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# Saudi's new debacle

## Yemen shows another ability after Aramco attacks

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## Private banks ready to support engineering services exports to Iraq

**TEHRAN** — The head of Iran's Association of Private Banks and Credit Institutions announced their readiness for financial support of exporters of technical and engineering services to Iraq, IRIB reported on Sunday.

"Some projects by Iranian exporters of technical and engineering services to Iraq require financing, which we are prepared to provide them as consortiums, that is

a combination of our own resources and those of our associated banks," Koroush Parvizian said in a conference on financing exports to Iraq on Saturday.

According to the official, to support exports to the Iraqi market, five branches of an Iranian private bank have obtained operating licenses from the Iraqi Central Bank, and two branches are already set up, each with \$50 million of capital. **→ 4**

## Over 3 million Iranians predicted to visit Iraq for Arbadeen

**TEHRAN** — Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli, who has visited Iraq, said on Sunday that it is predicted that more than three million Iranians to visit Karbala, which hosts the Shrine of Imam Hussein, (AS), to mark Arbadeen. Arbadeen marks an end to a 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS) and his loyal companions at the Battle of Karbala on Muharram 10 in the year 61 AH (680 CE).

This year, Arbadeen falls on Saturday, October 19. Millions of pilgrims from Iran,

Iraq, Pakistan and some other countries head to Karbala by foot. It is considered the greatest march in the world.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on September 18 that "the Arbadeen march is an extraordinary phenomenon not only in our era but also throughout history."

He added, "We cannot find such a gathering and movement that takes place every year more enthusiastically than the previous years."

## G-77 backs JCPOA, condemns unilateral sanctions on Iran

**TEHRAN** — Foreign ministers of the Group of 77 (G-77) along with China issued a detailed statement at United Nations headquarters in New York on September 27 reaffirming their support for the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and its negotiating partners, including the five permanent members of the UN Security

Council, Germany and the European Union, saying the deal exemplifies a "concrete case of a successful multilateral action for resolving outstanding global issues."

The nuclear deal, officially called that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), is endorsed by the UN Security Council resolution 2231. **→ 2**

## According to the legal evidence, Bin Salman must be executed

By Hanif Ghaffari

**TEHRAN** — Saudi Arabia's crown prince Bin Salman's explicit confession about Jamal Khashoggi's murder under his watch will have legal consequences and effects.

The Saudi crown prince, for the first time, confessed in an interview with PBS that the murder of journalist and critic Jamal Khashoggi at Riyadh's consulate in Turkey was under his watch.

"It (the murder) happened under my watch. I get all the responsibility, because it happened under my watch" he said explicitly.

According to Islamic Penal Code (which is originated from Islamic verdicts) if anyone participates with someone in execution of a criminal act, and if it is related to the acts of all of them whether or not the act of the individual is enough

for the crime to occur, and whether their act's effect is equal or different- he is considered as partner in the crime and his punishment will be as same as the criminal's punishment.

The law is true about Bin Salman. Undoubtedly, he should be seriously punished as a person who confessed to the ordering the murder of someone else. It is obvious that this action was not due to "self defense" or "corruption prevention", therefore, it is not taken as involuntary manslaughter.

On Dec 3, 2018, Saudi public prosecutor announced first trial of defendants in Khashoggi's murder case was held and five of them will be executed.

Saud Al-Mojeb said that the first trial of 11 defendants of Khashoggi's murder case was held in Riyadh while their lawyers were present. Saudi public

prosecutor called for execution of five defendants.

Bin Salman clearly stated that Khashoggi's murdered was carried out on his order and under his watch. Therefore, Bin Salman's crime is far greater than those who involved in the murder because they obeyed the order of "main murderer".

In such circumstances, the Saudi judiciary must issue an indictment against Saudi crown prince, and also issue his execution, as dismiss him from his position. Although it will not happen in Saudi Arabia, but Saudi judiciary will not be able to destroy the evidence of last year's trial of Khashoggi's defendants.

Currently, Bin Salman must be executed based on Saudi judicial law. Even if Bin Salman is not executed, khashoggi's next of kin can demand retaliation.

## Trump-Putin phone calls in U.S. Democrats' sights: Schiff

**TEHRAN** — The chairman of the U.S. House Intelligence Committee said on Sunday Congress is determined to get access to President Donald Trump's calls with Russian President Vladimir Putin and other world leaders, citing concerns he may have jeopardized national security.

"I think the paramount need here is to protect the national security of the United States and see whether in the conversations with other world leaders and in particular with Putin that the president was also undermining our security in a way that he thought would personally benefit his campaign," Democrat Adam Schiff said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Following a whistleblower complaint that Trump, a Republican, solicited a political favor from Ukraine's president that could help

him get re-elected, the lawmakers are investigating concerns that Trump's actions have jeopardized national security and the integrity of U.S. elections.

The intelligence committee has reached an agreement with the whistleblower to appear before the panel, Schiff told ABC's "This Week".

Lawmakers were working out logistics to protect the person's identity and also get security clearance for lawyers who will be representing the whistleblower. He hopes the whistleblower can appear very soon, Schiff said.

The whistleblower's complaint cited a telephone call in which Trump asked President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to launch an investigation of former Vice President Joe Biden and his son Hunter.



### ARTICLE

Masoud Hossein

Head of the Sport Desk of the TehranTimes

## Foul language endangers stadiums' atmosphere

Using profane language at the stadiums is a consistent problem which has not yet been solved and it could have disastrous consequences for Iran football.

Ahead of the new season of Iran Professional League, Football Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FFIRI) announced that the fans are strictly prohibited from showing irregular behaviors at the stadiums but after five weeks, the problem has not yet been solved.

Iran is under pressure to let the women enter the stadiums and a delegation of FIFA experts has recently visited Tehran to discuss measures designed to allow women to freely attend football matches.

The delegation inspected the Azadi Stadium in Tehran, where the national teams of Iran and Cambodia will play a qualification game for the FIFA World Cup 2022 on Oct. 10.

FIFA has said it will continue to engage closely with the FFIRI and relevant government entities to implement these important changes in accordance with FIFA regulations.

Iranian women have been banned from soccer matches at football stadiums since the 1979 and the football officials have not had serious concerns about that in the previous years and have a pile of work to do at the moment.

And time is tight. "We don't see a problem with women attending if the atmosphere in stadiums is convenient... but with so much foul language among fans and violence, this is not advisable," Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi has recently said.

Iran's football is marred by racist chants, ripping out the seats, throwing missiles onto the pitch and arguing with the referees and the Football Federation of Iran Disciplinary Committee has not been successful in controlling the situation so far.

The implementation of electronic ticketing system has not been completely accomplished and the stadiums have not been equipped with VAR system.

Iran, as a strong football in Asia, needs to be equipped with modern technology because this can increase safety and efficiency at the stadiums. The fans go to the stadiums to relieve stress and be happy but some issues could cause conflict. The Iranian football federation has a tough task ahead because Asian Football Confederation and FIFA are focusing more on things that happen in the country.



### ARTICLE

Faranak Bakhtiari

Tehran Times Journalist

## For dedicated firefighters who give up their lives to save ours

Iran marks the National Firefighters' Day on September 29 to commemorate the bravery and sacrifice of those who give up their lives in the line of duty. This occasion is an opportunity to pay tribute to members of the fire and rescue service who are devoted to protect the public.

September 29 was first observed as the National Firefighters' Day in the Iranian calendar year 1379 (March 2000-March 2001), 20 years after a tragic incident during the Iran-Iraq war.

In the Iranian calendar year 1359 (March 1980-March 1990), on the same day, Iraqi warplanes attacked the Abadan oil refinery and set it ablaze. Firefighters went on to extinguish the fire, but this time fire was not their only enemy; the refinery was extensively shelled again and many firefighters were martyred in the incident.

The firefighters' battle with the fire will not come to an end, but it risks the ultimate sacrifice of their life.

It was three years ago on January 19 when the fire was sparked by an electrical short circuit in the top floors of the crowded, 17-story Plasco building in Tehran, which then collapsed after a four-hour blaze and killed 16 firefighters who had been trapped under the rubble.

Many of the firemen present at the scene were traumatized by their colleagues trapped under the huge building and their own helplessness.

The event has broken the hearts of many citizens that today reminds of the greatest tragedy in the history of firefighting in the country.

### ■ Firefighting history in Iran

The history of firefighting in Iran goes back to 1842 when the first fire station was established in the city of Tabriz. The second and the third firefighting units were set up in the cities of Masjed Soleiman and Abadan to protect the refining facilities.

Tehran also established its first fire department in 1924. There are currently 131 fire stations operating in the city. **→ 12**



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## Voter turnout falls sharply in Afghan presidential election

**TEHRAN**— A preliminary count of voter participation in the first round of Afghanistan's presidential vote indicates a sharp drop in turnout, in an election held amid Taliban threats to disrupt the process.

The initial tally, released on Sunday by Afghanistan's Independent Election Commission with data from slightly more than half the polling stations, showed that just under 1.1 million people had voted the previous day.

If that turnout trend holds, it would represent a participation level of less than 25 percent - lower than any of Afghanistan's three presidential elections since the fall of the Taliban in 2001. **→ 13**



## Website releases ‘never before seen’ photo of Leader, Gen. Soleimani and Nasrallah

(PRESS TV) — The website of Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has published a photo of the Leader alongside Major General Qassem Soleimani and Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah.

The picture shows the trio in front of what appears to be a door covered by a curtain and surrounded by shelves stacked with books.



The website did not detail the date or place where the photo was taken.

It said the “never before seen” picture will make the inaugural cover of a new magazine, dubbed Massir (The Path), which will soon be launched by the office for preservation and dissemination of the works of Ayatollah Khamenei.

The issue, it added, will publish a five-hour interview with Nasrallah and the first interview with General Soleimani, who commands the Quds Force of Iran’s Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

Massir will also publish for the first time images of meetings between Nasrallah and Ayatollah Khamenei, the website said.

It also published photos of the Lebanese national resistance movement’s chief taken during an exclusive discussion with officials from the Leader’s office.

Iran’s support for resistance movements such as Hezbollah is an enduring feature of the Islamic Republic’s foreign policy.

That support is the target of U.S. President Donald Trump’s “maximum pressure” campaign which also seeks to stop Iran’s nuclear and missile programs and curb the country’s influence in the Middle East.

Earlier this month, Nasrallah hailed Iran as “the center” of a “major camp” against the U.S. and Israel headed by Ayatollah Khamenei, saying the resistance front is now in the middle of a campaign against the two enemies.

## Iran calls sanctions ‘crime against humanity’

**POLITICAL DESK** TEHRAN — Esmaeil Baghaei Hamaneh, Tehran’s ambassador and permanent representative to the UN office in Geneva, has called the consequences of unilateral sanctions against Iran “crime against humanity”.

During a speech at the 42th session of the UN Human Rights Council, he urged the United Nations to take actions in stopping the sanctions.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew Washington from the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and restored the previous sanctions against Iran and ordered new ones. Trump has described his government’s sanctions against Iran an “economic war”.

To strangle the Iranian economy, Trump has acknowledged that his administration has slapped the “harshest sanctions” against Iran that its kind has never been seen in history.

In an interview with CNN aired on September 24, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that sanctions are war.

“Sanctions are war. Because in a war, usually military targets are chosen. In sanctions, civilians are the targets. So, it’s war. It’s more than war,” he said.

President Hassan Rouhani said in June that the U.S. sanctions are examples of “crime against humanity and economic terrorism” because they have targeted ordinary people’s “lives and needs”.

“It should not be said that the U.S. has imposed sanctions on us, because they are not sanctions. They are crime against humanity. They could be called sanctions if they targeted some of our sensitive industries, but they are crime against humanity and economic terrorism when they target the people’s lives and needs,” he stated.

## Iran has no preference in U.S. elections to intervene in it: Zarif

**POLITICAL DESK** TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that Iran has no preference in the 2020 U.S. presidential elections to interfere in it.

“We don’t have a preference in your election to intervene in that election. We don’t interfere in internal affairs of another country,” he told NBC News in an interview aired on Sunday.

“But there is a cyberwar going on. The United States started that cyberwar with attacking our nuclear facilities in a very dangerous and irresponsible way that could have killed millions of people,” he noted.

He added, “You remember Stuxnet, you remember zero-day, you remember operation Olympic. So, there is a cyberwar and Iran is engaged in that cyberwar. Any war that the United States starts, it won’t be able to finish.”

It was first in July 2010 when the United States launched a serious cyber-attack against Iran. At the time, it was said that a virus named Stuxnet was used for damaging the computer systems that controlled Iranian nuclear industry.

After that, on January 16, 2011, the New York Times and many other media published news about how Stuxnet malicious computer worm was jointly built by U.S., Israel, the United Kingdom and Germany.

The Times revealed that George W. Bush, the former U.S. president, initially issued the permit for production of Stuxnet and then they started building the virus in cooperation with Israel.

