juba, Hardwired also taught a seminar on the rule of law and constitutional reform, in which I participated. The forum attracted judges, lawyers, journalists, pastors, political activists, and educators, all determined to achieve a more peaceful and prosperous future. The South Sudanese people are ready to lead, if they're allowed to do so by their government.

Although the people I met are hopeful, the closer the power-sharing arrangement comes to fruition, the greater is the danger of violent collapse. Integrating former combatants into a single military will be difficult. Moreover, warned ICG, "the looming specter of elections can raise tensions and trigger conflict—as it did in 2013 when polls were planned for 2015. The risk is particularly acute if the two parties share armed control of the capital, as they did in 2016." Then problems in ensuring security for the leaders of contending factions led to the agreement's collapse. The people of South Sudan cannot afford another such failure.

The experience offers U.S. policymakers a sobering lesson about international social engineering. Bashir's Sudan became a "project" in Washington, attracting everyone from Hollywood celebrities to evangelical activists. Yet insisting on political change for which local peoples were not ready proved disastrous. After the new nation fell into civil war, Washington was largely powerless to end the horror that it had helped set in motion. Like so many other nations in conflict, South Sudan is filled with good people suffering through bad, even catastrophic, events. Enabling them to take control of their futures is the essential challenge.

Italian analyst lauds Ayatollah Khamenei's stance on talks with U.S.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A political expert based in Italy praised Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei's rejection of US calls for talks with Iran, saying there is no need for new negotiations.

"I think Ayatollah Khamenei's answer is as coherent as possible," Federico Pieraccini, who is based in Milan, said in an interview with Tasnim.

"There is no need for new negotiations, the agreement was made after years of negotiations involving the most important nations of the planet," he added.

Pieraccini is an independent freelance writer and political expert based in Milan, Italy. He specializes in international affairs, conflicts, politics, and strategies. He has covered conflicts in Ukraine, Libya, Egypt, Syria, and Iraq. The following is the full text of the interview:

■ On Tuesday, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei deplored the US calls for talks with Iran as a trick and said Tehran will not negotiate bilaterally or multilaterally with Washington at any level. What do you think about Ayatollah Khamenei's remarks?

A: I think Ayatollah Khamenei's answer is as coherent as possible. There is no need for new negotiations, the agreement was made after years of negotiations involving the most important nations of the planet. From the Iranian point of view, the path to reach the agreement was long and troubled; the fact that it was disregarded by the United States after they signed it confirms that the word of a president of the United States is valid only for the period in which he is in charge. Negotiations of this kind last for years and cannot be questioned based on the mood of the future POTUS or based on domestic policy strategies, as in the case of Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA agreement.

■ Iran sees the United States' calls for negotiation as a trick and part of the so-called "maximum pressure" campaign which has failed to force the Islamic Republic to give in to US demands. How do you assess Iran's policy of "active resistance" against the US pressures?

A: Iran's decision to simply continue to behave as it has in the last 40 years has seriously disturbed the efficiency



of US 'maximum pressure'. As I have written in the past, Iran has been experiencing a difficult situation since the Islamic Revolution in 1979. If the United States had new methods or means to devastate the Iranian economy, it would have already adopted them. The truth is that Iran is a regional power that cannot be ignored or forced to comply. Moreover, the importance of Iran for the Middle Eastern equilibrium has pushed its main allies in the region and beyond (India, China, Russia, Lebanon, Syria, and many others) to circumnavigate sanctions and operate outside the economic field dominated by the USD and the financial system of London and New York.

■ Iran has said the US' return to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and the removal of sanctions against the Islamic Republic is the only way that Washington can hold talks with Tehran. How do you see the prospects of open diplomacy between Iran and the US as well as the other parties to the JCPOA?

A: This would be the ideal solution for all parties, except for Saudis, Israelis, and neoconservatives, present across the Republican and Democratic parties and strongly opposed to any kind of agreement with Tehran.

Unfortunately, such a solution is highly unlikely given that for Washington, every negotiation or joint negotiation means admitting defeat. Diplomatically, this is a

contradiction given that negotiations between countries are at the basis for avoiding conflicts and wars.

Surely, the only ones who have the possibility to bring about better relations between Iran and the United States are, in a limited way, Europeans, Russians, and Chinese. The problem for European countries is the two-way link with the United States and its dollar-based economy. With the sanctions in place, the US especially harms Europeans in trade with Iran in exports and imports. Paris and Berlin have already tried, in a very delicate way, to distance themselves from Washington by supporting the JCPOA. For China and Russia, the main mission is to hold Iran and Europeans in the agreement, seeking to promote commercial exchange between the parties, outside USD and the SWIFT banking system, to keep the agreement alive.

■ Can we regard the Islamic Republic's strategy of "active resistance" against the US pressures as successful given Ayatollah Khamenei's remarks?

A: Iran's reaction is to actively resist US economic pressure, continuing Saudi and Israeli provocations. Without forgetting that the campaign against Iran goes beyond the Persian region and involves the Middle East and North Africa. The possibility for Tehran to forge agreements and friendships with coalitions and nations that have anti-imperialism as their main strategy allows Iran to broaden its political, military, technological and economic horizons, actively resisting the maximum pressure from the United States.

The success of this strategy is evident from the fact that Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the United States are forced to continue provocations against Iran, although the three countries are aware that a war with Iran would be impossible to win. Ultimately, both Iran and its enemies understand in the event of a war, Saudis, Israelis and regional allies (including US military bases) would be the target of specific attacks that would cause unsustainable damage.

The conventional deterrence of Tehran resembles that of the DPRK and in both cases, the threats and the maximum US pressure are ineffective against nations that have been targeted for more than 40 years.

Continuation of American crimes in Afghanistan

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — The crimes of American Democrats and Republicans continue in Afghanistan. The result of eighteen years of US occupation in Afghanistan has been nothing but promoting terror and violence.

The Real Reason the US is Staying in Afghanistan

As Ronald Enzweiler wrote in libertarian-institute, As someone who lived and worked at the field level in Afghanistan for six years (2008-14) implementing projects for the U.S. Agency for International Development, I am bemused by the fact that the mainstream media (who should have known better or worse yet, actually did) misled the public into believing that it was — or ever will be — possible for the U.S. to reach a meaningful peace accord with the Taliban for amicably ending the Afghan war. Moreover, anyone who thinks a piece of paper a purported Taliban leadership council accepts and signs at a given point in time has any lasting value is woefully naive and ignorant of who the Taliban are and what governs their belief system and way of life. Spoiler alert: It's not a diplomatic legal document.

For starters, probably 70% or more of the ethnic Pashtuns who have inhabited the Afghanistan and Pakistan border region (this border is a figment of 19th century British imperialism) for centuries and have adopted over the last 35 years a variation of the Saudi Arabia-spread fundamentalist form of Islam (taught at the Saudi-funded religious schools they attended in Pakistan) as their way of life are illiterate — beyond being able to read Koran verses in Arabic. Moreover, the Taliban have no written theological doctrine or scholarship. These facts should be a clue that written documents are unimportant in their lives. The society that calls itself the Taliban (Arabic for "the students") live a mostly subsistent life without access to electricity, media, mass communications, or material goods. Most have never travel outside their homelands. They are extremely hostile to outsiders and adhere to a strict Medieval moral code (Pashtunwali) and their fundamentalist interpretation of Islamic law (Shari'a).

The Taliban only tolerated Osama bin Laden and his Arab jihadi cohorts being in their country before 9/11 because they were co-religionists (Sunni Muslims) who assisted and provided funding to the Taliban and other Afghan mujahideen fighters in driving the Soviet infidels out of their ancestral lands in the 1980s. This is the same fight against foreign intervention that the Taliban have been waging against the U.S.-installed government in Kabul and the U.S. and NATO occupation troops that have remained in Afghanistan after Osama and his gang were vanquished in early 2002.

Most Afghans I got to know (including Taliban sympathizers in Kandahar where I lived for three years) were actually glad the U.S. came in after 9/11 and drove out the Arabs. This undertaking was mostly a low profile CIA operation with minimal U.S. boots on the ground. The first couple years of foreign aid (before nation building) was also greatly appreciated. Kabul was a safe and vibrant city through 2006 or so. But as more foreign troops and aid works arrived, bombing sorties increased, and western influence became more prevalent, the insurgency became more widespread and violent. When it became clear that U.S. and NATO forces were not imminently leaving, public sentiment in most areas outside of Kabul turned in support of the Taliban. Over my six years in-country, anti-government elements progressively intensified their efforts to drive out the foreigners as more U.S. and NATO troop were sent in to fight the insurgents. The U.S.-led combat operations never succeeded



in achieving an attrition effect. But the massive U.S. spending fueled rampant corruption. The Taliban made a fortune extracting payments (reminiscent of the Silk Road days) from the military convoys that had to pass through their tribal lands on their way from the port at Karachi in Pakistan to Kandahar Airfield. The Air Force used the fuel, supplies, and munitions the convoys delivered to Kandahar to bomb the Taliban in these same areas! I could give a dozen more examples of such self-defeating absurdities that characterized the failed war-fighting and nation-building efforts the longer they lasted. (Actually, I do in my book.)

The Taliban are not militant jihadists. Their only concern is their ancient homelands. The only antagonism the Taliban have for Americans is the fact that the U.S. military has occupied their country to various degrees over the last 17 year as USAID and other international organizations attempted to impose western cultural values that conflict with their Saudi-indoctrinated fundamentalist form of Islam. (Saudi Arabia was one of only three countries that recognized the Taliban as Afghanistan's official government before 9/11.) Moreover, Taliban leaders have been wary since the U.S. troop surge in 2009 that the U.S. intended to maintain permanent bases in their country. This is why the Taliban and other Afghan nationalists intensified their fight to expel latest round of foreign invaders in a civil war to oust the U.S.-backed government. (Media pundits who lament that civil war and chaos will break out if the U.S. troops withdraw have somehow missed the last 40 years of Afghan history.)

It's always been an inaccurate pejorative for the U.S. government and media to refer to the Taliban as "terrorists." Consider this scenario: A foreign power invades and occupies your country; it installs and pays the costs (over \$5 billion in FY 2020) for keeping a friendly pro-western government in power; the Afghan officials who profit from these payments (corruption is a way of life in Afghanistan as the SIGAR has repeatedly documented) are willing to let the foreign power retain permanent military bases in your country (which are needed to keep them in power). As an Afghan nationalist, you don't want your way of life changed at gunpoint and don't want a foreign power to use bases in your country to project power in the region and possibly attack the neighboring (predominately Muslim) countries. Given this situation, you join a home-grown insurgency that opposes the foreign troops staying and having your traditional way of life coercively changed.

However, because you fight against the neocolonial foreign power that has taken de facto control of your country for its self-interests, you are deemed a "terrorist." Yes, the Taliban and other anti-government elements in Afghanistan have killed over 2,400 U.S. soldiers over the 17-year, \$2-trillion-dollar war and occupation of their country. But this

happened only because more than 100,000 U.S. soldiers at one point (140,000 including other NATO countries) and squadrons of F-16s were sent to their country to kill them — while subjecting the Afghan civilian population to the hardships, collateral damage, and casualties inherent in warfare.

The question our elected officials need to be asked: Why are U.S. soldiers still in Afghanistan and being killed fighting local insurgents engaged in a civil war who are not a threat to America 17 years after the al-Qaeda jihadists responsible for the 9/11 attacks were vanquished?

The assertion that U.S. troops need to stay in Afghanistan to keep Americas safe from radical Salafi jihadists is a self-serving canard by the pro-war crowd in Washington. The Taliban are not jihadi terrorists and in fact are fighting to keep Arab jihadists and sympathizers out of their country. Congress does not need to spend \$47 billion/year (current cost to U.S. taxpayers for keeping 14,000 U.S troops in Afghanistan and the pro-U.S government in Kabul in power) to prevent jihadi attacks on America originating in Afghanistan. This is a remote possibility. Arabs are unwelcome outsiders in Afghanistan — Osama was a special case due to his money and the Soviet occupation. Should jihadists establish operations in Afghanistan that threaten America after U.S. troop leave, this threat can be dealt with through surveillance, diplomacy, and covert operations. After Osama was targeted — but missed — in Khost province after the East Africa embassy bombings in 1998, the 9/11 commission report documents nine subsequent occasions where intelligence provided the Clinton Administration the opportunity to extradite, capture or kill Osama before 9/11. But none of this intelligence was acted upon. As this and other history shows, the U.S. has the intelligence, diplomatic channels, and covert operations capability (if needed) to deal with genuine terrorist threats in Afghanistan and elsewhere without having a permanent troop presence and ongoing combat operations in the country.

The real reason for the pushback by the Washington national security establishment against getting all U.S. troops out of Afghanistan is the guiding maxim of our post-World War II "War State" (the military-industrial complex President Eisenhower warned about) that has grown into a \$1-trillion/year enterprise with a worldwide empire of over 800 foreign military installations: never give up a military base in a strategic location. The U.S. military eventually will be pushed out of Kandahar Airfield in southern Afghanistan (it's also a civilian airport near a large restive city in Taliban territory). But Bagram Airfield (a prior Soviet base north of Kabul) is a military-only installation in an easily defended remote area. Bagram is the missing piece in our War State's chessboard of worldwide bases. Retaining it will enable our military to "project power" throughout Central Asia. It's a steal at \$30 to \$40 billion/year (assuming troops levels

and graft payments are drawn down at some point) for our overfunded War State. Representative Max Thornberry, then chairman and now ranking member of the House Armed Services Committee, visited Bagram in October 2018. He publicly acknowledged afterwards that the U.S. seeks "a sustainable presence" in Afghanistan. (The U.S. military's new high-tech F-35 fighters — a \$1.5 trillion program — are manufactured at a Lockheed plant near Rep. Thornberry's district in north Texas.)

There was never a chance the Taliban would agree to anything except a complete withdrawal of all foreign troops from their proud and ancient country. It's who they are, not a transactional matter. Likewise, there was never a chance the pro-war establishment in Washington would voluntarily give up Bagram as a future F-35 fighter base. The so-called negotiations over a peace deal with the Taliban that the Trump Administration and the media played up was Kabuki Theater and a political ploy on both sides. But the Taliban are right in saying the real losers are the Americans. This is because the Taliban will never quit fighting to evict the foreigners from their ancient lands; and the neighboring countries (Iran, Pakistan, China and the prior USSR "stans" in the north backed by Russia) will do whatever it takes to make sure the Taliban eventually win — no matter how long that takes. As this proxy war plays out, more U.S. soldiers will needlessly lose their lives in what is a lost cause that our media plays along with as dutiful enablers of our failed interventionist foreign policy. A sad state of affairs for our democratic republic.

Trump says he could end Afghanistan war quickly but 'tens of millions' of people would die!

Also Washington Post reported that Trump said Friday that the United States could end the nearly 19-year war in Afghanistan "very quickly" if he chose to do so but that it would involve killing "tens of millions" of people.

Trump's comments came at a joint news conference with Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison as he relayed that Afghanistan — a country of about 37 million people — was among the issues that the two men discussed in their meeting at the White House. "We've been very effective in Afghanistan, and if we wanted to do a certain method of war, we would win that very quickly, but many, many, really, tens of millions of people would be killed, and we think it's unnecessary," Trump said. "But Australia's been a great help to us in Afghanistan."

He made similar comments in July during an Oval Office meeting with Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. At that point, Trump claimed he could win the war "in a week" but said he did not want to go that route, because "I just don't want to kill 10 million people."

He later clarified that he had plans in reserve to drop enormous bombs on the country in an all-out military onslaught.

The U.S. military's role in Afghanistan has been a continuing sore spot for Trump. Recent developments have left uncertain the administration's strategy for achieving a political solution to the war and the U.S. troop withdrawals Trump has promised. Earlier this month, Trump decided to call off a secret meeting he planned with Afghan and Taliban leaders to secure a peace deal, after a U.S. soldier was killed in a Taliban attack.

