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Iran's crude steel output up 6% in 8 months yr/yr: WSA

TEHRAN — Production of crude steel in Iran during the first eight months of 2019 has risen six percent from that of the same period of time in 2018, World Steel Association (WSA) has announced in its recent report.

The WSA put the country's crude steel output at 17.188 million tons in the eight-month period of this year, rising from

16.153 million tons in the same time span of the previous year, Tasnim news agency reported on Friday.

Iran produced 2.2 million tons of crude steel in August 2019, which was 6.7 percent higher than 2.062 million tons of the product produced in August 2018, the same report conformed. **→4**

UN silence over U.S. anti-Iran acts will go down in history: Rouhani

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has said that United Nations' silence over anti-Iran acts of the United States will go down in history.

"The Iranian people will overcome problems one way or another, but the shame of silence over economic terrorism by an aggressive government will go down in history," he said during a meeting with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in New York on Wednesday.

Rouhani also said, "Today, Palestine is going through tough times and the Zionist regime is committing acts of aggression against Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq on a daily basis, and the United Nations is silent towards these crimes."

"This approach needs to be changed and this important international organization must carry out its responsibilities," the president insisted.

For his part, Guterres praised Iran for its efforts to help settle crises in the region.

Nearly 2,000 arrested as Egypt braces for anti-Sisi protests

TEHRAN — Egypt is bracing itself for a second weekend of protests on Friday, with authorities stepping up arrests and tightening security in major cities amid calls for a "million-man march" against President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi.

Egypt's Ministry of Interior warned on Thursday of "decisive" action against any attempts to "destabilize peace" as rights groups say nearly 2,000 people have been arrested since last weekend's rare

protests demanding el-Sisi quit.

Among those arrested was Hassan Nafaa, a political science professor at Cairo University and well-known columnist, who called for the president's departure in a Twitter post.

"I have no doubt that the continuation of el-Sisi's absolute rule will lead to disaster," Nafaa said. "Egypt's interest requires his departure today before tomorrow." **→13**



PERSPECTIVE

Hanif Ghaffari

Head of the Tehran Times Politics Desk

Consequences of Ukrainegate

The hidden aspects of Trump and Zelenskiy's call are being exposed. Although the U.S. president claims that he had a regular conversation with Zelenskiy on case of Biden's son in Ukraine, but evidence suggests that the White House has been negotiating with Ukrainian officials about 2020 presidential election! Of course it is a little complicated! The Washington Post reported that Trump ordered interim White House Chief of Staff to suspend \$ 400 million military aid to Ukraine shortly before his controversial call with the Ukrainian president. Following the action, the U.S. president immediately called Zelenskiy and asked him to investigate the corruption case of Biden and his son. He asked Zelenskiy to carry out investigation several times. In other words, Trump send this message to Zelenskiy that offering military aid to Kiev by Washington depends on Kiev's cooperation with the White House in case of Biden.

This matter was not supposed to be exposed, but U.S. security agencies, many of whom oppose Trump's presence in the White House, have released details. Another point is that U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was not involved in Trump's decision about consultation with Zelenskiy regarding Biden's case. The U.S. secretary of state believes that this action was too amateurish and was considered a kind of gift for the Democratic Party to impeach Trump or even make him to resign.

Although Zelenskiy denied Washington's pressure on Kiev on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting, but confirmed that Trump called him about his rival candidate. Now, there are extensive and behind-the-scenes consultations between senior Democratic Party officials and traditional Republicans on how to deal with Trump's new scandal. The latest news reveals that Democrats intend to pursue the case to make Trump resign. Some Democratic leaders also believe this case could be as a winning card against Trump in next year's presidential election. They argue that given a lack of support by 67 Senators for Trump's impeachment, it is better for Democrats to use the case as a bargaining chip on Trump's campaign instead of investing on his impeachment or resignation. **→13**

"The Urban Art" begins to build bridge between Iran, Italy

By Samaneh Aboutalebi

TEHRAN — The Embassy of Italy in Tehran has launched a project named "The Urban Art Unites" whose aim is to enhance cultural relations between Rome and Tehran.

Artists from Iran and Italy are scheduled to create huge paintings to be affixed to the exterior wall of the Italian ambassador's residence.

The first stage of the project, which will be carried out within a year by September 2020,

was implemented Thursday evening with the unveiling of two paintings by Mehdi Qadyanlu from Iran and Paolo Bordini, also Known as PAO, from Italy during a special ceremony attended by a number of Iranian and Italian cultural officials, artists and diplomats.

The paintings will be on view for two months and then will be replaced by two new artworks by two other artists.

In his brief speech, Qadyanlu called the art

project a great opportunity to build a bridge between Iran and Italy.

For his part, PAO said that coming to Iran and doing an artwork here was "an adventure" for him.

"My family and I were worried about coming to Iran but arriving here, I found people very kind and hospitable. The country is also very similar to Italy and working with an Iranian artist was an honor for me," he added. **→16**

Khashoggi murder 'happened under my watch', MBS tells PBS

TEHRAN — Saudi Arabia's crown prince said he bears responsibility for the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi last year by Saudi operatives "because it happened under my watch," according to a PBS documentary to be broadcast next week.

Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), the kingdom's de facto ruler, has not spoken publicly about the killing inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. The CIA and some Western governments have said he ordered it, but Saudi officials say he had no role.

The death sparked a global uproar, tarnishing

the crown prince's image and imperiling ambitious plans to diversify the economy of the world's top oil exporter and open up Saudi Arabia's society. He has not since visited the United States or Europe.

"It happened under my watch. I get all the responsibility, because it happened under my watch," he told PBS' Martin Smith, according to a preview of the documentary. The Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, set to air on October 1, ahead of the one-year anniversary of Khashoggi's death.

After initial denials, the official Saudi narrative

blamed the murder on rogue operatives. The public prosecutor said the then-deputy intelligence chief ordered the repatriation of Khashoggi, a royal insider who became an outspoken critic, but the lead negotiator ordered him killed after discussions for his return failed.

Saud al-Qahtani, a former top royal adviser whom Reuters reported gave orders over Skype to the killers, briefed the hit team on Khashoggi's activities before the operation, the prosecutor said. **→13**

Four days that pitched America into an impeachment nightmare

TEHRAN — After a whirlwind week, America is facing the reality of a new long national nightmare over a potentially corrupt presidency.

Forty-five years after Watergate, 20 years after Bill Clinton's shame, the mechanism of impeachment is again grinding into life in Washington. The attempt by Democrats to oust a defiant President Donald Trump seems likely, given already bitter divides, to pour even more poison into the nation's political

soul than those previous two impeachment dramas.

According to CNN, Unlike the complicated and confusing picture of shady dealings with Russians and potential obstruction painted by special counsel Robert Mueller, the questions pending in the new showdown are clear cut -- a factor that adds to the President's political vulnerability.

Did Trump abuse his power by leveraging

hundreds of millions of dollars in taxpayer military aid to pressure a foreign country to damage a political opponent? And did the White House then engage in an effort to cover it up?

"The President of the United States has betrayed his oath of office, betrayed his oath to defend our national security, and betrayed his oath to defend our constitution," House Intelligence Chairman Adam Schiff said Thursday. **→13**



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UNESCO-invitees tour attractions in Hamedan

TEHRAN — Participants to a UNESCO meeting, which was held in Hamedan, paid visits to several tourist attractions in the ancient Iranian city. Hamedan hosted the 6th meeting of the Coordinating Committee on the Serial Transnational World Heritage Nomination of the Silk Roads from September 23 to 26.

The invitees toured several cultural and natural attractions including the mausoleum of Avicenna, and prehistoric rock carvings of Ganjnameh which feature sets of cuneiform inscriptions written in three languages of ancient Persian, Elamite, and Babylonian, CHTN reported. **→10**



ARTICLE

Mahnaz Abdi

Head of the TehranTimes Economy Desk

Stock market's prominent performance in H1

While lagging the parallel markets of foreign currency, gold coin, and real estate behind, Iran's stock market hit a new record during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), as TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), closed at an all-time high of 302,103 points.

It is while the index had stood at 178,000 points at the end of the previous calendar year.

Experiencing a growth of 74 percent during the first six months of the present year, TSE witnessed its best performance since the Iranian calendar year of 1382 (March 2003-March 2004).

Also as reported, Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), has experienced a noticeable positive performance during the first half, as its main index, IFX, gained 78 percent during the mentioned period of time.

It seems that these markets will preserve their positive performances also during the second half of the year, as TEDPIX gained 9,367 points (the highest rise so far) in the first day of the second half and the value of trades at TSE and IFB reached 32 trillion rials (about \$761.9 million).

It shows that some huge liquidity is moving toward the stock market. The power of this liquidity will probably bring new records for this market in the second half.

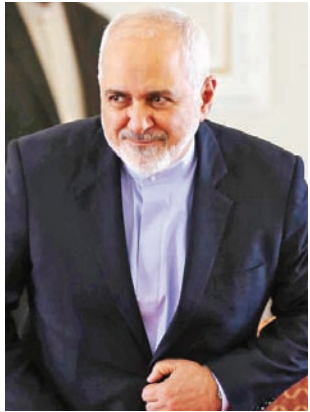
Also given that no growth is being seen at the markets of foreign currency and gold coin, and housing market is expected to witness drop in prices during the second half, another positive performance is anticipated for the stock market.

The first half ended with some fruitful performances also in the other exchange markets of the country, as the value of trades at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) during the sixth month increased 22 percent from its previous month.

IME has reported that some 2.168 million tons of commodities worth 102 trillion rials (about \$2.428 billion) were traded at this market during the past month, indicating 49 percent rise in terms of volume. **→4**

Zarif invites all regional states to join Hormuz Peace Endeavor

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has invited all regional states to join Iran's initiative for securing the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz called "Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE)".



In a tweet on Thursday, he said that the initiative entails "dialogue, confidence-building, freedom of navigation, energy security, non-aggression and non-intervention".

During his speech at the 74th UN General Assembly, President Hassan Rouhani said, "Based upon the historical responsibility of my country in maintaining security, peace, stability and progress in the Persian Gulf region and Strait of Hormuz, I would like to invite all the countries directly affected by the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz

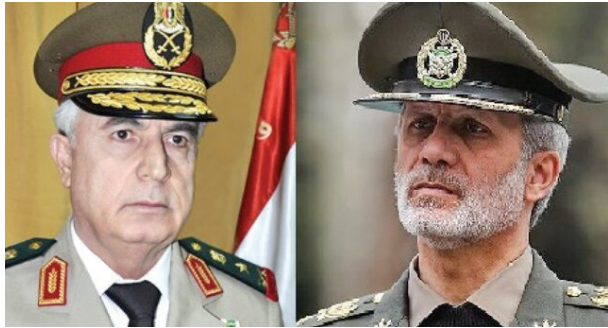
to the 'Coalition for Hope', meaning Hormuz Peace Endeavor."

He added, "The Coalition for Hope is based on important principles such as compliance with the goals and principles of the United Nations, mutual respect, equal footing, dialog and understanding, respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, inviolability of international borders, the peaceful settlement of all disputes, and more importantly, the two fundamental principles of non-aggression and non-interference in the domestic affairs of each other. The presence of the United Nations is necessary for the creation of an international umbrella in support of the Coalition for Hope."

Maintaining regional peace is core of Iran's policy, defense chief says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Defense Minister Amir Hatami has said that Iran's principled policy is maintaining peace, stability and security in the region.

In a phone conversation with Syrian Defense Minister Ali Abdullah Ayyoub on Friday, Hatami called for expansion of cooperation in line with maintaining regional peace, stability and security.



Abdullah Ayyoub

Hatami

He noted that the Syrian Army's recent moves in downing the Israeli regime's drones in Quneitra and Hama show the capability of the Arab country's defensive power.

Tehran and Damascus in 2018 signed an agreement to broaden defense cooperation during a visit by General Hatami who had emphasized Tehran's commitment to the Syrian security, the Fars news agency reported.

The defense agreement was signed after comprehensive rounds of negotiations between Iranian defense minister and Syrian officials, including Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

Imran Khan says both Mohammed bin Salman and Trump asked him to mediate with Iran

UNITED NATIONS (NDTV) — Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan said Tuesday that both the United States and Saudi Arabia asked him to mediate with Iran to defuse tensions.

Khan met both U.S. President Donald Trump and Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at the United Nations, before which he visited Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Saudi Arabia.



"Trump asked me that if we could de-escalate the situation and maybe come up with another deal," Khan told reporters. "Yes, we did convey this, and yes, we're trying our best," he said.

"I immediately spoke to President Rouhani yesterday after the meeting with President Trump. I can't say anything right now more than this except that we're trying and mediating," he said.

In Saudi Arabia, which was hit earlier this month by attacks on its oil infrastructure blamed on Iran, Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman "also asked me to talk to the Iranian president," Khan said.

Pakistan traditionally has strong relations with Saudi Arabia but also maintains ties with Iran, with Islamabad representing Tehran's consular interests in the United States in the absence of diplomatic relations.

The leaders of France, Germany and Japan were all also meeting with both Rouhani and Trump at the United Nations in hopes of reviving diplomacy.

Iran must not be the only party loyal to JCPOA: Rouahani

Europe showing no will or ability to save nuclear deal, the president says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said

on Thursday that the European countries have either been unable or shown not will to save the 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Talking in a press conference in New York at the conclusion of his visit to the annual UN General Assembly, he said Iran cannot be the only country that pay the price for keeping the JCPOA alive.

Under the JCPOA, Iran agreed to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial changes.

On Iran's move to scale back its commitments, Rouhani said, "We reduced our commitments in two phases. We also started the third phase. We hope that we would reach an agreement by the end of two-month deadline. We will take next steps if Europeans are not able to fulfil its duties."

"We were living up to our commitments fully and they kept decreasing their commitments. We wanted to create a balance, just as they were decreasing their commitments, we wished to decrease ours as well," CNN quoted him as saying, adding that the JCPOA included a formula that allowed for that.

In May 2018, President Donald Trump abandoned the nuclear deal and returned the previous sanctions and imposed new harsh ones.

Rouhani said if the other parties to the deal say they will fulfill all of their commitments "immediately, we will also return to all of our commitments ... and the temporary actions that we are taking will be reversed."

Asked about an International Atomic Energy Agency report seen by Reuters on Thursday according to which Iran has re-



duced its nuclear commitments by enriching uranium with advanced centrifuges, Rouhani said, "The limitations that we had vis a vis research and development, within the framework of the JCPOA, we have left those limitations."

Rouhani emphasized that Iran has no plan to increase enrichment levels, saying "that is not the scope of what we're doing." He said that Iran informed the IAEA beforehand.

Rouhani urges U.S. to pursue policy of logic

Rouhani also urged the United States to quit policy of maximum pressure and pursue a policy of dialogue and logic.

Trump has been repeatedly calling for dialogue with Iran. However, Iran has been

insisting that there will be no talks while the sanctions are in place.

"Cease this policy of maximum pressure and pursue a policy of dialogue and logic and reason," AP quoted him as saying.

He said that moving in that direction "would be a different set of circumstances and a different atmosphere."

According to CNN, he said, "The precondition of America is if it wishes to talk to Iran, the condition is that the sanctions and maximum pressure upon the Iranian people must be implemented and then enter into talks."

"We say this is the wrong precondition, this must be taken off the table. The sanctions must be dissolved," Rouhani added.

Leader: Europe has practically stayed committed to U.S. sanctions

Europeans not truthful and Iran must not pin hope on them, Ayatollah Khamenei suggests

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei said on Thursday that the Europeans have failed to meet their nuclear commitments and Iran should not pin hope on them.

"Despite their commitments, the Europeans have practically stayed committed to sanctions of the United States and have taken no action. It is very unlikely that they will be able to do anything for the Islamic Republic. So, we should not pin hope on the Europeans," he said during a meeting with members of the Assembly of Experts.

"As frequently mentioned before, we should not at all place hope and trust on anyone except for the domestic forces, in particular, not on those that have raised the flag of hostility against the Islamic Republic

and the Islamic establishment, firstly led by the U.S., and next by the European countries," the khamenei.ir quoted the Leader as saying.

He said that the motives of the European states do not differ from the motives behind the U.S. actions.

"These few European countries openly show hostility to the Islamic Republic. Their motives for hostility with the Islamic Republic are not inherently different from those of the United States; even though, the United States is quite peculiar," he stated.

The Leader added, "[The Europeans] do not have the same capabilities, hegemony and facilities [as the U.S.]; but, the mentality

of the European leaders is the same as that of the United States officials. They enter the scene as mediators, they negotiate, contact, make calls, make lengthy speeches, and make commitments, but they are not truthful."

"After the nuclear deal, when several European officials came to our country, and met with us, I told some of them at the time, 'these visits alone are useless; if you are honest and really want to work with the Islamic Republic, take action'; but they did not act upon it, as you noticed. And they all adhered to those secondary sanctions that the United States imposed without taking any steps [against it]," he said.

"We must not at all place hope and trust on anyone except for the domestic forces."

Indian PM, Iranian president hold talks at UN

"India differs with U.S. definition of Iran"

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a significant move on Thursday met Iranian President Hassan Rouhani in New York as New Delhi sought to engage Tehran with an eye on energy interests and connectivity corridor via Chabahar Port amid fast changing geo-politics, the Economic Times reported.

Amid rising tensions in the Persian Gulf, the two leaders have understood to discuss the regional situation and energy supplies from the region.

India, the world's third biggest oil consumer, meets more than 80 percent of its energy needs.

According to the Times of India, Iran was its third largest supplier after Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Their meeting was keenly awaited as it comes amid escalating face-off between Iran and the United States.

India has refused to get drawn into U.S. President's claims that Iran is the biggest sponsor of terror.

Modi reiterated India's support for giving priority to diplomacy, dialogue and confidence building in the interest of maintaining peace, security and stability in the Persian Gulf region, which is of vital importance for India.



Modi visited Iran in May 2016. In February 2018, Rouhani also paid a visit to India. During the two trips the two countries signed a series of agreements.

Modi referred to his to Iran and praised his meeting with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. "My meeting with the Supreme Leader was very good

and constructive and his treatment toward me was so intimate that I felt I was in my home," Modi said, IRNA reported.

Modi also said his country has always been defending Iran's right to use nuclear energy for civilian purposes.

In an indirect reference to U.S. sanctions against Iran, Modi said, "India only recognizes United Nations sanctions and will do whatever it can do for Iran as friendly state."

Earlier Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar met his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif in New York, second time since June, to increase bilateral interests. India and Iran are also exploring visit by Jaishankar to Tehran at an early date.

During Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale's recent visit to Tehran the two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation, ongoing connectivity and infrastructure development projects including development of Shahid Beheshti Port, Chabahar and full operationalization of the Trilateral Transit Agreement (Chabahar Agreement) between India, Iran and Afghanistan. Iran is India's gateway to Afghanistan, Central Asia, Eurasia and Russia.

UK must stop mischief in region, selling arms to aggressors: Iran's Foreign Ministry

(PRESS TV) — Iran has slammed Britain for turning a blind eye to its destructive role in the Saudi-led war on Yemen, urging London to stop selling arms to aggressors instead of accusing others.

"Instead of launching a smear campaign against others, Britain needs to stop making mischief in the region, selling arms to [the Saudi-led coalition of] aggressors [operating] in Yemen and participating in what the UN has approved as crimes against humanity," Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Abbas Mousavi said in a statement on Thursday.

The comments came after Britain's Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab, speaking in the House of Commons on Wednesday, pinned the blame on Iran for the September 14 Saudi oil attacks without providing any evidence for his claim.

Mousavi said the UK's support for the

aggressor side in the Yemeni war leaves no reason for the public opinion to accept the "unrealistic and one-sided" accusations by the British minister against Iran.

Blaming Britain's political and arms support for Saudi Arabia as a key factor for the continuation of the Yemen war, the Iranian spokesman advised London to, instead of accusing others, pressure its "warmongering ally" to immediately end the destructive war on Yemen.

"Britain had better stop interfering in regional nations' affairs and allow them to find a wise solution to put an end to the ongoing conflicts and tensions [in the region] mostly created as a result of foreign interference," he further said, noting the UK accusations, which coincided with Iran's recent announcement of a new initiative to ensure peace in the region, meant to undermine the proposal.

Mousavi warned that such propaganda campaign against Iran would undermine Tehran-London relations.

On September 14, Yemen's Ansarullah movement and their allies in the Yemeni army deployed as many as 10 drones to bomb Abqaiq and Khurais oil facilities run by the Saudi state-owned oil company Aramco.

The unprecedented attack knocked out more than half of Saudi crude output, or five percent of global supply, prompting Saudi and U.S. officials to claim without any evidence that it probably originated from Iraq or Iran.

The United States and Saudi Arabia have accused Iran of carrying out the attack on Aramco installations. Tehran, however, has rejected the allegations, with Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif saying Washington seems to be shifting from a failed campaign of "maximum pressure" to one of "maximum lying"

and "deceit" against the Islamic Republic.

In retaliation for the Riyadh regime's war against their country, the Yemeni army and volunteer forces led by the country's popular Houthi movement have attacked refineries in Saudi Arabia in the past in efforts to strike at the regime's major economic sector. The latest attack, however, hit targets that were about 500 miles deep into the Saudi territory, in one of the largest operations the Yemeni forces have launched so far.

The US-backed Saudi air campaign against neighboring Yemen has so far killed thousands of civilians, caused millions to leave or lose their homes, and sparked widespread starvation.

The UK's accusations against Iran come as British arms sales to Saudi Arabia have been a major contributory factor to the conflict in Yemen.

American rulers tend to lie, deceive: military advisor

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — American politicians have a tendency to lie and deceive and they easily violate international laws and treaties, says Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a top military advisor to the Leader.

They are not committed to human rights, environmental rights and international law, Rahim Safavi said, ISNA reported on Friday.

“The policy of the Americans is a policy of bullying and their demand is that others should be subject to them,” he added.

The top military advisor also argued that the Americans are fully aware of Iran’s power in the region.

“Our power has improved beyond Iran’s borders,” he said. “We have transformed from a national power into a regional power and the Americans are well aware of the meaning of Iran’s influence in the region. Their pressure on Iran is a result of their frustration at our influence.”

“If one observes the events that occurred at the United Nations General Assembly over the past few days, they can recognize Iran’s



General Yahya Rahim Safavi says the Americans are fully aware of Iran’s power in the region.

logical and robust behavior towards the Americans and that Iran has become so powerful that it can withstand their pressure,” Rahim Safavi stated.

Tensions between Tehran and Washington have risen since last year, when President Donald Trump abruptly withdrew the United States from the 2015 nuclear deal and attempted to put “maximum pressure” on the Islamic Republic.

Iranian officials argue that Trump’s “maximum pressure” has produced “maximum resistance” from Iran, and that Tehran will continue to resist.

Tensions in the Persian Gulf further heightened following a September 14 attack on Saudi Arabia’s oil fields, which the Saudis and their Western allies, especially the U.S., blamed on Iran.

Iran has rejected the claim and called it a “great deceit” in line with “great pressure” campaign on the Islamic Republic.

The Islamic Republic has also warned Washington that any military action against Iran will lead to an “all-out war”.

Rouhani offers condolences over death of Jacques Chirac



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani sent a message on Thursday to his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron offering condolences to the French people and government over the death of Jacques Chirac, the former French president.

“I offer condolences over the death of Mr. Jacques Chirac, the former president of France, and wish success and prosperity for your government and nation,” Rouhani said in his message to Macron.

Chirac, who championed the European Union, died on Thursday at the age of 86.

Chirac served two terms as president and twice as prime minister, and took France into the single European currency.

Macron hailed Chirac as a “great Frenchman”. The French National As-

sembly observed a minute’s silence in his memory.

Chirac was a fierce opponent of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. His strong opposition to the war on Iraq infuriated Washington to the extent that then White House national security advisor Condoleezza Rice famously said in spring of 2003 that Washington should “punish France”.

In a televised address from the Elysee Palace, Macron mourned his death, calling him a president who “embodied a certain idea of France”.

“We French have lost a statesman whom we loved as much as he loved us,” Macron said, according to the BBC. “Whether we share, or not, his ideas or what he fought for, we all recognize ourselves in this man who resembled us, and brought us together.”

Macron’s office said a national day of mourning will take place on Monday.

Tehran condemns U.S. sanctions on China, Russia



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Tehran has denounced the new U.S. sanctions on China and Russia, cautioning the international community of the dire consequences of Washington’s “unilateralism” and “economic terrorism”.

In a statement on Friday, Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said the U.S. regime’s recent sanctions against some countries are in violation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2231, which has encouraged other countries to cooperate with Iran, Tasnim reported.

“By this measure, the U.S. government is punishing other countries for observing a resolution that had been voted for even by itself,” Mousavi stated. The U.S. Treasury Department said on Wednesday it was imposing sanctions on five Chinese nationals and six entities that it said had violated Washington’s unilateral curbs on Tehran.

These included two Cosco Shipping

Corporation subsidiaries, Cosco Shipping Tanker Dalian and Cosco Shipping Tanker (Dalian) Seaman and Ship Management Co Ltd.