According to the official documents, Stuxnet was built jointly by U.S., Germany, UK and Israel, but Germany and UK may not have been aware what function the virus will have in future. What was certain is that Bush issued the permit for building Stuxnet and Barack Obama gave the permit for using the virus in 2009.

Zarif has repeatedly said that if the U.S. starts a war, it won’t be the one who ends it.

In an interview with CBS’ “Face the Nation” on September 22, he said any country that starts a war against Iran “will not be the one who finishes it”.

He said the U.S. is “posturing” by sending troops and defense equipment to Saudi Arabia following the September 14 attacks on a major Saudi Arabian oil facility.

“I think it’s posturing. I think it’s all going the wrong direction in addressing this issue,” Zarif said.

# Zarif says lifting sanctions has been Iran’s condition for talks

‘Trump had said after meeting with Rouhani there was possibility of lifting sanctions’

**POLITICAL DESK** TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad

Javad Zarif said on Saturday that removal of sanctions was Iran’s condition for President Hassan Rouhani’s talks with leaders of the 5+1 group including Donald Trump.

“Our condition for Mr. Rouhani’s talks with heads of state of the 5+1 group, and not just between Mr. Rouhani and Mr. Trump, was removal of sanctions,” he told reporters.

However, Zarif said, Trump was willing to first hold talks with Rouhani and then possibly he would remove sanctions.

“Rather he (Trump) was willing that the meeting take place and then said there was a possibility that the sanctions would be removed after this meeting.”

Rouhani held separate talks with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Macron and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York last week.

Zarif said, “We have always announced that if the United States wants to hold talks with the Islamic Republic, it should return to its commitments and stop sanctions.”

Iran has been insisting that the only path to negotiations between Tehran and Washington is that the United States must



lift all the sanctions that it has illegally and unilaterally imposed on Iran.

In an interview with Fox News aired on Tuesday, Rouhani said if the U.S. administration is really seeking dialogue with Iran “it must create the needed conditions.”

In May 2018, President Donald Trump abandoned the nuclear deal and returned

the previous sanctions and imposed new harsh ones.

**Zarif says he held talks with a number of Congressmen**

Zarif also said that he held phone conversations with a number of Congress members while he was in New York to attend the 74th UN General Assembly.

“We have made no request from mem-

## G-77 backs JCPOA, condemns unilateral sanctions on Iran

**1 →** According to the JCPOA, Iran is obligated to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

However, in May 2018 U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew his country from the multilateral agreement and ordered restoration of previous sanctions. In May 2019, the U.S. also announced a total ban on Iran’s oil export. Trump himself has called sanctions on Iran an “economic war”.

“The ministers reaffirmed the importance of supporting and strengthening multilateralism, and, in this regard, recognized that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the other parties is a concrete case of a successful multilateral action for resolving outstanding global issues, stressed that such model sets a real example for further accelerating the achievement of sustainable development including by strengthening international co-operation, through enhanced means of implementation,” the statement by the G-77 said.

The G-77 also slammed sanctions, par-

ticularly “unilateral sanctions”, against other countries, saying it is detrimental to economic and social development and kill chances of dialogue between countries.

“The ministers reaffirmed that the imposition of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions, against developing countries does not contribute to economic and social development, including dialogue and understanding among countries,” the statement added.

The Trump administration has threatened to punish any country that trades with Iran, a move which has been interpreted as an “extraterritorial” implementation of sanctions.

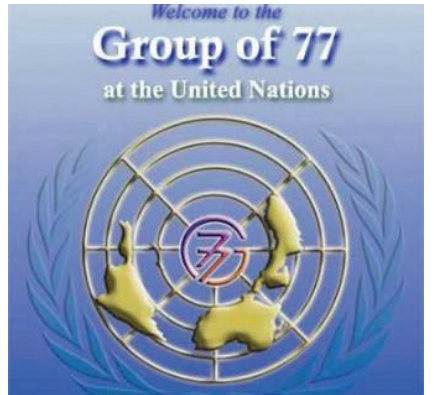
The Group of 77 said such “coercive economic measures” by the United States “undermine the principles enshrined in the

Charter of the UN and international law” and “severely threaten the freedom of trade and investment.”

The group called on the international community to resist such measures by the Trump administration.

“The ministers reaffirmed their firm rejection of the imposition of laws and regulations with extraterritorial impact and all other forms of coercive economic measures, including unilateral sanctions, against developing countries and reiterated the urgent need to eliminate them immediately. They emphasized that such actions not only undermine the principles enshrined in the Charter of the UN and international law but also severely threaten the freedom of trade and investment. The Ministers therefore called upon

**The G-77 and China “called upon the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral coercive economic measures against developing countries.”**



the international community to adopt urgent and effective measures to eliminate the use of unilateral coercive economic measures against developing countries.”

In their statement they also “reviewed the world economic situation, the recent developments in the world and the particular challenges faced by developing countries in the economic, social and environmental areas.”

## Iranian nation will not give into pressure: party chief

**POLITICAL DESK** TEHRAN — Asadolah Badamchian, secretary-general of the Islamic Coalition Party, said on Sunday that the Iranian nation will not give into sanctions pressure and will not hold talks with the United States when the country is under sanctions.

“The international negotiations have some rules and regulations. Negotiation due to sanction means giving into force and the Iranian nation will not accept that,” he said.

The party leader added, “[U.S. President Donald] Trump made efforts to meet with Iran’s President [Hassan Rouhani], however, he did not succeed. Negotiation has no meaning so long as the United States hatches plots, tightens sanctions, supports the Zionist regime of Israel and continues committing crimes in Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria and Gaza.”



Trump, who quit the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and announced an “economic war” against Iran, has been repeatedly calling for dialogue with Iran and even sending messages to Tehran to renegotiate the terms of the deal.

In an interview with Fox News aired on Tuesday, Rouhani said if the U.S. adminis-

tration is really seeking dialogue with Iran “it must create the needed conditions.”

Rouhani said Trump has put away trust when he was asked about a potential meeting in New York.

“If the United States of America’s government is willing to talk, it must create the needed conditions,” he insisted.

Rouhani continued, “Well, once we carried on negotiations with the United States of America for two years, and during a 17-day period, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the U.S. Secretary of State had continuous talks without returning to their countries. It was extremely difficult, but we did reach an agreement which was signed, and it was enshrined in the United Nations Security Council resolution, and without a valid reason or cause, the United States left

this agreement.”

Talking in a press conference in New York on Thursday, Rouhani urged the U.S. to quit policy of maximum pressure and pursue a policy of dialogue and logic.

“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.

## Envoy: Tehran attaches great significance to ties with Sarajevo

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Iranian Ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina Mahmoud Heydari said that his country is eager for broader relations with the Balkan states, adding that ties with Sarajevo is of prime importance to Tehran.

Heydari said that, following the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, the Islamic Republic of Iran put political, economic and cultural relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina on the agenda, and opening of the embassy in the most difficult circumstances of the siege of Sarajevo showed Iran’s determination and commitment to expand cooperation.

“Over the past 26 years, communications and visits by officials of the two countries at different levels have taken place and good cooperation is currently underway,” he told the local media.

“Since the beginning of my mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there have been numerous visits by Bosnian officials to Iran, such as the visit of the former Chairman of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, the Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Speaker of the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the

mayors of several cities,” Heydari said, adding that in return, visits were made by Iranian officials, such as visits by several important parliamentary delegations and visits by Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

All these visits are an indicator of the good relations between the two countries at the political and parliamentary level.

When it comes to economic relations between the two countries, it is important to note that several economic agreements were signed in the fields of trade, banking, joint venture, transport, cooperation of chambers of commerce.

“During one period due to the cruel sanctions imposed by some arrogant forces against the Iranian people, these relations were somewhat affected, but after the nuclear agreement, this trend changed and the conditions for the development of economic and trade relations between the two countries got better,” the Iranian ambassador said.

“I believe that we must provide space for private sector activities and cooperation between businessmen and investors of the two countries, and as I said, the economic potential of the two countries is much higher than the current level and there are numerous economic opportunities for the two countries,

especially in the energy fields, petrochemicals, minerals, agricultural and food products and tourism,” he added.

In addition, Heydari advises that it is needed to increase the awareness of businessmen of the two sides about mutual benefits and capacities. Bosnian businessmen, for example, can access the Asian market through Iran, and Iranian businessmen can access the EU market through Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Fortunately, data released by relevant Bosnian institutions shows that trade between the two countries has been increasing over the last three years, of course, efforts should be doubled to accelerate this growth.

“Here I would like to send a message to Bosnian businessmen and companies that the doors of the embassy are always open for them to cooperate with Iran,” the Iranian envoy mentioned.

Asked about areas where the relations between the two countries can be expanded, he explained that there are numerous similarities between the peoples of the two countries and a clear affection for each other. Given this mutual inclination, there are numerous areas for the development of bilateral relations in all political, economic, cultural, parliamentary and international areas.

“As I have already emphasized in my meetings with officials at different state, entity and cantonal levels, all regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina have good attractions and potentials, and we, as the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, welcome their greater activation to promote relations between the two countries, especially in economic and cultural fields. I hope that accelerating the formation of new government and parliament will create the opportunity for more efforts and planning to strengthen relations between our countries,” according to Heydari.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a crossroad of religions of Islam, Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism, which is adjacent to the European Union and at the same time has a long history of cultural relations with the East, including Iran.

Heydari stressed that there are numerous cultural similarities between the peoples of Iran and Bosnia and Herzegovina: the presence of numerous Persian language manuscripts in the Gazi Husrev-bey Library, and the emergence of Bosnian poets and writers who, under the influence of Iranian works, have written or translated works into Bosnian, is a solid example of cultural ties between the peoples of the two countries.



# Nuclear deal ‘worthless’ if it does not benefit Iran: Vaezi

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi says the nuclear deal, also known as Barjam in Iran, is worthless if it does not benefit Iran.

Vaezi accompanied President Rouhani during his trip to New York for the Annual UN General Assembly conference. While in New York, Rouhani held separate meetings with leaders of Germany, France and Britain whose countries are signatory to the 2015 nuclear agreement.

“Barjam without its benefits is worthless for us and we told the Europeans that in order to preserve the agreement they should fulfil their commitments and shoulder the U.S. burden as well,” Vaezi said on Sunday, ISNA reported.

He warned that Iran will continue to scale back its commitments under the nuclear deal if the other signatories to the deal do not fulfil their commitments.

“We have announced loud and clear that if they fail to take any action we will take the next step,” the presidential chief of staff pointed out.

According to Vaezi, Rouhani said during his New York trip that Iran needed to reap the benefits of the nuclear pact.

“Rouhani also strongly criticized Europe’s recent statement” that blamed



Iran for the September 14 attacks on the Saudi Aramco oil facilities, he added.

Vaezi also said some may like to create the impression that Europe is on the side of the U.S. “but this is not the right policy, and, at least, such a thing has not happened with regards to Barjam.”

U.S. President Donald Trump pulled

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

Earlier this month, the U.S. Depart-

ment of the Treasury slapped sanctions on the Central Bank of Iran and the country’s sovereign wealth fund, a move Trump described as the “highest level of sanctions”.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Vaezi said Rouhani’s visit to New York thwarted Washington’s anti-Iran agenda.

“The presence of Mr. Rouhani accompanied by a delegation at the United Nations General Assembly summit in New York as well as his interviews thwarted America’s propaganda against our country,” he stressed.

The top official said Washington mixed up many issues, including the nuclear deal and the Aramco incident, to propagandize against the Islamic Republic.

Vaezi also criticized Washington for attempting to obstruct the Iranian team’s trip to New York.

“The Americans created restrictions for the Iranian delegation in New York and attempted to create circumstances that would keep us from making that trip and going to the UN General Assembly,” he stated.

However, he continued, the Iranian delegation made the visit and tried to “show that the Islamic Republic of Iran was right and to reveal the pressure exerted on Iranian people.”

## Rouhani is not entitled to make changes to JCPOA, says top MP

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — A top lawmaker has said President Hassan Rouhani is not entitled to make any changes to the text of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), a nuclear deal struck in 2015 between Iran and six world powers.

“The president cannot add or remove even a word from Barjam (JCPOA) without permission from the Majlis,” Mehr on Sunday quoted Mohammadreza Pour-Ebrahimi as saying.

“Raising these subjects is with the intention of creating a psychological war so that the Islamic Republic of Iran retreats from its principal stances and its rightful demands,” he added.

According to Reuters, Rouhani told media in New York on Tuesday that he would be open to discussing with major powers “small changes, additions or amendments” to the nuclear deal if sanctions were taken away.

However, Parviz Esmaeili, the presidential office’s director for communications and information, later criticized Reuters for misquoting Rouhani.