In late 2017, on the recommendation of his national security team, Trump increased the U.S. troop presence in Afghanistan from around 8,600 to around 14,000. About 5,400 were to be withdrawn as part of a U.S.-Taliban agreement that was due to be signed after nearly a year of negotiations. In canceling the signing, which Trump had proposed be held at Camp David, he said that the talks were "dead."

Iran, Russia bin U.S.D in trade

TEHRAN (FNA) — The United States' sanctions regime has forced Iran to strengthen financial and economic ties with Russia and other Eurasian nations.

The US economic warfare has forced the two neighbors to trade in local currencies by connecting their financial messaging services to handle two-way banking transactions.

According to the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran, Abdolnasser Hemmati, and the Russian presidential aide, Yury Ushakov, banks in both countries are now connected through the Russian SPFS and the Iranian SEPAM. They are using this new system as an alternative to payments through SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) to protect themselves from Washington's sanctions.

SPFS (System for Transfer of Financial Messages) is a Russian equivalent of the SWIFT financial transfer system, introduced by the Central Bank of Russia to ensure intermittent financial services. SEPAM (a Persian acronym) is a platform through which inter-bank transactions are conducted electronically. It is now officially connected to the Russian banking system through SPFS.

This was all expected. Tehran will join the Russia-led free-trade zone, the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), next month. Russia's alternative to SWIFT will help expand trade exchanges between Iran and EAEU member states, using Armenian dram, Belarusian ruble, Kazakhstani tenge, Kyrgyzstani som, Russian ruble, and Iranian rial.

Washington's unilateralism is forcing China, Turkey, Iraq and a host of other nations to also resurrect the same currency exchange system. US unilateralism approach has even pushed Moscow and Beijing to use their currencies in settlements. Trade in rubles and yuans is the priority and eventually both will turn from a convertible currency into a reserve currency. The two economic powers are implementing the currency swap agreement to boost trade and eliminate dependence on the dollar. They have stressed their support for trade with Iran and opposition to US unilateral and secondary sanctions.

Same way, delegates from Iran, China, Russia and the European Union have publicly proposed a banking mechanism that would allow the exchange of European goods for Iranian crude oil through Russian territory. Turkey is also discussing with Iran ways to maintain trade relations through similar banking mechanisms.

These mechanisms and trade in local currencies have a common aim: To ditch the US dollar and protect banks and bank-rollers from secondary sanctions the Trump administration has threatened against countries and entities that dare to purchase oil from Iran. That the Trump administration has forced nations to adopt new or old economic strategies shows the continuing isolation of the US and unilateral policies. The Trump administration's measures are bringing many countries together with a common goal of bypassing what, especially in the case of Iran, are unilateral sanctions. They know that if Washington is allowed to try and use its dollar to punish Iran, soon they will be next. That's why these nations are refusing to side with Washington and scrap the nuclear deal.

As things stand, the new system of payment between Iran and Russia and trade in local currencies are here to stay. The two neighbors have begun enjoying their new-found partnership, and even if one day the US lifts its sanctions and returns to the nuclear deal, the mechanisms won't die out.

At regional and local levels, these mechanisms are efficient. Both Iran and Russia want what the other has to offer, and they don't want to rely upon the dollar. They have now proven that trade in local currencies works. They are officially circumventing unilateral and secondary sanctions imposed by the US, and it is much safer to bilaterally trade in local currencies instead of taking the dollar risk.

This is not a short-lived project, in part because the global economy is still exposed to Washington's unilateral foreign policy practices, but more because unilateral sanctions against Iran are also against the United Nations Charter, have no international support, and were imposed after President Trump walked out of the 2015 nuclear deal that had been endorsed by the UN Security Council.

Little wonder the European Union is also working out strategies to save the nuclear deal and continue trade with Iran through the so-called Special Purpose Vehicle or INSTEX. They are unwilling to take orders from Washington as with whom they are allowed to do trade. Soon, they will also cut reliance on the US dollar to avoid sanctions targeting their direct payments and bilateral trade with Iran.

UK's Labor Party in turmoil as vote to oust deputy ditched

TEHRAN — A vote to oust the deputy leader of Britain's main opposition Labor Party was ditched Saturday after a big backlash to the proposal prompted Jeremy Corbyn, the party's leader, to intervene.

The surprise attempt to abolish the role of deputy leader by one of Corbyn's close allies caused uproar among many Labor members and has overshadowed the start of the party's annual conference in the southern England city of Brighton.

Corbyn has tried to put a lid on the row by proposing that Labor carry out a review of the role, currently held by lawmaker Tom Watson, who has clashed with the leader on a number of issues, notably Brexit.

The proposal to get rid of the deputy's role had been scheduled to be put to a vote Saturday of Labor's governing body, the National Executive Committee.

The move against Watson has laid bare the divisions in the party — Watson has espoused a number of viewpoints that have offended many of Corbyn's left-wing supporters but have appealed to the moderate wing of the party.

Heading into the conference on Saturday, Corbyn tried to put a brave face on the row and said he enjoyed working with Watson.

"The NEC agreed this morning that we are going to consult on the future of diversifying the deputy leadership position to reflect the diversity of our society," Corbyn said.

Questioned by assembled reporters, Corbyn refused to say when he first knew about the attempt to oust Watson, nor whether he had full confidence in his deputy.

Watson told BBC radio before the proposal was ditched that the attempt to oust him was akin to "a straight sectarian attack on a broad-church party" and that he believes his position on Brexit was behind the move. He said the move against him

came as a shock and that he was in a Chinese restaurant in Manchester Friday evening when he found out about it.

The row exploded Friday when Jon Lansman, the founder of the pro-Corbyn grassroots Momentum group, proposed a motion for Watson's job to be scrapped.

Lansman said in a tweet he welcomed Corbyn's proposal to review the role of deputy leader and added that the party needs "to make sure the deputy leader role is properly accountable to the membership while also unifying the party at conference. In my view, this review is absolutely the best way of doing that."

Watson received widespread support including from former Labor prime minister Tony Blair, who said the move to oust Watson "would be undemocratic, damaging and politically dangerous."

Watson, who was elected deputy leader of the Labor Party in September 2015 at the same time as Corbyn took the helm, is a prominent supporter of a second Brexit referendum and is urging Labor to campaign for Britain to remain in the European Union in any further vote.

Labor's move recently to back a second referendum on any Brexit deal has not been welcomed by everyone in the Labour Party, even though a large majority of members are in favor of staying in the EU.

The party's official Brexit position is still in flux and set to be debated further over the coming days.

A draft statement Saturday from Labor's governing body suggests the party go into a general election without specifying whether it would support remaining in the EU in the promised second referendum.

However, the statement said the party would get the issue "sorted one way or another" with a referendum within six months if Labor formed the next government.

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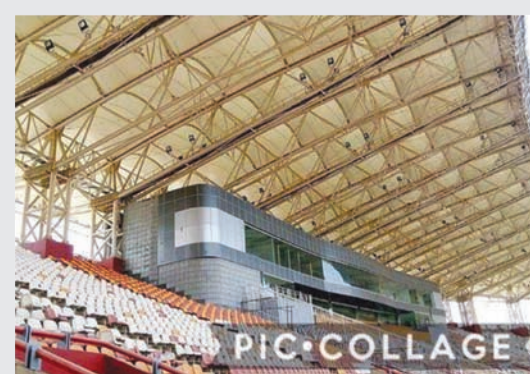
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Huge asteroid that narrowly missed Earth ‘slipped through the net’, NASA emails reveal

The largest asteroid to pass as close to the Earth in a century “slipped through” NASA’s detection systems, internal emails reveal.

Named 2019 OK by scientists, the asteroid nearly passed by undetected as it came five times closer to Earth than the moon, documents obtained by Buzzfeed via freedom of information requests revealed.

It was first detected by a Brazilian observatory on 24 July just hours before coming within roughly 73,000km of Earth. NASA’s failure to spot the 100-metre wide space rock highlighted longstanding concerns about a lack of US government funding for asteroid detection efforts.

“This object slipped through a whole series of our capture nets, for a bunch of different reasons,” Dr. Paul Chodas, manager of NASA’s Centre for Near Earth Object Studies, wrote to colleagues on 26 July.

“So, was this just a particularly sneaky asteroid? I wonder how many times this situation has happened without the



asteroid being discovered at all?”
The emails showed space agency employees rushing to discover how the

asteroid avoided detection, after a colleague alerted them to the near-miss “because there may be media coverage tomorrow”.

NASA telescopes did spot the asteroid on 7 July, but it was moving too slowly to be identified as a near-Earth object. By the time it sped up it was too close to a nearly full moon for astronomers to detect, according to the emails.

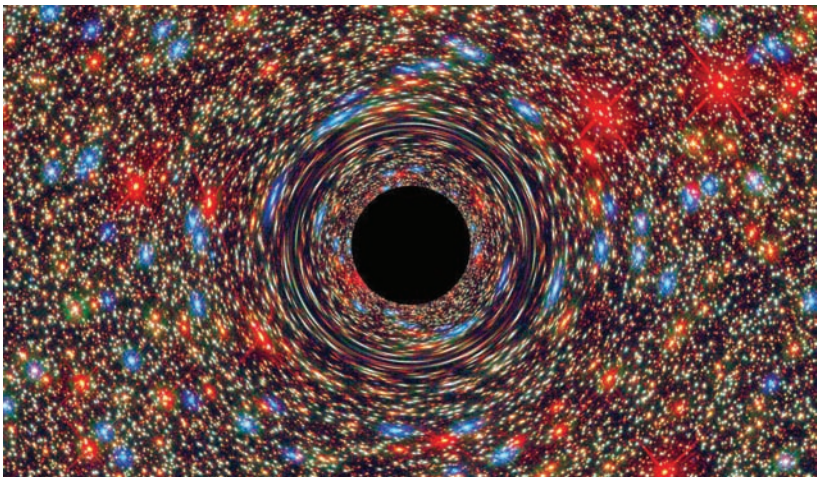
A planetary defense officer at NASA had written that 2019 OK appeared to be the largest asteroid to pass so close to earth in the last century. Another such event was not expected to occur until 2029, they said.

While there was never a chance the asteroid would have collided with Earth, a news release sent out weeks later by NASA said: “If 2019 OK had entered and disrupted in Earth’s atmosphere over land, the blast wave could have created localized devastation to an area roughly 50 miles across.”

The failure to identify the space rock as a near-Earth object highlights the need to better fund detection efforts.

(Source: The Independent)

From primordial black holes new clues to dark matter



Primordial black holes (PBHs) are objects that formed just fractions of a second after the Big Bang, considered by many researchers among the principal candidates in explaining the nature of dark matter, above all following direct observations of gravitational waves by the VIRGO and LIGO detectors in 2016. «We have tested a scenario in which dark matter is composed of non-stellar black holes, formed in the primordial universe,» says Riccardo Murgia, lead author of the study recently published in Physical Review Letters. The research was carried out together with his colleagues Giulio Scelfo and Matteo Viel of SISSA—International School for Advanced Studies and INFN—Istituto Nazionale di Fisica Nucleare (Trieste division) and Alvise Raccanelli of CERN.

«Primordial black holes remain hypothetical objects for the moment, but they are envisaged in some models of the primordial universe,» says Raccanelli of CERN. «Initially proposed by Stephen Hawking in 1971, they have come back to the fore in recent years as possible candidates for explaining dark matter. It is believed that dark matter accounts for approximately 80 percent of all matter present in the universe, so to explain even just a small part of it would be a major achievement. Looking for evidence of the existence of PBHs, or excluding their existence, also provides us with information of considerable relevance on the physics of the primordial universe.»

In this work, the scientists concentrated on the abundance of PBHs that are 50 times more massive than the sun. In short, the researchers have tried to better describe several parameters linked to their presence (specifically mass and abundance) by analyzing the interaction of the light emitted from extremely distant quasars

with the cosmic web, a network of filaments composed of gas and dark matter present throughout the universe.

Within this dense weave, the scholars have concentrated on the so-called Lyman-alpha forest, the interactions of photons with the hydrogen of cosmic filaments, which presents characteristics closely linked to the fundamental nature of dark matter.

Simulations carried out using the Ulysses supercomputer of SISSA and ICTP have been able to reproduce the interactions between photons and hydrogen. The models have been compared with real interactions detected by the Keck telescope in Hawaii. The researchers were then able to trace several properties of primordial black holes to understand the effects of their presence.

«We used a computer to simulate the distribution of neutral hydrogen on sub-galactic scales, which manifests itself in the form of absorption lines in the spectra of distant sources,» says Murgia. «Comparing the results of our simulations with the data observed, it is possible to establish limits on the mass and abundance of primordial black holes and determine whether and to what extent such candidates constitute dark matter.»

The results of the study seem to disadvantage the case that all dark matter is composed of a certain type of primordial black hole (those with a mass greater than 50 times that of the sun) but they do not totally exclude that they could constitute a fraction of it.

«We have developed a new way to easily and efficiently explore alternative scenarios of the standard cosmological model, according to which dark matter would instead be composed of weakly interacting massive particles (WIMPs).»

(Source: phys.org)

Dust cloud sparked explosion in primitive life on Earth, say scientists



An enormous dust cloud that swept through the ancient solar system sent Earth into a mini ice age that sparked an explosion in primitive life on the planet, scientists say.

The space dust was created when a monster asteroid was smashed to pieces in a violent collision somewhere between Mars and Jupiter nearly half a billion years ago.

The destruction of the 93-mile-wide space rock scattered so much dust into the inner solar system that it blocked some of the sunlight falling on Earth, the researchers claim. As a result, temperatures dropped for at least 2m years.

Because the cooling occurred over such a long time, life on Earth had time to adapt. And while many species carried on unaffected in the warmer spots near the equator, others evolved to make the most of the world’s freshly-formed colder regions.

“This the first time it’s been shown that dust from an asteroid break-up can lead to cooling that triggers an ice age on Earth,” said Birger Schmitz, a professor of nuclear physics at Lund University in Sweden.

Evidence from rock formations suggests that Earth experienced an unusual, short-lived ice age about 466m years ago. The drop in temperature locked water into ice that covered much of the planet, causing sea levels to fall globally. The period coincided with an apparent surge in the diversity of life on the planet, most of which was still in the oceans.

In the hope of shedding light on the mysterious ice age, Schmitz and his colleagues went looking for clues in ancient limestone rocks exposed at sites in southern Sweden and near St Petersburg in Russia. In particular, they looked for remnants of the huge asteroid, which geologists call the “L chondrite parent body”.

The researchers used acid to dissolve more than a ton of limestone rocks of different ages from the sites. They then picked over what was left behind. They found that after the asteroid’s destruction, the abundance of grains matching its chemical make-up rose by between 1,000 and 10,000 times. The levels stayed high for 2m-4m years. “The grains come with the dust so when you see an increase in these, you know there’s been an increase in the dust,” said Schmitz.

Further tests on the ancient limestone revealed a similar spike in levels of an isotope of helium that streams out of the sun in the surge of particles known as the solar wind. The researchers believe that the helium was brought to Earth when it became embedded in the finer space dust particles as they travelled through the solar system.

Writing in Science Advances, the team describes how dust and coarse-grained particles from the asteroid’s destruction rained down on Earth and became locked into sedimentary rocks. “We can nail that this ice age started to form when the dust from the break-up fell to Earth,” Schmitz said. The asteroid still accounts for about a third of the meteorites that land on Earth.

Scientists call the apparent explosion in marine life at the time the Great Ordovician Biodiversification Event, or GOBE. David Harper, a palaeontologist at Durham University who worked on the study, said it was “the most spectacular hike in marine diversity in the history of life”.

“Ice ages have been associated with major volcanic eruptions, but for the first time the team has implicated asteroid-derived dust in the initiation of global cooling and a major leap in biodiversity that changed marine ecosystems forever,” he added.

(Source: The Guardian)

Where to park your car, according to math

Just as mathematics reveals the motions of the stars and the rhythms of nature, it can also shed light on the more mundane decisions of everyday life. Where to park your car, for example, is the subject of a new look at a classic optimization problem by physicists Paul Krapivsky (Boston University) and Sidney Redner (Santa Fe Institute) published in this week’s Journal of Statistical Mechanics.