The U.S. Treasury also announced on Thursday that three individuals, five shipping vessels and a Moscow-based front company were sanctioned over an operation to move money and fuel to Russian forces supporting the government of Syria’s President Bashar al-Assad.

Mousavi said the Islamic Republic, as the main victim of economic terrorism, denounces such acts and regards Trump’s economic terrorism as a threat to the security of international trade.

On U.S. sanctions against a number of Russian individuals and companies, the spokesman said the U.S. government uses sanctions as a weapon against nations.

He called on the international community to stand up to the U.S. bullying and find a way to counter it.

Stena Impero released after two months

TEHRAN — A British-flagged oil tanker that was detained by Iran more than two months ago left Iran’s Bandar Abbas port on Friday and was heading toward international waters, according to Reuters.

On July 19, the 30,000-ton UK-flagged Stena Impero tanker was seized by Iranian naval forces, after it ignored distress call as it collided with a fishing boat on its route.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said at that time that the ship had also used a wrong path to enter the Strait of Hormuz.

A day after the seizure of the Stena Impero, Iran released footage showing Iranian speedboats cruising near the tanker as a military helicopter hovered over the vessel.

“The ship is on the move,” Erik Hanell, the chief executive of the ship’s owner, Sweden’s Stena Bulk, told Reuters in

a text message. “We will comment further when the ship reaches international waters.”

According to Refinitiv tracking data, the vessel was heading for Dubai’s Port Rashid in the United Arab Emirates, about 250 km (155 miles) away.

Tensions broke out between Tehran and London on July 4 after Britain’s naval forces unlawfully seized oil tanker Grace 1 and its cargo of 2.1 million barrels of oil off the Strait of Gibraltar. The oil tanker was released in August.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi announced on Wednesday that the procedure to release the Stena Impero had been finalized with cooperation of the Foreign Ministry, Judiciary and Ports and Maritime Organization.

However, Mousavi said, the case is still open to address some of the tanker’s violations concerning the environmental

damages it caused.

Earlier, an Iranian maritime official had said the Stena Impero would be released soon.

“Pursuant to a court order requiring an end to detention of the British oil tanker Stena Impero, this vessel will soon be released after 65 days of detention and begin its movement from the port of Bandar Abbas toward international waters,” Allahmorad Afifpour, the head of the Ports and Maritime Department of Iran’s Hormozgan Province, said on Sunday.

Also, President Hassan Rouhani said on Thursday he expected the oil tanker to be released after the completion of legal procedures in Iran.

“The tanker is going through the final court proceedings. I predict that it will be released,” Rouhani said at a news conference in New York.

Iran seizes 9 tons of narcotics destined for Europe

TEHRAN — The police have seized a huge shipment of illicit drugs destined for Europe in Orumiye, West Azarbaijan province, Iran’s Deputy Police Chief Ayoub Soleimani announced on Thursday.

Soleimani said the narcotics shipment, which was hidden in a petrol tanker, comprised 3.5 tons of morphine and 5.3 tons of opium, ISNA said.

“Also in recent days, another shipment of 20 kilograms of heroin as well as 130 pieces of smuggled weapons were seized in Orumiye ... and on Wednesday more than 175 kilograms of opium, more than 8 kilograms of crystal meth and 8 kilograms of cocaine were seized in Orumiye,” he added.

Iran’s neighbor, Afghanistan, produces some 90% of the world’s opium, which is extracted from poppy resin and refined to make heroin and morphine.

Iran is a major transit route for Afghan-produced opiates headed to Europe and beyond. The illegal drugs are often first shipped from Iran and other Asian nations to east

Africa, where smuggling networks help move it into Europe and even into the U.S. black market.

Iran confiscates and destroys hundreds of tons of illicit narcotics every year. According to the latest UN figures, Iran accounted for 91% of the world’s opium seizures and 20% of heroin and morphine seizures in 2017, amounting to 694 and 43 tons respectively.

In comments on July 9, Iran’s Ambassador to the United Nations Majid Takht Ravanchi said 3,815 Iranian law enforcement forces have lost their lives and over 12,000 others have been wounded in the war on drug trafficking over the past 40 years.

Over the past three decades, Iran has seized approximately 11,000 tons of different types of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, he added, saying that in 2018 alone, Iranian forces carried out 1,557 operations against drug traffickers, seizing approximately 807 tons of different types of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

Diplomat urges halt to U.S. nuclear policies

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — An Iranian deputy foreign minister told a UN meeting that the U.S. government must stop its “catastrophic and irresponsible” nuclear policies.

In an address to a high-level meeting at the United Nations General Assembly held on Thursday to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, Iran’s Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Gholamhossein Dehqani described nuclear disarmament and the creation of a world free of such weapons as a long-standing necessity.

The U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA indicates Washington’s irresponsible policy in dealing with global peace and security, he said, IRNA reported.

The Iranian envoy also warned against the threat that a new round of nuclear arms race and modernization of nuclear weapons pose to human survival, stressing that the U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA was another example of its irresponsible policies that obstruct international peace and security.

The U.S. catastrophic and irresponsible policies must be halted, Dehqani underlined, adding, “No one should possess nu-

clear weapons to target others, and before they (nuclear weapons) can destroy us, we must destroy them.”

“To accomplish this goal, the nuclear-weapon states (NWS) must comply with their legal obligations under Article 6 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT),” the Iranian diplomat concluded.

Iran and the Group 5+1 (Russia, China, U.S., Britain, France, and Germany) on July 14, 2015, reached a conclusion over the text of the 2015 nuclear deal.

The accord took effect in January 2016 and was supposed to terminate all nuclear-related sanctions against Iran all at once, but its implementation was hampered by the U.S. policies and its eventual withdrawal from the deal. On May 8, 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump pulled his country out of the nuclear accord.

Following the U.S. withdrawal, Iran and the remaining parties launched talks to save the accord.

However, the EU’s failure to ensure Iran’s economic interests forced Tehran to stop honoring certain commitments under JCPOA in May 2019.

Cleric raps rights advocates for silence over oppression of Muslims

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hojjatolislam Kazem Seddiqi, the interim Friday prayer leader of Tehran, has censured the so-called advocates of human rights for keeping silence over the oppression of Muslims throughout the world, especially the Kashmiri people.



It came after Kashmiri protestors held a demonstration with torches in the Soura neighborhood of Srinagar, shouting anti-Indian and pro-freedom slogans.

The disputed Himalayan territory has been jolted by fresh unrest since early August, when New Delhi announced it would end the decades-old constitutional guarantee of the half of Kashmir it controls.

Kashmir has been split between India and Pakistan since 1947 and since then the two nuclear-armed neighbors have fought two wars over the region.

In his Friday sermon, Seddiqi also pointed to the oppression of Nigeria, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia’s Shia communities by the regimes of those countries and prayed for their success in overcoming the oppression.

In remarks last month, Seddiqi said the issue of Kashmir is one of the tragedies of the Muslim world.

He said the Indian government was expected to abide by international law.

“Their action is contrary to human conscience, fairness and even the domestic laws of that country,” the cleric remarked.

The cleric further advised India to reconsider their decision and “know that oppression would not end [well].”

Erdogan says Turkey will continue oil, natural gas trade with Iran: NTV

ANKARA (Reuters) — Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday it was impossible for Turkey to stop buying oil and natural gas from Iran, despite the threat of U.S. sanctions, and added that trade between the two countries would continue, according to broadcaster NTV.

Speaking to reporters on his return flight from the United Nations General Assembly in New York, Erdogan said Turkey was not afraid of possible U.S. sanctions over its trade with Iran, adding that Ankara did not want to sever its cooperation with Tehran.

Erdogan urges caution over blaming Iran for Saudi attack

Also in an interview with Fox News broadcast on Wednesday, Erdogan urged caution over blaming Iran for a Sept. 14 attack on Saudi Arabia’s oil facilities, adding that it would not be right to place the entire burden on the Islamic Republic.

The United States, European powers and Saudi Arabia have blamed the attack on Iran, instead of the Yemeni Houthi movement that claimed responsibility. Iran has rejected the claims.

“I don’t think it would be the right thing to blame Iran,” Erdogan said, adding that the attacks came from several parts of Yemen.

“If we just place the entire burden on Iran, it won’t be the right way to go. Because the evidence available does not necessarily point to that fact,” Erdogan said, according to a translation of his comments broadcast by Fox.



Navy building 3 new destroyers: Sayyari

TEHRAN (MNA) — Habibollah Sayyari, the deputy army chief for coordination affairs, says the Iranian Navy is constructing three new destroyers.

Speaking on Friday, Sayyari said that production of three new destroyers including Dena, Shiraz, and Taftan, is currently underway in the Ministry of Defense’s Maritime Industry Department.

The senior Army officials added that the Islamic Republic of Iran has made huge achievements meeting its military needs, saying that “today, the production lines of advanced military weapons such as missiles, fighter jets, warships, submarines, and tanks exist in the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

He noted that the Iranian military experts are enhancing the level of domestically-made military weapons and equipment at the behest of the commander-in-chief of the Iranian armed forces, who is the Leader of the Islamic Revolution.

“Today, in addition to midjet-class Ghadr class submarines, the semi-heavy and fully indigenous Fateh submarines are also being produced,” underlining that the new next generation of Fateh-class submarines will be more advanced than the existing models.

Elsewhere, Admiral Sayyari noted that the Iranian navy has a presence across the international waters despite the attempts by ill-wishers, noting “despite threats, the Islamic Republic of Iran’s power has reached a point where it dispatches submarines to international waters.”

He further touched upon the importance of security in the Caspian Sea for the Iranian navy, saying that Iranian warships have been dispatched to the littoral states of Kazakhstan, Russia, and Azerbaijan within the framework of maritime diplomacy.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	314409.2
IFX	4168.02

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,046 rials
GBP	51,973 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$60.98/b
WTI	\$55.80/b
OPEC Basket	\$62.35/b
Gold	\$1,495.00/oz
Silver	\$817.54/oz
Platinum	\$927.25/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Stock market’s prominent performance in H1

➔ Noticeable performance was also witnessed at Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX), which is one of the four exchange markets of Iran, besides TSE, IFB, and IME.

As reported, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) sold 450,000 tons of oil products worth \$160.656 million at the international ring of IRENEX during the last week of the first half.



In that week, 168,000 tons of gasoline worth \$64.297 million as well as 162,500 tons of gasoil worth \$73.964 million along with 20,000 tons of kerosene and 50,000 tons of liquefied petroleum gas were sold to the foreign buyers at IRENEX.

Like the last week, IRENEX acts successfully in the whole first half of the year.

Given all these fruitful results, it could be anticipated that this year will be the second consecutive year of shining performance for the country’s stock market.

Manufacturing of refrigerators, freezers rises 13.6% in 5 months on year

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Manufacturing of refrigerators and freezers in Iran during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21- August 22) has risen 13.6 percent from that of the same period of time in the previous year, IRNA reported citing the data released by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.

As reported, 515,300 refrigerators and freezers have been manufactured during the five-month period of this year.



Since the U.S. reimposed sanctions on Iran to pressure the country’s economy, Iran has been taking all necessary measures to mitigate the impact of the sanctions and counter the U.S. actions.

Improving and boosting domestic production has been one of the major strategies that Iran has been following in the past two years in order to increase its independence.

And to realize this objective, providing the required working capital for the production units and offering them facilities is one of the major measures being pursued by the government to support these units in this year which is named the year of “Pickup in Production” by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei.

TEDPIX gains 20,243 points in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), has risen 20,243 points, or seven percent, to 314,409 during the five working days of the past Iranian calendar week (Saturday to Wednesday), Mehr news agency reported.

The index had fallen 5,764 points, or 1.9 percent, to 294,167 in the week before the past week.

As previously announced, TEDPIX has risen to 302,103 points at the end of the past Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (September 22).

Iran’s crude steel output up 6% in 8 months yr/yr: WSA

➔ WSA says that crude steel production in the world has risen 4.4 percent to reach 1.24 billion tons in the first eight months of this year.

Iran’s production of crude steel is rising despite the U.S. sanctions.

In an attempt to [as the U.S. president Trump put it] “choke off the country’s largest non-petroleum related sources of export revenue”, Washington imposed new sanctions on Iran’s metals and minerals sectors in early May.

While at the first glance [considering Trump’s comments], this might seem to be a heavy hit to Iran’s economy in the near future but a close look into the country’s exports data could reveal Trump’s great miscalculations. In fact, this could even be considered a “blessing in disguise” for the country’s minerals and metal industry.

In a press conference on June 8, Iranian deputy industry, mining and trade minister said the ministry has taken necessary measures to maintain the country’s metal exports despite U.S. sanctions.

“We have established a special working group in the ministry which is closely assessing the situation and making necessary arrangements to mitigate the impact of U.S. sanctions,” Jafar Sarqini told the Tehran Times in the press conference.

The official noted that it is expected for the exports from the country’s mining sector to,



at least, reach the last year’s \$8.5 billion by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2020).

Also, during a meeting with the members of Iran Steel Association in late July, Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani said the country has achieved a proper self-reliance in steel industry.

Steel industry is one of the industries in which some good investment has been made and today it has become a production advantage, the minister further underscored.

Meanwhile, Sarqini has said that Iran’s annual steel production is planned to reach 45 million tons by the Iranian calendar year 1400 (March 2021-March 2022).

Referring to the sanctions, the official said, “All those who have imposed sanctions against Iran aim to destroy he country’s production capabilities; therefore, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade prefer that the steel producers focus first on production and in this due development projects with the physical progress of over 70 percent will also help achieve this target.”

On June 15, the official had announced that the country’s annual crude steel production is planned to reach 30 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year.

He put Iran’s crude steel production at 25 million tons in the past year.

Sarqini had also announced that Iran will inaugurate steel projects with the capacity of at least 10 million tons during the current Iranian calendar year.

According to World Steel Association, Iran became the world’s tenth largest steel producer in 2018.

Iran which stood at the 13th place in 2017 could lag behind three major steel producers in the world, namely Italy, Taiwan, and Ukraine to stand at the 10th place in 2018, despite the re-imposition of sanctions by the U.S.

According to the WSA’s report, Iran produced 25 million tons of crude steel in 2018 which indicates 17.7 percent growth from 21.2 million tons in 2017.

France urges Germany to follow its example with budget stimulus

France will cut taxes by more than €10 billion next year and Germany should follow Paris’ footsteps with fiscal stimulus to revive its flagging economy, France’s finance minister said on 26 September.

According to euractiv.com, presenting France’s 2020 budget, Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said the European Central Bank’s latest monetary easing steps created an opportunity for governments that can afford it to invest more.

The ECB cut interest rates to a new record low on 12 September and launched plans to resume bond purchases to lower borrowing costs in the hope of sparking a recovery and boosting low inflation.

“Low rates won’t restore prosperity in Europe, monetary policy is necessary but is not enough,” Le Maire told journalists.

“Germany needs to invest and to invest now, the sooner the better. Let’s not wait for the situation to get worse,” he added, the latest in a series of such calls on France’s eastern neighbor.

■ **A budget stimulus package**
French policymakers are growing increas-

ingly frustrated as their German counterparts waver over whether to launch a budget stimulus package to pull Europe’s biggest economy back from the brink of recession.

French tax cuts already this year worth more than 10 billion euros are proving to be fortuitous for French growth as the global economy loses momentum, hitting export-dependent Germany particularly hard.

Le Maire said that households would see their tax burden cut next year by 9.3 billion euros, including a 5 billion reduction in income tax, which Budget Minister Gérald Darmanin said would benefit 95% of households.

Meanwhile, companies would see their taxes reduced by nearly 1 billion, in the latest instalment of a gradual reduction of the corporate tax rate over five years to 25% from 33.3%.

Emmanuel Macron focused tax cuts early in his presidency on companies and investors as part of his reform drive, which he hoped would boost growth by unleashing a wave of investment and entrepreneurial activity.

However, it also earned him criticism as a

president of the rich and helped to spark waves of anti-government demonstrations at the end of last year by yellow vest-clad protesters.

The protests, which saw some of the worst street violence in decades in a backlash against his reform push, forced Macron to refocus his tax policy on boosting households’ incomes.

Buoyed by the resultant tax cuts earlier this year and less exposed to international trade, France’s economy has so far held up much better than traditional European powerhouse Germany.

The French government has built its budget on the assumption Europe’s second biggest economy will slow only marginally next year to 1.3% from an estimated 1.4% this year.

The High Council for the Public Finance, an independent fiscal watchdog, said the forecasts stood up and judged the government’s projected 2020 public sector budget deficit of 2.2% of GDP to be “plausible”, according to a draft ruling obtained by Reuters.

■ **The smallest budget deficit**
Though that would be France’s smallest budget deficit since 2001, the watchdog had

some reserves about the underlying improvement in the public finances after taking into account swings in the business cycle beyond the government’s control.

Le Maire acknowledged that the government was not reining in French public spending – the highest among rich countries, as fast as planned due to the tax cuts concessions to protesters.

“We had a major social crisis several months ago which makes us take people’s expectations into account. A budget is not a purely technical exercise, it’s also political,” Le Maire said.

To offset the revenue lost from the tax cuts, Darmanin said savings were expected from reforms of the jobless benefits system, the public broadcasting sector, housing subsidies and better tax collection.

However, the lion’s share would come from lower than expected interest rates, which Darmanin said were expected to save the government 6 billion euros next year.

France has in recent weeks borrowed at record low negative rates as the deteriorating global economic outlook drove bond yields lower internationally.

China’s industrial profits contract in August

By Amanda Lee

Profits at China’s large industrial firms dropped 2 percent in August, with a year-to-date decline of 1.7 percent, as the world’s second-largest economy battles slow growth amid a trade war with the United States.

The contraction followed a brief recovery in July, when industrial profits rose 2.6 percent year-on-year, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

The NBS said August’s decline was largely driven by slowing sales, a drop in product prices and super typhoons that impacted manufacturing in China.

From January to August, total industrial profits were down 1.7 percent, the same reading as the year to July. China’s statistics agency said the profit decline eased marginally in various industries, including cars, electronics, ferrous metals and advanced manufacturing.

Overall industrial profits were driven by the private sector, which saw gains of 6.5 percent to 1.13 trillion yuan (\$158 billion) between January and August, slowing from 7 percent growth in the first seven months of the year.

■ **The state-owned enterprises**
The profitability of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) remained sluggish, plunging 8.6 percent to 1.21 trillion yuan (\$170 billion) compared to the same period last year. From January to July, SOE profit was recorded at 1.09 trillion yuan (\$153 billion), a fall of 8.1 percent year-on-year.

Ferrous metals – including steel used for the construction of bridges and skyscrapers – was one of the best performing industries, data showed, with profits jumping 180.8 percent year-on-year, indicative of Beijing’s infrastructure stimulus filtering into the economy. Profit of non-ferrous industry increased by 9.7 percent between January and August, an acceleration of 3.7 percentage points from the first seven months of the year.

Textile profits slumped 3.4 percent, while the electronics industry contracted 2.7 percent in the year-to-date, the NBS said.

One of the hardest hit industry was car manufacturing, which saw a 19 percent



decline between January and August, extending a protracted slump in the world’s biggest car market.

The NBS said while the overall profit of cars and electronics industry decreased, the rates of decline were 4.2 and 3.6 percentage points lower respectively than that of January to July period.

■ **Boosting industrial profits**
China’s State Council announced on Thursday it will let the market set a portion of the nation’s coal-fired power tariffs in a bid to boost industrial profits and reduce costs of electricity for factories.

Existing benchmark coal-power tariffs will be replaced by a new “base price-plus-floating” mechanism from January 1 next year, the State Council said in a statement.

The floating mechanism will allow the country’s state-owned power generators, electricity sales companies and users to set upwards price revisions of 10 percent and downward revisions of 15 percent.

In a separate statement released by the official Xinhua News Agency on Thursday, the State Council raised concern about declines in the country’s producer price index (PPI), a key barometer of corporate profitability, as well as soaring pork prices. The PPI, which measures factory gate prices, fell in July and August, the worst year-on-year contraction since August 2016.

“In the face of the current situation, we must be disciplined, pay more attention to the use of market-oriented methods, curb the excessive rise of some food prices, and keep the industrial producers’ prices basically stable, ensuring that the overall price level of the year is in a reasonable range,” the statement said.

(Source: scmp.com)

MNB projects current account deficits through 2021

The National Bank of Hungary (MNB) projected the country will run current account deficits through 2021, forecasts in the central bank’s quarterly Inflation Report released in full on Thursday show, according to a summary by state news agency MTI.

As stated by bbi.hu, the MNB forecasts current account deficits equivalent to 0.9% of GDP in 2019, 0.7% of GDP in 2020, and 0.4% of GDP in 2021.

In its previous quarterly forecast, published in June, the central bank had put the current account balance at zero for 2019, and projected surpluses in 2020 and 2021. Hungary had a current account deficit equivalent to 0.5% of GDP in 2018, MTI recalled.

The MNB acknowledged in the latest report that the current account balance is expected to decline temporarily in 2019 as declining demand on global markets and higher domestic demand cause the trade balance to deteriorate. At the same time, increasing absorption of European Union transfers will give Hungary a net external financing capacity equivalent to 1.8% of GDP, it added.

From 2020, the central bank sees net exports contributing positively to economic growth as the increase in imports slows because of restrained investment growth.

■ **The funding cycle**
In parallel, absorption of EU transfers is likely to decrease slightly as the end of the funding cycle approaches, it added. The MNB put the net external financing capacity at 2.0% of GDP in 2020, and at 1.7% of GDP in 2021.

The MNB noted that a persistently favorable net lending position would reduce net external debt to nearly zero over the forecast horizon.

The central bank said the consumer price index (CPI) is likely to rise again until the end of 2019 because of the base effect of lower fuel prices, then to stabilize at the 3% mid-term inflation target.

Core inflation excluding indirect tax effects is expected to “rise slightly” in the coming months, before decreasing to 3% “along a lower than previously expected path, due to external disinflationary effects,” the MNB added.

As revealed in a preliminary release on Tuesday, the MNB puts average annual inflation for 2019 at 3.3% in the fresh report, 0.1 of a percentage point higher than the



forecast in the previous report released in June. The central bank left its forecasts for CPI in 2020 and 2021 unchanged, at 3.4% and 3.3%, respectively.

The central bank noted that GDP growth in 2019 may have peaked in Q1 and augured a “more moderate pace” of growth in the period ahead “in the absence of measures improving competitiveness.”

Regardless of this, it added, Hungary’s growth rate will remain two percentage points over the growth rate in the eurozone.

The MNB projects GDP growth of 4.5% for this year, up 0.2 of a percentage point over the previous forecast. Hungary’s first-half GDP growth was up 5.1% year-on-year. The forecasts for economic growth in 2020 and 2021 are both 3.3%.

■ **The consumption growth**
The central bank said household consumption growth would gradually diminish as wage growth slows, but it projected a “persistently high” savings-to-income ratio of around 10% in the coming years, supported by the popularity of the Hungarian Government Security Plus (MÁP Plusz) bonds.

The MNB acknowledged the positive impact on growth of a 13+1-point Economy Protection Action Plan unveiled by Minister of Finance Mihály Varga in the spring, but also urged policymakers to act on recommendations outlined in the central bank’s 330-point Competitiveness Program published in February.

The central bank called for improvements to the education level and health status of human capital, as well as the efficiency of the state, and for reductions in bureaucracy and the shadow economy. It added that efforts to achieve innovation, modern infrastructure, efficient energy consumption and social convergence are “indispensable.”

Iran constructing power plant in Syria's Latakia

ENERGY DESK TEHRAN — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Wednesday that Iran's Mapna Group has started construction of a major power plant in Syria's Latakia, Press TV reported.

According to Ardakanian the construction of the 540-megawatts combined-cycle power plant is backed by the governments in Iran and Syria.

"This project is being executed through joint investment," Ardakanian said.

Ardakanian called on Iranian companies to get involved in Syria's plans for development in the electricity sector, saying that other countries are becoming increasingly interested in reconstruction plans in the Arab country.

The deal for construction of Latakia power plant was finalized in October 2018 when the Mapna group, the largest energy construction company in Iran, signed an agreement with Syrian authorities to build the power plant and the gas pipeline that feeds it.

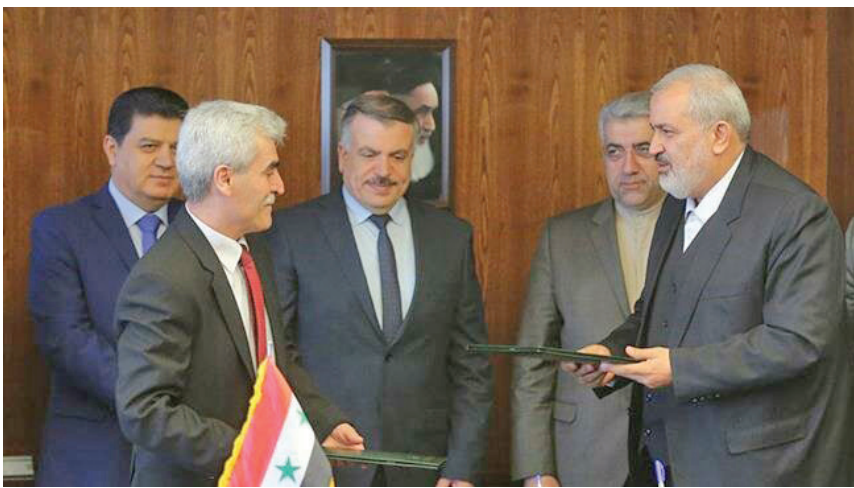
Syrian authorities have also asked for Iran's contribution to repair operations at a thermal power plant in Aleppo, Syria's second largest city, while plans are in place to build a gas-fired power plant in the same city by Iranian companies.