“What Reuters quoted Rouhani as saying about his readiness to amend and make changes to the JCPOA is not accurate,” Esmaeili said in a tweet.

“What is accurate is [Iran’s] readiness to shorten the JCPOA implementation time. It was the same 2023 commitment that Zarif talked about, which was the simultaneous ratification of the Additional Protocol at the Iranian Parliament and the final lifting of sanctions in the U.S.



Congress and the possibility of negotiation within the framework of the 5+1,” Esmaeili added, Mehr reported. (5+1 refers to the five permanent members of the UN Security Council plus Germany.)

Also, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, when asked by journalists whether Iran was open to changes in the nuclear pact, said: “No changes to the JCPOA.”

Pour-Ebrahimi, who has served as the head of the Majlis Economic Committee, expressed doubts as to whether Rouhani or Zarif offered to make changes to the text of the JCPOA in their New York trip for the annual UN General Assembly conference.

“Given the straightforward comments by the presi-

dent and the foreign minister in recent weeks and days, it does not seem that such stance was raised by Iran,” the MP added.

Tensions have spiked between Tehran and Washington since last year when U.S. President Donald Trump exited the nuclear pact and imposed sanctions on the Islamic republic that were lifted under the agreement and added new ones.

In retaliation for the U.S. “maximum pressure” policy, Iran has gradually reduced its commitments to the pact and plans to further reduce its commitments if the European parties to the deal fail to keep their promises to shield Iran’s economy from U.S. penalties.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said recently that Iran could engage in multilateral discussions if the United States returned to the deal and lifted sanctions, but ruled out any possibility of talks with Washington under pressure.

Rouhani and Zarif have also repeatedly rejected the notion of entering a new round of talks with the U.S. before it returned to the JCPOA and lifted the sanctions.

No new deal before compliance with the current one, Zarif wrote on his Twitter account last week.

According to Rouhani, Iran has no fear of talks and it is the United States which hinders negotiations.

“We have clearly said that we are ready for talks, but not in the atmosphere of sanctions and pressure,” he told reporters upon arrival in Tehran on Friday.

## Hatami: U.S. to change policy of maximum ‘pressure to ‘maximum groveling



**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami predicted on Sunday that Iran’s resistance will force the foes to change their “maximum pressure” campaign against Iran to “maximum groveling”.

Hatami was making a reference to Washington’s maximum pressure policy against Tehran, which was introduced after Donald Trump withdrew the United States from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal last year. The U.S. has also asked Iran to enter bilateral talks, but Iran has refused.

“In a year which the enemy wanted to turn into a year filled with pressure for us, we’ve had many achievements,” Hatami said, speaking in a meeting arranged to commemorate veterans of resistance, IRNA reported.

“The Sacred Defense (Iran’s resistance against the invading Saddam Hussein’s army in the 1980s) taught us that the only way is to resist and rely on ourselves,” said the defense chief.

Hatami added officials in the U.S. would deprive Iranians of oxygen, water and air, if they were able to.

Last week, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said that “maximum pressure” from the United States

has produced “maximum resistance” from Iran, and that Tehran will continue to resist.

Speaking at the Iranian mission to the UN in New York, Araqchi rejected the prospects of negotiations until the U.S. stops its campaign of maximum pressure on Tehran, The Independent reported.

He said “to get real negotiations started, this economic war has to end,” referring to U.S. sanctions that Iran also describes as “economic terrorism”.

“And to end this economic war, we first need a ceasefire in order to do real negotiations and find sustainable solutions,” Araqchi said.

“Not only us, but no country will negotiate under pressure,” he added.

In remarks earlier this month, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that the failed policy of maximum pressure on Iran has turned into “maximum deceit”.

“Having failed at ‘maximum pressure’, Secretary Pompeo is turning to ‘maximum deceit’,” Zarif tweeted.

Zarif’s comments came after U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo blamed Iran for the attacks on oil installations in Saudi Arabia on September 14, for which Yemen’s Houthi movement claimed responsibility and Iran rejected any involvement.

## Iraqi PM to visit Iran amid efforts to deescalate Tehran-Riyadh tension: report



**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi plans to visit Iran in line with his government’s policy to reduce the growing tension between Tehran and Saudi Arabia, the Iraqi media have reported.

“Abdul-Mahdi, who has arrived from Saudi Arabia wants to invite Saudi Crown Prince Bin Salman and the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani to Baghdad for a meeting,” an Iraqi website reported.

Abdul-Mahdi traveled to Riyadh on September 25, where he met King Salman bin Abdul Aziz and Mohammed bin Salman, also called MBS.

Sources who spoke to the Lebanese channel Al-Mayadeen revealed that Iraq is trying to propose an initiative in his mediation efforts between Riyadh and Tehran.

According to the Mehr news agency, the sources, who refused to be named, said that “the Iraqi mediation aims to hold a meeting between leaders of Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Iraqi capital Baghdad.”

Earlier, Al-Manar also reported that Iraqi sources have revealed that Abdul Mahdi is going to visit Iran in the few coming weeks in the context of reducing

tension and soothing the crisis between Riyadh and Tehran.

The United States and Saudi Arabia have blamed Iran for the September 14 drone attacks on Saudi oil facilities, a claim which Iran says is unsubstantiated.

Pakistan has also voiced readiness to reduce tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan has said he was acting as a mediator between Iran and the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

Khan said in a press statement on the sidelines of the recent UN General Assembly that “I cannot disclose more now, except that we are trying to do so and mediate.”

“The U.S. president asked me to meditate and I already spoke with the Iranian president yesterday,” Khan said.

Khan met Rouhani in New York on September 23.

“We also talked with Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and he asked me to talk to the Iranian president, where he knew I would meet him, and President Trump asked me whether we could ease the tension and maybe even reach a new agreement.”

## Zarif takes swipe at U.S. for not letting him visit envoy in NY hospital

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says he has been able to see and talk to Iran’s UN Ambassador Majid Takht-Ravanchi “thanks to technology”, taking a thinly veiled swipe at U.S. government which banned him from visiting the diplomat in a New York hospital.

“Thanks to technology, I was able to see and talk to my friend of 40 years and our UN ambassador Ravanchi, who is in hospital here in New York only a few blocks away,” Zarif tweeted on Saturday.

The U.S. State Department said on Friday that Zarif’s request to visit Takht-Ravanchi would be granted if Iran released one of several American citizens it had detained, according to Reuters.

Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said “disgrace will be left for a government that takes humanitarian issues hostage for its political goals.”

In July, the United States imposed tight travel restrictions on Zarif before a visit that month to the United Nations. The same restrictions were also imposed on Iranian diplomats and their families living in New York, which Zarif described as “basically inhuman.”

“It is certainly not a friendly action. It puts the members of the mission and their families under basically inhuman conditions. But for me it’s fine because I don’t have any work anywhere other than the three buildings,” the top diplomat said at the time.

## ‘Tens of terrorists killed in clashes with IRGC at Iranian borders’

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Ground Force Brigadier General Mohammad Pakpour has announced that the IRGC forces have engaged in over 50 clashes with the terrorists at the Iranian borders and killed tens of militants since late March.

“Over 50 cases of attack have happened in the past 6 months which have led to clashes and considerable tolls have been inflicted on the terrorists’ operational teams at the Northwestern and Southeastern borders of Iran,” General Pakpour told FNA on Sunday.

He also added that several Takfiri and terrorist teams in the Western borders of Iran have been dismantled completely by the IRGC Ground Forces and tens of terrorists have been killed in the past three years.

General Pakpour underlined that security and tranquility prevails at the Iranian borders despite all moves made by the terrorist groups due to the intelligence superiority and preparedness of the IRGC Ground Force’s units.

The IRGC is actively engaged in security operations against anti-Iran terrorist groups and accordingly is attacked by entities and terrorist groups which hold grudge against Tehran.

The Guards announced early in July that it had disbanded a team of terrorists in an ambush operation in the Northwestern province of West Azarbaijan as they were trying to infiltrate into the country, killing two of them.

The IRGC announced in a statement that servicemen from its Hamzeh Seyed Al-Shuhada base had carried out the security operation.

The terrorists were ambushed as they were trying to infiltrate the country from the province’s Chaldoran County. Two terrorists were killed in the clashes and several others were wounded, the statement noted.

Two IRGC servicemen lost their lives during the operation as well.

According to the statement, a considerable amount of weapons, ammunition, and communication equipment were also seized.

Also in June, the IRGC dismantled a 4-member terrorist gang in the same province near the border with Turkey.

The IRGC forces managed to kill one, injure two and arrest one members of a terrorist group active in Chaldoran region, in an ambush attack, the IRGC’s Hamzeh Seyed Al-Shohada Base said in a statement.

The security forces were hunting for the 4-strong sabotage gang. Also, IRGC forces seized a number of weapons and some ammunition from the terrorists in the operation.

## Saudis paralyzed in Yemen: IRGC general

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — Yemeni forces have gained such great deterrent power that they have paralyzed the Saudi invaders, the deputy commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) said.

Addressing a conference in Semnan on Sunday, Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi hailed the people of Yemen for standing against foreign pressures and attacks from the arrogant powers.

“At present, Yemen is in the deterrence stage, and this has paralyzed Al Saud,” the general said.

Yemen will display its power more clearly in future despite all pressures, he stated, adding that the axis of resistance is growing in the region.

The IRGC general also said the Yemeni forces came to know about the missile technology after the Saudi-led invasion, and managed to give a “crushing response to Al Saud’s stupidity.”

“Yemen’s deterrent power in the face of enemies has become clear after the reactions to Al Saud’s attacks, and the enemies are also mindful that they will be harmed if they take any action against that country (Yemen),” Fadavi went on to say.

His comments came a day after the Yemeni forces destroyed three Saudi military brigades in a large-scale military offensive in the kingdom’s southern border region of Najran.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of fugitive former president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi back to power and crushing the Houthi Ansarullah movement.

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

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



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	318250.6
IFX	4236.5

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	45,946 rials
GBP	51,619 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$61.04/b
WTI	\$55.91/b
OPEC Basket	\$62.35/b
Gold	\$1,498.85/oz
Silver	\$17.62/oz
Platinum	\$933.95/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Inflation rate at 42.7%: statistical center

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The Statistical Center of Iran announced that the inflation rate in the twelve-month period ended on September 22, which marks the end of the sixth Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar, stood at 42.7 percent, IRIB reported.

In the Iranian calendar year of 1395 (ended on March 20, 2017), Iran could manage to experience a single-digit inflation rate after 26 years.

The inflation rate stood at 9.8 percent in that year according to the Statistical Center of Iran and at nine percent according to the Central Bank of Iran (CBI).

But since the last year's calendar month of Khordad (ended on June 22, 2018), when the inflation rate stood at 10.2 percent, as announced by the CBI, the country's experiencing double-digit inflation rates again.

Paper production up 2.3% in 5 months on year

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Production of paper in Iran rose 2.3 percent during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22) compared to the same period of time in the previous year, IRNA reported citing the data released by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade.



The ministry's data indicated that 398,800 tons of paper have been produced during the mentioned five-month period.

Also, 307,600 tons of cardboard have been produced in the first five months of this year, rising 31.9 percent from the figure of the same time span in the past year.

Deputy Industry Minister Farshad Moqim has announced that export of papers and cardboards from Iran has risen 63 percent in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019) from its previous year.

The official has also said that Iran's paper and cardboard import has fallen 18 percent in the previous year.

EU ready to act alone on digital tax

European Union commissioners-designate said the bloc should agree on a digital tax if no deal on the matter was reached at a global level by the end of next year, ramping up pressure on multinationals accused of paying too little.

As stated by thedailystar.net, in written answers to EU law-makers published on Friday, the incoming commissioners also signalled their priorities on fiscal rules and financial reforms for the bloc. Efforts to overhaul corporate taxation to reflect profits made by digital multinationals have failed to produce results as individual countries have different approaches to taxes.

"If no effective agreement can be reached by the end of 2020, the EU should be willing to act alone" on a digital tax, said the incoming commission's vice-president Margrethe Vestager, who will be in charge of digital policy and competition.

The commissioner-designate for taxation, Paolo Gentiloni, echoed her comments, saying he would seek to prevent individual EU governments from being able to veto decisions on tax matters - a handful of EU states last year opposed a bloc-wide agreement on the digital tax.

The new commissioners are due to take office in November after they receive the final green light from EU lawmakers in hearings beginning next week.

Gentiloni also said that as part of the fight against tax evasion and tax avoidance, jurisdictions included in the EU's tax haven list should be subject to common sanctions. There is currently no coordination on financial penalties from the EU.

As the bloc's growth slows, EU commissioners also signalled their preferred measures to revive the economy, with Italy's Gentiloni pushing for fiscal leeway and Latvia's Valdis Dombrovskis calling for a "responsible fiscal policy".