The problem assumes what many of us can relate to when exhausted, encumbered, or desperate to be somewhere else: the best parking space is the one that minimizes time spent in the lot. So that space by the front door is ideal, unless you have to circle back three times to get it. In order to reduce the time spent driving around the lot AND walking across it, the efficient driver must decide whether to go for the close space, quickly park further out, or settle for something in-between.

“Mathematics allows you to make intelligent decisions,” Redner says. “It allows you to approach a complex world with some insights.”

In their paper, Krapivsky and Redner map three simple parking strategies onto an idealized, single row parking lot. Drivers who grab the first space available follow what the authors call a “meek” strategy. They “waste no time looking for a parking spot,” leaving spots near the entrance unfilled. Those who gamble on finding a space right next to the entrance are “optimistic.” They drive all the way to the entrance, then backtrack to the closest vacancy.



“Prudent” drivers take the middle path. They drive past the first available space, betting on the availability of at least one other space further in. When they find the closest space between cars, they take it. If no spaces exist between the furthest parked car and the entrance, prudent drivers backtrack to the space a meek driver would have claimed straightaway.

Despite the simplicity of the three strategies, the authors had to use multiple techniques to compute their relative merits. Oddly enough, the meek strategy mirrored a dynamic seen in the microtubules that provide scaffolding within living cells. A car that parks immediately after the furthest car corresponds to a monomer glomming on to one end of the microtubule. The equation that describes a microtubule’s length—and sometimes dramatic shortening—also described the chain

of “meek” cars that accumulate at the far end of the lot.

“Sometimes there are connections between things that seem to have no connection,” Redner says. “In this case, the connection to microtubule dynamics made the problem solvable.”

To model the optimistic strategy, the authors wrote a differential equation. Once they began to mathematically express the scenario, they spotted a logical shortcut which greatly simplified the number of spaces to consider.

The prudent strategy, according to Redner, was “inherently complicated” given the many spaces in play. The authors approached it by creating a simulation that allowed them to compute, on average, the average density of spots and the amount of backtracking required.

So which strategy is best? As the name suggests, the prudent strategy. Overall, it costs drivers the least amount of time, followed closely by the optimistic strategy. The meek strategy was “risibly inefficient,” to quote the paper, as the many spaces it left empty created a lengthy walk to the entrance.

Redner acknowledges that the optimization problem sacrifices much real-world applicability in exchange for mathematical insight. Leaving out competition between cars, for example, or assuming cars follow a uniform strategy under each scenario, are unrealistic assumptions that the authors may address in a future model.

(Source: phys.org)

Something is killing galaxies in the most extreme regions of the universe

By Toby Brown

In the most extreme regions of the universe, galaxies are being killed. Their star formation is being shut down and astronomers want to know why.

The first ever Canadian-led large project on one of the world’s leading telescopes is hoping to do just that. The new program, called the Virgo Environment Traced in Carbon Monoxide survey (VERTICO), is investigating, in brilliant detail, how galaxies are killed by their environment.

As VERTICO’s principal investigator, I lead a team of 30 experts that are using the Atacama Large Millimeter Array (ALMA) to map the molecular hydrogen gas, the fuel from which new stars are made, at high resolution across 51 galaxies in our nearest galaxy cluster, called the Virgo Cluster.

Commissioned in 2013 at a cost of US\$1.4 billion, ALMA is an array of connected radio dishes at an altitude of 5,000 meters in the Atacama Desert of northern Chile. It is an international partnership between Europe, the United States, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Chile.

The largest ground-based astronomical project in existence, ALMA is the most advanced millimeter wavelength telescope ever built and ideal for studying the clouds of dense cold gas from which new stars form, which cannot be seen using visible light.

Large ALMA research programs such as VERTICO are designed to address strategic scientific issues that will lead to a major advance or breakthrough in the field.

*Galaxy clusters

Where galaxies live in the universe and how they interact with their surroundings (the intergalactic medium that surrounds them) and each other are major influences on their ability to form stars. But precisely how this so-called environment dictates the life and death of galaxies remains a mystery.

Galaxy clusters are the most massive and most extreme environments in the universe, containing many hundreds or even thousands of galaxies.

Where you have mass, you also have gravity and the huge gravitational forces present in clusters accelerates galaxies to great speeds, often thousands of kilometers-per-second, and superheats the plasma in between galaxies to temperatures so high that it glows with X-ray light.

In the dense, inhospitable interiors of these clusters, galaxies interact strongly with their surroundings and with each other. It is these interactions that can kill off — or quench — their star formation.

Understanding which quenching mechanisms shut off star formation and how they do it is main the focus of the VERTICO collaboration’s research.

*The life cycle of galaxies

As galaxies fall through clusters, the intergalactic plasma can rapidly remove their gas in a violent process called ram pressure stripping. When you remove the fuel for star formation, you effectively kill the galaxy, turning it into a dead object in which no new stars are formed.

In addition, the high temperature of clusters can stop hot gas cooling and condensing onto galaxies. In this case, the gas in the galaxy isn’t actively removed by the environment but is consumed as it forms stars.

This process leads to a slow, inexorable shut down in star formation known, somewhat morbidly, as starvation or strangulation.

While these processes vary considerably, each leaves a unique, identifiable imprint on the galaxy’s star-forming gas. Piecing these imprints together to form a picture of how clusters drive changes in galaxies is a major focus of the VERTICO collaboration.

Building on decades of work to provide insight into how environment drives galaxy evolution, we aim to add a critical new piece of the puzzle.

Physics shows criminals more likely to find accomplices in big cities

By Brooks Hays

Why do big cities generate disproportionately large amounts of crime? A new mathematical model helped scientists show that it is easier for criminals to partner-up in major metropolitan areas.

Big cities not only house larger concentrations of potential victims, they also breed larger numbers of criminals. That means would-be perpetrators have an easier time finding accomplices.

“In a big city, you have the potential to meet more distinct people each day,” Daniel Abrams, researcher at Northwestern University, said in a news release. “You’re more likely to find an appropriate partner to start a business or invent something. But perhaps you’re also more likely to find the partner you need to commit a burglary.”

Previous studies have shown that as cities grow, crime increases exponentially -- particularly, burglary, auto theft and homicide.

“If you double the size of a city, you don’t just double the amount of crime,” Abrams said. “You actually more than double it.”

To explain the phenomenon, researchers designed a mathematical model to analyze the frequency of crime as a function of social interactions.

Abrams, an associate professor of engineering sciences and applied mathematics, partnered with Vicky Chugiao Yang, a postdoctoral fellow at the Santa Fe Institute and former doctoral student in Abrams’ lab, as well as Andrew Papachristos, a sociology professor at Northwestern who studies social networks in urban neighborhoods.

The trio of researchers populated their model with data from the FBI, Chicago Police Department and the National Incident-Based Reporting System. The scientists used their model to analyze co-arrest records -- when multiple people are arrested for the same crime -- for robbery, motor vehicle theft, murder, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft and rape.

Abrams, Yang and Papachristos published the results of the study this week in the journal Physics Review E.

The authors of the new study suggest the social aspect of big cities also yields positive outcomes, like more patents, small businesses and per capita income.

“The world is becoming very quickly urbanized,” Abrams said. “There is a huge mass migration to cities from rural areas. It’s important to understand what good and bad effects come with that. In order to promote the good side and reduce crime, we have to understand why it occurs.”

Play a great part in employment and production, Rouhani tells tourism minister

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani on Saturday urged Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan to play a great part in the arenas of travel industry and crafts and to improve the status of craftspeople in terms of job creation and production.



“Now that you have taken on a new responsibility with the votes of representatives [of the parliament], strive to expand the tourism industry by assistance of the private sector and diversify handicraft products....., in such a way that the Ministry could play a great part in employment and production,” Rouhani said Mounesan in a decree, IRNA reported.

Earlier this month, the Iranian parliament (Majlis) cast vote of confidence for Mounesan as the minister of cultural heritage, handicrafts, and tourism.

The vote of confidence completed the process of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization being converted into a long-awaited ministry.

Nearly 7.8 million tourists traveled to the country in the last fiscal year (ended March 20), showing a 52.5 percent growth compared with the preceding year.

Iran is home to hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, mansions, as well as very changing natural sceneries, and above all, millions of its hospitable people.

The Islamic Republic has launched extensive plans to bolster its tourism sector. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country is expecting to increase the number of tourism arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million.

Greek current account surplus inches down in July, tourism revenues rise

ATHENS (Reuters) — Greece's current account balance showed a slightly smaller surplus in July compared to the same month last year, as imports outpaced exports, the Bank of Greece said on Friday.

Central bank data showed the surplus at 1.28 billion euros (\$1.41 billion) compared to a surplus of 1.31 billion euros in July 2018.

Tourism revenues rose to 3.65 billion euros from 3.28 billion in the same month a year earlier.

Last year Greece's current account showed a deficit of 5.3 billion euros, up by 2.1 billion year-on-year as the trade gap widened.



ROUND THE GLOBE

Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yasawi

The Mausoleum of Khoja Ahmed Yaswi, a distinguished Sufi master of the 12th century, is situated in southern Kazakhstan, in the north-eastern section of the city of Turkestan (Yasi).

Built between 1389 and 1405, by order of Timur (Tamerlane), the ruler of Central Asia, it replaced a smaller 12th century mausoleum. Construction of the building was halted in 1405, with the death of Timur, and was never completed.



A UNESCO World Heritage, the property is limited to the mausoleum, which stands within a former citadel and the archaeological area of the medieval town of Yasi; the latter serves as the buffer zone for the property.

Rectangular in plan and 38.7 meters in height, the mausoleum is one of the largest and best-preserved examples of Timurid construction. Timur, himself, is reported to have participated in its construction and skilled Persian craftsmen were employed to work on the project.

Considered to be an outstanding example of Timurid design that contributed to the development of Islamic religious architecture, the mausoleum is constructed of fired brick and contains thirty-five rooms that accommodate a range of functions.

The property, burials and remains of the old town offer significant testimony to the history of Central Asia. The mausoleum is closely associated with the diffusion of Islam in this region with the help of Sufi orders, and with the political ideology of Timur.

Source: UNESCO

Hamedan to host UNESCO transnational nomination of Silk Roads meeting

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran's ancient city of Hamedan will host the 6th meeting of the Coordinating Committee on the Serial Transnational World Heritage Nomination of the Silk Roads from September 23 to 26.

Organized by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and UNESCO Cluster Office in Tehran in cooperation with the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO and the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism, the meeting will bring together the National Focal Points and experts from sixteen participating countries of the Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee for the Silk Roads serial transnational World Heritage nomination.

Representatives from Iran, Afghanistan, China, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, as well as Bhutan as an observer will attend the meeting.

Together with other partner countries, they will review the State of Conservation of the inscribed Silk Roads World Heritage property and the progress made by those countries that participate in the serial transnational World Heritage Nomination(s) Process of the Silk Roads. The meeting also aims to explore further continuation of the ICOMOS Thematic Study covering other parts of Asia and to decide on a strategy for related nominations, the UN cultural body reported.

It will also involve UNESCO representatives and international experts and other international resource personnel, including the International Institute for Central Asian Studies (IICAS, Samarkand) as well as the ICOMOS International Conservation Centre in Xi'an (IICC Xi'an), which acts as the Secretariat of the Silk Roads Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee as well as. These resource persons will facilitate discussions and provide technical assistance on the serial World Heritage nomination of the Silk Roads.

Together with five Central Asian countries and China, the World Heritage Center has coordinated the preparation of the serial transnational World Heritage nomination of the Silk Roads since 2003.

The ancient Silk Road has existed for thousands of years, passing through many different empires, kingdoms, reigns and societies throughout history. At certain times in its long history, traders could travel freely along these routes, whereas at others, travel was difficult or dangerous.

According to UNESCO, the Silk Road enriched the countries it passed through, transporting cultures, religions, languages and of course material goods into societies across Europe, Asia and Africa, and uniting them all with a common thread of cultural heritage and plural identities.

These vast networks carried more than just merchandise and precious commodities however: the constant movement and mixing of populations also brought about



Shohada Conference Hall of Hamedan Governance Office
Conference Hall of Baba Taher Hotel, Hamedan
23-25 September 2019

سالن کنفرانس شهدای استانداری همدان
سالن کنفرانس هتل باباطاهر، همدان
۱-۳ مهرماه ۱۳۹۸

A poster for the 6th meeting of the Coordinating Committee on the Serial Transnational World Heritage Nomination of the Silk Roads

the transmission of knowledge, ideas, cultures and beliefs, which had a profound impact on the history and civilizations of the Eurasian peoples.

Travelers along the Silk Roads were attracted not only by trade but also by the intellectual and cultural exchange that was taking place in cities along

the Silk Roads, many of which developed into hubs of culture and learning. Science, arts and literature, as well as crafts and technologies were thus shared and disseminated into societies along the lengths of these routes, and in this way, languages, religions and cultures developed and influenced each other.

War tourism to be expanded in Khorramshahr

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — War tourism, a kind of recreational travel to active or former war zones for purposes of sightseeing or historical study, is intended to be expanded in the city of Khorramshahr, a symbol of resistance during the 1980–1988 war against Iraqi invaders.

“20 spots have been identified in this city [Khorramshahr] in order to expand war tourism,” a local official said on Thursday, Mehr reported.

Abdol-Amir Arizawi announced the launch of tours to war zones to commemorate “the Sacred Defense Week”. The week is set by the Iranian calendar and begins on Shahrivar 31 (this year falls on September 22). The event is also marked by various military parades and war games.

Participants are scheduled to visit former war zones and



memorial places via land and sea tours, the official said, adding that the tours are organized by the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Ministry.

Holding photo exhibits and workshops on the Iran-Iraq war are amongst cultural activities of the event, he noted.

Iran liberated Khorramshahr in a landmark operation code-named Beit-ol Moqaddas on May 24, 1982, putting an end to over 500 days of the Iraqi occupation.

The Iraqi army invaded Iran on September 22, 1980, setting the stage for an eight years of war. With a support by certain Arab and Western countries, Saddam Hussein ordered attack on Iran nearly 19 months after the Islamic Revolution.

The war drew to a close in August 1988. The United Nations declared Saddam as the initiator of the conflict.

Tapping into China's tourism bonanza



More than 25 million Europeans work in tourism – a sector estimated to contribute around 10 percent of EU GDP. But what happens once the peak summer period ends? For many SMEs operating in Europe's travel industry, accessing new markets is vital for opening up new business opportunities. One market that shows no sign of slowing down any time soon is China. Once travel minnows, in just the space of a few years, the country has become a global powerhouse when it comes to outbound travel.

■ Getting a better balance

Attracting Chinese tourists outside the peak summer holiday period and to Europe's lesser frequented cities or tourist attractions is seen as one of the best ways to create growth and develop more sustainable tourism.

Dutch multimedia firm Nuformer is a specialist in motion graphics and virtual reality. Last year, the company used its creative technology to produce a giant 3D show in the Chinese city of Xian. Held during the closing ceremony of the EU-China Tourism Year, the performance showcased some of Europe's less-visited locations.

“Well projection mapping is a technology that enables

us to project very large size video footage on an object or an ancient wall like here in Xian, and the video footage that we used for this project showed lesser-known destinations in Europe,” says Nuformer CEO Rob Delfgaauw.

One of the key objectives of the EU-China Tourism Year was to promote off the beaten track and out of season locations.

In addition, the year-long campaign sought to build stronger business links and more than 1000 EU companies, including many small and medium-sized enterprises, took part in Business to Business matchmaking events.

■ Tourism overload

Last year saw more overseas visits to Europe than ever before. A part of that rise was down to Chinese tourists. While tourism brings lots of economic benefits, in popular places, like Barcelona, Venice and in Amsterdam, the boom is not universally welcome.

The Dutch city has introduced policies, such as removing the famous “I Amsterdam” sign in order to curb numbers outside the city's main art gallery. A ban on tours of the city's red-light district is also due to take effect next year.

Attempting to spread tourists by attracting them to other destinations not only seems to make more sense economically, but it would also appear to benefit those hotspots struggling to cope with large visitor numbers.