A first phase of the Latakia power plant, a gas-fired unit, will come online in 18 months, according to a plan by Mapna which says another gas unit and a steam unit will take 24 and 34 months, respectively, to finish.

As part of the project, Mapna has committed to building a 70-kilometer pipeline to link Syria's "own gas resources" to the power plant in Latakia.

Latakia, a key port city on the Mediterranean, has been less affected by years of war in Syria.

Damascus wants the city to become a model for reconstruction in other regions as the country is emerging from years of militancy and trying to rebuild the country devastated by the war.



An October 2, 2018 photo by Iran's engineering group Mapna shows authorities from Iran and Syria exchanging documents at the signing ceremony of a deal for construction of a power plant in Syria's Latakia.

Tehran to host intl. renewable energy conference, exhibition in mid-Oct.

ENERGY DESK TEHRAN — The 4th edition of Iran's International Renewable Energy Conference and Exhibition (Iran REC 2019) is due to be held during October 14-15 at Tehran IRIB International Conference Center.

As reported by the portal of Iran's Energy Ministry (known as Paven), a high-ranking delegation from International Solar Alliance (ISA) is going to visit Iran in order to take part in the event and also to present new plans for Iran's renewable sector.

According to the Iran REC Secretary, Moslem Mousavi, ISA has allocated \$3 billion for promoting renewables (especially solar power) across the globe and it is scheduled for them to also present a plan for improving Iran's solar sector during their visit to the country.

This plan includes funding 500 megawatts of solar power plants across the country through buyback deals, and creating 10,000 job opportunities in this sector across Iran.

It is also planned that during this international event an Indian trade delegation active in the field of renewable energies will travel to Tehran in order to further expand the



cooperation between the two countries' industries and trade sectors in this field.

The official further noted that the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is also planned to hold a meeting in Tehran, with a focus on renewable energies and concurrent to Iran

REC 2019 energy.

At the same time, a trade deal is also scheduled to be signed between two Iranian and Chinese companies for cooperation in construction of photovoltaic panels in Iran.

"This will be the largest solar panel production line in Iran with a capacity of about 200 MW," Mousavi said.

Iran has a vast potential for renewable energy, wind and solar energy resources are the best among other renewable energy resources in the region.

Following the increasing power demand, fuel subsidies decreasing and a need for much greater energy security, the Iranian government and policy makers are showing a significant interest in the renewable energy field.

One of the most important steps in this direction was setting a 5-Gigawatt target for installed capacity from renewables by 2020.

Feed-in tariffs are also another incentive policy that SATBA, the country's renewable energy organization, has established which guarantee a 20-year power purchase payment.

NPC, IDRO ink cooperation memorandum

with National Petrochemical Company (NPC) for supplying the equipment required in petrochemical industry's downstream sector.

The MOU was signed by NPC's Managing Director Behzad Mohammadi and IDRO Head Baqer Ali on the sidelines of Iran Plast 2019 exhibition in Tehran on Wednesday, Shana reported.

Speaking in the signing ceremony, Mohammadi pointed out that establishing a communication channel between petrochemical industry's upstream producers and consumers of these products in the downstream sector was one of the main goals of Iran Plast exhibition.

Noting that about 6,000 firms are active in the downstream industries, he added: "These firms receive about 4 million tons of feedstock a year, and this has led to creating jobs for 4,000 people, indicating that in the petrochemical industry production and consumption are both of particular importance."

The official further stated that the MOU signed between the two entities is aimed to strengthen and support major

downstream industries such as the automotive industry.

"We need to be aware of the needs of the downstream industries and identify the polymer clusters that the industry needs and plan the petrochemical research and technology systems accordingly," he said.

Iran's 13th International Exhibition of Plastic, Rubber, Machinery and Equipment (IRAN PLAST 2019) kicked off at the Tehran International Permanent Fairground on September 25 and wrapped up on Wednesday.

Petrochemical industry is playing a crucial role in Iran's economy. According to official data, petrochemical exports constitute the second largest hard currency earner in Iran after crude oil. Petrochemical exports already make up nearly 33 percent of the country's non-oil exports.

According to the Director of NPC's Projects Ali-Mohammad Bosaqzadeh, Iran's annual petrochemical output, which is currently at 65 million tons, is planned to reach more than 100 million tons by the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (ends on March 2022) and to 130 million tons or nearly doubled by 1404 (ends on March 2026).



NPC's Managing Director Behzad Mohammadi (R) and IDRO Head Baqer Ali signing an MOU on the sidelines of Iran Plast 2019 exhibition in Tehran on Wednesday.

ENERGY DESK TEHRAN — Iran's Industrial Development and Revolution Organization (IDRO) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU)

Oil prices headed for weekly loss on demand jitters

Oil prices were steady on Friday but headed for a weekly loss, weighed down by slowing Chinese economic growth that dampens the demand outlook and a faster-than-expected recovery in Saudi output.

As per reuters.com, Brent LCOc1 fell 6 cents to \$62.68 a barrel by 0919 GMT, while U.S. crude CLc1 rose 18 cents to \$56.59 a barrel. But both were down 2.6% on a weekly basis.

Brent, which is on course for its biggest weekly loss in seven weeks, is just above its level before Sept. 14 attacks on Saudi facilities that initially halved the kingdom's production.

Sources told Reuters this week that Saudi Arabia had restored capacity to 11.3 million barrels per day. Saudi Aramco has yet to confirm it is fully back online.

The "political risk premium in crude prices has largely evaporated," Jefferies analysts said in a note.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Friday



it might cut its growth estimates for global oil demand for 2019 and 2020 should the global economy weaken further.

"It will depend on the global economy. If the global economy weakens, for which there are already some signs, we

may lower oil demand expectations," IEA Executive Director Fatih Birol told Reuters.

In China, the world's second-largest economy and top importer of crude, industrial firms reported a contraction in profits in August.

A surprise 2.4 million-barrel build in U.S. crude inventories last week also weighed on prices.

Key oil freight rates from the Middle East to Asia rocketed as much as 28% on Friday in the global oil shipping market, spooked by U.S. sanctions on units of Chinese giant COSCO for alleged involvement in ferrying crude out of Iran.

The COSCO vessels are equal to about 7.5% of the world's fleet of supertankers, Refinitiv data showed.

Emerging details connected to the impeachment inquiry into U.S. President Donald Trump also helped dent demand sentiment, analysts said.

Renewable energy is not enough to reach climate targets, paper says

The UK-based charity, whose mission is to accelerate the transition to a circular economy to tackle the world's most significant challenges, says it is vital to move beyond the current focus on renewable energy as a solution to climate change.

As stated by openaccessgovernment.org, as set out in Completing the Picture: How the Circular Economy tackles Climate Change, moving to renewables can only address 55% of global greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve UN climate goals, the paper highlights the urgent need to tackle the remaining 45%.

The paper demonstrates the potential of the circular economy in tackling these overlooked emissions. To illustrate this potential, the paper looks at five key areas to demonstrate this – steel, plastic, aluminum, cement and food.

Adopting a circular economy framework in these areas can achieve a reduction totaling 9.3 billion tons of greenhouse gases in 2050. This

is equivalent to eliminating current emissions from all forms of transport globally.

These examples provide a clear message to other industries – such as fashion, electronics, and packaging – of the value the circular economy can offer.

Diet shift, emerging innovations, and carbon capture and storage are the final pieces required to complete the picture of how the world can achieve net-zero emissions by 2050.

By releasing the paper, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation said it sought to bring an important missing piece to climate change solutions, demonstrating how businesses, financial institutions, and policymakers can build a thriving and resilient economy while playing an essential role in combating climate change.

Switching to renewable energy

"Switching to renewable energy plays a vital role in addressing climate change, but this alone will not be enough. In order to achieve targets

on climate, it is critical that we transform how we design, make, and use products, and food. Completing the picture through a transition to a circular economy can enable us to meet the needs of a growing global population, while creating a prosperous and resilient economy that can run in the long term," said Dame Ellen MacArthur, founder of the Ellen MacArthur Foundation.

The Paris Agreement calls for net-zero emissions by 2050 to limit temperature increase to 1.5°. Whilst the circular economy is underpinned by renewable energy, the paper also demonstrates the crucial role the food sector and key industry sectors can play in reducing emissions to meet that target.

"This paper shows that transitioning to a circular economy is not only an opportunity to tackle emissions across sectors, but to design an economy that is restorative and regenerative, creating benefits for society, businesses, and

the environment," Dame Ellen added.

Christiana Figueres, former Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and Founding Partner, Global Optimism said: "Carbon constraints actually represent huge ingenuity opportunities. That is true for every company, for every city and any country. That is the direction in which we need to move, and this report offers compelling figures to give confidence in our ability to optimize decarbonisation and economic development in mutual support of each other."

The circular economy is based on three principles: design out waste and pollution, keep products and materials in use, and regenerate natural systems.

In addition to reducing emissions, the paper shows that the circular economy has the potential to increase resilience to the effects of climate change and contribute to the meeting of numerous UN sustainable development goals.

Iran's petchem feedstock to reach 1.7m bpd by 2025

ENERGY DESK TEHRAN — Managing Director of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) said the feedstock allocated to petrochemical complexes is going to reach equal to 1.7 million barrels per day (bpd) of oil by 2025, Shana reported.

Behzad Mohammadi made the remarks on the last day of Iran Plast 2019 international exhibition in Tehran on Wednesday.

He told reporters that currently about 33 million tons of feedstock (equal to 650,000 bpd of oil) is being supplied to petrochemical plants operating in the country on an annual basis.

By realization of the second leap in the petrochemical industry, 62 million tons per year of feedstock (equal to 1.4 million bpd of crude oil) will be supplied to the sector by 2021, he added.

"This figure will reach 1.7 million bpd by 2025 when the third leap in the industry is realized."

The official said nearly 1,000 jobs are created in the industry for every ton of production growth. However, with 66 million tons per year (mtpy) of production capacity in the industry, 108,000 jobs have been created in the sector in Iran.

He noted that the number of jobs created in petrochemical industry's downstream sector is very significant, adding that "for every ton of production in the downstream sector, 170,000 jobs are generated."

Mohammadi further said that 31 million tons of salable items are produced in the upstream sector of the petrochemical industry of Iran, adding 22.5 mtpy of items (roughly 70 percent of the country's output) is exported.

The 13th Iran Plast international exhibition began on Sunday, September 22 and rounded up on September 25 at Tehran's Permanent International Fairgrounds.

Wind energy in Argentina: the largest wind farm begins to operate

The total investment amounts to D 320 million. The total installed wind power is 222.3 MW. This wind farm reaffirms Genneia's leadership, which has more than 40% of the wind share.

According to evwind.es, wind energy will be evacuated through ET500, a work of which Genneia participated and has been operational since September 3.

The Madryn Wind Farm (PEM) is erected on a plot of more than 6,000 hectares on provincial route 4, in the province of Chubut; With its 62 wind turbines – 117 meters high and 60 meter long blades – there is clean energy produced for the Argentine Interconnection System (SADI), supplying the equivalent of more than 330,000 homes.

These numbers make Madryn the largest wind farm in Argentina, one of the largest in South America and one of the most important projects for Genneia.

To develop this park, the company invested 320 million dollars, generating at the peak of the project more than 300 jobs and entrusted its technology to the Danish company Vestas, whose wind turbines transform Patagonia wind into green energy. The park has an average capacity factor of 51% and winds that blow at an average of 8.6 m/s, characteristics that will allow it to generate 987,000 MWh of energy per year and take care of the planet by avoiding the emanation of 495,000 tons of carbon at the atmosphere.

Achieved its development

With the authorization of CAMMESA, today the second stage of Madryn was put into operation, which has a power of 150MW. The first, of 70 MW, began operating less than a year ago, on November 1. Genneia undertook the construction in stages and achieved its development in record terms for projects of these characteristics, complying with high international standards.

The PPA was signed in May 2016, within the framework of Resolution 202 of the Ministry of Energy and Mining of the Nation and the Regime for the Promotion of Renewable Energies established by laws 26,190 and 27,191. In this way, the so-called Madryn Wind Farm has a total installed capacity of 220 MW.

"When the years pass, we will know that we are part of the history of renewable energy generation in the country. And with pride, we will say that we were part of the Genneia team that managed to get renewable energy permanently installed in Argentina," said Walter Lanosa, CEO of the company.

This is Genneia's fourth wind power asset in Chubut, where it operates the Rawson (108 MW), Chubut Norte (28MW) and Trelew (50 MW) wind farms; and projects under development for more than 160 MW. The so-called "Madryn Node" has a total installed capacity of 410 MW.

The amount of Genneia's gross investments in renewable energy in Chubut reaches 400 million dollars, and if the rest of the projects involving the provinces of Rio Negro, Buenos Aires and San Juan are added, it reaches 1,000 million dollars in The 2018-2020 period.

A very important work

During the first days of September the ET500 was put into operation, a very important work for Genneia because it allows the energy dispatch of the Madryn Wind Farm and the rest of Genneia's wind assets in the province. The investment that led to the development of the ET500 amounted to 55 million dollars.

The construction, assembly and commissioning of the ET is a joint development of Genneia and the Goldwind company for Transener. From the beginning of this month, the 500 kV station began to be operated by Transener. The process included the energization of the new facilities, the 500/132 / 34.5kV power transformer bank of 600 MVA and its reserve phase, one of the largest equipment installed in the country.

Genneia is a leading company in the provision of sustainable energy solutions, which exceeds the horizon of 1,200 MW of power generation in Argentina. It has more than 40% of installed capacity in wind energy, which makes it the number one in the sector.

The company has more than 570 MW of wind power with its Rawson I, II and III, Trelew, Madryn I and II, Chubut Norte I and Villalonga I and II, Pomona I and II wind farms; and exceeds 660 MW of renewable energy, considering its solar parks Ullum 1, 2 and 3 (82 MW) in the province of San Juan.

In addition, it is building the Chubut Norte II wind projects (26 MW); Chubut Norte III (57 MW) and Chubut Norte IV (83 MW) in conjunction with Pan American Energy; the Wind Winds Park of Necochea in partnership with Central Atlantic Coast and a biomass plant in La Florida, Tucumán, for 19 MW.



Politics determines Trump’s stance on climate chang

GLOBALTIMES — US President Donald Trump on Monday made a 15-minute brief stop at the UN climate summit, which drew about 60 world leaders, before he moved to a smaller event and delivered remarks on religious freedom.Trump has been saying that climate change is a hoax. Therefore, the key aim of Trump to participate in the UN Assembly was not to discuss about climate. By attending a US event, which aimed at slamming China over the country’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on the sidelines of the annual gathering of world leaders at the UN, Trump in fact intended to divert attention of the international community. This showed his condescending attitude toward the UN.

The international community has great expectations of the US assuming bigger responsibilities on climate change issues, which we can see in the process of global climate negotiations. The international community hopes the US will reduce carbon emissions and wishes the US could provide more financial and technology support in dealing with climate change. However, actual moves by the US are contrary to such expectations.The Trump administration has been extremely irresponsible in handling climate change. US greenhouse gas emissions rose by 3.4 percent in 2018, reversing a three-year decline. It is worth pointing out that Trump’s negative approach to climate change has been criticized even within the US. Many states in the US have taken local measures to deal with climate change after the federal government failed to do so.

Upholding “America First” policy means that if dealing with climate change hinders US economic growth, affects employment, or undermines US international influence and hegemony, the Trump administration will not care. The Trump administration regards climate change as a political issue rather than a global public hazard. It involves itself in any issue that can improve its political status or help Trump gain more votes; otherwise, it doesn’t care - this is a very unhealthy policy adopted by short-sighted politicians. As the US presidential election draws near and Trump’s focus shifts to getting reelected, one reason Trump balks at climate change issues is his vote bank. Trump to some extent represents his voters, who believe climate change is pseudoscience and a trap laid by others to hinder US development.

Another reason is a political split in the US - Republicans deny climate change while Democrats don’t. US politics determines that no parties are rational. If one party supports something, the other one will oppose it. Climate change is a good example.

Trump plans to expand offshore oil and gas drilling in the Arctic Ocean and parts of the North Atlantic, and turn the US into world’s top oil exporter. However, dealing with climate change demands restrained use of fossil fuel, or fuels that generate greenhouse gases. Trump’s plans are undoubtedly undermining global efforts to deal with climate change.

But Trump’s plans for oil drilling could help mitigate unemployment pressure in the states that are rich in oil and gas resources. When there is contradiction between Americans’ livelihoods - which can be translated as “votes in favor” - and global welfare, Trump doesn’t hesitate to choose the former. All in all, one thing is pretty clear: Domestic political disputes in the US have become an important reason why the US federal government is unwilling to be active in dealing with climate change. The disputes have limited US contribution to the international society’s efforts.

■ US political chaos will damage global confidence
Political chaos in the US is escalating. US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced Tuesday that the House of Representatives will initiate a formal impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump. Trump’s phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in July was accused of asking for actions “which would benefit him [Trump] politically.”

The speaker’s statement gained extensive attention across the world, including from China. Why is political chaos in Washington always in the limelight? Why is China concerned about the political events of a country on the other side of the Pacific Ocean?The answer is simple: Chaos in the US, a major global power, may affect other countries. Although there is no lack of contradictions and conflicts between China and the US, their connections are inseparable. In particular in the economic and trade fields, the US was the second-largest trading partner, largest export destination and sixth-largest import source of China in 2018.Meanwhile, as the US-launched trade war against China is still underway, several trade talks await the two sides.

Trump has been deeply mired in allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 US elections since he assumed office. US politics has been filled with various investigations and reports over the past two and a half years. Personnel changes are also commonplace. Take the national security adviser. Robert O’Brien is the fourth official taking the position in the Trump administration.The trade war intrinsically contains uncertainty. Now, the situation is getting worse. With a formal impeachment inquiry into Trump, it will be even harder for Beijing to gauge where Washington’s policies are headed and how China should respond.Some observers believe that Trump might be more eager to conclude a deal with China in an attempt to shift domestic pressure. Even if such an impact does not show up immediately, uncertainty in China will be obvious.

In addition to the trade war, the US political situation may touch multiple aspects. For instance, both China and the US shoulder responsibilities in major international issues, such as the Korean Peninsula issue and the Iran nuclear issue. Could a chaotic US government carry out effective discussions on these issues? Will it be able to ensure the consistency of its policies? It should be of great concern to China and the world.Beijing cannot tell the future of Washington’s political situation, nor will it interfere in other country’s internal affairs. But we need to remind the US that frequent chaos in politics has led to a decline in US trust in China and the world.If Washington continues to focus on political struggles rather than solving practical problems, if political chaos becomes normal, it may lose the attention and confidence of the world.

■ Biased U.S. perception hinders bilateral ties
Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi delivers a keynote speech at a dinner co-hosted by the National Committee on US-China Relations, US-China Business Council, US Chamber of Commerce and Council on Foreign Relations on Tuesday in New York. Photo: Courtesy of China’s foreign ministry.

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi gave a keynote speech at a dinner co-hosted by the National Committee on US-China Relations, US-China Business Council, US Chamber of Commerce and Council on Foreign Relations on Tuesday in New York. Wang summarized the 40 years of China-US relations. He also responded to some prominent issues that concern the public opinion. It was Wang’s first public speech on China-US ties during his latest visit to the US. ➤13

White Paper expounds China’s relationship with the world

By Grant Smith

GLOBALTIMES — The State Council Information Office issued a white paper titled “China and the World in the New Era”on Friday. This is the first governmental white paper that has comprehensively expounded the relationship between China and the world. The white paper focuses on China’s international outlook, its development objectives and the role it plays with a purpose to increase the international community’s understanding on China’s development.

The world is undergoing profound changes unseen in a century and China’s relationship with the outside world is at a critical juncture. How will China that has grown strong get along with the world? Outsiders have never paid such great attention to the question as today. Due to a pervasive cognitive bias among them, the “China threat” theory is on the rise. Therefore it’s imperative to make them acquire a deeper understanding of China’s views.

At the early days of the reform and opening-up, the outside world judged China based on two common standpoints. The first one was that China is poor and weak - a fact at the onset of the reform and opening-up. The other one was China is transforming. Many presumed that the so-called transformation meant a transition from a Communist country to a Western model. As stereotyped as the two judgments were, they still were widely accepted at that time.

However, they are no longer valid in recent years. First of all, China is not a poor and weak country anymore. After 40 years of reform and opening-up, the country’s economy has grown rapidly and its comprehensive strength has not been what it used to be. Given China’s size and population, the country attaining prosperity and power is a miraculous achievement in human history. Second, instead of transforming into a Western model, China has embarked on a development path with Chinese characteristics - what the outside world has called the China model.

The impact the two changes have had on the relationship between China and the world is far-reaching and complex. China’s achievements and its contribution to global economic growth in recent years have been recognized and respected by most countries in the world. The country’s success has inspired some developing countries. However, as China didn’t take the Western road, nor did it yield to pressure yet has risen rapidly, some elites in a few Western countries are disappointed, frustrated and dissatisfied. China has grown into a giant. But speculations are swirling over how China will use its power. It’s understandable and we should not regard all external suspicions and misunderstandings as hostilities against China.

After all, it is not easy to convince the world the Western logic -- that a country is destined to seek hegemony after becoming strong -- does not apply to China. Continuous efforts are needed. The white paper reflects China’s commitments to the world. It will to some extent alleviate the anxieties and upsets caused by China’s rise. Three major consensus have been formed from the experiences and lessons of the past 70 years since the founding of the People’s Republic of China. First, work hard to build the country with self-reliant efforts; second, realize mutual benefits and win-win cooperation; third, never seek hegemony. Sticking to these, the stronger China becomes, the greater the role it will play in promoting world peace and development.

The white paper also displays the open-mindedness and goodwill of the Chinese people. China opened its door to the world when it was poor and weak. China can’t



isolate itself after it gains strength, because we know well that sound interactions between China and the world are mutually benefiting.

■ World must work together to fight U.S. sanctions abuse

The US is imposing new sanctions on five Chinese nationals and six Chinese companies for shipping Iranian oil, the US Treasury Department announced on Wednesday.

It is not the first time that the US has blacklisted Chinese companies over Iran. In July, the US issued the first sanctions against Zhuhai Zhenrong, one of China’s largest oil traders, after having ended the sanctions waivers for nations importing Iranian oil.

According to a Thursday statement from China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, China has and will continue to take necessary measures to firmly safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese entities.The Chinese government can, of course, provide support like tax breaks or cheap financing to the blacklisted companies, but more fundamentally, the US abuse of unilateral sanctions on other countries and companies highlights the need for China to strengthen anti-sanction cooperation with the international community.It should be made clear that a call for joint anti-sanction efforts is not meant to establish a new global system to confront the US, but that it is time to somehow restrain the unilateral hegemony of the US, which cannot be that unscrupulous in imposing sanctions on any country, entity or individual. In this sense, all businesses around the world that have been affected by the US sanctions are encouraged to take proper anti-sanction measures and strengthen cooperation instead of silently complying. If a large number of companies are involved in the anti-sanction effort and they are strong enough, then the entire sanction regime will fall apart.

The fear of being sanctioned comes from the US dominance of the global financial system, backed by the US dollar-based global settlement and payment system SWIFT.As such, it is necessary for China to establish its own payment system and put it into practical usage as soon as possible, which could weaken the US financial dominance and stop its abuse of sanctions. Such a payment system may also allow companies to keep trading with countries and companies sanctioned by the US.While it is not difficult to build such a global financial payment network with a similar function as SWIFT in terms of the technology, a successful international payment platform must be based on genuine global trade, monetary investment, and real participants.

In this sense, China needs to strengthen cooperation with other economies, such as European countries, the Middle East, Russia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Africa and other economic alliances, to establish a joint global payment, clearance and settlement system to resist the US financial hegemony. Especially, European countries like France, Germany and the UK can make good partners considering the fact that the three have already developed a special purpose vehicle, known as the Paris-based Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges, which is now operating to help European companies circumvent US sanctions.

■ China’s economic rise won’t translate into expansionist aim: experts

A white paper titled “China and the World in the New Era” was published Friday to elaborate on the relationship of China’s development with an evolving world. To better understand the significance of this paper including the reason for its issuance, its impact on the rest of the world to better understand China’s global views and development objectives, Global Times spoke to three experts to explicate these questions. Li Haidong, a professor with the Institute of International Relations at China Foreign Affairs University

The publication of the white paper is timely. The grand celebrations to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) will certainly enhance the outsiders’ impression of China’s strength. It’s of particular significance for China to issue such a white paper at a time when the outside world is adjusting their views on China. Relations between China, and other major powers are at a critical juncture. The white paper can help learn about China’s strategic intentions, development path and objectives. This is one of the important reasons for issuing the paper.