Housing price down 2.8% in Tehran City in a month

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Housing price in Tehran City has fallen 2.8 percent in the past Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (ends on September 22) from its previous month, IRNA reported, citing the data release by Central Bank of Iran (CBI). The CBI's data although indicated that housing price in the capital city has risen 56.5 percent compared to the same month in the previous year.

As reported, the number of real estate deals

in Tehran City fell 73 percent in Shahrivar, compared to the same month in the past year.

The number of deals during the sixth month of this year has been 2,800.

As previously announced by Ministry of Transport and Urban Development, the number of real estate deals in Tehran City fell 44.8 percent in spring, which corresponds to the first quarter of Iranian calendar year, compared to the same quarter in the past year.

The ministry's report said that the

Private banks ready to support engineering services exports to Iraq

**1 →** He added that in order to support exporters of goods and technical services to Iraq, we needed three major infrastructures to be provided.

"The first was insurance coverage by the Export Guarantee Fund and other commercial insurances to support the transportation of goods to the Iraqi market, this which has been designed and implemented," Parvizian explained.

"The second infrastructure was signing a contract with the National Development Fund for providing foreign currency and rial deposits, however, the U.S. sanctions have slowed down the progress of this program."

The official finally noted that the third infrastructure has been providing knowledge-based companies with facilities to support their exports to Iraq.

Iran and Iraq have been taking significant steps for boosting economic relations in the past few years.

The two countries are following up plans for increasing their bilateral economic trade to over \$20 billion.

As previously reported by Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPO), follow-



ing an agreement on establishment of an Iran-Iraq trade committee, officials from the two sides held a meeting to discuss the issue in Tehran on May 5.

In early March, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani headed a high-ranking political and trade delegation in a visit to Iraq, during which the two sides inked several agreements and emphasized expansion of trade ties.

Less than a month after President Rouhani's visit to Iraq, an Iraqi delegation visited Tehran to attend an Iran-Iraq business forum which was hosted by Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on April 7.

Sri Lanka needs to invest in people to unlock its productive potential

The World Bank unveiled on Sunday a new report to guide policymakers and development practitioners across Sri Lanka in better investing in the health and education of all Sri Lankans.

According to modern diplomacy.eu, realizing the Promise and Potential Of Human Capital is part of the Human Capital Project, a global effort led by the World Bank since 2018 that recognizes the vital importance of human capital for a country's future.

The project includes the Human Capital Index which measures and forecasts a country's human capital through a child's life-cycle from birth to adulthood.

The report finds that in 2019, Sri Lanka performs moderately well globally, with an overall score of 58 percent, and a ranking of 74 out of the 157 countries. If current education and health conditions persist, a child born in Sri Lanka today will be about half as productive as she or he could have been had they enjoyed complete education and full health, the report notes.

"People are the most valuable resource in any country and investing in people is smart economics," said Idah Z. Pswarayi-Riddihough, World Bank Country Director for Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives. "Technology and automation are radically changing the very nature of work and reshaping industry. Children in primary



school today are likely to work in jobs that may not even exist right now. Developing its human capital to a new and higher level will be key for Sri Lanka to become an upper-middle-income economy."

Sri Lanka has the highest score in South Asia, above the average for the region and income group. Sri Lanka performs well in survival to age 5, expected years of schooling, adult survival, and stunting. The main constraints to achieving a higher score for Sri

Lanka are under-nutrition and, on average, inadequate learning outcomes in school.

"Sri Lanka needs to address human capital development from the twin perspectives of upper-middle-income growth and regional equity," said Harsha Aturupane Lead Economist and Program Leader for Human Development for Sri Lanka and the Maldives. "Greater resources and policy attention are needed for provinces where human capital is less advanced, while also making rapid improvements in human capital in the more advanced provinces".

The World Bank is helping countries develop their human capital across all levels of education and training. The Sri Lanka Early Childhood Development Project will increase the ability of children from disadvantaged households to access early learning opportunities.

World Bank assistance to the general education sector through the General Education Modernization Project enhances the quality of the general education system. It also contributes to better teacher performance and student learning outcomes in English and Mathematics. The Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD) Project helps the country increase enrollment in priority disciplines for economic development, improve the quality of degree programs, and promote research and innovation.

Sell the South African Rand, says Bank of America

The Rand slumped Friday as investors fled emerging markets amid signs of another escalation in the U.S.-China trade war but analysts at Bank of America are tipping the South African currency for more losses in the weeks ahead.

According to poundsterlinglive.com, South Africa's Rand was hammered Friday alongside risk assets the world over after Bloomberg News reported that President Donald Trump is contemplating measures that would enable it to limit American portfolio flows, an aggressive step that would mark a significant escalation of the trade war between the world's two largest economies. He's also reportedly mulling restrictions on Chinese companies' access to U.S. stock markets too.

Restricting 'portfolio flows' would involve limiting the amount of debt and stock that American money managers can buy in China. Foreign holdings of Chinese stocks and bonds remain small but strong earlier growth in the world's second largest economy has left it increasingly in need of outside capital, which is why the country has begun to relax some rules in recent years.

President Trump's plans, if gone through with, would put a roadblock in China's path and would amount to something like an act of 'wounding with intent' in the trade war that had seemed to freeze throughout September. They could have a knock-on impact on the emerging world too, if they



harm China's economy.

Friday's report came amid much hope that talks scheduled for next month might produce an agreement that at least suspends hostilities for a bit longer, although hope may have faded into the weekend. Bloomberg News says Trump administration officials want to keep the action isolated from the current trade negotiations

**■ Rand expected to fall further**

The Rand was down 0.82% against the Dollar and 0.57% against a Brexit-stricken Pound Sterling late Friday as a result of the report but Bank of America recently told institutional clients to sell the South African currency because it's expected to fall further in the weeks ahead.



number of deals during the first quarter of this year has been 21,537, and the housing

price has risen 106 percent year on year in the capital city.

Iran-EU trade at €3b in 7 months

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The trade between Iran and European Union countries during the first seven months of 2019 stood at €3.087 billion, Tasnim news agency reported.

According to the latest data provided by Directorate-General of the European Commission (Eurostat), the trade between Iran and the EU nations has decreased by 73 percent compared to last year's same period in which the figure stood at €11.514 billion.

As reported, EU's exports to Iran plunged 51 percent in the mentioned period compared to the figure for last year's same time span.

EU countries exported €2.6 billion of goods to Iran in the said time, while the figure stood at €5.34 billion in the last year's first seven months.

EU's imports from Iran in the first seven months of 2019 also fell by 92 percent compared to the same period in the previous year, falling to €487 million. The EU imported €6.174 billion worth of goods from Iran in the first seven months of last year.

The significant drop in EU trade with

Iran in 2019, following the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions on Iran, shows that the EU has failed to defend Iran's interests in the context of the nuclear deal despite its promises.

According to the European Union's statistics agency, the trade between Iran and EU stood at €2.56 billion during the first half of 2019.

The figure shows 76 percent decrease from €10.67 billion in the first half of 2018.

While Germany, France, Italy and the Netherlands were respectively the major exporters to Iran; Germany, Spain, France and Italy were the top importers from the country in the said time span, this year.

In May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump formally pulled the United States out of the nuclear deal that was struck between Iran and world powers in July 2015.

Following Trump's decision, in January 2019, France, Germany and Britain (known as the E3) introduced an Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) which was meant to facilitate legitimate trade between European economic operators and Iran in order to convince Iran to stay in the 2015 nuclear deal.

credit rating upon the next review if the budget deficit is not brought under control and progress with reforms not made. That could have consequences for the Rand, analysts say.

Much is normally made of emerging market currencies in the final quarter, which is when developed world capital markets emerge from their summer slumber and trading flows pick back up. Some local analysts had anticipated those seasonal dynamics would carry the Rand higher throughout the October month and toward year-end, but Hauner has a litany of reasons for why the Rand and other emerging market assets could suffer next month.

«Our long-term valuation model sees ZAR very overvalued with fair value at 16.5. Our technical strategist Paul Ciana is also long-term bullish on D/ZAR. In the short term, the MACD indicator is about to send a buy signal,» Hauner says.

«Investors may consider buying D/ZAR ahead of the October risk-events as protection, even if the events themselves later on may lead to renewed D/ZAR selling. We buy D/ZAR at 14.86.»

Time to move your money? Get 3-5% more currency than your bank would offer by using the services of foreign exchange specialists at RationalFX. A specialist broker can deliver you an exchange rate closer to the real market rate, thereby saving you substantial quantities of currency.



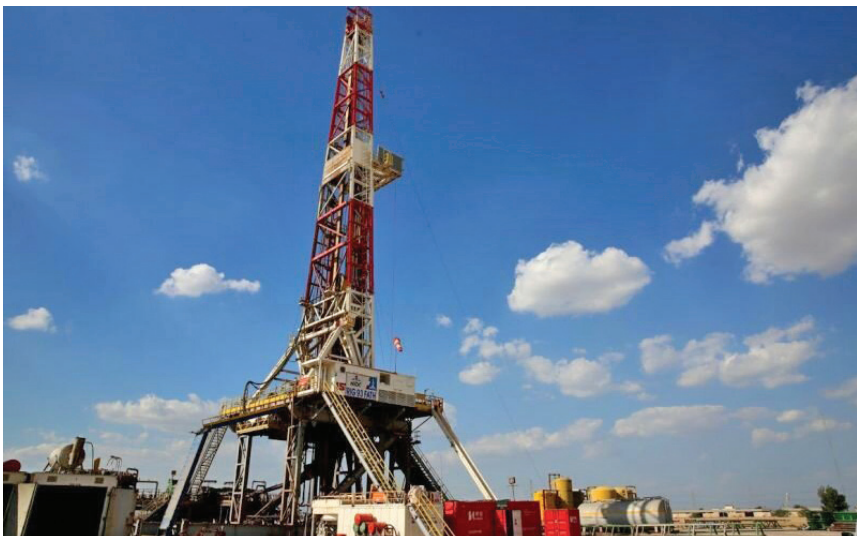
# ‘Azadegan oil field’s production capacity up 400% in 5 years’

**E N E R G Y** TEHRAN — Iran's Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC) said the oil production capacity of South Azadegan oil field in southwestern Iran has increased by 400 percent in the past five years, Shana reported.

According to a statement from PEDEC published by Shana, production from the mentioned oil field has increased by fourfold in the mentioned period while the capacity is up fivefold.

“Due to the current conditions of the country and especially the unjust U.S. sanctions, the National Iranian Oil Company has never limited itself to a single program [for development of this field] and depending on the conditions, budget and priorities, [NIOC] has planned and implemented alternative and flexible ways for developing this joint oilfield as quickly as possible,” the statement read.

According to the report, considering the strategic significance of South Azadegan oil



field, NIOC has placed especial importance on this project and so far the outmost

attention and focus has been given to the development of this field.

In early May, National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC) announced that digging operation of ten new wells of South Azadegan oilfield was started sooner than the schedule.

South Azadegan is one of the five major oilfields Iran shares with Iraq at the western part of Iran's southwestern region of Karoun, known as West Karoun fields.

West Karoun holds great importance for the country's oil industry since according to the latest studies, its in-situ deposit is estimated to be 67 billion barrels containing both light and heavy crude oils, and therefore it could have a big impact on Iran's oil output increases in the future.

With the fields fully operational, their output could add 1.2 million bpd to the country's oil production capacity.

Having an estimated 67 billion barrels of in-situ oil, West Karoun fields definitely deserve the spotlight which has been put on them recently.

## Oil’s future bleak – time for Persian Gulf producers to turn new page

By Kamel Al-Harami

Let us turn a new page as oil prices remain weak. Prices might hit new bottom next year – around \$25 a barrel in the worst case scenario envisaged by Russian oil companies. It seems very difficult to stop the oil price decline, even with cuts in oil production next year.

Further reductions in OPEC Plus production will be advantageous to other producers in terms of capturing more markets, no matter how small the volumes of gains are.

This time, it is hard to ask Russian oil companies to fully comply or even agree to new cuts as they will be the worst hit, even though other top OPEC producers are out of the market like Iran and Venezuela, which could capture back their market share in no time for political and commercial reasons.

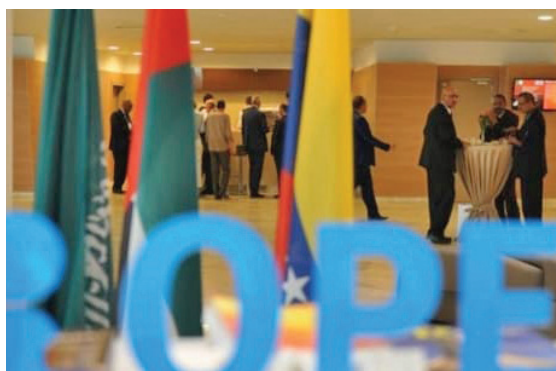
Oil markets are fragile and awash with crude oil from all over despite the 1.2 million reduction, up to the extent that even Saudi Aramco's reduction of crude oil within two weeks did not have much impact on oil prices. Within two working days, prices began to decline, reaching the

current price of \$61 with expectation to go below this level before the end of the year.