“I think it would be very important to try and see if we can inspire Chinese tourists to visit the lesser-known destinations in Europe, especially independent tourists in China, they are looking for unique experiences that they can share online with the friends and relatives in China,” says Dr. Dineke Koerts, an expert in Chinese tourism.

Dr. Dineke Koerts, from the Academy for Tourism at Breda University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands, is an expert in Chinese tourism. Business Planet spoke to her about the growing outbound Chinese tourism market.

■ What more can be done to encourage Chinese visitors to Europe?

“I think Chinese tourists, and especially independent tourists, are looking for good flight connections, easy visa procedures, that's very important for them, especially independent tourists when they decide where to travel. Also, safety is a big concern and a welcoming attitude towards Chinese visitors.”

■ What's the growth potential of this market?

“The growth potential I would say is perhaps beyond imagination if we realize that currently less than 10 percent of the Chinese population, of 1.4 billion more or less, hold passports. So it means, and with the middle class continuing to grow, it means that lots of Chinese tourists will be travelling the world and they have also developed a real appetite for travel.”

■ EU initiatives like the EU-China tourism year - how important are they for boosting tourism from China to Europe?

“I think the EU-China Tourism Year was very important in drawing attention to Europe, and also putting Europe on the map as a suitable destination for off-season travel. The main holidays in China are around October the 1st and January-February, so not the European high summer season. Furthermore, during the EU-China Tourism Year, many business to business matchmaking events were organized, putting European and Chinese tour operators and other tourism providers in touch with each other. If you go to the website of the EU-China Tourism Year there is lots of interesting material available, webinars and other leads, for especially small and medium enterprises to explore the possible market in China.”

(Source: Euronews)

West’s “humanitarian” claims struggle as Syrian war nears endgame

By Tony Cartalucci

Headlines emanating from the West regarding Syria's ongoing war have a common theme – allegations of Syria and Russia's “ruthless barrage” of the northern region of Idlib.

So often, however, has the US and its allies falsely invoked “humanitarian concern” that these headlines fall on informed and discerning ears who not only reject it, but have cemented in their minds a familiarity with this ploy that will make it all but impossible to use it again on whatever battlefield the US shifts its foreign policy to next.

■ Like a broken record

CBS in its article, “Syrians trapped by Assad's ruthless Russian-backed barrage in Idlib beg for help,” peddles an all-too-familiar narrative of helpless, innocent civilians in desperate need of “help.” That “help,” of course always comes in the form of US intervention and the eventual, total destruction of the nation as was the case for Libya in 2011.

The article claims:

More than three million people are trapped under a Syrian bombing campaign as Bashar Assad battles to reclaim the last enclave held by rebels in his country. Idlib is the only remaining opposition stronghold after eight grueling years of civil war.

There are no “rebels” or “opposition” in Idlib. There are, however, legions of militants operating under the banners of Al Qaeda, the self-proclaimed “Islamic State” (ISIS), and their various affiliates.

These terrorists are the recipients of foreign arms and support – and many of them are not even themselves Syrian – making CBS' claims that Syria's conflict is a “civil war” wholly inaccurate.

Far from Syrian or Russian “propaganda,” the fact that Idlib has been occupied by terrorists and not “rebels” is one admitted by the Western media itself – and a fact admitted to since the region first fell to foreign-armed terrorists.

The Associated Press in its 2015 article titled, “Assad Loses Final Idlib Stronghold to Al Qaeda-led Insurgents,” would report:

After a two-year siege, al Qaeda's affiliate in Syria and other insurgents on Wednesday captured the one remaining Syrian army air base in Idlib, a development that activists said effectively expelled the last of President Bashar al-Assad's military from the northwestern province.

From the moment Idlib fell, throughout its occupation by terrorist forces, and up to the current Syrian assault to liberate Idlib, it



is – by the West's own admission – terrorists that Syrian and Russian forces are fighting.

The collective attempt by the Western media to sidestep this fact – a fact they themselves have previously acknowledged and reported on – is aimed at condemning and impeding ongoing security operations organized by Damascus in Idlib.

■ Still trying to sell us intervention

The CBS article – like many examples of Western war propaganda – after deceiving readers as to who Syrian forces are fighting in Idlib – makes the case for US intervention, claiming:

In the aftermath, one woman screamed hysterically at a news camera, begging for an American intervention.

“We are getting killed every day,” she cried. “Mr. Trump, please, please stop this!”

But there is no help.

Like many of the West's narratives, CBS' story depends on readers believing without any evidence that not only did their “witness” really exist and said what CBS claims they said, but really begged the US to intervene despite seeing what US interventions have done everywhere else in the region over the past two decades.

Extra irony can be drawn from CBS' reporting – considering that the US itself has carried out airstrikes and drone attacks on Idlib over the years as well.

As another part of the West's admissions of Al Qaeda, ISIS, and other terrorist organizations occupying Idlib – there have been reports over the years of the US carrying out airstrikes and drone attacks targeting various leaders of Al Qaeda.

A 2016 Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) article titled, “Pentagon Says It Killed

Senior Al-Qaeda Leader,” admitted:

A U.S. drone strike in Syria killed a senior Al-Qaeda leader who once had ties to Osama bin Laden, the Pentagon said on November 2.

The October 17 strike near Idlib killed Haydar Kirkan, who “was intent on plotting and carrying out attacks against the West,” Pentagon spokesman Captain Jeff Davis said.

The Business Insider in another 2016 article titled, “Egyptian al Qaeda leader killed by US drone strike in Idlib, Syria,” would reveal:

Syria's militant Jabhat Fateh al Sham, formerly the Nusra Front, said on Monday that Egyptian cleric Abu al Faraj al Masri, a prominent member of the militant group, had been killed in a strike by the U.S.-led coalition.

The US – finding Idlib to be a seemingly target-rich environment for Al Qaeda leaders – and by having carried out military operations there itself – not only contradicts its current accusations of Syria and Russia bombing “rebels” and “opposition” groups, but also reveals the US as equally guilty of bombing the population of Idlib – whatever the reason – as it now claims Syria and Russia are.

Despite the best efforts by CBS and others to sell US intervention in Syria at this late juncture – the prospects of US intervention are remote – not only because the lies told by media networks like CBS to justify it have run their course, but also because the US is out of options militarily, politically, economically, and even covertly.

■ The endgame

Lacking any coherent, viable proxy force on the ground, the US is left with only a few, equally unattractive options including carrying out its own military campaign against Damascus, or having proxies like Israel or Turkey initiate

hostilities it can then join in shortly thereafter.

Russian diplomatic efforts to give Turkey an exit from its involvement in Washington's apparently failed proxy war appear to be gaining traction. Turkey will remain for the time being teetering between East and West as its economy and special interests within the spheres of business and politics cultivate ties in both directions.

Creating the conditions on the ground, however, that leave little for Ankara to gain from by aiding Washington's proxy war further is key to having Turkey place both feet down firmly on Damascus and Moscow's side at least in this regard.

Israel, on the other hand, is an eager proxy who remains committed to provocations including air strikes on Syria, Iraq, and now even Lebanon. Israel is also equally committed to provoking Iran – the primary target of the US-led war in Syria.

Israel's ability to “invade” Syria – let alone Iran – is nonexistent and its inability to win any war through air power alone was already fully demonstrated in its failed 2006 war with Lebanon. Without a sizable commitment of US forces, “US intervention” or that by its proxies in Syria – or Iran for that matter – is unlikely and were it to happen, not guaranteed to succeed.

The Russian military presence in Syria also greatly complicates US ambitions to escalate hostilities in Syria – and as Russia expands its ties throughout the Middle East – it complicates Washington's campaign of sowing regional hostilities as well.

Assuming those in Washington are aware of their failure in Syria and their current lack of options, the threat of simply sowing chaos in the region and delaying peace and reconstruction is more likely an attempt to find leverage and force concessions as the conflict reaches its endgame.

The US and its media's “humanitarian-based” accusations against Syria and Russia will continue despite its growing impotence as a political tool. Thus, the alternative media who helped dull the blade of this tool in the first place, must continue exposing Western disinformation and war propaganda to ensure it remains impotent.

In many ways, complacency and misplaced trust in Washington's feigned rapprochement with Russia, Syria, and others in the early 2000s invited the current conflict. Lessons must be learned from how this conflict began and how it is being ended in order to avoid it from ever unfolding again.

(Source: journal-neo.com)

Bolton’s dismissal does not mean a drastic change in American policy towards Iran: Shireen Hunter

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Shireen Tahmaasb Hunter, a professor of political science at Georgetown University, tells the Tehran Times that “Bolton's dismissal by itself alone does not mean a drastic change in American policy towards Iran.”

“Nevertheless, his departure could have created better conditions for diplomacy, had it not been for the attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil installations,” Hunter says.

She adds “Many people in the United States are beginning to realize that Netanyahu's policies are contributing to regional tensions and US problems in the region.”

Following is the text of the interview:

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

A: Bolton's dismissal, or as he claims his resignation, had many reasons. Only one of these reasons relates to Iran. Trump was

unhappy with Bolton because of his approach to North Korea and Afghanistan. Trump wants a deal with both North Korea and the Taliban. But Bolton was opposed to such deals. Also, I think Pompeo who wants to dominate US foreign policy-making, was increasingly unhappy with Bolton. Now, if Brian Hook succeeds Bolton, in effect Pompeo will become the chief policy-maker after the president. As a result, Bolton's departure as yet does not mean a substantial retreat of US hawks on Iran.

■ What effect will Bolton's dismissal have on US foreign policy toward Iran?

A: Bolton's dismissal by itself alone does not mean a drastic change in American policy towards Iran. Nevertheless, his departure could have created better conditions for diplomacy, had it not been for the attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil installations. This incident for the foreseeable future has seriously undermined any chances for diplomacy that might have existed before. Instead, it has increased the risk of some kind of US military retaliation on Iran.

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

A: By nature, Pompeo is also a hawk on Iran. However, he is more willing to do what Trumps wants. Therefore, if it had not been for the attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil installations, he might have agreed to give diplomacy a try.

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

A: Many people in the United States are beginning to realize that Netanyahu's policies are contributing to regional tensions and US problems in the region. However, even with Bolton's departure, a major change in American policy towards Israel is highly unlikely. Meanwhile, Netanyahu will use the attacks on Saudi oil installations to argue that Israel, too, is vulnerable to attacks by Tehran's regional allies like Hezbollah and Hamas, and thus ask America to adopt even harsher policies towards Iran including military strikes.

British Media is not waving, it's drowning...in a sea of its own mendacity

By George Galloway

“Israel has taken out a contract on Jeremy Corbyn” writer Gideon Levy wrote last year in Ha'aretz. As the contract crescendos, what does it tell us about Corbyn, the media, and Israel?

“The Jewish establishment in Britain and Israeli propaganda have taken out a contract on him (Corbyn), to foil his election...” Levy wrote in an opinion piece in 2018. This remarkable piece by Israel's finest journalist Gideon Levy, published in Israel's finest newspaper Ha'aretz, is remarkable not just in that it is a fine piece of writing on a par with what he writes every other day.

But it reminds those whose rushes of blood to the head too often lead them to erroneously believe that Israel is (not yet, at any rate) a “fascist” country. If it were, Levy would be dead, Ha'aretz long closed down and the strategic damage done internationally to Netanyahu by the steady stream of free journalism staunch in the interests of the state.

It is a commonplace that there is NO Arab country where such journalism is permitted. Even cartoonists enigmatically lampooning the Arab system are taken out, never mind trenchant existential attacks upon the character of the system and the leader, like this one.

Less palatable is the fact that NO British journalist would write this piece, quite the contrary. Virtually every British journalist is either writing the opposite or is engaged in a frantic search for the slightest morsel of historic Facebook scribbles to launch yet another assassination piece on the Labour leader.

It is his Arab season now but equally frantic, reckless, often mendacious offenses have been mounted over Corbyn's Cold War activities and his Irish activities. Before that it was his clothes, his unfamiliarity with the words and music of God Save the Queen and his inability to kowtow like a Japanese General before royal personages and on state occasions.

“Thank God you cannot bribe or twist/ the average British journalist/ but when you see what unbribed he'll do/ you see there is no reason to” – From a poem by Humbert Wolfe (1885-1940)

Unbribed (one presumes), the average British journalist in just three years has sincerely believed and ruthlessly proselytized that Jeremy Corbyn (35 years a British MP) has been a Soviet spy, a Czech spy an East German spy. He's been paid £10k per MEETING (at 1980s prices) for his philandering with Soviet bloc agents, he's been on a motorcycle tour of the former German Democratic Republic where he was recruited by the KGB. This is all by way of background as to why Corbyn was the sole MP in the British parliament to ask for evidence from Theresa May for her assumptions as to the true identity of the would-be assailants of the Skripals in Salisbury. The BBC even photoshopped Corbyn in front of the Kremlin walls in a Russian hat.

And Corbyn has also been an agent of the Lebanese Shia Islamist resistance group Hezbollah. And a friend and brother of their equal and opposite Palestinian Sunni resistance group Hamas. And an agent of their equals and opposites, the Shia Mullahs of the Islamic

Republic of Iran.

And prior to all of that, Corbyn was an agent of the revolutionary Irish Republican Army in their long struggle to oust the British occupiers from their country. The fact that Corbyn was meeting leading Republicans in public at the very same time as UK ministers and civil servants were meeting the very same Republicans in secret is carefully elided. That Corbyn was right in trying to bring the political wing of the IRA in from the cold and into a peace process – now universally lauded as the Good Friday Agreement – has to be carefully concealed.

Long ago videos from obscure events, entirely ignored at the time by the self-same media, are being exhumed and distorted. Pictures of wreaths being laid are parsed and wild inferences made as to who exactly is being mourned in the pictures. Smears that were launched last year are relaunching to presumed gullible readers as if they were news this year.

This tidal wave, I remind you again, has all rolled out like a tsunami from the entire UK media – left right and center – in just the last three years.

In the same three years Corbyn has tripled the Labour Party's membership, it is now bigger than all the other British political parties combined and is now the biggest political party in Europe, with over 550,000 members.

In that three years and in the face of the tsunami, Corbyn scored the biggest increase in Labour votes since Winston Churchill was turfed out on his backside in the Labour landslide in 1945.

If Corbyn did not have more than one

hundred Blairite Labour MPs sitting behind him seeking, in perfect synchronicity with the media storms, to overthrow, subvert and undermine him, he would without doubt be sitting in 10 Downing Street right now. Just imagine that...

So, it is now obvious that not only does Israel have a more free press than Britain, but also that the British media has increasingly little purchase with the British people. Newspapers are going out of business, their owners posting billion-dollar losses. The press are bankrupt in public esteem, too. It seems that the more they hysterically blow, the more people disregard what they have to say and some more, on every day migrate to other media shores, on social media, on alternative media channels like RT. The British media, waving frantically, are not waving actually, but drowning. Drowning in the sea of their own mendacity.

The BBC radio flagship program “Today” has lost one million listeners in one year. The BBC flagship television program “Newsnight” has lost half its audience. The Persecutor-in-Chief, the Daily Mail – whose founder was a personal friend of Adolf Hitler – has lost 12% of its readership in the last year.

The Russophobia Times of London has lost 6.6% from a very low base. The ‘liberal’ Guardian newspaper, which daily plumbs new journalistic depths, has sunk by an unlikely 13%.

And the Daily Telegraph, house-journal of disgraced former foreign secretary Boris Johnson, has lost a mind-bending 25% of its readers in just one year.

(Source: RT.com)

Algeria sets Dec. 12 for Presidential Election; what are the possible scenarios to happen?

By Hana Saada

ALGERIA — Algerian Head of State Abdelkader Bensalah announced, on a televised speech addressed to the nation on Sunday night, that the Presidential elections, already postponed twice, have been scheduled on December 12.

This announcement came in line with the army chief Gaid Salah's demand who, earlier this month, called for the convening of the electorate on 15 September, so that presidential elections could be held before the end of the year.