China plays an indispensable role in global governance. As China’s leadership in global governance is growing, what does it plan to do? The outside world may be puzzled. The white paper will help them deepen their understanding of China from a perspective of global governance.

By emphasizing China’s role as a responsible global power and “China’s contribution to the betterment of this world,” the white paper is intended to further reiterate China will not seek hegemony. For developing countries that have friendly relations with China or share strategic trust, especially those along the Belt and Road routes, the paper will add to their beliefs that China has made a significant positive contribution

to these countries and the world. This will boost their confidence and making them more resolute in developing closer ties with China.For European countries with deep engagement with China, the paper may influence the views of some, besides helping them to deepen their understanding of China. But it can hardly affect Americans, especially the US government, whose current attitude toward China is unlikely to change.

Making more countries understand China’s viewpoints in dealing with the world, the country’s development path and objectives will help China gain more friends. It’s hoped the white paper will help more countries understand China better. Fan Peng, a research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences’ Institute of Political Sciences.The timing of the publication of the white paper is significant. As we are celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China, we should summarize China’s development and list out the contributions China has made to the world.

China has been facing a sophisticated international environment. Attitudes of competitors and partners toward China are complicated. There have been hostilities and suspicions toward China. Even China’s partners don’t have enough understanding of the country. As such, it’s imperative for Beijing to issue a governmental white paper expounding China’s relationship with the world and making it clear that China has played a positive role and contributed a lot to the world development.

For those who are hostile against or harbor suspicions on China, their attitudes are unlikely to be changed by the white paper. However, the paper will strengthen the position of those who support China and offer them with more examples to influence others. Besides, the white paper will help people figure out China’s thoughts, stances, and positions.

Misperceptions do exist in understanding China’s global views but as the country continues to open up, the world is increasingly realizing the Chinese concept of building a shared future. More members of the international community are acknowledging that China’s economic rise does not translate into expansionist or imperialist aims. It just wants to make sure that no one is left behind in mankind’s quest toward betterment.

Some among the developed world are accustomed to only one model of development: rapid industrialization, exploitation of the developing countries for the supply of raw materials and they view this process as a zero-sum game. They fail to appreciate modern economists’ calls that alternative models of development do exist which focus on the win-win strategy.China’s remarkable progress has expanded its economic clout. One of the prime reasons for that is the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which builds upon relationships with its partners. It is very pertinent at this moment to issue such a white paper that outlines China’s aims in fostering relations with other countries and dispel the negative notions that often impede global growth.

As the world moves toward multi-polarity, developing countries are looking up to China. China should, therefore, continue to invest in partnerships with these countries so that they can take a lead from China and build their own economies. For example, China should also guide the developed world in matters that relate to the world’s future. These include climate change, poverty alleviation, global peace, and education, among others.

On Hormuz Peace Initiative



something of the sort in order to give it the momentum needed to be taken seriously by its counterparts and not be regarded as an entirely extra-regional recommendation. It therefore wouldn’t be surprising if Iran’s proposal includes regionally relevant details for facilitating its eventual entry into practice.

Iran’s “Hormuz Peace Initiative” is timely and much needed since global economic security – already threatened by the US trade war – is largely dependent on stability in the energy-rich Persian Gulf, which has been undermined

as a result of recent events there and America’s attempts to pin the blame on Iran without any evidence. Considering the US provocative actions and rhetoric, it cannot be trusted as a reliable partner for ensuring this, hence why it’s the need of the hour for the regional countries to cooperate.

That’s obviously a lot easier said than done owing to the deep distrust between Iran and Saudi Arabia, but both countries share partnerships with China and are greatly increasing their economic engagement with it, which places the People’s Republic of China in a privileged position to help facilitate peaceful dialogue if called upon by both parties to do so.Even if they don’t request this, there’s no ignoring that they each have shared interests in stabilizing the Persian Gulf in order to maximize the benefits they stand to receive from the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Iran is regarded as one of the most promising emerging markets in the world given its pivotal transit location along the South Eurasian Rimland, educated population, and natural resource wealth, while Saudi Arabia is in the midst of its “Vision 2030” systemic transition to a post-oil economy.

Without peace and security in the region, their future developmental plans – which are being advanced through differing degrees of foreign investment – are endangered, so now’s the time for them to finally take collective security seriously - without the US.

... And again contradictory polls!

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — Opinion polls published in recent days in the United States on next year's presidential election are highly contradictory. How can this paradox really be analyzed? Here's a look at the latest polls and analyzes in the US media:

Biden rises in poll as Ukraine scandal unfolds, interest in impeachment drops: Reuters poll

As Reuters reported, Support for Democratic presidential front-runner Joe Biden ticked higher following reports that President Donald Trump pressured his Ukraine counterpart to investigate Biden, while Americans overall are less supportive of impeaching Trump than they were months ago, according to a Reuters/Ipsos opinion poll released on Tuesday. Former U.S. Vice President and Democratic presidential hopeful Joe Biden makes a statement during an event in Wilmington, Delaware, U.S., September 24, 2019. REUTERS/Bastiaan Slabbers. In a sign that Biden's supporters appear to be standing by their candidate, 20% of Democrats and independents said they would vote for him in statewide nominating contests that begin next year according to the Sept. 23-24 poll, up 1 percentage point from a similar poll that ran last week.

It also found that 37% of the American public thinks Trump should be impeached, down from 41% in a similar Reuters/Ipsos poll that ran earlier in September. This compares with 44% in a poll that ran in May, after the Trump administration released portions of the Mueller investigation on Russian meddling in the 2016 election.

The former vice president has been swept up in a political furor over reports that Trump discussed Biden in a July phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and asked him to investigate unsubstantiated charges that Biden improperly tried to halt a Ukrainian probe of a company with ties to his son Hunter. The House of Representatives will launch a formal impeachment inquiry against Trump, after he confirmed the phone call at the center of the controversy on Tuesday and promised to release a transcript of the call.

Democrats have decried the call as an attempt by Trump to smear his top political rival, and the uproar has given Biden's campaign a chance to portray it as evidence that the president see him as the most dangerous opponent among the 19 candidates seeking the party's nomination to take on Trump in the November 2020 election.

But there is also a risk that Biden's candidacy and perceptions of his electability could be hurt by the possibility of Trump's repeated charges of corruption, strategists said.

"It could be distracting if the campaign becomes more about the allegations of corruption within the Biden family," said Donald Green, a political science professor at Columbia University. There has been no evidence to suggest so far that Biden used his position as vice president to help his son's business in Ukraine, and he has said



they never discussed the matter.

Green also said it is a risky move if Democrats launch an impeachment inquiry so close to the 2020 election about a conversation that may be interpreted a number of ways. "I don't think the typical American knows much about the Ukraine or what President Trump was talking about," Green said. "If this case is ambiguous, it's something that can be tarred as a witch hunt."

So far, most Americans say they are not closely following the growing scandal. Only 17% of the public says they have heard "a great deal" about the news that Trump discussed Biden with the president of Ukraine. Another 31% said they knew "some" of the details and 52% said they know little, if anything, about the Ukraine news, the Sept. 23-24 poll showed. Support for impeachment is higher among those adults who said they have been closely following the Ukraine news. Among those with a high level of familiarity, 5 out of 10 said they think Trump should be impeached, while 4 in 10 said he should not. The poll underscored the continued rise of U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren.

She had 14% support among Democrats and independents, up 2 points from the previous poll and enough to surpass U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders as the second-most-popular choice for the Democratic nomination. Sanders dropped by 4 points in the poll, receiving the support of 13% of Democrats and independents. Biden, Sanders and Warren all narrowly lead Trump in hypothetical general election match-ups, but their lead was smaller in the latest poll than it was in June.

Biden led Trump by about 5 points, Warren led Trump by 2 points and Sanders led Trump by 1 point.

The Reuters/Ipsos poll was conducted online, in English, throughout the United States. It gathered responses from 1,005 U.S. adults and has a credibility interval, a measure of precision, of 4 percentage points.

Warren and Biden virtually deadlocked in new national poll

As CNN reported, Sen. Elizabeth Warren and former Vice President Joe Biden are virtually deadlocked in a close race for the Democratic presidential nomination, according to a new national poll out Wednesday from Quinnipiac University. The poll shows Warren at 27% and Biden at 25% among Democratic voters and independent voters who lean Democratic, and is the first major national poll to show Warren in this strong a position since polling in Iowa and New Hampshire also found the two knotted at the top of the field. Although the difference between the candidates' numbers is within the poll's margin of error, the Massachusetts Democrat's new ranking is the first time a candidate other than the former vice president has topped the pack since Quinnipiac started posing the question in March.

The two candidates also saw change in support from the poll's August results, when Biden was at 32% and Warren was at 19%.

The poll reflects a tightening Democratic race as well as Warren's increasing consolidation of the progressive vote and making inroads among black voters. Her support among that crucial demographic bloc has climbed dramatically in recent months, from 4% in July to 8% in August to 19% now. Biden's support among black voters, meanwhile, has dipped from 53% to 40% over the same time. The numbers signal a potential softening in a key base for Biden's campaign, as well as an ability for Warren to grow support beyond white college-educated liberals.

In the new poll, Warren and Biden are followed by Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders (16%), South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg (7%) and California Sen. Kamala Harris (3%). All other candidates got 2% or lower in the poll. Two other national telephone polls released since the last round of debates -- from NBC News and the Wall Street Journal, and from Fox News -- found Biden in a stronger position ahead

of Warren. But recent surveys taken in early voting states show a two-person top tier forming.

A CNN/Des Moines Register/Mediacom poll released over the weekend found Warren surging in Iowa against Biden, standing at 22% to the former vice president's 20% among likely Iowa caucusgoers. And in New Hampshire, a poll of likely Democratic primary voters from Monmouth University favor Warren over Biden, 27% to 25%.

The Quinnipiac University poll was conducted by telephone September 19 through 23 among a random sample of 1,337 registered voters with a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 3.2 percentage points. The survey includes 561 Democratic voters and independent voters who lean Democratic with a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4.9 percentage points.

Biden extends lead over Warren, Sanders

But The Hill reported that Former Vice President Joe Biden has extended his lead over progressive rivals Sens. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) in the latest Hill-HarrisX poll released on Monday. The poll of likely Democratic and independent voters found that 31 percent support Biden for president, a 4-point increase from the last time the poll was conducted in late August. Sanders came in second with 16 percent, while Warren followed in third place with 14 percent. Though still within the margin of error, this uptick in support for Biden is a positive for a campaign that is trying to hold off Warren.

A Des Moines Register/CNN/Mediacom poll released Saturday showed Warren overtaking Biden for the first time in the caucus state. Warren won 22 percent support in the poll, compared to 20 percent for Biden. In the Hill/HarrisX poll, South Bend, Ind., Mayor Pete Buttigieg tied Sen. Kamala Harris (D-Calif.) for fourth place, with each winning 5 percent. Former Texas congressman Beto O'Rourke (D) followed with 4 percent.

Former entrepreneur Andrew Yang dropped back to 2 percent after previously climbing to 5 percent. The only other candidates to poll at least 2 percent or higher were Sen. Cory Booker (D-N.J.), Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), and former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Julián Castro. HarrisX researchers surveyed 440 Democratic and independent voters between Sept. 20 and Sept. 21. The margin of error for this poll is plus or minus 4.7 percentage points.

The Democratic field narrowed last week after New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio dropped out of the 2020 presidential race averaging in several national polls at less than 1 percent. De Blasio, who first launched his bid in May, announced the news on MSNBC's "Morning Joe," and vowed to continue his work as mayor of New York City.

"It's clearly not my time, so I'm going to end my presidential campaign, continue my work as mayor of New York City, and I'm going to keep speaking up for working people," he said at the time.

Asia Development Bank beams bond bumps

ASIA TIMES — The Asian Development Bank's quarterly local currency bond survey of mid-year and through end-August trends noted lower yields with slower economies, amid still positive "risk-off" foreign investor sentiment raising future flags. The US-China trade standoff continued to loom over regional markets, cutting interest rates in line with developed world central banks. The Japan-Korea diplomatic and export clash added to aversion, as equity markets also slid and currencies weakened against the dollar. Annualized growth was almost 15% in the latest period for combined size of the nine Emerging East Asian destinations over \$15 trillion, three-quarters from mainland China, and close to another 15% from Korea. A Cambodian bank bond as the third such listing on the stock exchange was a highlight as broader Indochina coverage may soon join Vietnam in the publication.

In most places the 10-year government bond yield drop surpassed the two-year, with curve flattening suggesting economic "gloom," the ADB commented. Korea, Malaysia and Thailand reduced benchmark rates 25 basis points, and Indonesia got a sovereign ratings upgrade to slash cost. Hong Kong's fall was less than the rest with "political uncertainties" from months of anti-Beijing street riots. The International Monetary Fund in its July outlook predicted 2.5% trade growth this year will be half the pace of 2017. Emerging market gross domestic product expansion will be just 4%, with inflation almost a point higher. Asia's clip is a "rock solid" 5.7%, despite Hong Kong and Korea at half that figure. Vietnam was an exception to the stock market spin, in part due to possible MSCI index elevation from the frontier to core rung in 2020. In most places the 10-year government bond yield drop surpassed the two-year, with curve flattening suggesting economic "gloom," the ADB commented

Credit default swap spreads "rose sharply" in July, even as overseas ownership of domestic bonds was "stable," according to the report. However, Malaysia and the Philippines had 1.5% declines, with net outflows in the former on oil export price softness and potential removal from an FTSE global bond index. A new World Bank policy paper points out that East Asia is ahead of other regions in developing capital markets for a state and corporate borrowing "spare tire," although the private sector can be "crowded out" and small and midsize company access lags. The update warns that Chinese growth "moderation" is a bigger risk than US recession, while multiple trade conflicts rage. While the Federal Reserve reversed course toward lower interest rates, major emerging market upsets elsewhere, such as in Argentina and Turkey, can still readily translate into asset class selloffs, it added.

The government-corporate bond divide is 60%-40%, and overall growth was 3.5% in the second quarter, roughly the same increase as in mainland China. In contrast, Hong Kong's outstanding amount slipped slightly to \$250 billion, while ASEAN's combined was up 2% to \$1.5 trillion. Thailand leads there at \$425 billion, followed by Malaysia's \$350 billion and Indonesia's \$220 billion. In Malaysia 60% of volume is Islamic-style sukuk, and Singapore's \$320 billion market is also moving into this niche. The Philippines and Vietnam are minnows at \$125 billion and \$50 billion respectively, although Manila stands out with a retail investor program. As a fraction of regional GDP the total is near 85%, with Korea the outlier with a 125% proportion. The foreign investor share ranges from 5% in China to almost 40% in Indonesia, with net buying over the April-July timeframe.

Cross-border Asian placement was \$3.5 billion, with China names accounting for half. Bank of China had the



single biggest \$750 million issue in Hong Kong dollars, and denominations in Singapore dollars, Korean won and Malaysian ringgit were 5% of activity. Hard currency East Asia offerings climbed 20% from January-July to over \$200 billion, 90% in the greenback. Indonesia was responsible for \$12 billion; Thailand \$1.5 billion; and Vietnam Prosperity Bank completed a \$300 million bond. Cambodia's Advanced Bank local listing had a 7.75% coupon above bank term deposits, with the proceeds going to more speculative rural business. It got a "B" Standard & Poor's rating to facilitate institutional and individual sale, with over 20,000 investors now registered on the \$150 million exchange. The small bourse is on the radar screen, especially of Indochina specialists already in Vietnam, and eyeing fresh spots with the announced merger of the Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh markets, under the caveat that "rock solid" may also describe boulder dangers.

George Washington warned U.S. about Saudi Arabia

By Doug Bandow

It's haunting how accurately our first president predicted our "foreign entanglements" with Riyadh.

President Donald Trump wants to outsource U.S. policy to Riyadh. After the recent attack on Saudi Arabia's oil fields, he tweeted that his administration was "locked and loaded," but was "waiting to hear from the Kingdom as to who they believe was the cause of this attack, and under what terms we would proceed!" He later ordered American forces to Saudi Arabia to garrison the Middle East's most brutally repressive and dangerously aggressive state. Since he himself ventured to Riyadh in 2017—his first foreign trip—Trump has consistently sacrificed America's national interests in catering to the preferences of the Saudi royal family. His administration backed the regime's brutal attack on Yemen, ignored Riyadh's continuing support for Islamic radicalism, and said little about their mounting human rights violations. Now he is acting as if American armed forces constitute the royals' personal bodyguards, at the crown prince's beck and call.

It was fear of precisely this kind of obsequious subservience to foreign nations and interests that prompted President George Washington to issue his famous 1796 Farewell Address. Obviously America's position in the world was very different then. The former colonies were still forging their disparate communities into a nation. The United States was a weak, marginal player in a world dominated by empires. Great Britain and Spain retained interests in and forces on the North American continent, while France maintained Caribbean colonies.

Centuries later, however, Washington's words still resonate. His message was clear: "nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others, should be excluded; and that, in place of them, just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated. The nation which indulges towards another a habitual hatred or a habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest."

Tragically the Trump administration's Middle East policy illustrates both sides of the equation. The president exhibits just such "permanent, inveterate antipathies" against Iran and Syria and "passionate attachments" to Saudi Arabia and Israel. The result has been to badly distort U.S. policy and harm American interests.

As Washington presciently explained more than two centuries ago, "Antipathy in one nation against another disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur. Hence, frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests. The nation, prompted by ill-will and resentment, sometimes impels to war the government, contrary to the best calculations of policy."

"Haughty and intractable" surely describes American policy toward Iran. As does the first president's warning of when the national government "adopts through passion what reason would reject; at other times it makes the animosity of the nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives. The peace often, sometimes perhaps the liberty, of nations has been the victim."

The other side of the equation has had an equally distorting impact on U.S. policy. Indeed, America's "passionate attachments" have helped determine the foregoing enemies' list. After all, Washington observed, "likewise, a passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. Sympathy for the favorite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter without adequate inducement or justification."

Perhaps the most immediate and obvious consequence of this are "concessions to the favorite nation"—such as arming the Saudis, aiding their murderous campaign against Yemeni civilians, and whitewashing their odious oppressions. However, the dangers go beyond simple policy. This sort of "passionate attachment" also threatens American democracy. Said Washington: "it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens (who devote themselves to the favorite nation), facility to betray or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity; guiding, with the appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption, or infatuation."

Riyadh appears to buy its friends directly and openly, as does its ally the United Arab Emirates. A different and more enduring foreign loyalty often emerges among those who retain ties to their ancestors' homelands, such as Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Greece and Turkey. Israel is sui generis, with its most zealous backers Christian believers who hold a unique (and uniquely dubious) eschatology.

While people can, and some do, advocate support for foreign regimes as necessary for American prosperity and/or security, others appear to assume that their favored nation's interests are automatically America's interests. Particularly shocking were Republican Party presidential candidates in 2016 who demanded reflexive support for the Saudis and other "allies" and insisted there should not be the slightest margin of difference between American and Israeli policy despite our many manifest divergences in interests. Which, in practice, would mean conforming to foreign positions irrespective of what our own imperatives are.

Washington also warned of the potential danger such entanglements could pose to domestic institutions: "As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent patriot. How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practice the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public council. Such an attachment of a small or weak towards a great and powerful nation dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter."

Could there be a better description of America's current policy toward the Middle East? Our supposed friends have entangled us and turned us into their catspaw. Perhaps most shocking is how Saudi Arabia, which shares neither our values nor our interests, has gained effective control over our foreign policy. Riyadh's influence in Washington, D.C. may be nonpareil—the only other nation that comes close is Israel. But there are other countries that seek to gain favor through lobbying. ➔13

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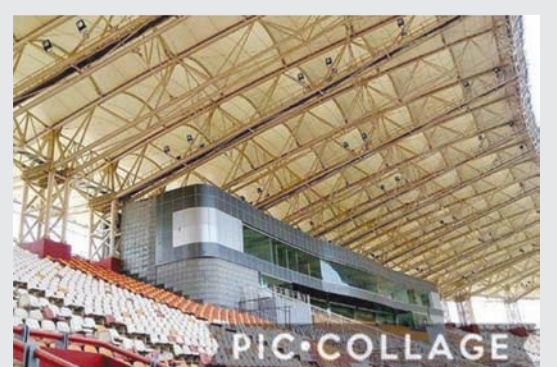
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Caught in the act: a black hole rips apart an unfortunate star

Scientists have captured a view of a colossal black hole violently ripping apart a doomed star, illustrating an extraordinary and chaotic cosmic event from beginning to end for the first time using NASA's planet-hunting telescope.

The U.S. space agency's orbiting Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite, better known as TESS, revealed the detailed timeline of a star 375 million light-years away warping and spiraling into the unrelenting gravitational pull of a supermassive black hole, researchers said on Thursday.

The star, roughly the same size as our sun, was eventually sucked into oblivion in a rare cosmic occurrence that astronomers call a tidal disruption event, they added.

Astronomers used an international network of telescopes to detect the phenomenon before turning to TESS, whose permanent viewing zones designed to hunt distant planets caught the beginning of the violent event, proving effective its unique method of surveilling the cosmos.



“This was really a combination of both being good and being lucky, and sometimes that’s what you need to push the science forward,” said astronomer Thomas Holoién of the Carnegie Institution for Science, who led the research published in the Astrophysical

Journal.

Such phenomena happen when a star ventures too close to a supermassive black hole, objects that reside at the center of most large galaxies including our Milky Way. The black hole’s tremendous gravitational forces tear the star to shreds, with some of its material tossed into space and the rest plunging into the black hole, forming a disk of hot, bright gas as it is swallowed.

“Specifically, we are able to measure the rate at which it gets brighter after it starts brightening, and we also observed a drop in its temperature and brightness that is unique,” Holoién said.

Observing the oscillation of light as the black hole gobbles the star and spews stellar material in an outward spiral could help astronomers understand the black hole’s behavior, a scientific mystery since physicist Albert Einstein’s work more than a century ago examined gravity’s influence on light in motion.

(Source: Reuters)

Jackdaws can identify ‘dangerous’ humans, scientists say



Jackdaws can identify “dangerous” humans from listening to each other’s warning calls, scientists say.

The highly social birds will also remember that person if they come near their nests again, according to researchers from the University of Exeter.

In the study, a person unknown to the wild jackdaws approached their nest. At the same time scientists played a recording of a warning call (threatening) or “contact calls” (non-threatening).

The next time jackdaws saw this same person, the birds that had previously heard the warning call were defensive and returned to their nests more than twice as quickly on average. Birds that heard contact calls still returned to their nests but took longer – they took 63 per cent of the time compared to birds that had not heard the call at all.

The study, published in Royal Society Open Science, looked at 34 jackdaw nest boxes.

“One of the big challenges for a lot of animals is how to live alongside humans. People can provide some benefits, such as the food at bird feeders, but in some cases humans are also a threat,” said lead author Victoria Lee, a PhD researcher at the University of

Exeter.

“Being able to discriminate between dangerous and harmless people is likely to be beneficial, and in this case we see jackdaws can learn to identify dangerous people without having had a bad experience themselves,” she said.

Jackdaws are the smallest members of the crow family and have a light grey patch on their neck and pale white iris.

They are known for forming strong bonds with mates and will stay together for life – even if they have years of unsuccessful breeding.

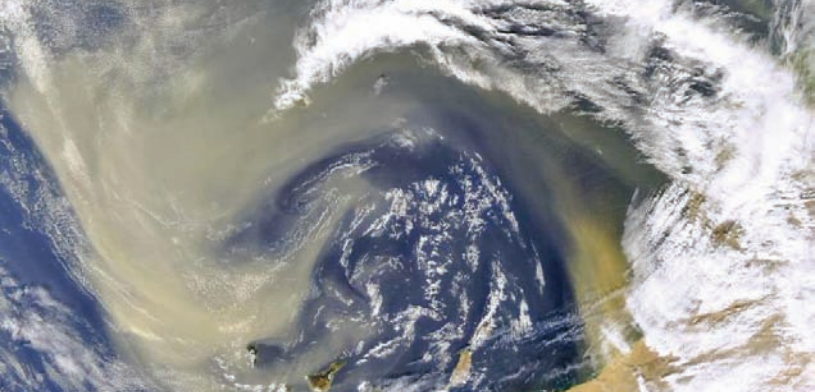
These highly social creatures roost and feed together, and will even encourage other jackdaw to follow them if they find a good source of food.

“This study provides important evidence that animals use social learning to assess the level of risk posed by individual humans,” researchers wrote in the paper.

“Understanding how social learning shapes anti predator responses is vital to predicting and mitigating the effects of human activity, and provides valuable insights into how cognitive abilities influence adaptation to changing environments.”

(Source: The Independent)

Canary Islands yield new evidence of Sahara’s age



By Brooks Hays

Determining the age of the Sahara Desert has proven difficult for geologists, but new research suggests the world’s largest desert is at least 4.8 million years old.

Scientists successfully dated dust from the Sahara that blew over to the Canary Islands a few million years ago.

“People have been trying to figure it out for several decades,” Daniel Muhs, a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey in Denver, said in a news release.