Our concern is what the Persian Gulf oil producer will do with such low oil prices as the minimum price of \$75 is needed to balance their budget with some difficulties and not forcing to dig into their financial reserves or borrowing or selling their 'jewel in the crown' by five to 10 percent in the case of Saudi Aramco.

Hard or limited choices must be made without taking harsh measures to curb spending. Yes, we produce the cheapest barrel of oil at an average of less than \$10, translating into net profit of \$50 a barrel, or daily net profit of \$150 million per day for Kuwait; while that of Saudi Aramco is \$365 million with 10 million barrels of crude oil production. On paper, this looks very attractive with huge profits beating all international commercial corporations.

However, the fact remains that Persian Gulf countries have overspent with some of them needing more than \$80 a barrel to balance their annual budgets. It is no longer the price of oil as much as the cost per barrel, without



any sign of radical solutions. Hoping for any surge in oil price is no longer viable while the future in terms of improvements in the coming years is bleak. Persian Gulf oil producers must be creative in coming up with solutions outside the barrel of oil.

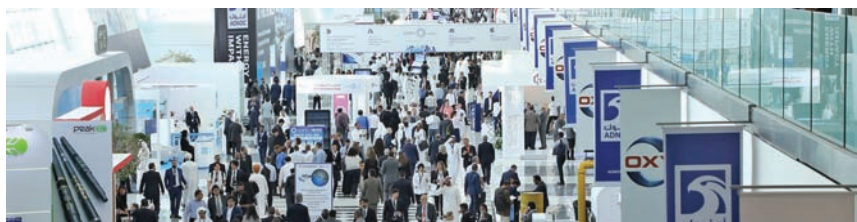
(Source: arabtimesonline.com)

## Africa’s energy industry to gather at ADIPEC 2019 to set agenda for 2020

Taking the lead in representing Africa at the world's largest oil and gas event, the African Energy Chamber (AEC) has signed an agreement with ADIPEC and officially endorses the conference and exhibition and invites all its partners to join the African delegation participating in The Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC).

According to oilreviewmiddleeast.com, Gabriel Mbaga Obiang Lima, minister of mines and hydrocarbons of Equatorial Guinea, said, the “good news for Equatorial Guinea and many African countries is, we have the resources.

African countries have some much-untapped reservoirs of oil and natural gas that have regrettably been underexplored.



“We need to attract investment in our oil and gas industry, explore, supply the market and also develop our countries. ADIPEC is a great place to meet potential investors. We have a unique relationship with the UAE through OPEC and the GECC.”

Nj Ayuk, executive chairman at the AEC and CEO of the Centurion Law Group, commented, “We need to have Africa better

represented within global investment shows like ADIPEC where major deals and contracts are being discussed.

The conference's focus on technology and the oil and gas sector 4.0 is especially relevant for Africa as the continent seeks to fully embrace digitalization and the latest technologies to leapfrog into next-generation energy initiatives and

developments.”

ADIPEC is being organized on the back of tremendous growth in investment and cooperation between the UAE and Africa this year, marked by the recent acquisition by ADNOC of Kosmos Energy's stakes in Senegalese and Mauritanian offshore licenses.

As interest for Africa picks up from Middle Eastern markets and global companies, ADIPEC offers the perfect stage to promote additional opportunities for such deals across African oil jurisdictions.

The conference will see the official launch of “Billions At Play: The Future of African Energy and Doing Deals”, the book by the AEC chairman that paves the way for the development of Africa's energy sector.

## Experts call for clear energy policies

By Lalin Fernandopulle

The energy sector - much like many other sectors in the economy, is in shambles with lack of, direction, consistency and clarity in policy, thereby plunging the country further into the abyss, said energy sector experts and economists at an energy forum last week in Colombo.

The panel comprising former regulators, think tank representatives, university dons and public sector organization heads, were unanimous that the energy sector urgently needs a clear, consistent and viable national policy with short- medium- and long-term plans for an efficient energy sector so as to overcome an imminent power crisis that will put the economy on the back foot again.

Energy sector experts have forecast 4.5 percent growth in electricity demand in the next 20 years which will need the installed capacity to be increased up 10,854 MW during the period. However, investments in the energy sector remains a key challenge in the country and will affect economic growth, whereas having an efficient energy sector will significantly contribute to economic and investment growth.

According to the World Energy Report published recently, the world's primary energy consumption of energy grew from 1.5 percent on average to 2.9 percent last year.

A key factor for the rise in energy consumption is that the world has suffered extreme climate conditions requiring extra energy and another factor is the increasing carbon emission levels worldwide.

Sri Lanka is no exception. Rapid increase in greenhouse gas emission due to urbanization and unplanned industrialization has resulted in extreme weather causing damage to the economy.

Frequent flash floods and droughts have threatened food security and the livelihoods of many people.

### ■ The G20 countries

All Central Banks of the G20 group of countries, have set up a network for greening economies due to the sharp rise in climate related insurance claims across countries.



However, the U.S. Central Bank (known as the Federal Reserve), is the 'odd man out', and has not joined this global initiative.

Increasing weather related disasters result in governments borrowing more.

The International Marine Organization (IMO) has called on vessel operators to shift to low sulphur fuel from January 2020 to restrict sulphur emission to 0.5 percent. It is estimated 60,000 vessels sail globally.

Sri Lanka has an ambitious target of generating 30 percent of electricity from renewable energy by 2020, and increasing the level to 50 percent by 2030. However, the political will has been lacking and is a major concern for the country which is on the brink of a major power crisis forecast by energy experts.

An energy sector expert from India on the panel, said India targets 50 percent of its power generation from renewables, by 2030.

Former Chairperson of the Central Electricity Regulatory Commission of India Dr. Pramod Deo said, “Despite the challenges with inter and intra state energy management, consistency and clarity of policy does exist.”

Executive Director and Head of Research of Verité

Research and Commissioner of the Public Utilities Commission of Sri Lanka (PUCSL) Dr. Nishan De Mel said the energy sector regulator has a key role to play particularly to ensure that social interest is preserved while being free from political interests.

### ■ The energy sector crisis

The energy sector crisis has been aggravated due to delays in implementing projects to meet the growing energy need of the country.

The implementation of the Long-Term Power Generation Plan of the Ceylon Electricity Board has been far too long in the back burner, while regulator and the implementer continue to 'pass the buck', back and forth. The country is aiming for energy self- sufficiency by 2030. It plans to increase the power generation capacity from 4,043 MW to 6,900 MW by 2025 with a significant increase in renewable energy.

However, despite the long term plans, the country experienced power outages in 2018 and 2019 due to hydro power reaching capacity and beginning to decline with less predictable weather patterns.

Information Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) Chairman Prof. Rohan Samarajiva said that he was disappointed with the 2019 energy policy.

The “country has not taken timely decisions on low cost base load power generation. Many think that renewable sources could solve the energy problem. It could to a certain extent, but foremost we need to fix the low cost base load problem,” he said.

Senior Professor, University of Colombo and Chairman of the Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka Sirimal Abeyratne said electricity generation cannot be looked at in isolation. It has to be looked into in a holistic manner and added that electricity demand will rise only if there is economic growth.

“We are only ahead of Afghanistan in terms of economic growth and we are the second most vulnerable country with regard to climate disasters,” he said.

(Source: sundayobserver.lk)

## Solar, wind are now cheaper than coal in most of the world

By Haley Zaremba

The world's premiere authority on global warming, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (or IPCC for short), announced in an alarming report at the end of last year that the world is running out of time to curb carbon dioxide emissions.

In fact, the data they collected found that in order to keep global temperatures from rising more than 1.5 degrees centigrade over pre-industrial averages within this century (the goal set by the Paris climate agreement), the entire world would have to transition to 100 percent clean energy by the middle of the century.

This, it goes without saying, is a lofty goal. But up until now, clean energies just haven't been able to compete in a market flooded with cheap fossil fuels.

Low- and no-carbon renewable energies like solar and wind power have long been subsidized by governments around the world because while they hold great promise for a clear, more sustainable energy future, they just couldn't compete with natural gas, coal, and oil when it comes to the bottom line.

But now, what was once so prohibitively expensive that governments needed to give financial incentive for these green energy technologies to be adopted at any serious scale, have become extremely cheap -- even with no government subsidies at all.

### ■ Sun-drenched winds

This week Bloomberg reported on the once unthinkable phenomena of solar and wind subsidies disappearing across the world because the industry has outgrown the need for them. “On sun-drenched fields across Spain and Italy, developers are building solar farms without subsidies or tax-breaks, betting they can profit without them.

In China, the government plans to stop financially supporting new wind farms. And in the U.S., developers are signing shorter sales contracts, opting to depend on competitive markets for revenue once the agreements expire,” Bloomberg said.

Perhaps most importantly, the article goes on to point out, these developments of self-sufficiency and profitability in the renewable energies sector “have profound implications for the push to phase out fossil fuels and slow the onset of climate change.”

The importance of our global energy production and consumption in terms of the global community's impact on greenhouse gas emissions and climate change can't be overstated. The Bloomberg report continues: “Electricity generation and heating account for 25% of global greenhouse gases.

As wind and solar demonstrate they can compete on their own against coal- and natural gas-fired plants, the economic and political arguments in favor of carbon-free power become harder and harder to refute.”

The reason that wind and solar have outgrown government subsidy programs is not because they never needed them at all -- to the contrary, the fact that financial state support of renewables is no longer needed shows that the subsidies did exactly what they were supposed to.

### ■ A young innovative sector

They allowed renewables, a young innovative sector, to get past the often-fatal initial stages of a new market sector where the prohibitively expensive first steps of scaling up an industry can often crush a company before it truly begins to function and then stabilize. Now, as JMP Securities equity analyst Joe Osha told reporters, the “training wheels are off.”

Wind and solar have successfully been able to expand to a level where they can mass-market and standardize, meaning costs go down and efficiency rises, especially as solar and wind technologies become more and more efficient.

According to data from BloombergNEF, wind power now costs half of what it did in 2010, and in the same period of time, the cost of solar has plummeted by a jaw-dropping 85 percent, making wind and solar cheaper than building a new coal or gas plant in most of the world.

Now, we just need wind and solar to be more widely adopted. Much, much more widely adopted.

Sales are already up, but renewables still account for a very slim proportion of global energy mixes. The profits are there, and the need is most certainly there, but the status quo can be hard to shake.

There is also the issue of variability with wind and solar -- if the wind doesn't blow or the sun doesn't shine, production dips, but demand for energy does not.

Luckily, there are solutions to this problem, and the market for energy storage, which would help provide a steady energy flow to the grid, is growing rapidly as well. We have a long, long way to go towards reaching the IPCC's deadline of 100 percent renewables by the middle of the century, but the goal is now more attainable than ever.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Vietnam to promote use of LNG in power industry

The Vietnamese government and Ministry of Industry and Trade planned to create favorable conditions for Japanese enterprises to research, survey and deploy liquefied natural gas (LNG) projects in Vietnam as it attempted to develop its use in the power production industry.

As stated by elevenmyanmar.com, the statement was issued by Minister Trn Tun Anh during a meeting with Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Isshu Sugawara in Tokyo on Thursday.

Anh asked Japan to continue supporting Vietnam to promote the development of gas, thermal and power projects, with the necessary regulations and policies to expand LNG ports and train staff in the field.

Sugawara said Japan would increase its budget to support training human resources for Vietnam in the near future.

Regarding international economic integration, the two ministers emphasized the need to promote multilateral trade negotiations in the region such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

Sugawara said he highly appreciated Vietnam's development in recent years and believed the RCEP agreement would be completed on time.

The meeting was held after Anh attended the LNG Producer-Consumers Conference 2019 in Tokyo on Thursday, which attracted policymakers, researchers and representatives from 14 LNG production countries and 12 LNG consumption countries.

At the conference, Anh said the development of LNG was an indispensable trend to diversify fuel sources, contributing to the country's energy security.

Vietnam's energy exploitation is mainly based on traditional resources such as hydroelectricity, coal, oil and gas, and hydroelectricity has almost been fully exploited. The Vietnamese Government has established policies to increase the use of renewable energy for economic development.



## U.S. cannot win in Afghanistan

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — On Saturday US President Donald Trump announced that he was canceling peace talks with the Afghanistan insurgency group the Taliban following an attack in Kabul which led to the death of an American soldier.

The president had aimed to broker a settlement and ceasefire with the organization in the bid to wind down a conflict that has plagued the Central Asian country since a NATO-led coalition overthrew its rule in 2001 as part of the War on Terror.