“I have decided... that the date of the presidential election will be Thursday, December 12,” said Bensalah, following army chief of staff Lieutenant General Ahmed Gaid Salah announcement that it would be appropriate to summon the electorate on September 15.

“I am still confident that these elections represent the sole and effective democratic solution, which will allow our country to overcome its current situation,” he said, adding: “The presidential election will present a unique chance that can establish confidence in the country.”

The elections to choose former President Bouteflika's successor, who stepped down after months of peaceful demonstrations, were supposed to take place on July 4 but postponed citing a lack of candidates, amid mass protests demanding the departure of Bouteflika's entourage - of the old guard, carrying out investigations on Bouteflika's era and introducing a radical change in all spheres.

Responding to popular demands, the Head of State, Mr. Abdelkader Bensalah, signed the Organic Law on the Independent National Authority in Charge of Elections and the Organic Law amending and supplementing Organic Law 16-10 dated August 25, 2016 on the electoral system, after completing the formalities stipulated in the Constitution and issuing the Constitutional Council's opinion to the Head of State.

The creation of the National Independent Authority responsible for organizing the electoral process and supervising all its stages, since the convening of the electoral body to the announcement of the preliminary results as well as the amendment of the organic law on the electoral system are the reliable evidence of the State institutions willingness to finally set up all the conditions to make this major election a success.

For his part, the army Chief reassured, in different occasions, that Algeria will transcend the crisis, and nobody has the power to interrupt or hamper its march and block it from reaching its objective, pointing out that all what has been achieved on the ground on several levels and numerous fields in order to rapidly resolve this crisis and develop the suitable conditions to meet the pressing popular demands, namely; the opening of the way for the Algerian people to accomplish their national duty and build the cherished democracy, would not be accomplished without a free and transparent election of the patriotic and loyal man, to be held as soon as possible.

This step was preceded by the organization of the National Panel for Dialogue and Mediation likely to enable Algeria to engage in the electoral process in a climate of national consensus and, thus, hold a free and fair elections. Algeria privileged the path of inclusive and constructive dialogue, with all the forces and actors of the society in order to overcome the current situation by creating the best conditions to accelerate the organization of a free, transparent and credible presidential election, regarded as the only solution capable of enshrining the authority of the State and its institutions. Such a solution is also likely to help Algerian address its economic difficulties, social challenges and threats to its national security in a complex and unstable regional and international environment.

The process of dialogue, supervised by an independent national body composed of personalities, under the direction of Karim Younes, has yielded fruitful results and important proposals, gathered in a report submitted to the Head of State. This report encompassed the conclusions of the Panel members' meetings with 23 political parties and 5670 representatives of national and local associations, in addition to personalities and national figures.

As a reaction, several political parties like National Liberation Front (FLN), National Democratic Rally (RND), the El Islah Movement “Reform Movement”, among others, expressed their satisfaction at the convening of the electorate by the head of state, Abdelkader Bensalah, in anticipation of the presidential election of December 12 which is a step to consecrate the constitutional legitimacy and give the floor to the people to exercise their sovereignty in the choice of their president in complete freedom and transparency. They welcomed the guarantee of the conditions and the legal and legislative mechanisms necessary for the organization of a transparent and regular Presidential elections, through the revision of the organic law bearing electoral system and the formation of an independent authority responsible for overseeing the entire electoral process.

Reaffirming their full readiness to contribute effectively, through massive participation, to the success of the next Presidential election, they praised the role of the military institution and the firm commitment of its command, from the beginning of Hirak “Popular Movement”, to satisfy the popular demands.

On the other hand, some protesters and political parties of the opposition asked for more time to create the right condition for a vote of discontinuity with the old system, reoriented, for two decades, by Bouteflika. In this sense, Talaié El Houriet party considered that the institutional and legal conditions for the organization of an inclusive and transparent presidential election were brought together, reiterating its call on the Government to resign and replace it with a Government of national competences, by adopting measures of appeasement which are able to create the appropriate environment to guarantee a strong participation during the next presidential election to give the next president sufficient legitimacy to launch political, economic and social reforms.

The holding of the presidential election will depend on the balance of power between the regime and the protesters. Some demonstrators are rejecting the decision of the Head of State for a simple reason: many believe that the conditions for a real democratic transition are not met, including the departure of the figures of the old guard. In addition to the fact that Mohamed Chorfli the selected Head of the independent authority responsible for organizing the electoral process is a former Minister of Justice who, according to them, symbolizes the continuity of the old guard and a bad signal.

Two scenarios are, therefore, possible: the repetition of what happened on July 4 with a simple cancellation of the vote; or an election that the government organizes at all costs.

It is imperative for the government to regain the confidence of Algerians by establishing more dialogue with the actors of the mobilization or with representatives of the political parties of the opposition. This dialogue would be an important guarantee for getting people to join the transition process. In addition, the representatives of the mobilization should participate in the organization of the election because they are seen as a real guarantee of its democratic conduct.

Mosques to offer free legal counseling nationwide

SOCIETY TEHRAN — A scheme, titled “each mosque, one legal counselor”, will be launched to provide people with free legal counseling services in mosques nationwide, Mohammad Reza Khoshroo, a judiciary official, has stated.



The scheme aims to reduce people’s legal problems through offering them help with the laws and regulations as well as counseling services.

Using mosques as a place for providing legal and judicial knowledge to people, making peace and reconciliation, and resolving disputes are among the strategies of the cultural affairs department of the judiciary, he noted, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Promoting the knowledge of law among people in order to understand and evaluate the law and to get acquainted with the scope of their rights under the law are other purposes of the scheme, he explained.

Meetings will be held with related organizations by the next week to finalize the scheme and start the services, he concluded.

Unborn babies directly exposed to black carbon produced by traffic

Air pollution particles have been found on the foetal side of placentas, indicating that unborn babies are directly exposed to the black carbon produced by motor traffic and fuel burning.

The research is the first study to show the placental barrier can be penetrated by particles breathed in by the mother. It found thousands of the tiny particles per cubic millimetre of tissue in every placenta analysed.

The link between exposure to dirty air and increased miscarriages, premature births and low birth weights is well established. The research suggests the particles themselves may be the cause, not solely the inflammatory response the pollution produces in mothers.

Damage to foetuses has lifelong consequences and Prof Tim Nawrot at Hasselt University in Belgium, who led the study, said: “This is the most vulnerable period of life. All the organ systems are in development. For the protection of future generations, we have to reduce exposure.” He said governments had the responsibility of cutting air pollution but that people should avoid busy roads when possible.

A comprehensive global review concluded that air pollution may be damaging every organ and virtually every cell in the human body. Nanoparticles have also been found to cross the blood-brain barrier and billions have been found in the hearts of young city dwellers.

While air pollution is reducing in some nations, the evidence of harm caused by even low levels is rapidly increasing and 90% of the world’s population live in places where air pollution is above World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines.

The research, published in the journal Nature Communications, examined 25 placentas from non-smoking women in the town of Hasselt. It has particle pollution levels well below the EU limit, although above the WHO limit. Researchers used a laser technique to detect the black carbon particles, which have a unique light fingerprint.

In each case, they found nanoparticles on the foetal side of the placenta and the number correlated with air pollution levels experienced by the mothers. There was an average of 20,000 nanoparticles per cubic millimetre in the placentas of mothers who lived near main roads. For those further away, the average was 10,000 per cubic millimetre.

(Source: The Guardian)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Freed journalist tells of her Taleban ordeal

(October 10, 2001)

The British journalist Yvonne Ridley is expected to fly back to the UK later today after being released by the Taleban. Ms Ridley has given an account of her experiences during the 11 days spent in detention. This report from Elizabeth Blunt:

It was a **scoop** Yvonne Ridley would probably **have been happy to do without**: when the air raids on Kabul began, she was the only Western journalist in the city. But she was locked in Kabul prison, after being caught inside the country without a visa. She tells how she was being held in a room where weapons were stored, sleeping with a rocket-propelled grenade under her bed. She could hear explosions and see **tracer fire** from anti-aircraft guns, but she said her main fear was that she would become **the focus for a riot** once people knew that she was in the prison. Ms Ridley’s **account bears out** claims by the Taleban authorities that she was well treated. In Jalalabad, where she was first held, **she was treated for fever** and insect bites by a doctor, who expressed great concern that she was refusing to eat. She **admits** that she had been **uncooperative** with her jailers, but finally they seem to have been impressed by her stubbornness. As she left, they presented her with an embroidered Afghan dress and told her, «Ridley, you are a man!» She says she took it as a compliment.

■ **Words**

a scoop: here - an exciting news story which is reported in one newspaper before it appears anywhere else

would have been happy to do without: would prefer not to have had the experience at all

tracer fire: fire by bullets or shells whose course is made visible, usually by a line of smoke left behind it

the focus for a riot: the reason for and target of a riot (when there is a riot, crowds of people behave violently in a public place - for example, they fight, throw stones or damage buildings)

account: a written or spoken report of something that has happened

bears out: supports, confirms

she was well treated: here - her captors behaved well towards her (if you treat someone in a certain way, you behave towards them or deal with them in that way)

she was treated for fever: she received medical care to help her get rid of her fever (if you treat a patient or an illness, you try to make the patient well again)

admits: if you admit something, you recognise or agree, sometimes unwillingly, that it is true

uncooperative: here - not prepared to do what her jailers asked her to

(Source: BBC)

750,000 Iranians suffering from dementia

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Some **d e s k** 750,000 people are diagnosed with dementia nationwide, Masoomeh Salehi, head of the Dementia and Alzheimer’s Association has announced.

Dementia is not a specific disease. It’s an overall term that describes a group of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person’s ability to perform everyday activities. Alzheimer’s disease accounts for 60 to 80 percent of cases.

Salehi made the remarks on the occasion of September 21, World Alzheimer’s Day, which was held with the theme of ‘raising awareness and challenging stigma’.

“Dementia is a syndrome in which there is deterioration in cognitive function beyond what might be expected from normal ageing; so this what make it different with Alzheimer’s,” she explained.

She went on to add that it affects memory, thinking, orientation, comprehension, calculation, learning capacity, language, and judgement, but not consciousness.

Referring to Alzheimer’s constituting up to 80 percent of dementia, she noted that early interventions can highly prevent the disease’s progress and patients can be treated if undergo early diagnosis.

“However, Alzheimer’s is almost incurable and only can be controlled to some extent,” she noted, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Early detection of Alzheimer’s each year can delay up to five years of symptoms or complications, she said, adding, Alzheimer’s is caused by the loss of brain cells occurring in people over the age of 60.

Therefore, Alzheimer’s happens during the aging process; however, dementia can be caused by genetic problems and occur at earlier ages, she added.

“Last year, some 700,000 Iranians have developed dementia while the number reached up to 750,000 this year,” she regretted.

Referring to the Dementia and Alzhem-



Dementia has significant social and economic implications in terms of direct medical and social care costs, and the costs of informal care. In 2015, the total global societal cost of dementia was estimated to be US\$ 818 billion, equivalent to 1.1 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP). The total cost as a proportion of GDP varied from 0.2 percent in low- and middle-income countries to 1. 4 percent in high-income countries.

er’s Association, she explained that about 8,000 people have become members of the Alzheimer’s society over the past years, 2,500 of whom are currently active members.

“With measures taken to raise awareness, our members have grown dramatically since the establishment of the asso-

ciation, but there is still a need for more information and public participation,” Salehi added.

At the Association’s rehabilitation and day care center, patients receive rehabilitation services, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and other non-pharmacological treatments six

US and Canada have lost three billion birds since 1970

The US and Canada have lost more than one in four birds – a total of three billion – since 1970, culminating in what scientists who published a new study are calling a “widespread ecological crisis”.

Researchers observed a 29% decline in bird populations across diverse groups and habitats – from songbirds such as meadowlarks to long-distance migratory birds such as swallows and backyard birds like sparrows.

“Multiple, independent lines of evidence show a massive reduction in the abundance of birds,” said Ken Rosenberg, the study’s lead author and a senior scientist at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and American Bird Conservancy.

Co-author Adam Smith from Environment and Climate Change Canada called the findings a “wake-up call”.

The population losses are consistent with what scientists have counted among insects and amphibians.

The study, published today in the journal Science, did not analyze the reason for the drop. But around the world, birds are thought to be dying more and having less success breeding largely because their habitats are being damaged and destroyed by agriculture and urbanization.

Researchers calculated the declines with 10 years of information on migratory birds from weather radar stations and 50 years of data from the ground. Sources include citizen science from the United States Geological Survey, the Canadian Wildlife Service, the Audubon Christmas Bird Count and Manomet’s International Shorebird Survey.

Grassland birds were hit especially



hard, with a 53% reduction in population. Shorebirds were already at low numbers and now have lost more than one-third of their population. Radar of the night skies found that the volume of spring migration has dropped 14% in just the last decade.

Domestic cats, collisions with glass and buildings, and a decline in the insects birds eat – probably because of widespread pesticide use – also contribute to the dwindling bird numbers. And climate change compounds those problems by altering bird habitats.

Not all bird species declined. Raptors and waterfowl showed gains, probably because of focused conservation efforts, including under the Endangered Species Act.

Co-author Michael Parr, president of the American Bird Conservancy, said saving birds will require policy changes, bans on harmful pesticides and funds for bird conservation.

“Each of us can make a difference with everyday actions that together can save the lives of millions of birds – actions like making windows safer for birds, keeping cats indoors, and protecting habitat,” Parr said.

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → چ

Alborz province sinks 29cm annually, NCC warns

Iran’s National Cartographic Center (NCC) has warned that northcentral Alborz province, adjacent to Tehran, is suffering from land subsidence by an annual rate of 29 centimeters, which must be tackled before incurring great loss, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“a-, ac-, ad-, af-, ag-, al-, an-, ap-, as-, at-”

■ **Meaning**: to or towards

■ **For example**: Change your **address** in the records.

PHRASAL VERB

Pack somebody off

■ **Meaning**: to send someone to stay somewhere for a period of time

■ **For example**: My parents used to pack us off to camp every summer.

IDIOM

Cry wolf

■ **Explanation**: to call for help when you are not really in danger. As a result, nobody believes you when you really need help.

■ **For example**: There’s Mary screaming again! Does she really have a problem or is she just crying wolf again?

هشدار سازمان نقشه‌برداری درباره فرونشست

۲۹ سانتیمتری استان البرز

به گزارش ایرنا، سازمان نقشه‌برداری کشور نسبت به فرونشست ۲۹

سانتیمتری زمین در استان البرز هشدار داد و خواستار جلوگیری از به وقوع

پیوستن خسارات وسیع شد.

Yemen's Houthis announce plan to conditionally halt strikes against Saudi Arabia

TEHRAN — Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement says it will stop launching retaliatory missile and drone attacks against positions inside Saudi Arabia if the Saudi-led military coalition, which has been pounding impoverished Yemen for the past several years, reciprocates the initiative in kind.

The Ansarullah's president of the Supreme Political Council in the Yemeni capital, Sana'a, Mahdi al-Mashat, made the announcement on Friday.

"We are announcing that we will stop targeting Saudi territories with drones and ballistic missiles and all kinds of targeting, and we will wait for the favor to be returned with a similar or even better one by (Saudi Arabia) announcing a halt to all sorts of air strikes against Yemeni territories," Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network quoted him as saying.

Mashat's comments came almost a week after Houthi fighters conducted drone and missile 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.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its region-



al allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing Yemen's former regime back to power and crushing the Houthi movement, which significantly helping the Yemeni army in defending the country against invaders.

The Houthi top official also called for serious negotiations to be held among all parties involved in the persisting conflict. "I call on all parties from different sides of the war to engage seriously in genuine negotiations that can lead to a comprehensive

national reconciliation that does not exclude anyone," Mashat said, while boasting the Houthi movement's rapidly improved military capabilities and "significant advancement" in air and missile defense.

He also warned that that the Houthis "would not hesitate to launch a period of great pain" if their call for peace was ignored.

The US-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, estimates that the war has claimed more than 91,000 lives over the past four and a half years, Press TV reported.