“More recent studies said it was the beginning of the Pleistocene, about 2.6 million years ago. Then others say a few thousand years ago.”

Researchers have also found evidence that the Sahara’s aridity has been interrupted by periods of greening.

To better understand when the dynamic dryland first formed, scientists went in search of paleosols, layers of ancient African dust. On the Canary Islands, located off of Africa’s west coast, scientists found layers of fine reddish-brown soil sandwiched between layers of volcanic rocks and sands dunes.

In one location, scientists found the paleosols -- featuring fine-grained quartz and mica, minerals foreign to the islands -- interspersed with layers of shells of marine organisms. At another location, researchers found the African dust among layers of ancient lava.

When lava cools and solidifies, isotopic clocks in the hardened minerals begin ticking. By analyzing the ratios of isotopes inside the lava rocks, scientists can determine the age of the lava layers.

Researchers were able to date three paleosols. The oldest was deposited between 4.8 and 2.8 million years ago, and another got trapped between 3.0 to 2.9 million years ago. The third was blown across the sea around 400,000 years ago.

The findings -- shared Monday in a presentation at the Geological Society of America’s annual meeting -- suggest the Sahara was dry enough to fuel large dust storms by 4.8 million years ago. Scientists previously found 4.6-million-year-old paleosols among marine sediments.

It’s possible the desert is even older.

Tripling shelf life of macaroni and cheese

Washington State University scientists have developed a way to triple the shelf life of ready-to-eat macaroni and cheese, a development that could have benefits for everything from space travel to military use.

If human beings go to Mars, they need food. Food that won’t spoil during the long travel between planets, and while they’re on the surface.

Currently, plastic packaging can keep food safe at room temperature for up to twelve months. The WSU researchers demonstrated in a recent paper in the journal Food and Bioprocess Technology they could keep ready-to-eat macaroni and cheese safe and edible with selected nutrients for up to three years.

“We need a better barrier to keep oxygen away from the food and provide longer shelf-life similar to aluminum foil and plastic laminate pouches,” said Shyam Sablani, who is leading the team working to create a better protective film. “We’ve always been thinking of developing a product that can go to Mars, but with technology that can also benefit consumers here on Earth.”

In addition to having space travel in mind, the researchers are working closely with the U.S. Army, who want to improve their “Meals Ready to Eat” (MREs) to stay tasty and healthy for three years.

In taste panels conducted by the Army, the mac and cheese, recently tested after three years of storage, was deemed just as good as the previous version that was stored for nine months.

The food itself is sterilized using a process called the microwave-assisted thermal sterilization (MATS) system, developed by WSU’s Juming Tang. The food must be sterilized in plastic, since metal, like tin cans, can’t be microwaved and glass is fragile and not a preferred choice of packaging for MREs. Glass is also too heavy for military or space uses.

Adding a metal oxide coating to a layer of the plastic film significantly increases the amount of time it takes for oxygen and other gases to break through.

The metal oxide coating technology has been around for almost 10 years, but it develops cracks

when subjected to sterilization processes. That eventually compromises the food shelf-life, said Sablani, a professor in WSU’s Department of Biological Systems Engineering. WSU researchers have been working with packaging companies to develop new films that keep oxygen and vapor out longer.

The packaging films are made up of multiple layers of different plastics. These few-micron thin layers have different purposes, like being a good barrier, good for sealing, good mechanical strength, or good for printing, Sablani said.

“We are excited that an over-layer of organic coating on metal oxide helped protect against microscopic cracks,” he said. “Multiple layers of metal oxide coating have also increased the barrier performance. Our research guided development of newer high barrier packaging.”

To ensure the process works fully, the Army plans to do testing under field conditions. So these new MREs will be stored longer, then sent to deployed soldiers to eat in the field.

“If they like the taste of the packaged food

there, then that’s the ultimate test of new films,” Sablani said.

The team doesn’t wait the three years to test the results of each new film. Keeping the packaged food in a 100-degree Fahrenheit incubator rapidly speeds up the food quality changes at a consistent rate. Six months in the incubator is equivalent to three years at room temperature, while nine months is the equivalent to nearly five years, Sablani said.

For space travel, it’s not really possible to field-test for a trip to Mars. But Sablani plans to reach out to NASA to talk about how to test the WSU films to make sure that packaged food stays edible on a space mission where failure isn’t an option.

“NASA knows about our work, but we’re just now getting to the point where we can talk to them with a proven product,” Sablani said. “We hope to work out a way to test these products on the International Space Station in the future to show that the food is safe after long-term storage.”

(Source: Science Daily)

AI equal with human experts in medical diagnosis, study finds

Artificial intelligence is on a par with human experts when it comes to making medical diagnoses based on images, a review has found.

The potential for artificial intelligence in healthcare has caused excitement, with advocates saying it will ease the strain on resources, free up time for doctor-patient interactions and even aid the development of tailored treatment. Last month the government announced £250m of funding for a new NHS artificial intelligence laboratory.

However, experts have warned the latest findings are based on a small number of studies, since the field is littered with poor-quality research.

One burgeoning application is the use of AI in interpreting medical images – a field that relies on deep learning, a sophisticated form of machine learning in which a series of labelled images are fed into algorithms that pick out features within them and learn how to classify similar images. This approach has shown promise in diagnosis of diseases from cancers to eye conditions.

However questions remain about how such deep learning systems measure up to human skills. Now researchers say they have conducted the first comprehensive review of published studies on the issue, and found humans and machines are on a par.

Prof Alastair Denniston, at the University Hospitals Birmingham NHS foundation trust and a co-author of the study, said the results were encouraging but the study was a reality check for some of the hype about AI.

Dr. Xiaoxuan Liu, the lead author of the study and from the same NHS trust, agreed. “There are a lot of headlines about AI outperforming humans, but our message is that it can at best be equivalent,” she said.

Writing in the Lancet Digital Health, Denniston, Liu and colleagues reported how they focused on research papers published since 2012 – a pivotal year for deep learning.

An initial search turned up more than 20,000 relevant studies. However, only 14 studies – all based on human disease – reported good quality data, tested the deep learning system with images from a separate dataset to the one used to train it, and showed the same images to human experts.

The team pooled the most promising results from within each of the 14 studies to reveal that deep learning systems correctly detected a disease state 87% of the time – compared with 86% for healthcare professionals – and correctly gave the all-clear 93% of the time, compared with 91% for human experts.

However, the healthcare professionals in these scenarios were not given additional patient information they would have in the real world which could steer their diagnosis.

Prof David Spiegelhalter, the chair of the Winton center for risk and evidence communication at the University of Cambridge, said the field was awash with poor research.

“This excellent review demonstrates that the massive hype over AI in medicine obscures the lamentable quality of almost all evaluation studies,” he said. “Deep learning can be a powerful and impressive technique, but clinicians and commissioners should be asking the crucial question: what does it actually add to clinical practice?”

However, Denniston remained optimistic about the potential of AI in healthcare, saying such deep learning systems could act as a diagnostic tool and help tackle the backlog of scans and images. What’s more, said Liu, they could prove useful in places which lack experts to interpret images.

Liu said it would be important to use deep learning systems in clinical trials to assess whether patient outcomes improved compared with current practices.

Dr. Raj Jena, an oncologist at Addenbrooke’s hospital in Cambridge who was not involved in the study, said deep learning systems would be important in the future, but stressed they needed robust real-world testing. He also said it was important to understand why such systems sometimes make the wrong assessment.

“If you are a deep learning algorithm, when you fail you can often fail in a very unpredictable and spectacular way,” he said.

(Source: The Guardian)

Researchers can guess where you’re from by how colors make you feel

Whether you see red, feel blue, or go green with envy may depend on what country you call home, a new study suggests. And when given data on how a person associated colors with emotions, researchers could correctly predict where they were from 80% of the time.



The scientists surveyed 711 people from China, Germany, Greece, and the United Kingdom. Volunteers read the word for 12 colors, such as “green” and “turquoise.” They then indicated which of 20 emotions the colors brought to mind, and how strongly the color was tied to the feeling.

Across the board, the colors that inspired the most emotion were red, black, and pink, whereas brown and purple had weaker associations. Black was associated with sadness across all countries, for example, and red with positive emotions like love and pleasure, along with negative feelings such as anger and hate, the researchers report in Royal Society Open Science.

Still, there were some cultural differences. For instance, people in Germany associated brown more strongly with disgust than any other country, and people from Greece were the only group to associate purple primarily with sadness. White was rated as more negative in China (people there traditionally wear white to funerals), and yellow was positive in all countries except Greece.

By using a type of artificial intelligence known as machine learning, which uses data to “train” a program to make guesses or correlations that wouldn’t be immediately obvious to humans, the researchers could predict which country the person was from. The team says the study shows how such technology can be used to make sense of emotion research—a field where data are often complex and nuanced, and rarely black and white.

(Source: sciencemag.org)

Russian spaceship with UAE astronaut blasts off into space

A Russian Soyuz spaceship blasted off from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan towards the International Space Station on Wednesday carrying a crew of three, including the first astronaut from the United Arab Emirates.

Emirati astronaut Hazzaa AlMansoori, Russian commander Oleg Skripochka, and flight engineer Jessica Meir of NASA were expected to dock with the space station about six hours later.

AlMansoori, 35, a former fighter jet pilot, will spend eight days aboard the station, becoming the first Arab to visit the giant scientific laboratory orbiting the Earth.

He plans to carry out a series of experiments, hold several live space-to-Earth sessions and host an Emirati food night wearing the traditional national clothing, the



UAE authorities have said.

Hours before launch, AlMansoori together with crewmates received a blessing from a Russian orthodox priest in line with Russian space tradition, although unlike the two others he was spared from being sprinkled with holy water.

Smiling, AlMansoori made a Winston Churchill-style V hand sign while standing on the stairs leading to the elevator which took the crew to their capsule.

The new crew’s arrival will boost the ISS headcount to nine - for the first time in four years - until AlMansoori and two astronauts from a previous expedition return to earth on Oct. 3.

(Source: Reuters)

UNESCO-invitees tour attractions in Hamedan

1 → The guests were from France, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, China, Russia, South Korea, Japan, Bhutan, Turkey, Switzerland, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Nepal, the report said.

Organized by the UNESCO World Heritage Center 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 reviewed possible UNESCO inscription of the Silk Roads as a serial transnational World Heritage.

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.

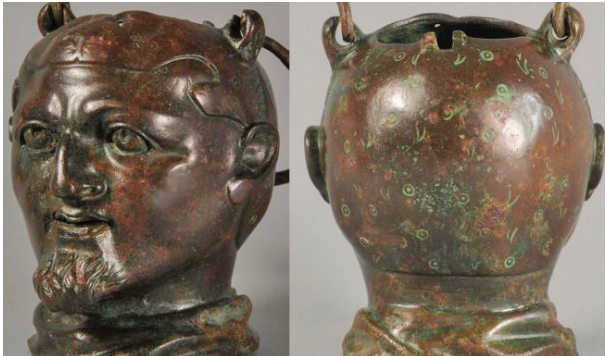
Known in classical times as Ecbatana, Hamedan was one of the ancient world's greatest cities. Pitifully little remains from antiquity, but significant parts of the city center are given over to excavations, and there's a scattering of historical curiosities.

Hamedan, never falls short of offering cultural heritage sites to its visitors. Scenic natural landscapes, traditional restaurants, public gardens and colorful outdoor markets and more importantly, its hospitable people make for an unexpected slice of the city.

Skeleton of ancient sports fan and head-shaped jar found in Bulgarian grave

The skeleton of an ancient sports fan was discovered alongside an 1,800-year-old jar shaped like the head of a wrestler or boxer who may have had his nose broken, archaeologists reported.

The "spectacular" balsamarium — a jar used to store liquids such as balm or perfumes — was found in a grave in southeastern Bulgaria (ancient Thrace).



It dates to a time when the Roman Empire controlled Thrace — an ancient area that encompassed parts of Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey.

Made of brass, the balsamarium depicts a man with a goatee and a nose that looks crooked or bent as if it had been broken and not fully healed. The man is wearing a cap made from the skin of a feline, likely a panther or leopard, the archaeologists wrote in a paper published in the October issue of the American Journal of Archaeology.

Examples of balsamariums that have similar features, such as a crooked or bent nose, have been found elsewhere in the Roman Empire and are often interpreted as depicting boxers or wrestlers.

The feline cap worn by the man may be an allusion to a Nemean lion, a creature that the Greek god Hercules fought and defeated, according to ancient mythology.

(Source: Live Science)



ROUND THE GLOBE Aachen Cathedral

Aachen Cathedral, traditionally known in English as the Cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle, is a Roman Catholic church in Aachen, western Germany.

Construction of this palatine chapel, with its octagonal basilica and cupola, began c. 790–800 under the Emperor Charlemagne. Originally inspired by the churches of the Eastern part of the Holy Roman Empire, it was splendidly enlarged in the Middle Ages.



Charlemagne made the Frankish royal estate of Aachen, which had been serving a spa ever since the first century, his favorite abode. The main buildings of the Imperial Palace area were the Coronation Hall and the Palace Chapel — now Aachen Cathedral.

The Palatine Chapel is based on an octagonal ground plan, which is surrounded by an aisle and by tribunes above, and roofed with a dome. Facing the altar, the Emperor sat on the gallery; the Carolingian stone throne was the coronation seat of the kings of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nation from the Middle Ages until 1531.

The chapel itself is easily recognizable from later additions by its distinctive structure. An atrium on the western side and a portico led to the imperial apartments. The Gothic choir and a series of chapels that were added throughout the Middle Ages created the composite array of features that characterized the cathedral.

The interior of the chapel is embellished by antique columns that Charlemagne probably ordered to be brought from Rome and Ravenna.

(Source: UNESCO)

UNESCO-tagged Ali Qapu receives over 375,000 visitors in H1

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The 16th-century Ali Qapu d e s k Palace, an element of the UNESCO-registered Imam Square in Isfahan, central Iran, welcomed over 375,000 visitors during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21).

Best known as Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. (literary meaning “Image of the World”), the property is hemmed on four sides by magnificent buildings: to the east, the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque; to the west, the palace of Ali Qapu; to the north, the portico of Qeyssariyeh; and to the south, the eminent the Imam Mosque.

Amongst monuments of the Imam Square, Ali Qapu Palace received topmost number of visitors during the six month period, “Fariba Khatabakhsh, director of the World Heritage site, said on Wednesday, IRIB reported.

“It drew 375,919 people, 337,525 of whom were domestic and 37,555 were international travelers,” she said.

Over 1,800,000 tickets were sold to visitors of Isfahan’s cultural heritage sites during the six month, the official noted.

During the period, the Imam Mosque attracted 118,858 domestic and 38,955 international travelers, the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque lured 77,330 Iranian and 31,899 foreign nationals, the report said.

One of Isfahan’s other top destinations, Chehel Sotoun, a 17th-century royal palace, welcomed 300,125 Iranian visitors and 34,277 international holidaymakers, IRIB quoted another tourism official as saying.

Naghsh-e Jahan Sq. was laid out in the very early 17th century under the reign of the Safavid ruler, Shah Abbas the Great, to signal the importance of Isfahan as a capital of a powerful empire.



A view of the UNESCO-registered Imam Sq., Isfahan, central Iran, and the Ali Qapu Palace is seen on the right.

The sizeable open space has changed little since it was built, the only modern additions are some fountains added during the Pahlavi era. Its vast sandy esplanade was used for celebrations, promenades, and public executions, for playing polo and for assembling troops.

Profusion of tree-lined boulevards, Persian gardens and

important Islamic buildings give Isfahan a highly touristic appeal that is unmatched by many other Iranian cities. In addition, the city is home to many versatile artisans who underpin its reputation as a living museum of traditional culture.

Iranians have long termed Isfahan “Nesf-e Jahan”, which literary means “Half of the World”.

UNWTO sees global tourism to grow 3% per annum until 2030

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — The UN World Tourism d e s k Organization (UNWTO) expects that global tourism will continue to grow at an average of 3 percent annually until 2030.

“This growth reflects the progressive expansion of access to tourism thanks to the decline in the price of transport, especially air transport, and growing middle classes worldwide,” the UN body announced in a statement to mark the World Tourism Day (September 27).

Over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification, and it has become one of the fastest growing and most important economic sectors in the world, benefiting destinations and communities worldwide.

“International tourist arrivals worldwide have grown from 25 million in 1950 to nearly 1.3 billion today. Similarly, international tourism revenues earned by destinations around the world have grown from 2 billion U.S. dollars in 1950 to 1260 trillion in 2015. The sector represents



File photo: People walk pass the Azadi Tower, western Tehran. The inverted-Y-shaped monument is one of visual icons of the Iranian capital.

an estimated 10 percent of the world’s GDP and 1 in 10 jobs globally.”

These ancient Scottish cave drawings may soon vanish

Hidden beneath the medieval ruins of Macduff’s Castle in Fife, Scotland, lies an even more ancient wonder: a series of 4,000- to 1,500-year-old carvings that archaeologists have yet to fully comprehend.

Inside the shadowy, red-tinged Wemyss Caves hide ancient etchings of animals, hunting scenes and what might be the first rendering of a Scottish ship. As archaeologists and historians work to unravel the meanings of these mysterious drawings, environmental and human threats are forcing them into a high-stakes race against time.

The Wemyss Caves contain several carvings that are believed to date to the Bronze Age, as well as more than 50 Iron Age symbols carved by the mysterious Pict people of Scotland be-

tween 300 CE and the early 400s.

When the Pictish carvings were discovered in the 1860s, there were at least 25 more, but the collection has been and continues to be threatened by erosion, deterioration and human harm. Several carvings, including one of a Pictish beast and another of a swan, were destroyed when a car was set on fire inside one of the caves in 1986, and only three of the five caves originally found to contain carvings

remain today.

The Wemyss Caves’ carvings remain the oldest and largest concentration of Pictish symbols anywhere in the world. Because the Picts did not write down their own history, and accounts from other peoples have proven to be unreliable, not much is known of Pictish culture.

What is remembered is their military prowess, which effectively kept the region from the Roman Empire’s rule throughout the Iron Age.

The Wemyss Caves house mysterious carvings from as early as 300 CE. In the face of natural and human threats, archaeologists are racing to decode them before they vanish.

4 tips for protecting your trip during hurricane season

With some parts of the world still recovering from hurricane season. Planning well in advance for potential disruptions is essential, even if you’re not traveling to a high-risk areas like Florida or the Caribbean, said Justin Tysdal, travel insurance expert and chief executive of Seven Corners, a travel insurance firm.

“As we’ve learned in recent years, some of the most unsuspecting places can also be cause for concern, including Houston, Texas and New York.” Here’s what you need to know to protect your travel plans this hurricane season.

■ Check your hotel and airline policies

Many hotels in high-risk areas have some sort of hurricane policy, but they vary in what they cover and how they work.

A hotel with a hurricane guarantee often offers either a full refund or will let you rebook within a year with no extra fees attached should you have to cancel. But it’s important to know exactly how it works ahead of time, as some depend on the timing of the storm. Other hurricane policies only reimburse after the fact and if other criteria is met, such as the storm making landfall qualifying as a “direct impact” to the hotel or if the storm winds are considered “hurricane-force.”

Airlines will often rebook your flight without an extra charge for storm-related cancellations, but they are not required to do so by law. In cases of partial reimbursements from a hotel or airline, having travel insurance could close any gaps.



“Remember that a travel insurance plan is designed to reimburse you for nonrefundable trip costs. So, if a hotel or airline offers only a partial refund, a travel insurance plan will pay the remaining part of your expense, as long as you bought insurance for the full nonrefundable cost of your trip,” Mr. Tysdal said.

■ Don’t delay

As soon as a storm has a name, it’s too late to purchase travel insurance, Mr. Tysdal said. “Think of it as buying auto insurance after you have wrecked your car. Once the risk is definite, it’s not insurable.”

Timing is also a factor regarding what types of travel insurance you can purchase,

which will affect how much coverage you have. The most comprehensive plan will include a Cancel For Any Reason (CFAR) option, which can only be purchased within 20 days of your initial trip deposit date.

“It is the only way to guarantee you will be able to cancel your trip for a reason other than a trigger specifically listed in the policy. If a traveler cancels with CFAR, they can recoup 75 percent of their trip investment and take their trip another time,” Mr. Tysdal said.

■ Cruises may require extra coverage

If you’re taking a cruise and have concerns about hurricane-related

disruptions, there’s even more to think about.

Even if it looks like your cruise will be smooth sailing, think about how you are getting to your cruise departure point, as a flight delay or cancellation because of a storm may lead to you missing your boat. Make sure your insurance policy has a Missed Connection benefit, which will cover additional transportation costs should you need to join your cruise at another port.

“We recommend selecting a plan with at least a \$1,000 Missed Connection benefit. This covers the unexpected cost if you miss your cruise departure due to a flight or weather delay or other triggers listed in the policy,” Mr. Tysdal said. “The insurance company may also cover accommodations and meal expenses while you are catching up to your cruise.”

■ Secure important documents

Most travelers carry important documents like their passport and driver’s license with them on vacation, but in an emergency evacuation situation, there’s a chance these can be damaged or lost. Leaving copies of these documents — along with your flight and hotel information and any insurance-related documents — with someone you trust before your departure will make life easier for when you return home.

“You can also store them on the cloud or in an email to yourself, so you can access them online in case you lose the physical copies,” Mr. Tysdal said.

(Source: The New York Times)

Former Algerian officials given lengthy prison terms over conspiracy charges

By Hana Saada

ALGIERS — Following the two-day trial, the military court, located in Blida, South of the Algerian capital Algiers, announced its verdicts with respect to the unprecedented case for plotting against the Algerian Army and state, involving figureheads of the ruling elite, including the former President brother and Advisor, two former intelligence Chiefs and former Defense Minister.

The Blida's military court, found all the defendants, symbols of the old guard, guilty, namely; Said Bouteflika, brother and adviser to deposed President of the Republic Abdelaziz Bouteflika, seen as one-time kingmaker, Mediene, nicknamed Toufik, the Chief of the all-powerful DRS intelligence agency from its foundation in 1990 till 2015, Tartag, his deputy, who succeeded him and following the bodies dismantled in 2016; he served as Algeria's security coordinator under the supervision of the presidency, Louisa Hanoune, Secretary General of the Workers' Party (PT), along with the former National Defense Minister, Major General Khaled Nezzar, his son Lotfi and the "Mediator" Farid Ben Hamdine.

They were convicted of "undermining the authority of the army" and "conspiring against the state in order to bring about regime change, in the run-up to the former President Abdelaziz Bouteflika resignation in the face of mass protests that broke out on February, 22nd, calling for the departure of the symbols and figures of the old guard and the prosecution of the corrupt ones.

The brother of Algeria's deposed former president, seen as the real power behind the presidency after his brother suffered a debilitating stroke in 2013, has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for conspiring against the state and undermining the military. The same jail sentence was addressed to the three co-defendants; two former secret service chiefs and the Secretary General of the Workers Party.

For their part, former Defense Minister Nezzar, his son Lotfi, and a former businessman Farid Benhamdine, were all also sentenced to 20 years in absentia. They are believed to be in Spain and subject to an international arrest warrant.

According to defense lawyer Miloud Ibrahim, the prosecutors at the military court in Blida, sought the maximum sentence of 20 years against all the defendants.

The hearings were restricted to lawyers and defendants' families only, with media also kept out of the courtroom. Outside, security was tight with police blocking access by vehicles and pedestrians to the court's two entrances.



Algeria's President Abdelaziz Bouteflika smiles as he arrives with his brother Said at his campaign's communications department during a surprise visit in Algiers, Algeria April 10, 2009.

During the closed-door trial, lawyers for Workers' Party Secretary General Louisa Hanoune admitted that Hanoune held, on March 27th, a meeting with the former president's brother and General Mohamed Mediene, a day after Gaid Salah publicly called for the resignation of President Bouteflika.

The lawyer of Mediene, reputed for two decades to be the ultimate authority behind the cloak of the Algerian government, a man whose image was never seen, pleaded for the session to be adjourned because of his client's poor health.

"He's not in a state to explain himself, listen to questions, defend himself or be judged," Miloud Brahimi was quoted as saying by the Soir d'Algerie newspaper. However, the judge consulted a doctor and turned down the request.

For his part, Said Bouteflika refused to answer the judge's questions and walked out, according to one of the lawyers present. Tartag, also, refused to leave his cell.

The four defendants had been arrested shortly, on April and May, after Bouteflika stepped down from office on April 2nd following weeks of mass protests calling for his resignation after he announced his intention to seek a fifth term.

The charges centered on March meetings between the three and the Secretary General of the leftist Workers Party, Louisa Hanoune, following the mounting pressure on President Bouteflika. Some feared they were plotting, as a last-ditch attempt to preserve the rule of the former president, to prepare for a transition period and fire army chief Ahmed Gaid Salah, who sided with the protesters.

This latter "the chief of staff of the ANP," Ahmed Gaid Salah, denounced in his speech of April 16, 2019 these "secret meetings", speaking

of "parties that plot against popular demands and the army." If we refer to the indiscretions of some lawyers, there would have been three meetings at the villa Dar El Afia belonging to the Directorate of Internal Security (DSI).