Over the near 20 years since, allied forces have failed to eradicate the organization's presence in the country. The Taliban refuses to recognize the local Afghanistan government, which it deems to be a puppet of America. The ordeal has subsequently taken the lives of thousands of American troops, as well as that of supporting countries, cost billions of dollars and shows absolutely no sign of coming to an end.

Given this, one must question whether Trump can "win" in Afghanistan. The president, spurred by his "America First" agenda, would very much like to try and secure peace so that he can pursue his foreign policy priorities elsewhere.

As unrealistic as this is, he is pressed by many in the American political system who see such an effort as a strategic abandonment of the country, doomed to be violated by the Taliban who will inevitably retake power. Attempts to force them to concede will also not work. In this light, it will continue to be Washington's quagmire for the foreseeable future. Why is the United States in Afghanistan? The reality of Afghanistan's desolation might be attributed to the fact that it has been a never-ending center of insurgency, war and geopolitical ambition.

Nicknamed "The Graveyard of Empires," the region has experienced a lot. The United States has contributed thoroughly to its demise as a nation, with Washington having invested heavily in its support of insurgent movements in the 1980s to defeat the influence of the Soviet Union and the Afghan socialist state.

In the long run, it was a move which backfired in its empowerment of extremism and the subsequent rise of Taliban rule, who were then linked by Washington to the September 11 attacks thus leading to the invasion of the country by a NATO coalition.

Since that time, the United States has persistently lingered in Afghanistan in the bid to support its government and to try and uphold stability. The Taliban, however, has been resilient against the foreign presence, thriving on the country's poor governance structures and desolate economy to sustain influence. This has created a perpetual game of cat and mouse which has produced a never-ending trajectory of casualties and attacks, but no results to show for it. It has become a headache and conundrum for American foreign policymakers.

Trump, not surprisingly, feels different. Under his "America First" mantra, he has opposed the deployment of American troops for causes that do not contribute to the direct gain of the United States. He criticized operations and occupations as "expensive" and has attempted to end US-led conflicts in given regions by brokering peace deals. Afghanistan is one of these locations. Trump does not see the country as strategically important, but a distraction. However, as with all his proposals to withdraw US troops or rescale operations, the president persistently fails to come up with a tangible strategy.

The question is what can be done? If Trump aims to pressure or force the group to capitulate, he is wrong. To try and do so would only be a bigger distraction to US foreign policy and resources. In this case, it becomes a lose-lose situation for the United States: not only after 20 years does it seem less plausible than ever to defeat the Taliban, but certainly peace seems far-fetched and idealistic at best. As a result, this country has truly become America's quagmire; for the foreseeable future. There is no way out.

## Lawrence Davidson: War on Yemen undermining Saudi Arabia's economic growth

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Lawrence Davidson, professor of history, says now the war on Yemen is being spread into Saudi Arabia, causing disruption in Riyadh's economic stability.

In an exclusive interview with FNA, professor Davidson said, "Further escalation of this war could prove ruinous to the Persian Gulf Arab states... as the UAE has already witnessed an economic downturn in part due to the negative budgetary impact of participation in the Yemen conflict."



Commenting on the economic effects of the attack on Aramco, professor Davidson said even if there are no more attacks on Aramco, it endures record low stocks value, and "Investors will remain skittish — a factor that will also carry over into investment in the Persian Gulf region generally."

Lawrence Davidson is a retired professor of history from West Chester University in Pennsylvania. In his academic researches, he has focused on American foreign relations with the Middle East. Below is the full text of the interview:

■ Despite the defense budget of over \$55bln, Saudi Arabia's most strategic targets were under fire by the forces of Yemen, the impoverished Arab country. Why did the 3rd largest defense budget fail to protect Aramco?

A: The Saudis buy their defense in the form of weapons purchases. They are under-trained to effectively use much of this material. Thus, they have purchased anti-missile weaponry but it was obviously not deployed to protect the oil site in question. The Americans will no doubt be asked to deploy and man this defense network at the oil sites for the near future. The White House counts on the income made by staffing the defense facilities with its contractors.

■ Given the attack on Aramco, are the Western investors interested in Aramco's shares any longer?

A: Aramco shares will no doubt fall in the short term. If the situation does not escalate further the shares should recover slowly, though not back to their original highs. Investors will remain skittish — a factor that will also carry over into investment in the Persian Gulf region generally. The prevailing economic instability is a way the Persian Gulf Arab states have been made to share Iran's economic pain, for both are part of a connected threatening situation.

■ How do you find Saudi Arabia and its ally the UAE's economic growth in light of the war on Yemen, and tensions with Iran?

A: It is all tied together. From the point of view of a foreign investor, war disrupts economic stability. War that goes on for years is also hard to contain. The war in Yemen is spreading into Saudi Arabia and this will undermine Saudi growth. The UAE has already witnessed an economic downturn in part due to the negative budgetary impact of participation in the Yemen conflict. Further escalation of this war could prove ruinous to the Persian Gulf Arab states.

# Decoupling effort shows U.S. underrates China

**GLOBALTIMES** — Some fanatical US hawks need to take a closer look at what the Chinese economy has achieved over the past 70 years, instead of devising crazy ideas about a US-China decoupling. Why? Because they are playing with fire and seriously underestimating the development of China's manufacturing industry and companies.

The news that the Trump administration is considering delisting Chinese companies from US stock exchanges seems to be the latest attempt at a decoupling. The move is said to be part of a broader effort to limit US investment in China.

Major US stock indexes fell following this news on Friday, with US-listed shares of Chinese companies tumbling. Alibaba sank 5.15 percent, JD.com was down 5.95 percent, and Baidu Inc declined 3.67 percent.

US Treasury spokesperson Monica Crowley was quoted in a Saturday report as saying that, "The administration is not contemplating blocking Chinese companies from listing shares on US stock exchanges at this time." The denial is likely only an attempt to reassure the market.

Whatever the real intentions of the US Treasury are, the news itself is expected to have significant repercussions for the Chinese and US economies, as well as their companies, in the future. Nowadays, certain US hawks are relentless in seeking a decoupling from China, which has already caused disruption to normal business operations and financial markets. One of the possible consequences of the uncertain ban on Chinese listings is that US-listed Chinese companies may start considering contingency plans, or at least restrain their business expansion in the US, given rising uncertainties from the US-China trade war. US companies that have investments in China may also need to think about the same issues. In the end, the US will see its remaining growth impetus depleted by concerns over future risks and policy uncertainties.

Some US politicians seem to believe that a decoupling from China will be simple and that it won't significantly impact its economy. Such an arrogant belief in reality underlines a serious underestimation of what the Chinese economy and Chinese companies are capable of today. After 70 years of development, China has built a world-class manufacturing industry, and has an independent and complete modern industrial system. It was during the development process that a number of outstanding Chinese companies emerged, some of which are now listed in the US. It should be noted that the listing of Chinese companies in the US is not just beneficial to China, but also to US investors. And the future growth of these Chinese companies may mean a lot more to US citizens, especially those with a 401(k) plan. It is foolish for US hawks to try to decouple. After all, it is US consumers and investors that will bear the costs.

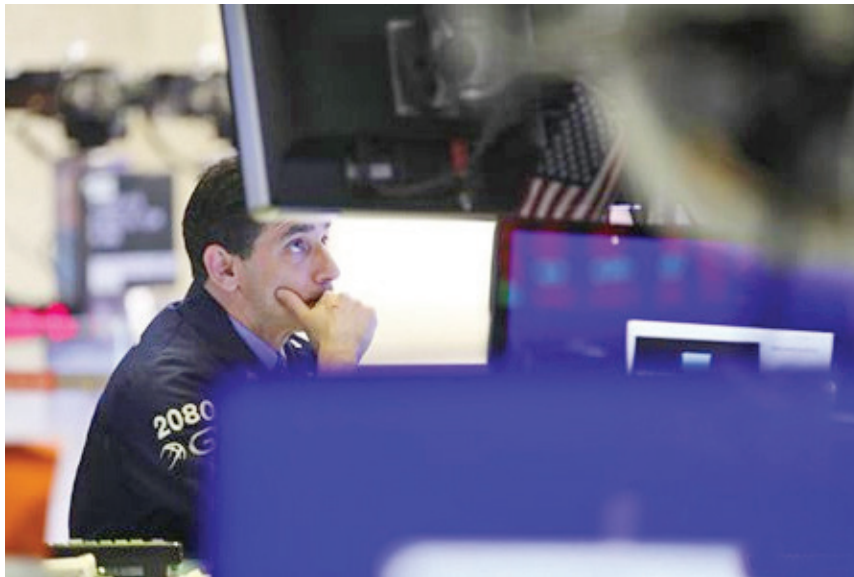
■ **China-Africa governance exchange nothing like the export of Western institutions**

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, China has been providing foreign aid for 70 years. It can be said that foreign aid was the most important and even the only content of the Republic's diplomacy for a long time. As China's aid expands, especially with the deepening of China-Africa relations in recent years, the criticism of China's aid to Africa by world opinion has intensified.

Although "encouraging corruption" and "exporting the Chinese model" is not the reality of China's aid to Africa, the relationship between China's foreign assistance and the buildup of Africa's governance capacity still needs clarification.

China never avoided talking about the emphasis of aid or downplayed the governance exchanges between China and African countries. China's foreign aid model is fundamentally different from the adopted Western model. The Western aid model is accompanied by lots of add-on conditions like political system reform, market economy reform and government performance. Once African countries do not meet the bar, Western countries will wield punishing sticks.

In contrast, China has guaranteed that its aid to Africa "does not attach any conditions and does not interfere with Africa's domestic affairs." This



model should not be interpreted as China's aid does not support the improvement of African countries' governance or exacerbates corruption in Africa. The evolution of China's foreign aid in the past 70 years is an important part of China's continuous efforts to be integrated into and shape globalization.

China's aid to Africa accounts for more than one third of China's total foreign aid, which epitomizes China's understanding of South-South cooperation and global development governance. China supports Africa's governance improvement. Its foreign aid has gradually refined and sublimated from strengthening infrastructure construction, emphasizing technical cooperation and official training, to highlighting the exchange of experience in governing the country. China's aid to Africa also covers four major aspects, including security and the rule of law, participation of citizens in governance and human rights, opportunities for sustainable economic development, and human development.

There are three reasons as to how Chinese experience and practice in strengthening Africa's governance capacity have also been positively evaluated by African countries and the global development evaluation system. First, China's development experience better suits Africa. Developed countries have long wished to apply their development theories to Africa. However, Africa, as a former colony, is not equipped with the same starting point and conditions as developed countries. Forcing the model on this theme has caused turmoil and even infiltration of terrorism in Africa. In contrast, with more resemblances, China can be a better reference for African countries. Second, China's aid pays more attention to equal status in China-Africa relations. China treats African countries based on the principles of respect and equality. This is of great attraction to the African continent that was once colonized and accustomed to the double standards of the West.

Third, China's aid has enhanced the bargaining power of African countries. For example, Angola ended 27 years of civil war in 2002. Western society led by the US attached many additional conditions to Angola's post-war reconstruction assistance, which prevented Angola from obtaining start-up funds. However, China insisted on providing unconditional aid to Angola, which enabled Angola to claim rights in negotiations with the West and eventually compelled the West to make concessions.

However, China is also facing the problem like how to get a better result from aid in promoting African governance. Since conducting the governance exchanges with China depends on African countries' free will, the lack of government transparency mechanisms in African countries has exacerbated the problem.

If the exchange of governance experience only stays in the words and documents and lacks supervision and evaluation, the effect of improving the governance capacity of African countries will certainly be greatly reduced.

Improving governance capacity is crucial to Africa's independent development. For an entire century, Africa failed to rid itself of the development dilemma and achieve poverty alleviation under Western guidance. Therefore, African countries hold high expectations for China, a

fast-growing emerging power. They hope to learn distinctive experience from their new partner, which is why Africa is "looking east."

China is willing to share its development and governance experience accumulated in the past decades with African countries, thus boosting African modernization. Although the actual implementation is also faced with some difficulties, I believe that with the continuous enhancement of political mutual trust between China and Africa, the external impetus will certainly be internalized into the endogenous impetus for reform.

■ **China's green road to sustainable development**

On September 26, Chinese delegation attending the 74th Session of the UN Assembly unveiled at the UN Headquarters China's Progress Report on Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2019), the second progress report released by the Chinese government since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015.

Like its first progress report, the second one takes stock of the progress China has made in pursuing the 2030 Agenda in an all-round way, identified gaps and outlined plans for the next step. On top of that, as a welcome improvement, the report also included multiple case studies in five aspects of China's implementation endeavor, providing valuable references for the global implementation process.

The report speaks volumes of the resolve and action of China as a committed and responsible major country. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda is a huge project that demands systematic efforts as well as strong political will, resolve and action. This report shows the proactive, steady, sustained and robust efforts of the Chinese government and, more importantly, guided and orderly participation and great contribution of motivated multiple stakeholders in China in implementing the Agenda.