The war has also taken a heavy toll on the country's infrastructure, destroying hospitals, schools, and factories. The UN says over 24 million Yemenis are in dire need of humanitarian aid, including 10 million suffering from extreme levels of hunger.

The Houthis publicly took credit for the September 14 attacks against Saudi oil facilities, but the U.S. swiftly blamed Iran.

Tensions have significantly risen as a result of the accusations leveled against Iran, which Tehran has rejected, and there has been speculation that the U.S. may take military or other forms of action against Iran or Iranian interests.

In rare protests, Egyptians demand President el-Sisi's removal

TEHRAN— Thousands of pro-democracy protesters marched in cities across Egypt, demanding the resignation of President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

Videos posted on social media showed demonstrators chanting "rise up, fear not, Sisi must go" and "the people demand the regime's fall" late on Friday.

Protests were reported in the capital Cairo, the second-biggest city of Alexandria and Suez.

Officers in civilian uniforms confronted the demonstrators who tried approaching Cairo's Tahrir Square, where mass protests started in 2011 which toppled Hosni Mubarak.

Al Jazeera is banned from reporting from inside Egypt, but there were several reports of arrests made in the capital, and tear gas being used on demonstrators.

The demonstrations came after self-exiled Egyptian businessman and actor Mohamed Ali accused President el-Sisi of corruption and called on people to take to the streets and demand the leader be removed. El-Sisi has dismissed the allegations as "lies".

"If el-Sisi does not announce his resignation by Thursday, then the Egyptian people will come out to the squares on Friday in protest," Ali said in a video posted on Tuesday.

China, Solomon Islands establish diplomatic relations

TEHRAN — China and the Solomon Islands have established diplomatic relations days after the Pacific island nation severed ties with Taiwan.

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi and the Solomon Islands' Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeremiah Manele signed an agreement to form ties at a government guest house in the Chinese capital, Beijing, on Saturday.

"We look forward to the quick development of bilateral relations between China and the Solomons," said Wang, pledging to support the country in moving "forward in the development path it has chosen for

itself".

Manele said the Solomon Islands' decision to switch diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China - its largest trading partner - was based on "national needs".

"The development challenges for our country are huge. We need a broader partnership with countries that also includes China," he said.

The move marks a setback for Taiwan, which has been a de facto sovereign nation since the end of a civil war in 1949. China still views the island as its territory and has promised to seize it - by force if necessary, Al Jazeera reported.

Netanyahu sought to escalate Mideast tensions to win another term: Nasrallah

TEHRAN— The secretary general of the Lebanese resistance movement Hezbollah says Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did his utmost to escalate tensions and crises in the Middle East as part of attempts to secure another term in office, but all to no avail.

"Netanyahu tried to change equation in Lebanon in a bid to stay in power and continue on as incumbent Israeli prime minister. He even engaged in fiery rhetoric against Iran, but his bid to secure another term just failed," Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said in an address to his supporters in a televised speech broadcast live from the Lebanese capital city of Beirut on Friday.

"Results of the recent Israeli elections exposed the extent of leadership crisis there, and showed the lack of confidence in the regime," the Hezbollah chief said.

He noted that Netanyahu sought to exacerbate tensions in the Middle East in order to get elected.

Israel's September 17 snap general elections came five months after an inconclusive vote in August, where Netanyahu once again failed to form a majority cabinet.

With 99 percent of the votes counted, Israeli media are



saying that a Likud-led right-wing bloc looks set to control 55 of the parliament's 120 seats, with up to 57 for a center-left alliance.

Despite their rivalry, Netanyahu and his main opponent, Benny Gantz, had only narrow differences on key issues

during their campaigns, meaning that even if Netanyahu was to stand down after five terms in office, significant changes in the Tel Aviv regime's policies on relations with the United States, the standoff with Iran or the Palestinian conflict would most likely remain unchanged.

Once all the votes are counted, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin will meet with the parties that won seats and will ultimately give one party leader up to 42 days to form a government.

The deadlock has turned the regime's former minister of military affairs Avigdor Lieberman, who is now head of the far-right Yisrael Beitenu party which has eight seats, to a key influence in the coalition-building process.

According to Press TV, Nasrallah then pointed to the highly disruptive drone attacks on Saudi Aramco petroleum and gas processing plants at Abqaiq and Khurais in the kingdom's Eastern Province, stating that the "ensuing development clearly showed how expensive is oil once compared to blood. Saudi warplanes continue to kill Yemeni children, but no concrete action is taken (to stop the onslaught)."

Turkey is prepared for possible Syria border operation: Erdogan

TEHRAN — Turkey is ready to act on its southern border with Syria, President Tayyip Erdogan said, after warning that it could take unilateral steps if the U.S. does not establish a "safe zone" in northeast Syria this month.

"Our preparations along our borders are complete," Erdogan told reporters

in Istanbul on Saturday before departing to attend a U.N. General Assembly meeting.

NATO allies Turkey and the U.S. have started joint land and air patrols along part of the border strip, but Ankara says Washington is moving too slowly to establish a sufficiently large safe zone to push Syrian

Kurdish forces from the border.

Turkey has been angered by U.S. support for Kurdish-led forces which fought Islamic State in Syria. It considers the Kurdish YPG fighters a terrorist organization and wants them removed from more than 400 km (250 miles) of border, AFP reported.

The YPG-led Syrian Democratic Forces has said they will pull back up to 14 km in some areas. Turkey says the U.S. had agreed that the "safe zone" should extend 32 km into Syria.

Erdogan reiterated complaints over U.S. support for the Kurdish fighters, saying Washington was providing them with arms.

More than 100 arrested in Paris 'yellow vest' protests

TEHRAN — Over a hundred demonstrators were arrested at yellow vest protests in Paris on Saturday as about 7,500 police were deployed to quell any violence by the movement and its radical, anarchist "black blocs."

There were also fears that the demonstrators could try to infiltrate a march against climate change in the French capital.

The yellow vest movement erupted 10 months ago and blindsided President Emmanuel Macron, whom protesters accused of being out of touch with the needs of ordinary French people.

"What are we doing? We are assembling just to say that we can't make ends meet. [The protest] is not only against the president, it's against the system," said a woman protestor who did not give her name.

The weekly demonstrations — Saturday was the 45th — prompted Macron to loosen the state's purse strings to the tune of nearly 17 billion euros (\$18.8 billion) in wage boosts and tax cuts for low earners, but tapered off over the summer.

However, it remains to be seen whether the movement will regain the momentum of the winter and early spring, when the protests often descended into violent clashes with security forces, especially in Paris.

By 1.00 pm (11 GMT) police had arrested 106 demonstrators, police headquarters said, adding that some had been found to carry hammers or petrol canisters.

"We are being treated like criminals," said a woman, who identified herself as Brigitte.

The authorities had banned demonstrations in some areas of the city, including tourism hotspot Champs-Elysees, but some protesters violated the ban, leading to a tense standoff with police who used teargas and batons to scatter them.

Macron on Friday called for "calm," saying that while "it's good that people express themselves," they should not disrupt a climate protest and cultural events also due to go ahead on Saturday.

The number of police deployed for Saturday's rallies are on a par with the peak of the yellow vest protests in December and March.

Key yellow-vest figure Jerome Rodrigues has billed Saturday's protest as "a revelatory demonstration", claiming "many people are going to come to Paris."

But officials have again outlawed protests on the Champs-Elysees and other areas in the heart of the capital, where previously protesters had ransacked and set fire to luxury shops and restaurants.

Some demonstrators in January even used a forklift truck to break down the doors of a government ministry.

The police have also been criticized for being heavy-handed in clashes with hardcore anti-capitalist "black bloc" groups blamed for much of the violence that has accompanied the demonstrations.

Saturday coincides with the annual European Heritage



Days weekend, when public and private buildings normally off-limits to the public are open to visitors, AFP reported.

After attracting 282,000 people nationwide on the first day of protests last November, yellow-vest protest participation had fallen sharply by the spring, and only sporadic protests were seen over the summer.

Macron said in an interview with Time magazine published Thursday that the movement had been "very good for me" as it had made him listen and communicate better.

"My challenge is to listen to people much better than I did at the very beginning," the president said.

A game that just has become attractive

➔ **I** Netanyahu's defeat in occupied territories is also of particular importance. The prime minister of the Zionist regime was trying to stabilize his political position in occupied territories by turning over the facts about the Islamic Republic of Iran and Palestinian-Lebanese Resistance Front. However, Netanyahu's lies were not even welcomed by the settlers of occupied territories.

Although, there is not a significant difference between Benny Gantz and Netanyahu in this regard, but Netanyahu's defeat shows that the time of false claims about the Resistance Front and its allies is over. Finally, what is happening today in Saudi Arabia and among the inheritors of Abdulaziz is a revealing point of Al Saud's frustration and defeat in Yemen and the region.

Saudi Arabia was defeated in Syria and Iraq, and lost billions of dollars that were spent on establishing and equipping ISIL, Al-Nusra Front, and other terrorist-Takfiri groups. Now, they should give up in Yemen and wait for their punishment because of killing thousands of innocent children, women and men. Yes! The game has just become attractive, but it will never please the enemies of the Resistance Force.

Is a new crisis looming in Egypt amid protests calling for El-Sisi ousting?

➔ **I** According to news outlets, repressive measures were introduced against the rallies that took place in several Egyptian cities after self-exiled Egyptian businessman and actor Mohamed Ali accused el-Sisi of corruption, calling for his departure. Police used tears gas to disperse protesters and void the square.

Ali encouraged people to stand strong and take into the streets demanding the restoration of their rights. He broadcasted a series of videos that went viral last week, accusing the military of spending billions from the public treasury for their personal benefit whilst Egyptians are suffering from poverty. He accused el-Sisi of constructing a 7-star hotel at a cost of around 2 billion Egyptian pounds (\$120 million) as a favor to Sherif Salah, a military general, via a direct order, and not a tender.

"If el-Sisi does not announce his resignation by Thursday, then the Egyptian people will come out to the squares on Friday in protest," Ali said in a video posted on Tuesday.

"God is great... enough already. I want to come back to Egypt. I miss Egypt and my people. May God strengthen your resolve," he said.

In response, el-Sisi dubbed these declarations as "slander and lies", adding that these videos aimed at undermining the confidence "between him and the people."

"Yes, I build presidential palaces and I will continue to build them but not for myself... I'm working to build a new Egypt."

"And I say to every mother and every man who trusts in me... and I say to the people: your son (referring to himself) is honest, faithful and sincere, and this is not a response to anyone, but this is something known about me for a long time," he stated.

For their part, pro-government channels said small group of protesters had gathered in central Cairo just to take videos and selfies before leaving the scene. Another pro-government channel said the situation around Tahrir Square was calm and that footages circulating are old from previous protests.

El-Sisi toppled Morsi a year after his election as President of Egypt in 2012, following the ousting of Hosni Mubarak who was forced from power. Morsi won 51.7% of the vote. Thus, his rule was cut short a year later when Egypt's military under the leadership of the then Defense Minister Abdel-Fatah el-Sisi seized power in a coup on 3 July 2013.

Israeli forces injure over 75 Palestinians in Gaza

TEHRAN— More than 75 Palestinians have been injured as the Israeli forces attacked anti-occupation protests near the fence between the besieged Gaza Strip and the occupied territories.

The Gazan Health Ministry said 74 protesters and two medics were injured during the 75th Friday of protests.

Ashraf al-Qedra, the spokesman for the ministry, said in a tweet that 48 of the wounded were hit by live ammunition fired by the Israeli troops.

Palestinians have been holding weekly rallies in Gaza since last year to protest the siege on the enclave and stress the right to return of the Palestinians who have been externally displaced by Israeli aggression since 1948.

At least 307 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli forces ever since the anti-occupation protest rallies began in the Gaza Strip on March 30, 2018. Over 18,000 Palestinians have also sustained injuries.

In March, a United Nations (UN) fact-finding mission found that Israeli forces committed rights violations during their crackdown against the Palestinian protesters in Gaza that may amount to war crimes.

Gaza has been under Israeli siege since June 2007, which has caused a decline in living standards.

U.S. says will send more military troops to Saudi Arabia, UAE

TEHRAN — The United States says it will send troops to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to bolster Riyadh's air defenses following a recent drone attack on two major oil facilities owned by Saudi state oil giant Aramco.

The decision to send reinforcements to the region, which was approved by President Donald Trump on Friday, was made at the request of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, according to the U.S. Defense Department.

The Pentagon said the deployment would involve a moderate number of troops for what it called primarily "defensive in nature".

"In response to the kingdom's request, the president has approved the deployment of U.S. forces, which will be defensive in nature and primarily focused on air and missile defense," U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said at a news briefing.

"We will also work to accelerate the delivery of military equipment to the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to enhance their ability to defend themselves."

The Pentagon has previously planned to send anti-missile batteries, drones and more fighter jets to the Persian Gulf too, according to Reuters. Washington is also considering keeping an aircraft carrier in the region indefinitely, Press TV reported.

Mexico Federation tells refs to clamp down on discriminatory chants

Mexican soccer bosses told match officials on Friday to suspend games if fans shout homophobic or racist slurs and warned that they will take players off the pitch if the chants do not stop.

If home supporters continue with the abuse then the offending club will be made to play their next home game behind closed doors, while abuse by opposing fans will lead to fines, officials from the local federation and league told reporters.

“The act is discriminatory if a third party feels affected by it,” said the president of the Mexican Football Federation, Yon de Luisa.

“We are being proactive with FIFA and in no way do we want to see Mexican football affected.

“Mexico is a recidivist,” he added, in reference to the national team, where chants that gay groups call offensive are common.”

Games will be halted for at least five minutes after the first offence and possibly longer if the players are removed a second time, officials said, adding that clubs were also being instructed to banish offenders from the ground.

Officials said they will explain the new rules to fans over the next three games, and that the new regulations will come into full effect in the 15th week of the season.

The decision comes two months after FIFA tightened its disciplinary code to clamp down on discriminatory songs and chants.

Mexican fans have gained a reputation for shouting homophobic slurs at goal kicks and the national side has been sanctioned by soccer’s world governing body FIFA on more than a dozen occasions for discriminatory chanting.

Mexican players, led by Javier ‘Chicharito’ Hernandez, appealed to fans to stop the chanting in a 2016 publicity campaign. *(Source: Mirror)*

Juventus aim to raise 300 million euros via capital hike

Italian soccer club Juventus aim to raise up to 300 million euros through a capital increase after posting a 39.9 million euro loss in the financial year ended in June, the club said on Friday.

Juventus, which won Serie A championship for the last eight seasons, last year paid 100 million euros to Spain’s Real Madrid to engage Portuguese striker Cristiano Ronaldo.

Shareholders will vote on the rights issue in a meeting scheduled on Oct. 24.

Top shareholder Exor, the holding of the Agnelli family, is committed to buy into the capital increase pro-quota, Juventus said in a statement.

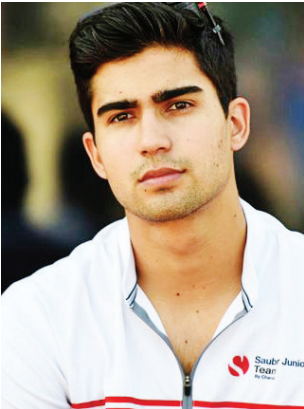
The Italian soccer club signed a pre-underwriting agreement with BNP Paribas, Goldman Sachs International, Mediobanca and UniCredit CIB which act as joint global coordinators and joint bookrunners for the capital hike.

Juventus expect to post a loss in 2019/2020 financial year. *(Source: Goal)*

Stricken racing driver Juan Manuel Correa out of coma

American racing driver Juan Manuel Correa, injured in the Formula 2 Grand Prix crash that killed Frenchman Anthoine Hubert in late August, is out of an artificially induced coma, his team said on Saturday.

Correa, just 20, broke both his legs and suffered spinal injuries and acute respiratory failure before being placed in the induced coma.



The Quito born racer was travelling at 170 mph (270 kph) at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit in Belgium on August 31 when a collision with Hubert’s car left Correa needing an initial four hours of surgery at Liege hospital.