The facts of this case go back to the end of March when Said intensified calls and meetings with high-ranked officials, including Intelligence Chiefs, along with politicians seeking their advice on the transitional period amid protesters demanding Bouteflika to step down after announcing his candidacy for a fifth term.

According to the Algerian French language news website "ElWatan" two meetings took place on March 27th. The first grouped General Toufik with Said Bouteflika in the morning, followed by another in the afternoon, attended by Louisa Hanoune, General Toufik and Said Bouteflika. It was the day after the Deputy Minister of National Defense, Chief of Staff of the National People's Army, Army Corps General Ahmed Gaid Salah's declaration where he asked for the application of Article 102 which provides for the resignation of the President or the impediment for illness.

As head of a political party worried about the country, noted one of the lawyers, Louisa Hanoune wanted to inquire about the situation with the brother and adviser of the President, then still in office. General Toufik joined them and asked that the meeting be held at the villa Dar El Afia, which is not far from his home instead of going to the residence of the Presidency.

The discussions were related to possible roadmaps "for an exit" of President Bouteflika "after a period of transition." Some names of politicians who could lead this period were mentioned and the possible departure of

Gaid Salah mentioned by Said Bouteflika. The meeting lasted only one hour.

On March 28, Said Bouteflika received in the same villa General Toufik to which he asked to convince former President of the Republic Liamine Zeroual (1994-99) to agree to lead the transition. The next day, the two men met at his home at the Moretti State Residence on the morning of March 30. The meeting is very short. Liamine Zeroual refuses the offer of General Toufik and returns to Batna province, his home land.

On April 3, Former President Liamine Zeroual broke the wall of silence, confirming his meeting with General Toufik, at the request of the latter, who proposed to him to preside over the transition, in agreement with Said Bouteflika, but he refused.

On 16 April, Gaid Salah accused Toufik of having participated in secret meetings "to conspire against the demands of the people and to hinder the solutions of the ANP and the proposals for ending the crisis". He threatens him with "resorting to firm legal measures in case he persists in his actions". A few days later, a judicial inquiry was opened at the Blida military court.

"There is no doubt that the heads of discord, which have been exposed, as well as their criminal and pernicious acts harmful to Algeria, are now suffering the fair and equitable punishment they deserve by the force of the law", the Amy Chief added, revealing that there will be more arrests.

"The investigation will reveal new people involved in the plot against the Army and Algeria." "Those whom the ongoing persevering and thorough investigations will undoubtedly reveal in the future, will also be punished in a fair and equitable manner by the force of law," he argued.

This verdict is the first judgment handed down to senior figures remanded in custody following the outbreak of the popular protests and the launch of anti graft investigations targeting the symbols of the old guard. Two former prime ministers, more than 11 ex-ministers, governors, executives, and several prominent businessmen, oligarchs close to Bouteflika are waiting for their trials.

Algeria launched large-scale investigations with respect to other heavy cases, to wit, inter alia, the Khalifa and Sonatrach corruption cases, Al-Butcher, the main defendant following the seizure of more than 701 kg of cocaine in Algeria's western port of Oran, a scandalous file which revealed in the involvement of state officials, judges and governors in what is being described as the biggest cocaine seizure in Algeria, as well as the trials of the "entourage" of the Bouteflika regime.

Aramco attack proved Saudi oil worth much more than Yemeni blood for Western establishment

TEHRAN — The September 14 attacks into Aramco's oil processing facilities at Abqiaq and Khurais were sophisticated assaults against vital economic infrastructure in Saudi Arabia that halved the country's oil output.

Yemen's Ansarullah was quick to claim responsibility for what it called "Operation Deterrent Balance 2", following the "Operation Deterrent Balance 1" that targeted the Shaybah oil fields in southeast Saudi Arabia last month.

The attack was carried out using different drones, including Samad 3, which had also been used to strike Abu Dhabi's international airport last year, according to Yemeni sources.

Over the past few weeks, the western officials have every so often condemned the attacks and the western mainstream media outlets have published story after story about the assaults.

The US has vowed its "locked and loaded" to respond, and Riyadh has threatened all options were on the table in reaction to the attacks.

The western figures claim that the attacks did not originate from Yemen, but instead Iran.

This is while others, including Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, have implied that they see no reason to blame Iran for the attack.

Another hot debate in the western political and media circles has been the consequences of the devastating attack for the global oil market, with Riyadh being the world's number one petroleum exporter.

But regardless of the consequences of the attack or who was behind it, the case was another evidence that the western governments and media care much more about their short-sighted interests than the global interests.

In short, the political, media coverage of the attack stands in stark contrast to that of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen.



■ Deafening silence

Riyadh began its bombing campaign in Yemen in March 2015 to restore to power its favored presidential candidate Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi, after Ansarullah took the capital Sana'a from Hadi's forces.

Using US and British supplied bombs and their intelligence, the Saudi air force started targeting the impoverished Arab country's agricultural, water and health infrastructure, leading to widespread famine and the worst Cholera outbreak in modern history.

Further exacerbating the situation, the Saudis imposed a blockade on the country preventing food and medical supplies entering the country.

Despite the big magnitude of the Yemen crisis and that the Saudi war machine has been relentlessly pounding the country for nearly five years, the western political and media class have hardly paid attention to the situation in Yemen.

■ Notable example

A striking example was the case of two Saudi coalition airstrikes that struck civilian targets in northwestern and southern Yemen last week.

The attacks were Riyadh's answer to announcements by Yemenis that they would launch a drone and missile attacks into Saudi Arabia if the Saudis stopped their assaults. Dozens of innocent people were killed in these attacks, but the Yemeni deaths barely register in Western media.

■ What's the reason?

Key to this whitewashing are military, financial and geopolitical reasons, relating to Saudi Arabia's role in the region and its connections with Western powers.

Saudi Arabia is widely seen as a client state who lavishly exchanges it's petrodollars for the West's support.

The country imports weaponry worth billions each year from both the US and Britain, with the biggest arms deal in history being signed between Donald Trump and King Salman in May 2017. While the arms deal satisfy appetites of western weapon contractors, they also enable western powers to use Saudi Arabia as a bulwark against Iran, which has been at loggerhead with the western powers since the 1979 revolution.

This is why for the western political and media circles the bombing of two oil refineries in Saudi Arabia, which led to no civilian casualties, is a far more important issue than a textbook example of genocide in Yemen.

■ Yemenis got nothing to lose

Anyway, Yemenis have apparently learned they need to stand on their own feet and resist against the Saudi invasion.

Yemen has been the poorest country in the Arab world and has little to lose. Despite all the western efforts, the truth is that the balance of power has transformed with the human costs of the war for the Saudis pitting against economic and political costs.

Their resistance will gradually push Saudi Arabia to rethink its actions in Yemen, forcing it to stop its war machine, which has included 17,000 air raids and the dropping of 50,000 bombs, many on non-military targets.

on the practice says it's safer than smoking tobacco cigarettes.

Walmart isn't abandoning e-cigarette sales because vaping is unsafe.

Walmart is abandoning e-cigarette sales because it doesn't want to be left with a bunch of expensive inventory it can't sell as local, state, and federal governments issue new regulations on e-cigarette products, up to and including complete bans.

American regulators and politicians are hopping on the bandwagon of a baseless moral panic, created by so-called "public health" advocates and promoted by the mainstream media. ➡13

By Thomas Knapp

"Walmart Inc. will stop selling e-cigarettes in its U.S. locations as the country grapples with a string of vaping-related deaths," Bloomberg reports.

CNN: "Walmart said Friday [September 20] it will stop selling e-cigarettes as the number of deaths tied to vaping grows."

Associated Press: "Walmart said Friday that it will stop selling electronic cigarettes at its namesake stores and Sam's Clubs following a string of mysterious illnesses and deaths related to vaping."

Nearly every national headline on the story

emphasizes "vaping-related" illnesses and deaths. Nearly every first paragraph associates Walmart's decision with those illnesses and deaths.

"Burying the lede" is the journalistic malpractice of failing to mention the most important facts of a story in the first ("lead" or "lede") paragraph. That's what's going on here.

One has to go to the second paragraph of most major media accounts, if not further, to learn Walmart's real reason for its decision. Per AP: "The move is due to 'growing federal, state and local regulatory complexity' regarding vaping products, the company said

in a statement."

And one can read most of the stories in their entirety without coming across a couple of other important facts.

Fact #1: So far, wherever a specific "vaping" product has been linked to these "vaping-related" illnesses, that product has been a black market "street vape." That is, a product you can't buy at Walmart, or at your local convenience store, or on the web sites of any of the reputable — and government-regulated — makers of e-cigarettes.

Fact #2: While questions remain as to the long-term safety of the relatively new practice of "vaping," so far every credible study

MSM defends CIA's "whistleblower" after ignoring actual whistleblowers

By Caitlin Johnstone

The word "whistleblower" has been trending in news headlines lately, but not for the reasons that any sane person might hope for.

"Read the whistleblower complaint regarding President Trump's communications with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy", says The Washington Post. "Trump responds to hearing on whistleblower complaint", says MSNBC. "Trump-Ukraine scandal: what did the whistleblower say and how serious is it?", writes The Guardian. "Whistleblower complaint says White House tried to 'lock down' Ukraine call records" announces CBS. "Whistleblower's complaint is a devastating report from a savvy official", declares CNN.

So who is this "savvy official"? Who is this courageous whistleblower who boldly shone the light of truth upon the mechanisms of power in the interests of the common man? Who is this brave, selfless individual who set off an impeachment inquiry by taking a stand and revealing the fact that the US president made a phone call in July urging Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky to help investigate corruption allegations against Joe Biden and his son?

Well believe it or not, according to The New York Times this brave, noble whistleblower who the mainstream media are currently championing is an officer for the Central Intelligence Agency.

"The whistle-blower who revealed that President Trump sought foreign help for his re-election and that the White House sought to cover it up is a CIA officer who was detailed to work at the White House at one point, according to three people familiar with his identity," The New York Times reports. "The man has since returned to the CIA, the people said. Little else is known about him."

So there you have it. A mysterious stranger from the lying, torturing, propagandizing, drug trafficking, assassinating, coup-staging, warmongering, psychopathic CIA was working in the White House, heroically provided the political/media class with politically powerful information out of the goodness of his heart, and then vanished off into Langley sunset. Clearly there is nothing suspicious about this story at all.

In all seriousness, even to call this spook a "whistleblower" is ridiculous on its face. You don't get to call someone from the US intelligence community a whistleblower unless they are actually whistleblowing on the US intelligence community. That's not a thing. A CIA officer who exposes information about government officials is an operative performing an operation unless proven otherwise, because that's what the CIA does; it liberally leaks information wherever it's convenient for CIA agendas while withholding all other information behind a veil of government secrecy.

A CIA officer who exposes information about CIA wrongdoings without the CIA's permission is a whistleblower. A CIA officer who exposes information about someone else is just a spook doing spook things. You can recognize the latter by the way the mass media supports, applauds and employs them. You can recognize the former by the way they have been persecuted, imprisoned, and/or died under mysterious circumstances.

But if you listen to the billionaire media, we should be calling this CIA officer a whistleblower, we should be enraged at The New York Times for exposing that CIA officer's identity, and we should be raising a small fortune on GoFundMe for "legal aid" that this CIA officer will never need.

"The idea that the media needs to 'protect' a high-level CIA officer making explosive claims about the president, which have now been used as the basis for impeachment proceedings, is such an insane perversion of journalistic ethics," journalist Michael Tracey tweeted today on this new development.

While all this political/media class cheerleading for whistleblower protections is going on, the most prominent whistleblower in America remains imprisoned for taking a principled stand against secret grand juries while being driven into crippling debt. Chelsea Manning is still racking up fines of \$1,000 per day while locked in a Virginia federal detention center for refusing to testify against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. The mainstream press that is so keen to champion a "whistleblower" who works for the CIA and provided information which feeds into America's fake partisan pro wrestling feud has been almost completely silent on the actual whistleblower who exposed actual US war crimes.

"The courageous whistleblower Chelsea Manning has now been held in a federal detention center in Alexandria, Virginia for more than six months," reads a recent article by World Socialist Website, one of the only news outlets to consistently report on Manning's plight. "Manning has not been charged with or committed any crime. She was sent to jail on March 8, 2019 for refusing to testify before a secret grand jury that has indicted persecuted WikiLeaks founder and publisher Julian Assange, who published the information she leaked exposing rampant US imperialist criminality."

"The vindictive treatment of Chelsea Manning has included 'administrative segregation'—a prison euphemism for solitary confinement—and being fined an unprecedented \$1,000 per day for refusing to answer grand jury questions," WSWS reports. "By the time she might be released in October 2020, she will be left owing the US government as much as \$440,000. Convicted antiwar activist Jeremy Hammond, who provided intelligence documents to WikiLeaks, has been also brought to the same jail as Manning in order to coerce him into giving false testimony."

"On a scale of 'haha' to 'lol,' how likely would you say it is that politicians' sudden interest in whistleblowing will lead to the reform of the Espionage Act, which the government has routinely used to jail the sources behind some of the most important stories in US history?" tweeted NSA whistleblower Edward Snowden in response to an Onion article satirizing the latest hypocrisy.

Pointing out hypocrisy is such a common practice in politics that it often wears a bit thin these days, especially since it's frequently done in a disingenuous way, but when implemented with intellectual honesty it serves a very useful purpose: it shows when people aren't really being truthful about the position that they are taking.

The political/media class of the United States do not care about whistleblowers. They do not care about truth, and they do not care about justice. They do not care about holding power to account, because they exist only to serve power.

I don't pretend to know what the CIA's game is here; it probably isn't to remove Trump from office because everyone knows that will not happen and failed impeachments historically boost a president's popularity. But I do know that everyone cheerleading for this fake "whistleblower" while ignoring the real ones has exposed themselves.

(Source: caitlinjohnstone.com)

Fars province registers highest road deaths in summer

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – The highest rate of road casualties across the country took place in Fars province during summer, traffic police chief Teymour Hosseini has announced.

With 181 fatalities, Fars ranked first, while Isfahan and Khorasan Razavi provinces ranked second and third in traffic-related fatalities with 140 and 131 deaths, respectively, he lamented.

Ardebil (16), Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari (17), and western Tehran (17) had the lowest death tolls in road crashes happened during the summer, he stated.

He went on to say that Hamedan province, with 22 casualties, ranked first with the highest increase in traffic fatalities, while Kohgiluyeh-Boyer Ahmad and Kerman provinces come next, ISNA reported on Wednesday.

Pointing out that in some provinces the number of people killed in accidents reduced during the three past months, he said that East Azarbaijan, Kordestan and Isfahan provinces had the highest decline in road accident victims with 33, 22, and 22 deaths, respectively.



“Through the summer traffic scheme began on June 10, aiming to increase road safety and reduce car crashes during holiday trips, we have monitored 300 kilometers of the roads nationwide,” he explained.

He went on to regret that Friday, September 20, was the deadliest day of the week; as some 16 percent of the total fatalities have lost their live on Fridays; while Saturdays have the lowest casualties.

He explained that during the aforementioned period, 65 percent of people were killed immediately at the crash scene, while 5 percent of deaths happened on the way to hospitals, while the rest lost their live in medical centers.

July 16 was also the deadliest day of summer; as unfortunately 52 people killed in road crashes, he regretted.

During the second and third months of summer, average speeds on the roads increased by 0.2 and 0.7 percent, respectively, he concluded.

Every year the lives of approximately 1.35 million people worldwide are cut short as a result of a road traffic crashes, WHO reports. Between 20 and 50 million more people suffer non-fatal injuries, with many incurring a disability as a result of their injury.

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

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

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Colombia hands over alleged drug lord to USA

(October 31, 2001)
After two years of unsuccessful appeals, an alleged drug lord has been handed over by Colombia to the authorities in the U.S. This report from Jeremy McDermott.
Alejandro Vernal, **alias** Juvenal, had once been part of the Medellin **drug cartel** when it was one of the most powerful crime syndicates in the world. But he'd never been one to wear diamond encrusted Rolex's or brandish gold-plated Uzi machine guns, **opting** rather for a **lower profile**.
It was for this reason he had **evaded** capture for so long, but his luck ran out in 1999 with his arrest during the joint U.S.-Colombian Operation Millennium. And now, having run out of appeals, he has been handed over to the U.S. drug enforcement agency and taken to Miami to face charges of **smuggling** up to thirty tons of cocaine to America every month.

Last week the U.S. said it wants **to extradite** not just **drugs traffickers** but guerrillas and paramilitaries from the three Colombian **warring factions** on its foreign terrorist organizations list. This, along with an announcement of further help for Colombia (already the third largest **recipient** of U.S. military aid in the world) threatens to turn the country into another front line in the global war on terrorism.

■ **Words**
alias: who also uses the name...
drug cartel: different illegal drug producing organizations that work together rather than being in competition against each other
opting: if you opt for something, you choose it instead of something else
a lower profile: here, a way of behaving that is not as noticeable to the authorities
evaded: if you evade something, you avoid it
smuggling: the act of bringing things illegally into one country from another
to extradite: to have a person sent from one country to another following a legal procedure where they will face prosecution in a court of law
drugs traffickers: people who supply illegal drugs and arrange for them to be taken to other countries
warring factions: different groups that are fighting each other
recipient: a person or here, a country, which receives something
(Source: BBC)

Tehraners breathe 18 days of foul air in summer: report

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** – Tehran air quality index (AQI) reached an unhealthy level of pollution for 18 days during summer, according to a report published by the Tehran Air Quality Control Company.

An AQI is used to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecast to become.

The index categorizes conditions according to a measure of polluting matters into excellent (0-50), good (51-100), lightly polluted or unhealthy for sensitive groups (101-150), moderately polluted (151-200), heavily polluted (201-300) and severely polluted (301-500).

During the aforementioned period, 17 days were lightly polluted, while air



quality on one day reached unhealthy levels which was almost dangerous for all the residents.

However, “good” air quality reported in Tehran for 74 days, but not a single day of excellent air quality.

This is while, last year over the same period 13 days were unhealthy for sensitive groups, and the rest of the 79 days remained at good levels of air quality.

But Tehraners did not breathe a single day of heavily polluted air during summer last year.

During the past three days that autumn started, AQI stayed above 150 due to PM 2.5 for almost two days and got unhealthy for sensitive groups of people.

UK govt. told it has to curb aviation emissions to meet net zero climate target

The growth in demand for flights must be curbed to tackle greenhouse gas emissions as part of the UK's climate targets, government advisers have said.

Extra levies on those who fly frequently, reformed taxes or a price on carbon and management of the amount of airport capacity in the UK are among the potential measures suggested by the Committee on Climate Change (CCC).

They are needed to limit the growth in demand for flights to no more than 25 per cent above current levels by 2050 as part of efforts to reduce the UK's emissions to net zero by mid-century, the committee said.

It warned the government it needed to assess its strategy for providing airport capacity in the context of cutting emissions, and make sure investments make “economic sense” in a net-zero world.

Current planned additional capacity in London, including a third runway at Heathrow “is likely to leave at most very limited room for growth at non-London airports”, the committee said.

The recommendations come in a letter from Lord Deben, the committee's chairman to transport secretary Grant Shapps on including international aviation and shipping emissions in the UK's targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions to zero overall by 2050.

The letter said aviation was likely to be the largest emitting sector in the UK by 2050, even with strong progress on technology to provide greener fuels and limiting demand for international flights.

Including the emissions in the legally-binding net zero target emissions will show the scale of deployment needed for measures to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to offset the emissions caused by flying.

As far as shipping is concerned, the committee said net zero was likely to be feasible and cost-effective through use of alternative fuels, such as hydrogen or ammonia.

“Now is the time to bring the UK's international aviation and shipping emissions formally within the UK's net-zero target,” said CCC chief executive, Chris Stark. “These are real emissions, requiring a credible plan to manage them to net-zero by 2050.

“Their inclusion in the UK target will complement international approaches and increase confidence that the Government is prioritising their reduction, ensuring the net-zero target covers all of the UK's emissions.

“As the UK prepares to host the next major climate summit in 2020, we are well placed to show global leadership on this fundamental issue of international concern.”

Jackdaws can identify ‘dangerous’ humans, scientists say

Jackdaws can identify “dangerous” humans from listening to each other's warning calls, scientists say.

The highly social birds will also remember that person if they come near their nests again, according to researchers from the University of Exeter.

In the study, a person unknown to the wild jackdaws approached their nest. At the same time scientists played a recording of a warning call (threatening) or “contact calls” (non-threatening).

The next time jackdaws saw this same person, the birds that had previously heard the warning call were defensive and returned to their nests more than twice as quickly on average. Birds that heard contact calls still returned to their nests but took longer – they took 63 per cent of the time compared to birds that had not heard the call at all.

The study, published in Royal Society Open Science, looked at 34 jackdaw nest boxes.

“One of the big challenges for a lot of animals is how to live alongside humans. People can provide some benefits, such as the food at bird feeders, but in some cases humans are also a threat,” said lead author Victoria Lee, a PhD researcher at the University of Exeter.

“Being able to discriminate between dangerous and harmless people is likely to be beneficial, and in this case we see jackdaws can learn to identify dangerous people without having had a bad experience themselves,” she said.

(Source: The Independent)



Leo Murray, director at campaign group 10:10 climate action, said aviation had been given a “free ride” in climate policy for too long, with politicians putting it in the “too hard” box.

He said the government was talking up electric planes, which should be an innovation priority, but the potential for technology to contribute to carbon cuts in a short time frame was limited.

“The CCC make it very clear that growth in demand for flights from UK airports cannot continue unchecked. That's why we need to introduce a frequent flyer levy.

“Most of the environmental damage from air travel is caused not by annual family holidays but by very frequent leisure flights by those at top end of the income spectrum.

“A frequent flyer levy is the fairest and most effective way to keep aviation emissions within safe limits, at the same time as protecting access to some air travel for all,” he said.

Dr Doug Parr, chief scientist for Greenpeace UK, said the government's current aviation strategy is incompatible with the net zero target, “and must be revised”.

“The new strategy must focus on restricting demand growth, and will either require Heathrow's third runway being cancelled, or capacity restrictions on other airports to balance Heathrow's expansion.”

A Department for Transport spokeswoman said: “The fight against climate change is the greatest and most pressing challenge facing the modern world and this government recognises that aviation and shipping have a crucial role to play in tackling it.

“The government has already made clear its commitment to zero emission shipping in the Clean Maritime Plan, which was published earlier this year.

“We are also committed to setting a clear ambition for the aviation sector and will carefully consider the advice of the Committee on Climate Change when we publish our position on aviation and climate change for consultation shortly.”

(Source: The Independent)

Pacific islands seek \$500m to make ocean’s shipping zero carbon

A coalition of Pacific island nations wants to raise \$500m (£400m) to make all shipping in the Pacific Ocean zero carbon by the middle of the century.

The Pacific Blue Shipping Partnership, announced on Tuesday by the governments of Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu, has set an emissions reduction target of 40% by 2030, and full decarbonisation by 2050.

The partnership intends to raise money through grants from multinational institutions, concessional loans, direct private sector investment and through issuing regional “blue bonds”.

The money would be used to retrofit existing passenger and cargo ferries with low-carbon technologies, and to buy new zero-emissions vessels. Pacific island populations are dependent on shipping for travel, medicines, their livelihoods and connection to the outside world.

Such countries are precariously dependent on imported fossil fuels and acutely vulnerable to price shocks or supply disruptions. The region imports 95% of its fuels. Imported petroleum accounts for an average of 40% of GDP in Pacific island countries, with the transport sector the largest fuel user.

In archipelago states of small island populations spread over vast ocean distances, sea travel is vital for linking communities and for economic development. The lack of regular connectivity between islands is a major constraint on domestic, social and economic development and on international trade.

The climate crisis is making travel significantly more difficult and disrupted. Rising sea levels and the increased frequency of dangerous weather are making sea journeys more difficult and slower, leading to more frequent cancellations of journeys and damaging ageing transport infrastructure such as ports and refuelling facilities.

A joint Fiji-Marshall Islands government briefing paper said that compared with other major economic sectors, “investment in the sustainable development of sea transport for Pacific island countries has been extremely limited to date”.

“A transition to sustainable, resilient and decarbonised sea transport at this scale will require substantial investment, including at least \$500m to support implementation of the 10-year work programme.”

The Marshall Islands environment minister, David Paul, told a forum at the UN climate action summit in New York that securing funding would spark a “rapid transformation



of our ... shipping sector”.

The Pacific is estimated to contribute just 0.03% of global emissions, but in many instances is feeling the impacts of climate change first and most acutely. Sea levels have risen at nearly four times the global average rate in some parts of the western Pacific, and the increased frequency of natural disasters has weakened island nations' ability to recover from repeated, worsening catastrophes.

Fiji's prime minister, Frank Bainimarama, said in May that the globe's major emitters and largest economies were not contributing enough to help the Pacific adapt to climate change.

“We need major economies to strengthen their climate finance investments, including their replenishment of adaptation and green climate funds. It is the defining crisis of our time. And if we do not take action, that crisis will soon escalate into chaos that will consume the entire world.”

He said Pacific dependence on shipping “demands a transformation of our maritime sectors which will require new kinds of financial partnerships with bilateral and multilateral assistance and, potentially, a regional blue shipping bond”.