As stressed by the Sustainable Development Report 2019 released by the UN, climate change and development inequality are two major challenges facing today's world. China is fully committed to ecological progress and inclusive development. The building of an "ecological civilization" has been written into the Chinese Constitution and the idea that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets" has taken root in the hearts of ordinary Chinese people. Since 2012, China has afforested nearly 70,000 square kilometers and restored more than 30,000 square kilometers of desertified land each year on average. Between 2000 and 2017, the new afforestation in China accounted for 25 percent of the global total.

China has taken a massive precision poverty alleviation endeavor, bringing millions of people out of poverty, promoting rural renewal and pursuing inclusive development. Its efforts to leave no one behind have paid off handsomely. China brought 13 million people out of poverty every year between 2012 and 2018, and the total number accounts for over 70 percent of poverty reduction worldwide for the same period.

China is on track to eradicating absolute poverty next year and meet the first Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10 years ahead of schedule. Maternal and neonatal mortality rates have been further reduced, although China has met these targets long before

required. China keeps narrowing the gap between urban and rural areas and between different regions in terms of infrastructure such as road and ICT access, expanding the social security net, and further improving provision of public services.

As the largest developing country, China is committed to its due international responsibilities as an active participant in global climate governance for an equitable, reasonable and win-win global system. China endeavors to align the Belt and Road cooperation with the 2030 Agenda for common development. Over the years, China has also provided assistance to other developing countries to the best of its ability to support them in implementing the 2030 Agenda through bilateral channels and under the framework of South-South cooperation, including through the China-UN Peace and Development Fund and South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund, making important contributions to the global implementation process.

The report offers China's experience for other countries to speed up their implementation. President Xi Jinping stressed that sustainable development holds the "golden key" to the resolution of today's global issues. In pursuing sustainable development, countries need to learn from each other and foster synergy in addressing challenges. The report sheds light on China's experience at least in three respects, providing useful references for other countries. First, how to integrate the SDGs into national mid-to-long-term development strategy. China is committed to innovation-driven, coordinated, green and open development that is shared by all, and pursues a five-sphere integrated plan in its development, which fits perfectly well with the 2030 Agenda's idea of integrated and balanced development in economic, social and environmental dimensions. The five-year plan for national economic and social development is a periodic guiding document for China's development across the board. From day one of China's implementation, the 2030 Agenda has been deeply integrated with China's 13th Five-Year Plan to ensure the implementation is comprehensive, balanced, practical and effective.

Second, how to build an implementation mechanism featuring balanced progress and effective coordination. The 2030 Agenda is composed of 17 goals and 169 targets. In early 2016, China established an inter-agency coordination mechanism participated in by 45 government departments. For balanced progress in implementation, 17 goals and 169 targets were divided and assigned to different departments according to their mandates. In fact, the report itself is an outcome of inter-agency coordination and contribution, fully demonstrating the importance of an effective implementation mechanism.

Third, how can societal participation and contribution be encouraged. A highlight in this report is China's best practices in five areas - targeted poverty alleviation, innovation-driven development, ecological civilization, revitalizing rural China, and the Belt and Road cooperation, explained through 17 cases, including practice of local governments, villages, towns, the business community and ordinary people. This presents a more comprehensive picture of how the two approaches are combined - government's top-down mobilization and inputs, and implementation, and bottom-up implementation with the participation, innovation and initiatives of the non-state actors.

The report sets objectives for the next steps of China's implementation. Sustainable development is an ongoing endeavor. China is still confronted with a long and uphill journey in development, including shifting growth drivers and promoting structural adjustment and upgrading. The report outlines tasks and specific pathways for the next steps at the end of the chapter for each and every SDG, indicating China's confidence and resolve to pursue better, more efficient, equitable and sustainable development. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda calls for the effort of all countries. This progress report gives us great confidence that China will continue to step up domestic implementation and make more contribution to the global implementation process.



# The endless crisis at the White House

By Saeed Sobhani

**TEHRAN** — There seems to be a crisis over the deal between the President of the United States and the President of Ukraine. This has increased US public opinion's approval of impeachment and even ousting Trump. Here's a look at the latest reports and news:

Another Day, Another Scandal. What the 'Trump-Ukraine Collusion' Is Really About

by Daniel Lazare wrote in Antiwar that For nearly a week, Washington has been consumed by reports that Donald Trump pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to dig up dirt on Democratic frontrunner Joe Biden. The furor began on Wednesday, Sept. 18, when the Washington Post disclosed that Trump had said something to an unknown foreign leader that "was so alarming that a US intelligence official who had worked at the White House went to the inspector general of the intelligence community." Two days later, the Wall Street Journal reported that the foreign leader was Zelensky and that Trump had asked him "about eight times" in the course of a single phone conversation to look into allegations that then-Vice President Biden had pushed for the removal of a public prosecutor investigating a Ukrainian company that employed his son, Hunter. A day after that, Biden complained that Trump was trying to "smear me," while on Sunday, Adam Schiff, Democratic chairman of the House intelligence committee, declared that Trump might be guilty of "the most profound violation of the presidential oath of office ... during just about any presidency."

From initial report to America's greatest scandal ever in just four days — surely this was some sort of Washington speed record. Since the moment Trump was elected, Democrats have been searching for "the Big One," as New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd put it, the scandal "that's going to finally bring Donald Trump down" — and now at last they found it.

Of course, Democrats said the same about Russiagate, the scandal that dominated headlines for two and a half years but fizzled when special prosecutor Robert Mueller said he was unable to come up with evidence "that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government." But now that Trump stood accused of conspiring or coordinating with the Ukrainian government — or at least trying to — surely the Big One was finally at hand.

But it's not. One reason is that there's no sign of a quid pro quo. The Washington Post suggested in its initial report that the purpose of the July 25 phone call was to "manipulate the Ukrainian government into helping Trump's reelection campaign." The means, supposedly, was \$250 million in military aid that he was threatening to withhold if the Ukraine failed to cooperate. But the Wall Street Journal's source specifically denied that Trump had threatened a cutoff while the New York Times reported that a decision to end military aid — subsequently revoked — had actually occurred weeks earlier.

Another reason for skepticism is that charges of a smear job clearly misplaced. If anyone's activities are suspicious, it's Biden's, and Trump can hardly be blamed for wanting to get to the bottom of them.

To briefly recap: in February 2014, a US-backed coup spearheaded by ultra-rightists sent Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich fleeing and installed billionaire Petro Poroshenko in his place. This was bad news for a wealthy Yanukovich supporter named Mykola Zlochevsky who was widely accused of corruption and was in danger of losing all or some of his holdings. In an attempt to smooth things over with the Americans, Zlochevsky appointed Hunter Biden to a lucrative post with Burisma Holdings, a natural-gas company he founded in 2002. Hunter had just been discharged from the US Navy after testing positive for cocaine. He had no experience in the natural-gas business and knew nothing about the Ukraine. But he got the job anyway along with a salary of \$50,000 a month.

But when the Ukrainian prosecutor general launched an investigation into Burisma, the Obama administration demanded that Viktor Shokin, the man who took over the office a year later, be removed. Indeed, Biden bragged that he threatened to withhold \$1 billion in loan guarantees during a visit to Kiev if Poroshenko didn't do as he was told. "I said, 'We're leaving in six hours,'" he said last year. "If the prosecutor's not fired, you're not getting the money. Well, son of a bitch, he got fired."

If anyone's guilty of a quid pro quo, it would seem to be Biden. Questions remain. Washington says it wanted Shokin because he was impeding the Ukraine's anti-corruption drive and that it pushed for someone more vigorous even though the results for Burisma might have been negative. But the New York Times says the company was pleased by Shokin's dismissal, and that a year later it was able to reach an amicable settlement with his successor. Hunter Biden's job was safe.

Still, profiting off a family connection in this manner is plainly corrupt, and Biden is obviously attempting to deflect attention from his own misdeeds by screaming about Trump. The upshot is yet another tedious pseudo-scandal in which Democrats will only succeed in embarrassing themselves.

Understanding the Trump Ukraine Call

Also Foreign policy reported that U.S. President Donald Trump's July phone call with his Ukrainian counterpart, Volodymyr Zelensky, has tripped off one of the most complicated and controversial moments of the Trump presidency.

On Wednesday, the White House released a much-anticipated memo summarizing the call with Zelensky amid growing controversy that Trump used the call to pressure the Ukrainian leader to investigate former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden and his son. The summary of the call shows that Trump urged Zelensky to look into Biden and his son Hunter. Biden, who sat on the board of a Ukrainian oil and natural gas company. During the call, which is reportedly the subject of a formal whistleblower complaint against the U.S. president, Trump said "I would like you to do us a favor," to Zelensky after the Ukrainian president inquired about obtaining U.S. military equipment. Trump also told Zelensky that he should be in contact with U.S. Attorney General William Barr and Rudy Giuliani, the president's personal lawyer. Foreign Policy has annotated the memo to unspool



some of the more convoluted details and give context to the key points of the U.S.-Ukrainian relationship.

Donald Trump made a HUGE mistake releasing the Ukraine transcript

Also CNN reported that It's always a challenge to understand why Donald Trump says and does things. He is a hugely impulsive figure who often acts on a whim. There is no long-term strategy that informs his daily tactical decisions -- just Trump, well, doing stuff.

But even by that haphazard standard, the President's decision this week to release a rough transcript of his July 25 conversation with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky makes zero political sense -- either in the moment he did it or in the after-action report.

In each episode of his weekly YouTube show, Chris Cillizza will delve a little deeper into the surreal world of politics. Click to subscribe!

The rough log of the call makes quite clear to any fair-minded person that Trump did the following things:

- 1) Repeatedly reminded Zelensky of how much the United States does (and can do) for Ukraine.
- 2) Asked Zelensky to investigate debunked allegations of corrupt activity by Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, in Ukraine Trump's Ukraine scandal: Who's who?
- 3) Said he would put Attorney General William Barr and former New York City mayor Rudy Giuliani in touch with Zelensky to follow up about the Biden probe.

That's not an interpretation of what Trump said or a second-hand account of the call. It is an, admittedly rough, transcript released (and presumably blessed) by the White House. In which the President of the United States says things like "I will say that we do a lot for Ukraine. We spend a lot of effort and a lot of time" and "Biden went around bragging that he stopped the prosecution so if you can look into it ... It sounds horrible to me." (There is no evidence of wrongdoing by either Joe or Hunter Biden.)

That we have the President's actual words here -- undisputed -- makes this whole matter so, so much worse for Trump.

Remember that in the Mueller probe into Russian interference in the 2016 election and Trump's possible role in obstructing that investigation, we never had a transcript of, say, the conversation between the President and then-FBI Director James Comey in which Comey alleges Trump asked him to drop the investigation into Michael Flynn. Or of Trump's conversation with Corey Lewandowski, in which the President told his former campaign manager to tell Attorney General Jeff Sessions to un-recuse himself in the probe.

We also don't have a transcript of Trump referring to Haiti and African nations as "[s-hole] countries." Or of the full conversations between Trump and his former lawyer, Michael Cohen, as they discussed the hush money payments made to Stormy Daniels and Karen McDougal. Or lots and lots of other controversies and alleged conversations -- big and small -- that have sprouted up during Trump's first three years in office.

That's not this. In this case, we have the receipts -- even if what was released by the White House was not a full transcript but rather a sort of rough memo documenting the conversation between Trump and Zelensky. It's a primary source document that, uh, documents a clear use of pressure by Trump to get Zelensky to do what he wants.

"IT WAS A PERFECT CONVERSATION WITH UKRAINE. PRESIDENT!" Trump tweeted Friday morning -- apparently quoting himself and in ALL CAPS, no less! Later on Friday, he added: "If that perfect phone call with the President of Ukraine Isn't considered appropriate, then no future President can EVER again speak to another foreign leader!"

The number of tweets -- and the amount of defensiveness contained therein -- would suggest to even the most armchair of psychologists that the President might well be overcompensating for something he now realizes he very, very much should not have done.

As I wrote when the Ukraine call was initially released, it reads pretty close to a smoking gun that Trump used the power of his office to further his own personal, political interests. (If you are arguing that Trump didn't say the words "quid pro quo" so, therefore, he is in the clear, well, OK.)

Whether Trump's decision to release the transcript was driven by his blindness to how it would read or his conviction that he did everything absolutely perfectly -- or both -- is sort of beside the point now. The genie is out of the bottle. And that reality is incredibly perilous for the President.

Trump-Ukraine scandal: U.S. special envoy steps down as crisis widens

Also Guardian reported that Kurt Volker, the US special envoy for Ukraine, has resigned, according to a US official, becoming the first casualty in the rapidly growing impeachment crisis surrounding Donald Trump. Volker is due to

appear before Congress next week and was mentioned in the whistleblower complaint as helping Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelenskiy "navigate" Trump's demands. The news, first reported in an Arizona student newspaper, the State Press, emerged late on Friday, hours after Congress issued a subpoena to the US secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, to hand over documents related to contacts the president and his lawyer had with the Ukrainian government.