Correa, who grew up in Miami but is currently based in Barcelona, is now in “a race against time (for) major surgery in order to minimise risk of irreversible injuries,” his team Sauber said.

“The medical priority for Juan Manuel now shifts from

the lungs to the leg injuries that were sustained more than two weeks ago,” the statement said.

The accident happened as Hubert hit a wall at Spa and smashed into Correa at high speed, flipping the American’s Sauber junior team car upside down and shattering Hubert’s vehicle, the main monocoque separating from the rear.

Hubert, 22, who was considered a serious talent by Renault’s F1 set up, died at the circuit 90 minutes after the race and was the first driver to die at a Grand Prix since the deaths of Ayrton Senna and Roland Ratzenberger at Imola in 1994. *(Source: AFP)*

Wenger to take FIFA role, wants club job

Arsene Wenger will take up a job at FIFA in the coming weeks, as he continues to wait for an offer from a club with a project which interests him, sources have told ESPN FC.

The Frenchman, who turns 70 next month, will join FIFA in a technical role. The role has not yet been completely defined, but it will be a very important one where his voice will be heard and opinions respected.

While Wenger is excited to help football improve through FIFA, sources have told ESPN FC his priority remains finding job in club football soon.

As much as he was ready for the challenge at FIFA, he is also eager to get back to full management, whether at a club or a national team.

Wenger left Arsenal in the summer of 2018 after 22 years at the club. Since then, he has had opportunities to get back in the game but none that fully satisfied him.

While waiting for the right job, he has worked as a pundit on television. He has been travelling a lot while still living in London.

Wenger still believes that he can improve any team and win trophies in any league. He has watched a lot of matches and met a lot of players, managers and ex-players in the last two years. *(Source: Soccernet)*

NBA passes stricter tampering, salary cap regulations



NBA team owners passed stricter measures to force compliance with player tampering and salary cap rules on Friday after a wild off-season where several top stars changed clubs.

The tougher regulations provide for fines of up to \$10 million, voiding of contracts, forfeiting of NBA draft selections and suspensions of team executives who seek to attract players while they are under contract to another team.

“We need to ensure that we’re creating a culture of compliance in this league and our teams want to know they’re competing on a level playing field and frankly don’t want to feel disadvantaged if they are adhering to our existing rules,” NBA commissioner Adam Silver said.

“What we are really seeking again is a cultural change in the league, that all the partners in the league are essentially saying this is the kind of league we operate.”

The issue came to a head after stars Kevin Durant and Kyrie Irving joined the Brooklyn Nets shortly after becoming free agents -- when the official negotiating period for free agents and clubs had barely begun.

Other deals that were eventually consummated came to light before talks were even supposed to start.

There was also concern about players talking with each other about possible moves, such as Kawhi Leonard wanting Paul George

to join him on the Los Angeles Clippers while George had a contract with the Oklahoma City Thunder.

“The ultimate goal here is to ensure compliance and to ensure that there’s that appropriate tension that exists at the team,” Silver said. “So there is sort of a significant threat that if a team doesn’t comply that there will be consequences.”

Among the ways the league will toughen

the tampering rules is a random audit of communications for five NBA teams, Silver saying he has the ability to confiscate people’s communication devices should he desire under the new regulations.

“I’m not looking to take devices,” Silver said. “We do have the power to take people’s devices. That is not something certainly in the first instance we would be looking to do. I think we can create the appropriate

culture without certainly on a random basis people feeling that’s necessary. We have lots of other tools available to us.”

■ Fines ineffective

Fines, Silver said, have proven ineffective at deterring violations.

“There’s a general sense in this league that among the tools we have to ensure compliance, fining authority unto itself may be one of the least effective tools,” Silver said.

“So within the power that already has been vested in the league, there is the ability to impact competition directly by suspending executives, taking away draft picks and voiding contracts.”

While not vowing a foolproof system, Silver warned potential violators that, “We believe through these tools, we’re dramatically going to increase the likelihood that we’re going to catch you.”

Some issues the league wants to examine, such as changing the dates for free agency, must be done in conjunction with the players union.

But moves such as George leaving the Thunder for the Clippers show how much influence star players can have on other players and by extension, their teams.

An individual player’s ability to change the fortunes of a team “provides enormous leverage for that player,” Silver said. *(Source: AFP)*

Spurs lose at Leicester after more VAR drama



Tottenham’s eight-month long wait for a Premier League away win continued after a controversial 2-1 loss at Leicester on Saturday.

James Maddison’s fine strike completed the comeback for Leicester after they went 1-0 down, but Tottenham were left to rue the intervention of VAR after throwing away a winning position for the second time this week.

Mauricio Pochettino’s men faced a tricky trip to the King Power after letting a 2-0 lead slip to Olympiakos to draw 2-2 in the Champions League in midweek and defeat here was their third in seven league matches this season.

Harry Kane gave Tottenham the lead with his fifth of the season before Ricardo Pereira equalised but only after the visitors were denied a second in contentious circumstances.

Spurs thought they had gone 2-0 up through Serge Aurier, only for VAR to claim Son Heung-Min was fractionally offside before Leicester hit back. Pereira netted first and then Maddison’s sensational effort from distance was enough for Brendan Rodgers’ men.

“That is what Leicester is all about. We are a top side -- we have to be seen as one now. Nobody will want to come here and play us,” Maddison said.

“We are showing we are a real threat here. People moan what VAR takes away from the game but if they rule goals out like that we’ll

be happy. It adds to it.

“If I am going to take my game to the next level, I need to be scoring goals so I was happy to see that one go in.”

Maddison brought the first chance in a lively start to the game when he brilliantly jinked his way through the Tottenham defence, only to hit the ball straight at Paulo Gazzaniga.

The Tottenham No.2 was in for Hugo Lloris, whose wife is due to give birth, and Leicester thought they had opened the scoring on 15 minutes after the stand-in goalkeeper’s howler.

Gazzaniga spilled Youri Tielemans’ weak shot and Wilfred Ndidi tucked home the rebound, only for VAR to reveal he was offside and the goal ruled out.

Tottenham then took the lead against the run of play with a superb piece of inspiration from Kane on 29 minutes. He was bundled over as he charged into the area but as he fell to the ground, managed to stick his leg out and divert the ball past Kasper Schmeichel to the delight of the travelling Spurs supporters.

Gazzaniga looked shaky at times but was alert to deny Ayoze Perez before the break and then did well to make a decent from Jamie Vardy 10 minutes after the restart before Son fired wide at the other end. *(Source: ESPN)*

Europe lead Team World 3-1 after first day in Laver Cup



Team Europe took a 3-1 lead over Team World on the first day of the Laver Cup after winning two of three singles matches and the doubles contest in front of a sellout crowd in Geneva on Friday.

Dominic Thiem and Stefanos Tsitsipas won their respective singles matches before Roger Federer and Alexander Zverev teamed up in the doubles, saving a whopping 15 of 16 break points to beat Jack Sock and Denis Shapovalov 6-3 7-5.

“All of us tennis players travel around the world for 10-11 months of the year,” Federer said. “There’s no place like playing at home so this is a very special night for me.”

Greek Tsitsipas, ranked seventh in the world, kicked off the evening session with a 6-2 1-6 10-7 win over American Taylor Fritz, claiming the opening set in 24 minutes with two breaks of serve.

Although Fritz battled back in the second, winning six of the next seven games to level the score, Tsitsipas capitalised when Fritz double-faulted at 7-7 in the super tiebreak -a race to 10 points when the match goes into a third set.

“I think the momentum changed in the third set tiebreak,” Tsitsipas said. “I found my rhythm, had a more clear mind on the court, didn’t rush so much. I think that played a crucial role in closing it at the end.”

Earlier, in the first session, Europe struck first when Austrian Thiem beat Canada’s Shapovalov 6-4 5-7 13-11, saving three match points in the super tiebreak.

Thiem, ranked fifth in the world, needed only one break of serve to take the opening set, but the 20-year-old Shapovalov fought back to break twice in the second set to tie the game at one set apiece.

The young Canadian led 9-7 in the tiebreak before squandering his match points as Thiem clawed his way back to win the contest on his second match point.

“It’s a really special thing with the tiebreak in the third,” Thiem said. “It creates lots of close moments and match points on either side.”

American Sock earned Team World their only point of the day after securing a 6-1 7-6(3) win over Italian Fabio Fognini.

Fognini failed to convert any of his six break points in the match as Sock won five games in a row to take the opening set.

Federer and Rafa Nadal, with a total of 39 Grand Slams between them, gave Fognini plenty of advice during breaks in play as the second set went with serve until the tiebreak.

But Sock came away victorious after Fognini double-faulted at 3-5 before the Italian made a backhand error to surrender the match. *(Source: Reuters)*

Liverpool looks to extend 100% domestic record after European defeat



Penalties were needed to separate the two sides on that occasion after the scores was level at 2-2 after 30 minutes of extra time.

Chelsea midfielder Ross Barkley says his side can take confidence from the match, despite missing out on lifting the trophy.

“You saw how well we performed in the Super Cup. We will perform to those levels again on Sunday and hopefully, it goes our way,” said the 25-year-old, who missed a penalty in his side’s Champions League defeat by Valencia Wednesday.

■ Vulnerable Liverpool?

Under Klopp’s reign, Liverpool has looked frighten-

ing in attack. The awesome trio of Sadio Mane, Mohamed Salah and Roberto Firmino have run riot against Premier League defenses and have started this season in similarly impressive form.

Despite its success going forward, Liverpool has looked vulnerable in defense as of late and has kept just one clean sheet in the league.

Even UEFA Player of the Year Virgil van Dijk has looked slightly off the pace and was at fault for Napoli’s second goal during Tuesday’s defeat in Europe.

It’s a potential frailty that Chelsea will be keen to take advantage of with its roster of young attacking talent.

The likes of Tammy Abraham, Mason Mount and Fikayo Tomori have breathed new life into the club which lost star attacker Eden Hazard to Real Madrid in the summer.

That trio of youngsters have all been given a chance in the Chelsea first team by new boss Frank Lampard and have so far relished in the opportunity.

Most notably, Abraham, 21, is the league’s current joint top scorer with seven goals, three more than Liverpool’s Mane and Salah have each managed.

The maturity and progress shown by his young side has pleased Lampard in recent weeks to a point where he believes it can cope with “one of the best teams in the country.” *(Source: CNN)*

Iran crowned Asian Volleyball champions

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran overpowered Australia in straight sets (25-14, 25-17, 25-21) in the 2019 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship at the 12,000-seater Azadi Sports Complex here on Saturday.

Team Melli win Asian Men's Volleyball Championship for the third time, as the Persian had already won the title in 2011 and 2013.

Earlier on the day, Japan defeated South Korea 3-1 (25-23, 25-17, 23-25, 25-22) in bronze medal match.

Meanwhile, Chinese Taipei defeated China 3-1 (25-16, 23-25, 25-20, 25-16) in the 5th-6th playoff match and Pakistan beat India 3-2 (25-23, 25-21, 20-25, 19-25, 15-9) in the 7th-8th playoff encounter, asianvolleyball.com reported.

For the lower-ranked teams contesting the 9th-16th playoff encounters, all matches took place at the Volleyball Federation Hall on Friday.

The last year's AVC Cup winners Qatar saw off Kazakhstan 3-1 (25-12, 25-18, 29-31, 25-19) to claim the 9th place, with Kazakhstan ending their campaign with the 10th position, a far cry from the 2nd place they had won in the previous edition in 2017.

Then 9th-place finish of Qatar earned them a place in the AVC Continental Olympic Qualification Tournament in Jiangmen, China between January 7 and 12, 2020. Only top 8 teams from this edition of the Asian Senior Men's Volleyball Championship are qualified for the Olympic Qualification Tournament, but the Tokyo 2020 hosts Japan have already



been qualified, Qatar, the team finishing 9th place, will be in place.

Thailand preserved their previous 11th position after putting it past the fighting Indonesia in a hotly-contested clash 16-25, 30-28, 21-25, 25-17, 15-10. Indonesia finished 12th position.

Oman completed their campaign with a below-par 13th position after a tie-breaker (24-26, 25-16, 17-25, 25-18, 15-12) win against Sri Lanka in the 13th-14th playoff on Friday. Sri Lanka came in 14th place overall.

Earning their first victory in this cham-

pionship, Kuwait showed their great team spirit and improved performance to beat Hong Kong China, the team they had lost 1-3 earlier, in exhausting five sets 19-25, 21-25, 25-19, 25-23, 15-12 to finish 15th place, leaving Hong Kong China to return with the bottom 16th place overall.

Persepolis coach Calderon thrilled to meet Esteghlal



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Gabriel Calderon says that he is thrilled to face Persepolis's arch-rivals Esteghlal football team in Tehran derby.

Argentine Gabriel Calderon and Esteghlal Italian coach Andrea Stramaccioni will experience Tehran derby for the first time and they know that how important the match is for the fans.

"First, I would like to say it's a great honor for me being in this great match. Tehran derby is one of the most important derbies in the world. We are fully ready for this match and We have a great desire to win," Caldron said in the pre-match press conference.

Will Persepolis play an attacking football? "For me, attacking football means a

balance against our opponents. We respect Esteghlal as we respect the other teams in Iran league. I hope Tehran derby make Iran football proud," the Argentine added.

Persepolis captain Jalal Hosseini will most likely miss the match due to stomach pain.

"Jalal is a great player and a role model for our players. He will be absent for the match against Esteghlal but there is no excuse. Jalal is always with us," Calderon stated.

Persepolis have scored just two goals in three matches and Calderon says that his team's midfielders must create more scoring chances.

"I believe that if a team play well at the middle of the field, their strikers will have more scoring chances," Calderon concluded.

Esteghlal need more time: Andrea Stramaccioni



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Andrea Stramaccioni says that Esteghlal football team need more time to learn the new strategy.

Under the Italian coach, Esteghlal have suffered one defeat and two late draws in Iran league. Esteghlal are scheduled to meet their arch-rivals Persepolis on Sunday in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

"We are preparing for this important match and I've requested my players to give 110-percent effort in this match. Every one of us has to take responsibility for what we have done, if not, I will be disappointed," Stramaccioni said at the pre-match press conference.

Esteghlal forward Cheick Tidiane Diabaté will be absent in the match due to a rib injury.

"Diabaté will most likely miss the match as well as Farshid Esmaili. Also, Mehdi Ghaedi is a doubt for the derby. But we are mentally prepared because we have an important match ahead," the ex-Inter coach stated.

Can the fear of being fired make you feel worried?

"In professional football, you have to expect everything. I will step down if I am problem. I will respect the club's decision," Stramaccioni answered. "We need more time to build a team we want. Esteghlal have missed so many players and play with a new coach and with a new style. It takes time. I don't care about the derby's result. We want to strengthen Esteghlal, that's why we are here," the 43-year-old coach concluded.

Iran's Karimi bags silver at World Wrestling C'ships



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Alireza Karimi from Iran won a silver medal being defeated by Rio Olympic bronze medalist J'den Cox at the final of 92kg class of the 2019 World Wrestling Championships on Saturday.

The American wrestler dominated Karimi 4-0 in the final bout. Cox became the second U.S. man to win an Olympic or world title without surrendering a point in more than 30 years (joining Kyle Dake from last year).

Irakli Mtsituri from Georgia and Russian Alikhan Zhabrailov won the bronze medal.

Earlier on the day, Younes Emami won a bronze medal at the 70kg class after defeating Briton Nicolae Cojocaru 8-0. On Sunday, Iran's Hassan Yazdani will meet Deepak Punia from India at the 86kg final match.

The 2019 World Wrestling Championships are being held in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

Zidane on Mourinho talk: 'I'm not interested'

Real Madrid head coach Zinedine Zidane has said he is not bothered by rumors linking Jose Mourinho with his job.

Sources have told ESPN FC that the Frenchman is under pressure after Madrid suffered a disappointing defeat by Paris Saint-Germain in their Champions League opener.

Madrid were up against an under-strength PSG side on Wednesday missing Neymar, Edinson Cavani and Kylian Mbappe but produced a pitiful display, failing to register a shot on target in a Champions League game for the first time in 16 years.