A blue bond is a debt instrument issued by governments, development banks or others to raise capital to finance marine- and ocean-based projects that have positive environmental, economic and climate benefits.

The Seychelles last year launched the world's first sovereign blue bond, a \$15m 10-year bond to protect marine environments and safeguard fisheries.

Dr Peter Nuttall, a scientific and technical adviser for the Micronesian Center for Sustainable Transport at the University of the South Pacific, told the Guardian that shipping was the “absolute lifeline” of any Pacific community.

“Without shipping, our economies die, our people can't survive. In places like the Solomon Islands or the Marshall Islands, 80% to 90% of all goods arrive by ship. We have the most expensive shipping in the world, the longest transport routes, and the worst ships.”

(Source: The Guardian)

Second Announcement

N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN
TENDER NO. : 01-31-9780015

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

Items	Material Description	Qty
3	P/F “ cooper-Bessemer” GAS Turbine Type cobera-182.ROTOR ASSY.RT48-1-7.COL-B.ROTOR ASSY./BALANCED.P/N:10-RT48-1-7.182FUEL CONTROL DIAG.ASSY.RT48-42-49.AEG ACTUATOR.P/N:2-02G-022-003.ROTOR ASSY.RT48-1-7.COL-B.NUT PLAIN RD.P/N:RT48-1-7B	26NO
5	GAS GENERATOR.PRESSURE GAUGE P/N:2-01J-058-512&507.SWITCH PANEL P/N:1-01F-001-016-016OIL CONSOLE ASSY.P/N:2-13-P-025-001.FUEL GAS STARTP/N:2-05V-373-001	39 NO
8	P/F “ cooper-ROLLS” power GAS Turbine Type RT48.INLET DIFFUSER& NOZZLE ASSY.RT48-4-21.DIFFEUSER.P/N RT48-4-6G NO 2.ROTOR ASSY.NO. RT48-1-19. COLLAR THRUST.CEAR HELICAL.BEARING.ASSY.NO.RT45-3-6.SPACER (NOZZLE ADAPTER) INLET DIFFUSER&NOZZLE	110 NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their “ Intention to participate” letter via Fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 2, available at: WWW.nisoc.ir, not .later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid .bond of 55,246 EURO or 7, 126,181,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed via: WWW.nisoc.ir-material procurement management tab ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P. NISOC’S WAREHOUSE, AGHA JARI, IRAN PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D. SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC’ S MATERIAL APPROVAL NO ADVANCE PAYMENT WILL BE PAID

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
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Leave Yemen or face crippling attacks on your country: Ansarallah to UAE

TEHRAN — Yemen's pro-government Houthis Ansarullah movement has warned the United Arab Emirates to leave the war-racked country or face "crippling attacks" on "their own soil".

Abdul Wahab al-Mahbashi, an Ansarullah member in Yemen's Supreme Political Council, warned the UAE that Yemeni forces will wage destructive attacks on the Persian Gulf country if it continues taking part in the Saudi war on Yemen.

Mohammed al-Bukhaiti, another Supreme Political Council member, called for the UAE to "quit escalating tensions", noting that "the opportunity given to Abu Dhabi is limited."

Al-Bukhaiti urged the Emirati forces to withdraw from "the country's western coast and its southern provinces".

He added that the UAE is seeking to gain influence in Tai'zz Province.

"A number of Emirati mercenaries have left for Tai'zz from the A'sab base in Eritrea in a bid to obtain military advances following completion of their training," he said.

Al-Bukhaiti said that any escalation on behalf of enemy forces will be met with an "extensive" response from Yemen, adding that the enemy's use of non-military ships and ports endangers maritime security.

The Yemeni officials' stern warnings for

the UAE come nearly two weeks after Yemeni resistance attacked the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry, inflicting substantial damage on Aramco's Khurais and Abqaiq plants.

The raid shut down about 50 percent of the kingdom's crude and gas production, cutting the state oil giant's crude oil supply by around 5.7 million barrels per day.

The attack, which also cut five percent of the world's oil supply, pushed the typically ignored four-year-long Saudi-led aggression in Yemen into the center stage of international headlines.

Washington and its allies, however, quickly blamed Iran for the attack, ignoring the Saudi onslaught in Yemen and expressing concern regarding the "disruption of global energy supplies".

The stepped-up Yemeni retaliatory strikes come as the UAE has announced the gradual withdrawal of its troops from the Saudi-led conflict, largely because Abu Dhabi believes the war appears to have become "unwinnable", according to US reports.

The UAE appears more interested in reinforcing its grip over southern Yemen than achieving the Saudi objective of installing a pro-Saudi government in the Yemeni capital Sana'a.

Yemeni officials, nonetheless, have warned



on numerous occasions that a failure by the UAE to fully implement its withdrawal will be met with retaliatory measures.

According to Press TV, Saudi Arabia relied greatly on the Emirati forces in advancing its war effort.

Observers believe that a Saudi-led tribal

alliance may eventually disintegrate with infighting due to a lack of Emirati oversight.

Numerous bloody clashes have already been reported between Saudi-backed militants loyal to ex-Yemeni president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, and Emirati-backed southern separatists in the past two months.

Erdogan's AK Party membership seen sliding further as dissent grows

TEHRAN — Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan's AK Party faces more defections after losing 840,000 members in the last year, former loyalists say, compounding its difficulties after two founding members broke ranks aiming to set up rival parties.

Erdogan, modern Turkey's longest serving leader, has already faced a series of setbacks this year including an economic recession which has eroded AK Party support and defeat for his candidates in mayoral elections in Ankara and Istanbul.

The June loss in Istanbul prompted ex-economy minister Ali Babacan to resign and call for a "new vision" for Turkey. Ex-Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu, once Erdogan's closest



ally, also resigned from the party two weeks ago, saying it had lost the ability to solve the country's problems.

The defections pose a serious challenge to Erdogan's 16-year rule in Turkey, a NATO member bridging Europe and the Middle East which wields regional power despite the downturn that hit its \$722 billion economy.

The AK Party already relies on an alliance with nationalists for its parliamentary majority, leaving it vulnerable if it loses even a small proportion of votes to new parties set up by either Babacan or Davutoglu.

Three former party stalwarts who spoke to Reuters said the AKP would continue to lose members because it had lost touch with its base and its founding principles.

Taliban worries loom as Afghanistan prepares to vote for a president

TEHRAN — Millions of Afghans are expected to brave the threat of militant attacks to vote in a presidential election on Saturday, hoping to prevent a repeat of a bitter, fraud-marred and ultimately unresolved poll in 2014.

About a dozen candidates are in the fray for the presidency but the incumbent President Ashraf Ghani and his chief executive

Abdullah Abdullah are the top contenders for the job at a time when Taliban insurgents have intensified attacks.

The 70-year-old Ghani and Abdullah, 59, have ruled through a fractured power-sharing arrangement since 2014, their forces fighting against the Taliban even as the rebels held peace talks with the United

States that were later abandoned.

The Taliban hold more territory now than at any time since 2001 when their regime was overthrown by a U.S.-led invasion.

"People of Afghanistan will defend their free and fair votes. I know Afghans will protect democracy," Ghani said at an election rally, adding the hardline group

was unable to defeat the Afghan people's inherent spirit of freedom and desire for progress.

However, more than 170 civilians have been killed and more than 300 wounded in attacks involving the Taliban in the run-up to the election, Reuters reported.

Former French President Jacques Chirac dies at 86

TEHRAN— Jacques Chirac, the former French president who was a colossal figure in the country's politics for three decades, died Thursday at the age of 86, his family told AFP. The center-right Chirac, acknowledged even by foes as a supreme political fighter, rose to prominence as mayor of Paris before becoming prime

minister and then serving as head of state from 1995 to 2007.

Former opponents and supporters hailed his common touch and enduring popularity, while world leaders including German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Russian President Vladimir Putin acclaimed his service to France.

"He incarnated a France that was true to its universal values and to its historic role," said former President and onetime protege Nicolas Sarkozy, who added that "a part of my life has disappeared today."

His death was announced by his son-in-law Frederic Salat-Baroux who told AFP he had passed away Thursday morning at his

home in Paris "surrounded by his family, peacefully." He is expected to be given a state funeral.

The news led to intense discussion about Chirac's legacy to France, with commentators united in admiration of his wily political skills and homely style, but divided on what he achieved, AFP reported.

Politics determines Trump's stance on climate chang

→6 As China-US relations have once again reached a crossroads, Wang pointed out where China-US relations should be headed. Frankly, calmly, objectively, and rationally, Wang conveyed clear and rich information to the US and the world. Demonstrating China's style as a great power, Wang spoke in a way totally different from US politicians like US Vice President Mike Pence and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, whose words have been emotional and aggressive.

It is worth mentioning that US President Donald Trump addressed the UN General Assembly earlier on Tuesday, where he criticized China over its trade policies for no reason, slammed globalism and focused on his "America First" policy.

Trump is obviously launching a race of "sneeze of own country first" and the US has the ability to quooze other countries' interests in such races. "President Trump's third address to the United Nations General Assembly was an unmistakably nationalist one," CBS News said.

People around the world can judge the significant difference in rhetoric between China and the US in their policy declaration. The Chinese side reiterated that mutually beneficial cooperation is the only right option for China and the US, and neither country has taken advantage of the other. However, the US side insists that the US has suffered losses from such cooperation. China believes that opening-up and integration represents the right direction, and neither of the two can move ahead without the other. However, some people in the US are pushing the so-called decoupling of China-US ties.

Beijing has stressed that conflict and confrontation will lead to a dead end, and neither country can transform the other, while some in Washington refuse to abandon their intention of promoting an evolution in China. China has no intention to play a "game of thrones," but some American politicians are paranoid that China will replace the status of the US.

Wang noted that the crux of the problems between China and the US lies in biased US perception of China. In the US, there is a growing amount of negative and radical public opinion against China, which is twisting Americans' recognition of China. China needs to make more efforts to help rectify Americans' understanding and work together with US society to avoid China-US

relations being kidnapped by sentiments and paranoia, or misled by prejudiced politicians. Some Americans see China as a threat. Such mind-set has hindered the development of the bilateral relationship and caused substantial harm to the two sides' national interests. As Wang noted in his speech, "Is a peaceful, cooperative and open China an opportunity or a challenge to the US? Is a proactive and constructive China on the world stage a partner or an adversary for the US?" It is suggested that Americans should "think really hard about the key questions."

■ How to grow in China: Tech it from Huawei

I visited the headquarters of Chinese tech titan Huawei in Shenzhen, South China's Guangdong Province, Tuesday afternoon with journalists from the US and Germany. During the four hours of interview, the words of former 3Com Corporation CEO Bruce Claflin kept coming to my mind that it would also be an amazing story if Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei's success took place in the US. During the visit, an American journalist asked a question about Huawei's relationship with the Chinese government - a real cliché. In response, current Huawei Technologies Chairman Liang Hua suggested that foreign reporters read the corporation's history after he briefed them on the company's development.

The simple answer made journalists look into the social milieu and policies that led to Huawei's development. The Chinese tech giant's story began in Shenzhen in the context of the resurgent Asian nation's reform and opening-up. A company like Huawei could only emerge in a market economy which offered favorable conditions. Ren's success in China is enough to prove that China's social environment and policies can foster companies on a par with world-class ones such as Apple, Microsoft and Google. In addition, China is even able to make better use of market forces than the US. Foreign media outlets usually interpret Huawei in terms of the policies of the Chinese government. But it would help them trust the company if they chose another viewpoint and tried to understand the Chinese government's policies using the company's growth as a benchmark.

Huawei didn't develop to be a leading company in

telecommunications by following government orders or relying on government support. The biggest support the flag-bearer of China's tech prowess gets from the government, in fact, is the environment created by the country's reform and opening-up. Shenzhen government's management is efficient and in line with the rules of market economy. This is why more and more world-class Chinese companies - such as Tencent and BYD - are taking root in Shenzhen. It resembles Apple, Microsoft and Google's rise in the US. Huawei's development would not have been the same if it were not in Shenzhen. However, some Chinese companies that have grown up following Huawei are not all based in Shenzhen. After Shenzhen has become a benchmark, many other places have been learning and drawing experiences from its reform and opening-up. For example, Hangzhou, capital of East China's Zhejiang Province, has given birth to Alibaba.

Huawei's success has raised such a question: Since Western countries believe that only market economy can nurture enterprises like Huawei, what prevents them from understanding that China can provide such a legal, normative and social environment? To misunderstand the relationship between Huawei and the Chinese government is to misunderstand China's development. This can even be regarded as political discrimination. If some countries fear their companies are unable to rival or compete with Huawei, they can indeed find a ruse to restrain Huawei and other Chinese companies alike. But doing so will be like swimming against the tide of market economy and is bound to fail. They will surely hurt Huawei's development but will do more harm to themselves.

Chinese enterprises keep marching toward the world. The Chinese government has no reason to jettison reform and opening-up at such a critical juncture. Chinese central government and local governments may tweak the reform plan in keeping with the ground reality, but the general trend will not change. More Chinese cities are following the example of Shenzhen. More enterprises with remarkable potential like Huawei as well as more foreign enterprises will benefit. Now that China can create Huawei, it is bound to create more Huaweis. Why not?

George Washington warned U.S. about Saudi Arabia

→7 Advocates for Greece and Turkey routinely battle each other, often with inconclusive results, though the latter has won particularly important victories, such as American acquiescence to and sometimes approval of often ruthless policies against internal opponents and other nations, including Cyprus and Syria. Activists with ties to Central and Eastern Europe have backed the liberation of their "captive nations" during the Cold War and pushed for the rapid expansion of NATO afterwards, despite America's and Europe's contrary assurances to Russia.

Today's confrontation between the West and Moscow in part grows out of what Russians see as a calculated betrayal. South Korea, meanwhile, looks to Korean Americans for support, though they lack the organization and clout of other groups. In different ways, all of these cases illustrate the problem caused by "passionate attachments"—the almost routine and sometimes substantial sacrifice of U.S. economic and security interests to benefit other governments. In most instances, cultural, ethnic, and historical ties provide the foundation for foreign political influence. Saudi Arabia is the rare case where the means is mostly cash and lobbyists.

What to do? George Washington was no isolationist. Like his contemporaries, he expected America to prosper as a commercial republic. Rather, he advocated that the new government "steer clear of permanent alliances," have with other states "as little political connection as possible," and not "entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils" of other nations' "ambition, rivalry, interest, humor or caprice." That is, cooperation in any form should be based on circumstance and focused on advancing the interests of the American people. He wouldn't necessarily oppose defending Saudi Arabia, but he would expect the determination to be made by Washington, D.C. and not Riyadh.

Some Americans have lost interest in the Founders, who seem exiled by the mists of time. Yet George Washington and his contemporaries confronted the eternal challenges of power and principle. In his Farewell Address, Washington melded theory with practice and offered lessons which U.S. presidents and other policymakers should learn for today, including to "observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all."

E-Cigarettes: media bury the lede, we get to bury the bodies

→11 The regulations and bans those regulators and politicians are proposing will increase, not decrease, the illnesses and deaths associated with "street vapes."

People who want to procure and use nicotine (or cannabis) aren't going to request permission from regulators or politicians and take no for an answer. They're just going to go get the stuff.

They'll buy it at Walmart if they can. They'll get it from a friend at a party or a stranger on a street corner if that's their only option.

The regulators and politicians, urged on by promoters of moral panic in the mainstream media and "public health," are trying to MAKE that their only option.

Mainstream media is burying the lede. The funeral home and cemetery industries should send thank you cards and increase their advertising buys. The longer this goes on, the more grave plots, caskets, headstones, and urns they're going to sell.

(Source: counterpunch.org)

Khashoggi murder 'happened under my watch', MBS tells PBS

→1 Asked how the killing could happen without him knowing about it, Smith quotes Prince Mohammed as saying: "We have 20 million people. We have three million government employees."

Smith asked whether the killers could have taken private government jets, to which the crown prince responded: "I have officials, ministers to follow things, and they're responsible. They have the authority to do that." Smith describes the December exchange, which apparently took place off-camera, in the preview of the documentary.

A senior US administration official told Reuters in June the Trump administration was pressing Riyadh for "tangible progress" towards holding to account those behind the killing.

Eleven Saudi suspects have been put on trial in secretive proceedings but only a few hearings have been held. A UN report has called for Prince Mohammed and other senior Saudi officials to be investigated.

Nearly 2,000 arrested as Egypt braces for anti-Sisi protests

→1 According to Al Jazeera, Nafaa's arrest on Wednesday followed the detention of Hazem Hosny, a spokesman for former army chief Sami Anan who was jailed last year for attempting to run against el-Sisi in a presidential election.

Khaled Dawoud, the head of Al-Doustor Party who has been a vocal critic of the president's policies, was also arrested. Security forces have also deployed more troops to major cities, with police stopping and searching pedestrians on key thoroughfares and squares. Authorities have also blocked news websites and disrupted access to messaging platforms, according to monitoring groups.

Consequences of Ukrainegate

→1 On the other hand, some Republican leaders believe that the recent scandal will leave no chance for Trump in future election. They suppose that in such circumstances, it is necessary to be ready to probably vote Trump out in the 2020 presidential election. They believe Trump should be pressured to step down as president or not contest the election, although the U.S. president will strongly oppose it.

Anyway, we will observe the intensification of political disputes in the U.S. over Ukrainegate in the next few days. It would leave the fate of the controversial U.S. president in a state of uncertainty.

Sources: Nice player stole teammate’s €70k watch

Nice forward Lamine Diaby-Fadiga has admitted to stealing teammate Kasper Dolberg’s watch from a team dressing room last week, sources have confirmed to ESPN FC.

The story was first reported by French outlet L’Equipe. Diaby-Fadiga, 18, is one of the most promising prospects at the club, where he’s been since joining the academy at age 13. Alongside his lawyers, he confessed his crime to the club, apologised to Dolberg and manager Patrick Vieira, and promised to reimburse his teammate for the full value of the watch.

The timepiece is worth €70,000. Dolberg pressed charges against an unknown perpetrator he denoted as “X” last week after discovering the watch had been stolen during a training session. An official investigation was later opened by the police.

Nice are also investigating the matter on their side and Diaby-Fadiga risks having his contract terminated for gross misconduct as well as risking a criminal conviction.

The former France U16, U17 and U19 international made his debut for Nice as a 16-year-old and made six appearances for the first team last season.

(Source: ESPN)

Roma ban fan for life for racist abuse

Roma have handed a lifetime ban to a supporter who racially abused Brazilian defender Juan Jesus on social media.

The Serie A side tweeted an image of the messages - including details of the account - and confirmed they had reported the incident to the police.

The public denunciation was met with widespread appreciation on Twitter.

It comes after anti-discriminatory body Fare said Italian football authorities and their disciplinary systems to combat racism were not fit for purpose.

Fare executive director Piara Powar added “the rot is deep” and “no-one is taking the issue seriously”, but Serie A insisted it was “seriously and constantly engaged in activities against racism”.

AC Milan launched an anti-racism task force at last weekend’s derby against Inter, christened the ‘Derby Against Racism’, in response to recent racist incidents.

Inter striker Romelu Lukaku had been subjected to monkey chants by Cagliari fans during a Serie A game on 2 September, however Cagliari were cleared of racist chanting.

(Source: Goal)

Tokyo 2020 voids 6,900 Olympic tickets bought with fake IDs

Organizers of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics said Friday they have invalidated nearly 7,000 tickets worth \$1.6 million after discovering they were purchased with fraudulent identities through an online lottery.

“Tokyo 2020 understands that there have been large-scale purchases following the first wave of the Olympic ticket lottery applications from a large number of IDs registered with false personal information,” the organizers said in a statement.

“About 30,000 fraudulent IDs were generated” during a first-round online lottery to secure tickets for the summer games, the statement said.

“Altogether, about 6,900 tickets for 150 sessions were purchased using these fraudulent IDs, with a face value of about 180 million yen.”

There were no details on who is suspected of creating the fake identities to carry out the purchases, though local media reported that the organizing committee suspected a specific group was behind the plan.

Organizers said they were consulting with police and “will continue to monitor illegal applications during the second lottery sale.”

A first wave of Olympic tickets went on sale for Japanese residents only in May, with would-be spectators required to sign up online by creating a profile and choosing which seats they wanted a chance to buy in a lottery system.

Around 3.2 million tickets were sold in the first phase of sales, with a second phase organized in August for those who missed out the first time around.

Olympic tickets can only be resold through an official Tokyo 2020 resale site, and organizers warned that any tickets bought via other resellers would also be invalidated.

(Source: AFP)

Rare losses have kept Liverpool feet on the ground, says Klopp

Liverpool may be on a 15-match winning run in the Premier League but manager Jurgen Klopp said on Friday that he is glad his side has suffered losses in other competitions that have kept their feet firmly on the ground.

Liverpool are top of the league after six games — the only Premier League team with a perfect record this season — and Klopp’s side will look to extend their winning run on Saturday at Sheffield United.

“We don’t think about (the winning run).” Klopp told reporters. “The only moment when I think about it is in the press conference. Nobody mentions it, it’s just about the next game.

“Thank God we lost from time to time in the Champions League and other cup competitions so we still know how it feels, because that is really important.”

Liverpool have never won a Premier League match at Bramall Lane and Blades boss Chris Wilder joked that his side might need to play 11 defenders against the European champions.

“We want to go to Sheffield and make their life as uncomfortable as possible,” Klopp added. “Maybe we’re considered a top team but we don’t want to behave like a top team.

“I don’t see any reason why there should be any advantage for Sheffield apart from playing in their own stadium.”

Liverpool impressed in their 2-0 win at MK Dons in the League Cup after Klopp made 11 changes with youngsters coming to the fore, but he said they would have to wait their turn before they were ready for league action.

“We’re not in doubt about these boys and we know what we’re going to do with them and what we expect of them,” the German manager said. “They have all the time in the world and they’re in a really strong squad, so it’s not easy for them to get in.

(Source: Mirror)

Micah Richards on the dark side of football - ‘it’s a lonely place, I felt like a ghost’

“You’re a money grabber”, “You don’t respect the shirt”, “You’re a virus, you are killing this club”.

Those were the kind of messages I was getting every day on social media during the final months of my time at Aston Villa, and of course they hurt.

I would be wondering how anyone could say that about me if they knew where I had come from, how hard I had worked, and what I was like as a person.

But when you are an injured footballer, especially when you are out for as long as I was, you find out all about the dark side of the game.

I was in a lonely place for a long time, and I did not know how to get out of it.

I am a pundit now, not a player, but when I was getting abused by Villa fans on Twitter and Instagram, I was still battling to save my career.

Deep down, I probably knew it was already over, but for most of the two and a half years between my 295th and final game as a professional, against Wolves in October 2016, and the day I announced my retirement in July this year, I was living in denial.

I would keep on waiting for each new manager to come in at Villa and say to me ‘I’ll give you a chance’, but it got to a stage where that could never happen, because



although I could train 100%, I was never able to play.

I could run and I could jump - but I couldn’t twist on my right knee, and it would not get any better. Whatever I tried, it did not make any difference.

There were times while I was injured at

Villa when I felt like I was a ghost.

They told me to come in three times a week, then two. Then one. I would stay at home waiting for the club doctor to text and say when I was needed.

I got looked after brilliantly by all the medical staff there and I know the inten-

tion was probably to help me out, to save me travelling in, but it left me a lot of time on my own to think.

All I wanted to do, still, was play football but I was fighting thoughts that my knee was never going to be good enough to do that. The fans were getting frustrated with me. And of course you also start to think that the club don’t really want you there.

I was not seeing much of my team-mates at the time, because I wasn’t training with them. But even when I did, I would never talk about my emotions or express my feelings, so anyone talking to me at the time never truly knew what was going on.

As a player, you worry about a lot anyway, but all footballers put on a front. I have played with players who I think have been depressed, and I have seen people just go ‘oh, they will be all right’.

It is the same away from football. When you are a successful footballer, you get put on a pedestal. You are the person your friends and family look up to, and they do not know how to approach you when things are going wrong, even when you just need someone to reach out to you and ask you if you are all right.

The perception is you are a man, you are an athlete, and you are extremely well paid. You are supposed to be doing great.

(Source: BBC)

Nice and Marseille sanctioned for ‘discriminatory’ behavior of fans



French top-flight football clubs Nice and Marseille have been punished for the “discriminatory” behavior of their fans, which has included homophobic banners and chanting.

Nice will have a tier in its stadium closed for a home match, while Marseille’s supporters will not be able to attend an away game.

The upper tier of the Tribune Sud stand of Nice’s Allianz Riviera stadium will be closed for its match against Lille Saturday, following the ruling from the discipline commission of the Ligue de Football Professionnel (LFP).

The stand, which holds many of the clubs’ season ticket holders, will be closed because of “banners and discriminatory chants” during a Ligue 1 match between Nice and Marseille on August 28.

The game was halted for 10 minutes during the first half by referee Clement Turpin, with players escorted off the pitch.

One of the banners in question criticized the French football league for approving more fenced off sections in stadiums, saying it would make “stadiums more gay,” with another appearing to

refer to Nice’s new owner, the British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe, who completed a takeover reported to be worth about \$100 million.