"I'm not interested in what is said outside the club, the day I pay attention to what's in the press is the day I leave,"

Zidane told a news conference on Saturday ahead of Real's visit to early La Liga leaders Sevilla on Sunday.

"I feel in a strong position and I never give up. I will keep trying until the last minute and as long as the club will give me the chance to continue. I don't feel questioned at all."

Spanish media have reported that Real president Florentino Perez would be keen to recruit former coach Mourinho should Zidane be relieved of his duties.

"I'm not bothered by the Mourinho speculation," he added. "This is how the situation is, and whenever the team has a bad result the impression is that everything needs to change. It's difficult but it's the reality."

Real have taken eight points from four La



Liga games while Sevilla top the standings with 10 after making a flying start under coach Julen Lopetegui, who was named as Zidane's successor at Real last year but was

sacked in October.

Lopetegui, however, said he harbored no ill feelings towards Real and was treating Sunday's game like any other.

"Three points are up for grabs tomorrow and that should be motivation enough for us even though we know what it means to face Real Madrid," he said.

"I have a very good memory of every club I've been at and always try to remember the positive things. I try to be responsible and ambitious and tomorrow will be no exception."

Real will be able to count on captain Sergio Ramos against Sevilla after he missed the PSG defeat due to suspension, although Marcelo is a doubt and Luka Modric is still injured.

(Source: soccer.net)

8-Star Manchester City humiliate Watford

Pep Guardiola's men were at their devastating best on Saturday afternoon at the Etihad Stadium where the Citizens put the Hornets to the sword with a first half display the Premier League had never seen.

Goals from David Silva, Sergio Aguero, Riyad Mahrez, Nicolas Otamendi, Kevin de Bruyne and Bernardo Silva (treble), helped Manchester City hand a 8-0 battering

to Watford to condemn the visitors to the worst defeat suffered by any team in the league this season.

Five of City's goals arrived in the first twenty minutes of the first half as Quique Sanchez's men could not handle the red hot champions.

According to Opta, the five goals scored by the hosts after just 18 minutes is the fastest any side has ever

gone 5-0 ahead in a Premier League match in the competition's history.

In a repeat of last season's FA Cup final, City crushed Watford to cut the gap with league leaders Liverpool to just two points, ahead of the Reds meeting with Chelsea later on Sunday at the Stamford Bridge.

(Source: soccer.net.ng)

Iran beat Palestine at 2020 AFC U16 Championship Qualifiers

Iran defeated Palestine 2-1 in Group C of the 2020 AFC U-16 Championship Qualifiers at the Hajibabaei Stadium in Hamadan, Iran on Friday.

Yadegar Rostami in the 25th minute and Amir Ebrahimzadeh in the 45th minute scored for Iran.

Hossein Abdi's team, who defeated Maldives 13-0 in its opener, will face Afghanistan on Sunday.

Earlier in the day, Afghanistan defeated Maldives 3-0.

All the 47 AFC member Associations are taking part in the competition and divided into 11 Groups. In each group, various teams will play each other once at a centralized venue. The eleven group winners and four best runners-up will qualify for the final tournament.

The final round will be held in Bahrain next year.

(Source: the-afc)

Iran female referees to judge AFC U16 Women's C'ship

IRNA — Iran's Mahsa Ghorbani as referee, Ensieh Khabaz Mafi Nejad as assistant referee and Mahnaz Zokaei as the 4th official will officiate the match between Australia and Bangladesh.

Also earlier the game between South Korea and China is to be officiated by Iran's Mahsa Gorbani as the referee and the other Iranian referee Ensieh Khabbaz Mafinejad as an assistant referee.

The 2019 AFC U16 Women's Championship qualification is a women's under-16 football competition which decides the participating teams of the 2019 AFC U-16 Women's Championship.

A total of eight teams qualify to play in the final tournament held in Thailand, four of which are decided by qualification.

Persepolis captain Jalal Hosseini to miss Tehran derby

PLDC — Persepolis football team captain Jalal Hosseini will likely miss the match against Esteghlal.

The Reds are scheduled to meet their arch-rivals on Sunday in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Hosseini was forced to leave the training for lower abdominal pain on Friday.

He should undergo an endoscopy to determine whether he is fit for the match or not.

Esteghlal striker Cheick Tidiane Diabaté also is absent due to rib injury.

IPL: Padideh suffer late defeat to Foolad

TASNIM — Padideh football team suffered a late 1-0 defeat to Foolad in the Iran Professional League (IPL) on Friday.

Luciano Pereira opened the IPL leaders' goal in the injury time in Mashhad.

In Isfahan, Sepahan and Naft Masjed Soleyman played out a goalless draw.

Tractor defeated Gol Gohar 1-0 thanks to Amin Pourali's own goal in Tabriz.

Sanat Naft drew 1-1 with Zob Ahan, Paykan humiliated Machine Sazi 6-2, Pars Jonoubi defeated Saipa 3-2 and Nassaji emerged 2-0 victorious over Shahin Bushehr.

On Sunday, Esteghlal will play Persepolis in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

Back to back Afghan titles for Toofan Harirod

Toofan Harirod are the Afghan Premier League champions for the second year in a row, after they beat perennial contenders Shaheen Asmayee 1-0 after extra time in the competition's decider on Friday.

It was far from easy, but Hatam Shirdil's 95th minute strike proved decisive when the teams had finished goalless after 90 hard-fought minutes in the nation's capital.



Toofan's second consecutive title takes the Western Afghanistan club to three Afghan Premier League titles, one behind Kabul-based Shaheen, who reached the final for the seventh season in a row.

In front of a capacity crowd, both sides came into the match eager to convert their perfect records throughout the tournament into silverware, but despite chances at either end, the first 90 minutes failed to produce a winner.

In the fifth successive Afghan Premier League final to go to extra-time, Shirdil quickly broke the deadlock, outmuscling the Shaheen defence before poking the ball home on the volley from close range.

Emotions boiled over five minutes later when a coming together between two players led to a melee, with Shaheen going down to ten men, and Toofan having a substitute sent from the bench, and the visitors used their numerical advantage to retain their status as champions of Afghanistan.

The Afghan Premier League is a run over a month-long tournament format, with eight teams from around the country competing in a group stage, with the top four advancing to the semi-finals.

Toofan's win also gives the chance to complete at the Continental level, with their title giving them entry to the qualifying stage of the 2020 AFC Cup.

(Source: the-afc)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

The worst sin is one which is supposed to be trifling.

Imam Ali (AS)

Shahu album “Cedars Die Standing” honoring Iranian marine commandos released

A R T **TEHRAN** — Shahu, a major Iranian traditional music group, has released its new “Cedars Die Standing” in honor of those Iranian marine commandos who took part in the operation to liberate Khorramshahr from the Iraqi forces in 1982, the Rudaki Foundation announced on Saturday.



A poster for the unveiling ceremony of the music album “Cedars Die Standing”.

Musician Hamed Saqiri has drawn inspiration to compose the album from the memories of Captain Hushang Samadi, who was the commander of Marine Battalion 1 that fought during the operation.

“Cedars Die Standing”, which has been recorded in collaboration with the Rudaki Foundation, will be unveiled during a special ceremony at Tehran’s Vahdat Hall on Thursday.

The southwestern Iranian city of Khorramshahr was captured by Iraqis on October 26, 1980 during the early months of the Iran-Iraq war and it was liberated on May 24, 1982.

Vienna exhibit showcases Persian miniature paintings by elderly amateur Austrian artists

A R T **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Cultural Center in Vienna is playing host to an exhibition of Persian miniature paintings created by a number of elderly amateur Austrian artists.

Fifteen Austrian amateur artists aged 70 to 80 have created the paintings based on inspiration from books of Iranian miniature paintings.



Art aficionados visit an exhibition of miniature paintings by a number of elderly amateur Austrian artists at Iran’s Cultural Center in Vienna on September 17, 2019.

They have also taken lessons on Persian painting given by Vienna-based Iranian artist Mitra Shahmoradi.

A number of academics and artists as well as Iranian expatriates living in Vienna attended the opening ceremony of the exhibit on Tuesday.

Speaking at the ceremony, Shahmoradi said that the retired elderly are highly interested in learning miniature paintings.

Shahmoradi said that the exhibition is also displaying 4 paintings created by a 92-year-old lady who was highly interested in paintings until the last days of her life.

The opening ceremony ended with a performance by Iranian ney virtuoso Mohammadreza Azin, which was warmly received by the participants.

The exhibit will be running for three weeks.

“The Salesman” star Shahab Hosseini leads “Oasis of Now” cast

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — Shahab Hosseini, the star of Asghar Farhadi’s Oscar-winning movies “A Separation” and “The Salesman”, will lead the cast in Finnish-Iranian director Hamy Ramezan’s new project “Oasis of Now”, Screen Daily announced on Thursday.

“Oasis of Now” follows a family seeking asylum in Finland, and won the best project award at the Finnish Film Affair, which ended on Thursday.

Hosseini was named best actor for his role in “The Salesman” at the Cannes Film Festival in 2016.

He is also scheduled to portray Shams-i Tabrizi, the wandering sage who later became the mentor of Rumi in the 13th century CE, in “Drunk on Love”, a co-production between Iran and Turkey that will be directed by Hassan Fat’hi, director of the popular Iranian TV series “The Tenth Night”, “Zero Degree Orbit” and “Shahrzad”.

“Oasis of Now” is the debut feature of Ramezan, the director the documentary “Refugee Unknown” (“Tuntematon pakolainen”) about the Finnish-Iranian Ali Jahangiri who wanted to personally experience the reality faced by refugees in Europe in the autumn of 2015.

The movie will be produced Jussi Rantamäki and Emilia Haukka of the Aamu Film Company.



Shahab Hosseini poses during a photocall after accepting the Palme d’Or for best actor for his role in “The Salesman” during the closing ceremony of the 69th Cannes Film Festival on May 22, 2016 in Cannes, France. (Cannes)

Children’s painting exhibit marks International Day of Peace

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Niavaran Cultural Historical Complex in Tehran hosted an exhibition of children’s paintings on Saturday to mark the International Day of Peace.

Entitled “For Love and Peace”, the event exhibited a collection created by a group of schoolchildren during a two-year cultural project, which was implemented in collaboration with Iran’s branch of the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

As part of the cultural project, the children in company with their parents took part in several workshops at a Louvre show and another exhibit entitled “Dutch Archaeology and Art: Highlights from the Drents Museum”, both of which were organized at the National Museum of Iran in Tehran.

They also had several cultural visits to the big gardens and historical houses across the city.

The one-day exhibition, which was organized at the Abi Hall of the complex, actually represented the children’s personal conceptions of peace as developed during the project.



A poster for “For Love and Peace”, an exhibition of schoolchildren’s paintings at the Niavaran Cultural Historical Complex in Tehran.

Iran to host Finnish film festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — Movies from Finnish filmmakers will be reviewed during a weeklong festival, which will be held in three Iranian cities from September 28 to October 4, the organizers announced on Saturday.

The Finnish Film Week will be organized by Iran’s Art and Experience Cinema and the Finnish Film Foundation at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran, the Hoveizeh Cineplex in Mashhad and the City Center Cineplex in Isfahan.

Finnish Film Foundation Chief Executive Officer Lasse Saarinen, the director of the International Department of the foundation, Jaana Puskala, and a number Finnish cineastes, including actor and producer Kaarle Aho, are scheduled to attend the festival.

Over 15 short and feature films will go on screen during the festival, which will be held in collaboration with the Embassy of Finland in Tehran.

The festival’s schedule will be published in the near future.



A poster for the Finnish Film Week.

Moreover, workshops on joint film production and meetings by Iranian and Finnish filmmakers will be organized on the sidelines of the festival.

Italian festival picks films from Iran

A R T **TEHRAN** — A lineup of 18 Iranian films will be competing in the Sediciorto International Film Festival running in the Italian city of Forlì from October 4 to 13, the organizers have announced.

A selection of 15 films will go on screen in Iranfest, a section dedicated to Iranian short films, and three animations will be competing in Animare, a section for animated films.

The short film selection includes “Azadeh” by Mir Abbas Khosravinejad, “Ballsy, Story of a Revolution” by Mohsen Purmohseni-Shakib, “Delay” by Ali Asgari, “Dreams in the Depths” by Reza Mohammadi, “Elephant Bird” by Masud Soheili and “Hanged” by Roqieh Tavakkoli.

Also included are “Home” by Farkhondeh Torabi, “Next” by Saeid Sadeqi Serarudi, “Song Sparrow” by



A scene from “The Role” by Farnush Samadi.

Farzaneh Omidvarnia, “Tanakora” by Hamed Parizadeh, Meysam Hassani and Amirreza Rashti, “Tangle” by Maliheh Gholamzadeh, “The Role” by Farnush Samadi, “The Sea Swells” by Amir Gholami, “The Sixth String” by Bahram Azimi and “Umbra” by Saeid Jafarian.

The animations are “The Incomplete” by Erfan Parsapur, “Bon Appetit” by Saman Haqiqivand and “Take a Nap” by Mina Qasemina.

Since 2004, Associazione Sediciorto is actively engaged in the promotion of cinematic arts and has made the encouragement of independent films, particularly short films, a priority.

Its main objective is to present manifestations of the contemporary cinema industry to a diversified public.

163 films from different countries will be competing in seven competitive sections of the festival this year.

International Persian, non-Persian speech competition held in Tehran

1 → Book reading competition was other part of the competition in which Zainab Akbari, Atifa Rajaie and Freshta Ibrahimini were declared as first three winners.

“I prepared hard for almost one year for this competition and I wanted to highlight unknown aspects of the problem of immigration and war to our Iranian friends,” said Hussaini, the first winner. “I am glad I could do that today.”

“For a girl it is not always easy to avail such opportunities and make most of them. Without any facilities, I worked really hard for this and I am happy I could deliver today,” said Mosoma Mohammadi, the first runner-up.

Reza Mohammadi, the second runner up, expressed satisfaction for being the only male contestant among the top winners.

Sayed Aby Talib Mozaffari, one of the judges of the competition, said the people of Afghanistan, especially the refugees, have

many tales to tell but they lack strong speech skill and the platform. “This program can empower students to express themselves and I am glad the students took this initiative themselves.”

For non-Persian speakers, Persian language, Iranian food and culture were main attractions. “I like Iranian food and I am trying to practice cooking and I like to speak Persian language” said Ley from China who won first position in non-Persian speakers segment.

Diahabi from Senegal, the first runner-up, said he is happy that he got an opportunity to compete with contestants from other countries, talk about various problems including human rights violations taking place in Gorre Island.

“Since I have been involved in the area of speech competitions, I have found Afghan students the most efficient and I am convinced



that these contestants will go on to become the powerful speakers in the future” Said Farzana Masomian, one of the judges of the contest.

According to the organizers, bolstering communication skills of students and helping them overcome stage fear are among the main objectives of the competition. It also allows for cultural exchange between students from different nationalities.

India’s Eros Now ties up with Microsoft’s Azure platform

MUMBAI (Reuters) — India’s Eros Now said on Thursday it is tying up with Microsoft’s Azure cloud platform to host and stream its digital video offerings, in a boost to the U.S. software giant’s push to expand in the Indian market.

As part of the tie-up, Microsoft will build an online video platform for the Bollywood production house, which will offer interactive voice search features in multiple Indian regional languages.

“AI and intelligent cloud tools will be the next drivers of the media business and will impact everything from content creation to consumer experience,” Anant Maheshwari, President of Microsoft India said in a press statement

This is one of Microsoft’s first forays into India’s crowded digital video space, so far dominated by market leader Amazon Web Services (AWS) that is used by players such as Walt Disney-backed portal Hotstar and

Indian movie and video streaming platform ALTBalaji, among others.

Last year, Microsoft tied up with ZEE5, a video-on-demand platform owned by Indian media company Zee Enterprises.

The deal also comes just weeks after Reliance Industries Ltd, led by Asia’s richest man Mukesh Ambani, announced it was tying up with Microsoft to build data centers in India that will be hosted on Microsoft’s Azure cloud.