Ratcliffe also owns the Team Ineos cycling outfit. The banner used a play on words with the word “pedale,” which translates as “pedal” in French but is also used as a homophobic slur.

After the game, Nice manager Patrick Vieira called the behavior of the Nice fans “unacceptable” and praised the referee’s decision to take the players off the pitch.

Marseille’s punishment relates to chants heard in a game against south coast rivals Monaco on September 15 and prevents fans attending the Ligue 1 clash in Amiens on October 4.

Marseille’s “visitors park” will also be closed for the trip to Amiens.

Ahead of this season, referees in France were given new powers to stop matches in the event of homophobic behavior.

Earlier in August, a second-tier match between Nancy and Le Mans was suspended after supporters sang homophobic songs.

(Source: Guardian)

Loew backs Keller as new head of under-fire German FA



Germany coach Joachim Loew gave his backing to the new president of the scandal-hit German Football Association (DFB), Fritz Keller, who vowed to regain lost trust in the DFB following his election Friday.

“Fritz Keller has stood for professionalism, down-to-earth thinking and a great management culture for many, many years,” said the 2014 World Cup-winning coach, who like Keller hails from south-west Germany.

Loew says Fritz will bring “a great deal of passion” to the embattled DFB, “that will do us good” following a series of recent scandals which rocked the association.

The 62-year-old winemaker and restaurateur was unanimously elected in Frankfurt as head of the DFB, which has around seven million members, becoming the 13th president of the 119-year-old association.

“Now it’s time to roll up the sleeves, tie the laces, put on the shin pads and get to work,” Keller told delegates at the DFB headquarters.

He takes over an association still reeling from a series of blows.

Keller’s predecessor Reinhard Grindel resigned earlier this year over a luxury

watch scandal.

However, his reputation was already tarnished after Mesut Ozil singled him out for criticism in his statement while retiring from international duty in July 2018 after Germany failed to qualify from their group at the World Cup.

The Arsenal midfielder, who has a Turkish background, deemed comments made by Grindel in 2004 as “unforgivable and unforgettable”, after he said “multiculturalism is in reality a myth (and) a lifelong lie” in Germany.

On top of that, former DFB presidents Theo Zwanziger and Wolfgang Niersbach must also answer tax evasion charges, linked to the 2006 World Cup vote-buying scandal, as part of ongoing investigations in both Germany and Switzerland.

Having been chairman, then president of Bundesliga club Freiburg, Fritz said the DFB must win back faith from the German public, especially after the disastrous 2018 World Cup campaign.

His restaurant Schwarzer Adler - Black Eagle - has held a Michelin star for 50 years and Fritz says the DFB, like any good caterer, must get the basics right.

(Source: DW)

What the heck is going on at Manchester United?

If success in soccer was measured solely by results in the boardroom rather than on the field of play, then Manchester United would be the team to beat.

On Tuesday, the club announced record revenues of £627.1 million (\$772 million) for the year ending June 30, 2019 -- an increase of 6.3% from the previous year, in part courtesy of the new Champions League broadcasting deal.

In addition was the announcement of 10 new or renewed global sponsorship deals, as well as the claim that it now had 1.1 billion fans and followers across the globe, according to data from Kantar, added further gloss to the shiny figures.

But when you swap the spreadsheets for the Premier League table, it’s clear something doesn’t add up.

In fact, by the time United arrives at Old Trafford to face Arsenal on Monday it could already be out of the title race -- if it was really in it to start with.

Last season it finished sixth, 32 points behind champion Manchester City and 32 ahead of Cardiff, the team occupying the final relegation place.

After a mere six games of this fledgling Premier League season, United is already 10 points adrift of league leader Liverpool -- by Monday it could be 13.

“I never said it was going to be easy this season,” United coach Ole Gunnar Solskjaer told reporters Friday.



“There are going to be bumps in the road, ups and downs, highs and lows - when we lose a game we have to trust ourselves and what we are doing, keep our eyes on the prize and the principles we believe in.”

Those bumps do not look like they’ll be subsiding any time soon. On Wednesday, United required a penalty shootout to defeat third-tier Rochdale in the English League Cup after the contest finished 1-1

after 90 minutes.

That result came on the back of a nondescript performance during the 2-0 defeat at West Ham which sparked criticism from the club’s former players as well as insipid display against Astana in the Europa League.

■ ‘Shocked and saddened’

“I don’t know where to start,” former United captain Roy Keane told Sky Sports in the aftermath of the defeat at London’s Olympic Stadium.

“I knew they weren’t in a great place but I am shocked and saddened by how bad they are. You can lose a game of football but everything about United was lackluster.

“No quality. A lack of desire. A lack of leaders. A lack of characters. It is a long way back and it is scary just how far they have fallen.”

Keane is hardly alone in criticizing this United side. Gary Neville, the former United defender, was similarly critical after the loss at West Ham.

“I suppose I shouldn’t be surprised. I’ve said over the last few weeks, watching this team and squad that it’s not ready,” he told the Gary Neville Podcast.

“There are going to be ups and downs and lots of pain. It was painful at West Ham, but it doesn’t make it any easier when you see it with your own eyes. This squad is depleted. It’s young, inexperienced and not ready.”

(Source: BBC)

AFC U23 Championship: Iran handed tough group

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran have been drawn in a tough group at the 2020 AFC U23 Championship.

Farhad Majidi's team are drawn in Group C along with defending champions Uzbekistan, China and South Korea.

The fourth edition of the Championship will be played across three cities - Bangkok, Buriram and Songkhla - with the tournament kicking off on January 8, and the final to be played on January 26.

Besides Continental glory, 15 of the 16 teams will also be competing for places in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, where the top three sides will join hosts Japan as Asia's representatives next July.

Hosts Thailand have been drawn in Group A and they will have 2013 champions Iraq, Australia and debutants Bahrain to contend with.

Qatar, third in 2018, 2016 champions Japan, Saudi Arabia - runners-up in 2013, and Syria are in an exciting looking Group B.

Vietnam, runners-up in 2018, have DPR Korea, Jordan - third in 2013 - and United Arab Emirates for company in Group D.

Should Japan make the last four stage, the other three semi-finalists will be assured of their places in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

AFC U23 CHAMPIONSHIP THAILAND 2020			
GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D
A1 THAILAND	B1 QATAR	C1 UZBEKISTAN	D1 VIETNAM
A2 IRAQ	B2 JAPAN	C2 KOREA REPUBLIC	D2 DPR KOREA
A3 AUSTRALIA	B3 SAUDI ARABIA	C3 CHINA PR	D3 JORDAN
A4 BAHRAIN	B4 SYRIA	C4 IR IRAN	D4 UAE

Iran squad named for FIVB Volleyball World Cup



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Igor Kolakovic named his 13-man squad for the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup.

Middle blocker Mohammad Mousavi is the big absent in the list. He has requested the coaching staff to give him a rest.

The 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup will be the 14th staging of the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup, contested by the senior men's national teams of the members of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball

(FIVB), the sport's global governing body.

The tournament will be held in Japan from 1 to 15 October 2019.

Japan played hosts for this event for the twelfth consecutive time since 1977.

Squad:

Saeid Marouf, Milad Ebadipour, Farhad Ghaemi, Pouria Fayazi, Amir Ghafour, Ali Shafiei, Masoud Gholami, Aliasghar Mojarad, Javad Karimi, Pouria Yali, Amirhossein Esfandiyar, Mohammadreza Moazen and Mohammadreza Hazratpour

Three Iranians shortlisted for Beach Soccer Stars awards



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — The 50 nominees for the Beach Soccer Stars awards, as well as the 12 nominees for the Best Coach of the Year award, have been unveiled.

From this list, captains and coaches of all the beach soccer national teams will vote for the Best Player and Best Coach of the year.

The awards will be presented at the Beach Soccer Stars gala on 9 November in Dubai, the UAE.

Peyman Hosseini as well as Mohammad Ahmadzadeh and Mohammad Moradi are the Iranian players in the list.

As well as these categories, in this year's Beach Soccer Stars night, the Best Women's Player, Best Goal, Rising Star and Best Event will also be awarded at the Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup in Dubai, beachsoccer.com reported.

Ex-French star Youri Djorkaeff to travel to Tehran

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former French World Cup winner Youri Djorkaeff would be part of the delegation that FIFA will send to Tehran to make sure women fans are admitted to the World Cup qualifying match between Iran and Cambodia.

The match will be held in Tehran's Azadi Stadium, slated for Oct. 10.

Djorkaeff has been recently appointed as Chief Executive Officer of the FIFA Foundation, whose objectives include making football more accessible to women in the Middle East.

The presence of a delegation is important "to show that FIFA intervened there with conviction," said the former midfielder.

Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) cultural advisor Gholam Hossein Zamanabadi has

said tickets would be available for all women fans to purchase.

"All Iranian women can buy tickets to watch the match and it's not for a select group of women," said Zamanabadi.

Separate entrances, stands and toilets have been prepared for women fans at the iconic Azadi Stadium.

Women fans attended the second leg of the 2018 AFC Champions League final between Persepolis and Kashima Antlers last November.

The move to allow women fans to attend football matches in Iran is in line with FIFA's stand, with President Gianni Infantino having said on Sunday that the world governing body had been assured by Iranian authorities that women will be able to watch an Asian Qualifiers tie in Tehran next month.



Is 2019 legendary cast of Lin, Haddadi, Yang the best ever in Asia Champions Cup history?



Hamed Haddadi. Mohammad Samad Nikkhah Bahrami. Lin Chih-Chieh. Yang Donggeun. These are names that Asian basketball fans are all familiar with from their iconic performances over the years. Legends, you might even call them.

One more thing they have in common? They have all been playing a large role for their teams at the FIBA Asia Champions Cup 2019.

Has this been best group of players at the Asia Champions Cup stage ever?

■ And another one...

Hamed Haddadi and Samad Nikkhah Bahrami have

won so much with each other and individually that there's no chance of denying their legendary status.

They have won 3 Asia Cup titles together.

Samad won 4 straight Asia Champions Cup titles from 2007 to 2010, including the 2008 title with Saba Battery playing with Haddadi.

Haddadi then won another Asia Champions Cup in 2013 with Foolad Mahan Isfahan.

With all of those trophies stacked up, the excitement surrounding the announcement that both players would be playing for Naft Abadan at Asia Champions Cup 2019 was more than warranted. Both stars are fresh off impressive World Cup runs in China that saw them secure Olympic bids, so they should be ready for another promising run in Thailand.

These two don't actually need another Asia Champions Cup title to make their résumés more impressive, but you know that they will be putting their best efforts to win nonetheless.

Over the first two games, Haddadi has averaged 10.0 points, 12.5 rebounds, 3.5 assists, 2.5 steals, and 1.5 blocks per game. Meanwhile, Samad has been leading the team in scoring with 18.0 points per contest to go with averages of 2.5 rebounds and 5.5 assists per game.

■ Beast Lin is in

Arguably the most popular basketball player in Chinese Taipei, Lin Chih-Chieh, will be making his much anticipated debut with the Fubon Braves at the FIBA Asia Champions Cup 2019. He's spent a large chunk of his prime playing in China with the Zhejiang Guangsha

Lions, but finally decided to come back home this summer.

Up to this day, Asian basketball fans still talk about his performance at Asia Cup 2013. The famed forward averaged 10.7 points, 3.8 rebounds, and 4.9 assists per contest, was named to the All-Tournament team, and led Chinese Taipei to their best finish since 1999 at 4th place.

Lin Chih-Chieh — or also known as "The Beast" by his faithful fans — has shown that he still plenty left in his tank, averaging 11.0 points, 3.0 rebounds, 3.0 assists, and 2.5 steals per game. How far can he get the Braves in their FIBA Asia Champions Cup debut?

■ It's about time

There are few players in Korea with as prolific a profile as Yang Dong-Geun. He's a KBL Rookie of the Year, 4-time MVP, 6-time champion, and 3-time Asia Cup bronze medalist. That's just not an easy list to compile over one's basketball career.

Yang is a Hyundai Mobis lifer, having played for only one club in his 15-year career to this point. Now that Hyundai are back in the mix for the Asia Champions Cup this year, it is only proper that Yang Dong-Geun will finally be making his debut in the competition as well.

The 38-year-old has compiled a long list of accolades so far in his career. Adding an Asian Champions Cup title this year would certainly make that list look even better.

He done pretty well so far with a stat line of 11.0 points, 3.0 rebounds, and 3.5 assists per game, looking to help get Hyundai Mobis to the Final Phase.

(Source: fiba)

Junior World Kabaddi C'ships for boys' logo shows Iran's authority in Persian Gulf

IRNA — The logo designed for Junior World Kabaddi Championships for boys, that will be held in Iran's Kish Island, is a clear sign of Iran's authority in the Persian Gulf, said a senior Iranian kabaddi official.



"The logo shows two dolphins that are frequent animals in the Persian Gulf. Dolphins normally swim in groups which shows synchronization in kabaddi as well. Also, Kish Island that will host the event is Iran's symbol of authority in the middle of the Persian Gulf waters," said Abbas Ursaji, Iran Kabaddi Federation President on Thursday.

Iran's Kish Island in the Persian Gulf will host the Junior World Kabaddi Championship for boys on November 9-15.

Teams from India, South Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, Chinese Taipei, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Turkmenistan, Denmark, Kenya, Uganda, Canada, Australia and Iraq will take part at the competition.

Naft Abadan to meet Alvark Tokyo at FIBA Asia Champions Cup semis

Palayesh Naft Abadan of Iran defeated Thailand's Hi-Tech Bangkok City 71-62 on Thursday in the 2019 FIBA Asia Champions Cup.

Hamed Haddadi scored 18 points for Naft Abadan and Xavier Allen Alexander led Hi-Tech Bangkok City with 22 points.

Naft Abadan had already defeated Bahrain's Al-Muharraq and Fubon Braves of Chinese Taipei in Pool A.

The Iranian team has qualified for the competition's semifinals and will meet Alvark Tokyo of Japan on Saturday.

Pool B consists of China's Guangdong Southern Tigers, Ulsan Hyundai Mobis Phoebus from South Korea, Japan's Alvark Tokyo and Al Riyadi Beirut from Lebanon.

The 2019 FIBA Asia Champions Cup is the 28th staging of the FIBA Asia Champions Cup, the international basketball club tournament of FIBA Asia.

The competition is being held in Thailand from September 24 to 29.

(Source: FIBA)

Iran futsal drop two places in world ranking

Tasnim — The Iranian national futsal team have moved two spots down in the latest Futsal World Ranking released on Thursday.

Team Melli have dropped to fifth place in the ranking with 1643 points.

Iran had a disappointing performance at the Caspian Cup in Astrakhan, having drawn 2-2 with Azerbaijan and suffering a 9-3 loss against Russia.

Brazil and Spain are first and second with 1874 and 1782 points, respectively

Russia replaced Iran in third place with 1676 points and Argentina are fourth with 1644 points.

The Iranian national futsal team are preparing for the 2020 AFC Futsal Championship Qualifiers and also the 2020 FIFA Futsal World Cup.

Iran finished third at the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016 after a 4-3 penalty shootout win over Portugal following a 2-2 draw.

IPL: Sepahan beats Persepolis to move top

Persian Football — Sepahan football team defeated Persepolis 2-0 to move top of the Iran Professional League (IPL) table on Thursday.

Kiros Stanley gave the visiting team a lead in the 81st minute in Tehran's Azadi Stadium with a powerful strike and substitute Mohammad Mohebbi made it 2-0 four minutes later.

In Isfahan, Zob Ahan drew 2-2 with Esteghlal.

Darius Shojaeian was on target for Esteghlal in the 67th minute but Danial Esmailifard equalized the match six minutes later.

With one minute remaining, Farshid Esmaili put Esteghlal into the lead once again but Arsalan Motahari leveled the score two minutes later.

In Ahvaz, Foolad and Paykan played out a goalless draw and Machine Sazi defeated Shahin Bushehr 4-2 in Tabriz.

Sepahan moved top of the table with 11 points ahead of Tractor on goal difference.

Iran lose to Russia at Caspian Cup

Tasnim — Iran national futsal team lost to Russia 9-3 at the Caspian Cup 2019 International Tournament on Wednesday.

Iran started the competition with a 2-1 win over Kazakhstan but drew 2-2 with Azerbaijan in its second match.

Russia won the title with seven points, followed by Iran and Kazakhstan with four points. Azerbaijan came fourth with a single point.

The tournament was held in Astrakhan, Russia from September 22 to 25.

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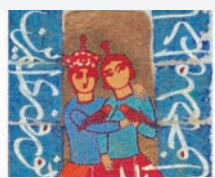


GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

He who hides his own secret, controls his own life.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



Painting

■ Seyhun Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Ali Qahramani.

The exhibit titled "The Lovers' Wind" will run until October 9 at the gallery located at No. 11, 4th St., Vozara Ave.

■ Paintings by Hani Najm and Salameh Golnaraqi are on display in an exhibition Saleess Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until October 9 at the gallery located at 148 Karim Khan Ave.

■ A group of artists, including Rahebeh Keshavarz, Atefeh MORTazavi, Nasim Monfared and Behjat Zarebidgoli, is displaying their latest paintings in an exhibition at Sheis Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Self Portrait" will continue until October 2 at the gallery located at Shirzad Alley near Daneshju Park.

■ A painting exhibition entitled "Dead End" by Hooman Mehdana is currently underway at CAMA – Contemporary and Modern Art Gallery.

The exhibit will run until October 2 at the gallery located at No. 44, 10th Golestan, Pasdaran St.

Photo

■ An exhibition of photos from the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war by Sassan Moayyedi is currently underway at Dena Gallery.

The showcase named "Farewell" will be running until October 7 at the gallery located at 4 Sussan Alley off Qarani St.

■ Armin Aminian is showcasing a collection of his photos in an exhibit titled "Wine of Love" at El Gallery.

The exhibition will be running until October 25 at the gallery located at 1 Hamid Dead End, off Lesani Alley, Jebbeh St., off Mahdiah St. in the Elahieh neighborhood.

■ Photos by Setareh Sanjari and Alireza Fani are on view in an exhibition at Mohsen Gallery.

The exhibit will run until October 9 at the gallery located at 42 East Mina Blvd., Naji St., off Zafar St.

Sculpture

■ Sculptures by Elaheh Keshavarz are on display in an exhibition at Elaheh Gallery.

The exhibit will be running until October 7 at the gallery that can be found at 47 Golfam St., off Africa Ave.

■ Leila Nazari is displaying her latest wooden sculptures in an exhibition named "In Trees' Narration" at Shalman Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Cold Silence" will be running until October 2 at the gallery that can be found at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.

■ Iron sculptures by Majid Mohseni are on display in an exhibition titled "Iron Dream" at Shirin Gallery.

The exhibit entitled "Form Follows Farzaneh" runs until October 9 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

Multimedia

■ Vaali Gallery is showcasing a collection of paintings and sculptures by Saeideh Hatami in an exhibition named "Domination".

The exhibit will run until October 8 at the gallery that can be found at No. 71, Khoddami St. off of Vanak Square.

“The Urban Art” begins to build bridge between Iran, Italy

1 → “The Urban Art Unites” intends to support creative bilateral artistic exchange between Italy and Iran and also to raise social awareness of the importance of beautification in urban spaces.

Speaking to the Tehran Times, Ambassador Giuseppe Perrone stressed the point that art can unite Iran and Italy despite the differences between the two nations.

“About three months ago when I arrived in Tehran, I was impressed by the murals featuring different concepts and in various styles across the city. I appreciate the efforts made by city authorities and artists to beautify their city,” he added.

He also expressed his satisfaction over the works created by Qadyanlu and PAO, and said: “Although the artists are completely different in their styles, there is something in the paintings that connects them to each other, and now all the people can praise the artists and enjoy their works.”

Perrone also announced the embassy's plan to organize an exhibition of sculptures by the Italy-based Iranian artist Bijan Basiri in early October in Tehran.

“We are working in the area of cinema as well, because this is a point of strength for both Italy and Iran. We are organizing some film review sessions and programs not only in Tehran but also in other Iranian cities in the near future,” he concluded.



Iranian artist Mehdi Qadyanlu (L), Italian Ambassador Giuseppe Perrone (C) and his fellow Italian painter Paolo Bordino pose with the paintings decorating the wall of the ambassador's residence in Tehran as part of "The Urban Art Unites" on September 26, 2019. (IRNA)

Iranian group asks UN to select maestro Loris Tjeknavorian as peace ambassador



Maestro Loris Tjeknavorian acknowledges the audience after a performance at Milad Tower in Tehran on August 4, 2019. (Borna/Sara Abdollahi)

A R T TEHRAN – The Peace and Friendship Ambassadors Group in Tehran proposed on Wednesday that the United Nations select renowned Iranian-Armenian maestro Loris Tjeknavorian as a peace ambassador.

The proposal was made by Tayyebeh Mohammad, the founder of the Peace and Friendship Ambassadors Group, during a meeting held at the United Nations Information Centre (UNIC) in Tehran, the Persian service of ILNA

reported on Friday.

Tjeknavorian, 81, for his part said, “I am happy that I am an Iranian and I am also very pleased that my parents, like many other Armenians, chose to live in Iran, the country of Cyrus.”

“No single person can establish peace in this world, but we can reach peace with love and culture, and it is love and culture that is the anti-weapon. We in Iran can say that with all these poets and scholars, we are the peace-seeking country,” Tjeknavorian added.

Iranian film festival to celebrate Intl. Children's Day



A poster for the Children's Film Week.

A R T TEHRAN – International Children's Day, which falls on October 8, will be celebrated in Tehran by a weeklong film festival beginning on October 5.

A lineup of six movies previously screened at the 32nd International Film Festival for Children and Youth in Isfahan during August will be showcased during the Children's Film Week at the Abbas Kiarostami Hall of the Farabi Cinema Foundation, the foundation announced on Friday.

The lineup includes “The 23” by Mehdi Jafari, about 23 young Iranian volunteers who

were held captive during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, “Benjamin” by Mohsen Enayati, an animation about Benjamin who tries to save his mother from the King's soldiers, and “No Fly Zone” by Amir Dasargar, about three teenagers who face several problems and obstacles while working on a project.

“That Night's Train” by Hamidreza Qotbi, “The Ocean Beyond the Window” by Babak Nabizadeh and “Tornado” by Seyyed Javad Hashemi are also among the films.

Farabi is organizing the film week in collaboration with the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults.

3 films from Iran to compete in Tokyo festival

A R T TEHRAN – Three movies from Iranian filmmakers will be screened at the 32nd Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF) as the organizers announced the lineup on Thursday.

Director Saeid Rustai's award-winning drama “Just 6.5” has been selected to be screened in the official competition. The film shows a police squad under the leadership of Samad who was assigned to arrest Nasser Khakzad, a major drug trafficker in Tehran.

“The Oath” by Mohsen Tanabandeh will be screened in Asian Future, which is dedicated to up-and-coming Asian directors who have directed no more than three feature-length films.

In Iran's legal system, 50 oaths in court can reverse a judgment. Razieh, whose sister was killed by her husband, takes 50 people to the courthouse by chartered bus.

Asian Future also features Iranian director Reza Jamali's debut movie “Old Men Never Die”.

The film tells the story of an Iranian village where nobody has died for 45 years and only the aged remain. 100-year-old Aslan and his friends begin to think suicide is the solution.

The festival will open on October 28 and wrap up on November 5 with screening Martin Scorsese's Netflix epic saga of organized crime in postwar America “The Irishman” starring Robert De Niro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci.



“Old Men Never Die”, Iranian director Reza Jamali's debut movie, will be screened in the TIFF Asian Future competition.

Photos by Kenro Izu on display at Tehran gallery



A photo from Kenro Izu's series “Sacred Places”.

A R T TEHRAN – A selection of photos by U.S. based Japanese photographer Kenro Izu are on view in an exhibition at Tehran's Nabshi Center.

The collection includes photos from his series “Sacred Places”, “Still Life” and “Blue”, the gallery has announced.

Kenro Izu was born in Osaka, Japan. Izu moved to New York in 1970 to study photography, and subsequently decided to stay and work there.

In 1975, after working as an assistant to other photographers, Izu established Kenro Izu Studio in New York City, to specialize in still life photography, both commercial and fine art.

In 1979, Izu made his first trip to Egypt, which inspired him to begin his series “Sacred Places”, an exploration that is still in progress.

As Izu continued his series “Sacred Places”, he traveled to Egypt, Syria, Jordan, England, Scotland, Mexico, France and Easter Island (Chile).

By 1984, his still-life images series, which include floral and anatomical subjects, were flourishing.

In 2000, he started experimenting with a technique of cyan over platinum to achieve a deep blue-black. The body of work entitled “Blue” was completed in 2004.

Izu has been the recipient of the New York Foundation for Arts grant in 1985, the Catskill Center for Photography Fellowship in 1992, the Lou Stouman Award in 1999, a Guggenheim Fellowship in 2001, the Vision Award from the Center for Photography at Woodstock in 2005 and a Lucie Award in 2007.

His Tehran exhibit will continue until November 1 at the gallery located at 51 Khosro Alley, Villa St.