It emerged this week that Volker had helped organise a meeting between Trump's personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, and a Ukraine presidential aide. Giuliani was trying to convince Zelenskiy's government to investigate the son of Joe Biden, Trump's possible opponent in next year's elections.

With impeachment proceedings against Trump under way, further reports emerged of White House efforts to limit access to transcripts of conversations with other countries. Trump's phone calls with Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman and Russian president Vladimir Putin were also tightly restricted, according to former administration officials quoted by CNN and the New York Times.

The Washington Post reported that further restrictions were placed on details from a 2017 meeting between Trump, Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov and ambassador Sergei Kislyak, in which Trump is reported to have said he was not bothered by Moscow interference in the 2016 election because the US did the same kind of thing in other countries. The White House limited access to the remarks to "an unusually small number of people", the Post said, after speaking to three former officials. The president had already been accused of sharing highly sensitive information on the Islamic State movement during the meeting.

Earlier on Friday, in a congressional letter delivered to Pompeo, three House committees demanded documents as part of their investigation into "the extent to which President Trump jeopardised national security by pressing Ukraine to interfere with our 2020 election and by withholding security assistance provided by Congress to help Ukraine counter Russian aggression".

The chairmen of the intelligence, foreign affairs and oversight committees also warned Pompeo that "your failure or refusal to comply with the subpoena shall constitute evidence of obstruction of the House's impeachment inquiry".

The committees sent a separate note to Pompeo notifying him of a rapid schedule of depositions they expected to hold with five state department officials involved in contacts with Ukraine. The list begins next Wednesday with the former ambassador, Marie Yovanovitch, who was forced to retire from the post in May, earlier than planned. Trump, according to the White House version of his 25 July conversation with Zelenskiy, was scathing about Yovanovitch, referring to her as "the woman" who was "bad news", and who was "going to go through some things".

Volker is due to appear on 3 October, the day after Yovanovitch's scheduled deposition. Giuliani has publicly displayed text messages purportedly from Volker, about a meeting he had helped arrange with a Zelenskiy aide.

Giuliani was seeking to persuade the Kyiv government to investigate Hunter Biden, the son of former vice-president Joe Biden, one of the frontrunners in the Democratic primary for next year's presidential election. Giuliani himself again came under scrutiny on Friday when it emerged he had accepted a paid slot to speak at a Moscow-backed conference next week that Putin is expected to attend. The appearance was promptly cancelled after a report by the Washington Post.

The younger Biden had been on the board of an Ukrainian energy company, but an Ukrainian investigation found no evidence of impropriety.

Shortly before making the call to Zelenskiy in July, to press him further on investigating Biden, Trump ordered the suspension of US military aid to Ukraine.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday, Pompeo claimed to have been too busy to read more than a couple of paragraphs of the whistleblower complaint about Trump's behaviour towards Ukraine, and insisted that no state department official had done anything inappropriate. In their letter to Pompeo, the three committee chairman, noted that he had first been asked to hand over relevant documentation on 9 September, but had not complied.

"Your actions are all the more troubling given that since our 9 September request, it has become clear that multiple state department officials have direct knowledge of the subject matters of the House's impeachment inquiry," the chairmen -- Democrats Eliot Engel, Adam Schiff and Elijah Cummings -- said.

Pompeo's continued refusal to hand over the documents, they added, would impair Congress's "constitutional responsibilities to protect our national security and the integrity of our democracy".

## Just how swampy are U.S-Saudi arms deals?

By Andrew Cokburn

The American conservative-Let's just say that Americans representing the kingdom are making a killing while pushing U.S. jobs overseas.

CEO of Lockheed Martin, Marillyn Hewson (L) and Ahmad Bin Aqeel Al Khatib (R), Director of Saudi Research and Marketing Group pose for a photo after signing a bilateral agreement, worth \$280 billion, between United States and Saudi Arabia at Al-Yamamah Palace in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on May 20, 2017. (Photo by Bandar Algaloud /Saudi Royal Council/ Anadolu Agency/Getty Images)

The old maxim that "the U.S. government exists to buy arms at home and sell arms abroad" was never truer than today. Our defense budget is soaring to previously undreamed-of heights and overseas weapons deals are setting new records.

Indeed, the arms sales industry has become so multi-faceted that while some American corporations push weapons, other U.S. firms are making money by acting on behalf of the buyers. Thus a Lockheed Martin-Raytheon team recently dispatched to Riyadh to negotiate the finer points of the ongoing \$15 billion deal for seven Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) batteries jointly manufactured by the two companies, found themselves facing not Saudis across the table, but a team of executives from the Boston Consulting Group. This behemoth, which has \$7.5 billion in global revenues, is just one of the firms servicing Mohammed "Bone Saw" Bin Salman's vicious and spendthrift consolidation of power in the kingdom.

Among other lucrative revenue streams, BCG enjoys a contract to overhaul the defense ministry's arms buying practices, a challenging task given the hundreds of billions of dollars worth of weapons MBS has on order.

For arms dealers doing business in the kingdom, the most visible overhaul to date has been the consolidation of control over Saudi weapons purchases, and all branches of the armed forces, in the hands of MBS himself.

Previously, control in this area had been distributed among different factions of the ruling family, thus enabling each to enjoy the financial rewards (read: kickbacks) traditionally attendant to such deals. But MBS has made it his business, in every sense of the word, to cut out potentially rival middlemen by centralizing all Saudi defense business under the umbrella of the General Authority of Military Industries, with management in the trustworthy (he hopes) hands of close relatives and henchmen such as Mutlaq bin Hamad Al Murashid, the Princeton-trained nuclear engineer charged with developing the Saudi nuclear program.

The Boston Group has cultivated a market in advising foreign governments on arms buying, promoting the fostering of their own military-industrial complexes, or, as BCG executives demurely expressed the strategy in a 2018 paper: "Unlike the way business was done in the past, today's buyers want the defense contractor to invest in their country's infrastructure, help develop their local defense capabilities, and diversify their economies."

So-called "offset" agreements have long been a feature of major weapons export deals in which the exporter undertakes to award sub-contracts for the weapon system in the purchasing country, or else offer some other quid pro quo in the form of business or technology transfer. Their massive expansion in recent times, as highlighted in the BCG paper, brings an additional benefit for all parties involved. But it comes at a risk of sending U.S. defense jobs overseas, and opens up security vulnerabilities, since sensitive technology is now being shared with foreign arms manufacturers abroad.

But the promise of a lucrative offset contract to a company in which an influential figure on the buy side has an interest could be a powerful inducement to swing the decision in a favorable direction, an elegant solution to pesky prohibitions against bribery, including the hated 1977 Foreign Corrupt Practices Act that was inspired in part by revelations of arms-deals bribes by Lockheed and others.

As the well-informed Paris-based security news service Intelligence Online delicately puts it: "One of the reasons for [the success of such arrangements] is that they are not totally covered by the transparency criteria governing commission payments [AKA bribes] which were brought into force by OECD convention in 1997." (Not, of course, to suggest that BCG itself has base motivations in facilitating offset deals today.)

Of course, if the Riyadh based BCG office ("always buzzing with a motivating and inspiring vibe," according to the corporate website) had the true interests of Saudi Arabia at heart, they would have thrown the THAAD sales force out on their ears. THAAD is a system distinguished not only by its enormous cost (\$1 billion plus per six-launcher battery), but also by its total uselessness for the Saudis. Presumably, the Saudis have been sold on the THAAD as a defense against Iranian ballistic missiles like the old Soviet Scud and its various Iranian upgrades.

As its name suggests, the THAAD aims to intercept incoming short range or medium range ballistic missiles arcing down into the top of the atmosphere 25 to 90 miles up and no further away than 125 miles. The THAAD's radar must therefore "acquire" -- spot -- the actual missile warhead, distinguishing it from nearby broken up pieces of its spent booster rocket or from decoys deliberately launched with it. The radar must then track and predict the future trajectory of the warhead itself, not confusing it with any of the accompanying bits and pieces. Relying on the radar's predictions, the THAAD missile interceptor, once launched, must quickly accelerate to MACH 8 speed and guide with absolute precision to hit the target warhead directly, like a bullet. Near misses won't do.

After a series of early, disastrous failures, the Pentagon is now touting a fifteen out of fifteen string of successful THAAD launchings. Needless to say, not one of these tests has been against a ballistic missile target accompanied by booster debris or decoys, much less against half a dozen of such missiles fired at once.

This alone should be reason enough for the Saudis to toss the deal, but even if the system could perform as advertised, it would have been entirely irrelevant as a defense against the September 14 Houthi attacks on Abqaiq and Kurais. The drones and cruise missiles employed clearly came in at low altitude, while THAAD is designed to operate against high altitude targets. The Patriot and Hawk batteries already in place are of course no better suited to confront low altitude threats, which are inevitably masked by ground clutter.

Even if the attackers had been obliging enough to send in ballistic missiles with a high-altitude trajectory, the THAAD would have offered little succor, since its infra-red seeker, as noted, cannot distinguish between actual warheads and decoys. Nor would the Russian S-400 system cheekily offered by Putin in the aftermath of the attack have fared better, and for many of the same reasons. →13



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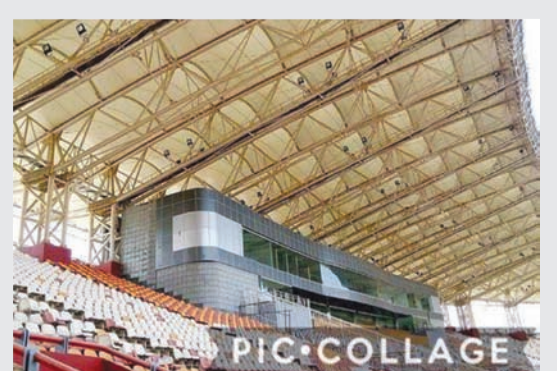
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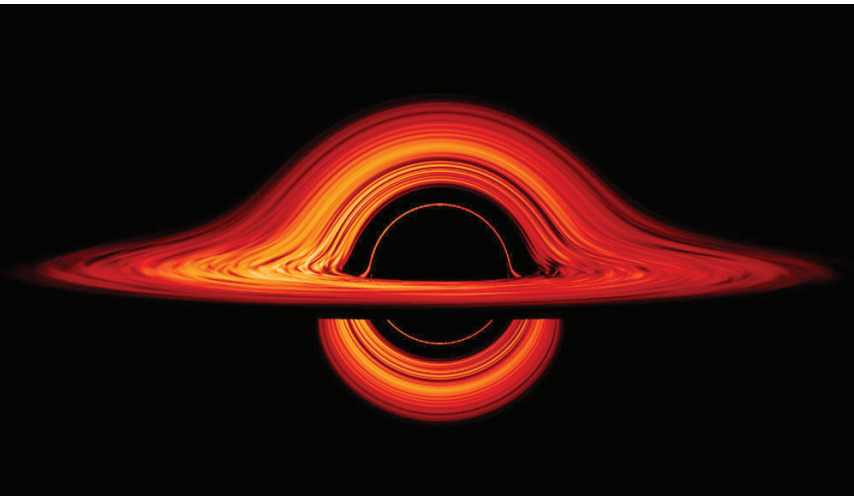


# NASA’s new black hole visualizations showcase how gravity warps light

In April, astronomers wowed the world with the first real-life picture of a black hole. But that blurry, still image of the supermassive monster in the galaxy M87 doesn’t really convey just how wildly a black hole’s immense gravity distorts its surroundings. Now, images from computer simulations highlight in more detail how a black hole warps spacetime like a fun house mirror — and how that affects the appearance of its glowing accretion disk of infalling material.

In these simulation images, the white-hot accretion disk looks basically how you’d expect when seen face-on — similar to Earth’s viewing angle of M87’s black hole in that historic first image. But seen along its edge, the computer-rendered accretion disk looks more bizarre. The black hole’s superstrong gravity bends light emanating from gas in the disk behind the black hole, so that the disk’s far side seems to split into arcs above and below the abyss.

Light from gas swirling around the black hole looks more like a time-lapse image of nighttime city traffic than a continuous band of material, thanks to magnetic fields threaded throughout the disk. “As the gas swirls around, it tangles the magnetic fields [and] you get



these knots,” says astrophysicist Jeremy Schnittman of NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Md., who created the black hole images posted online September 25. These magnetic field knots heat surrounding gas, creating bright spots. “If the entire disk were rotating together, these [knots] would look more like random blobs,”

Schnittman says. But since gas closer to the black hole orbits faster, the hot spots get stretched out into bright smears as gas circles the cosmic drain.

Another oddity, which appears when viewing the black hole along its edge, is that gas on the left side of the disk — zooming toward the viewer — is brighter than gas

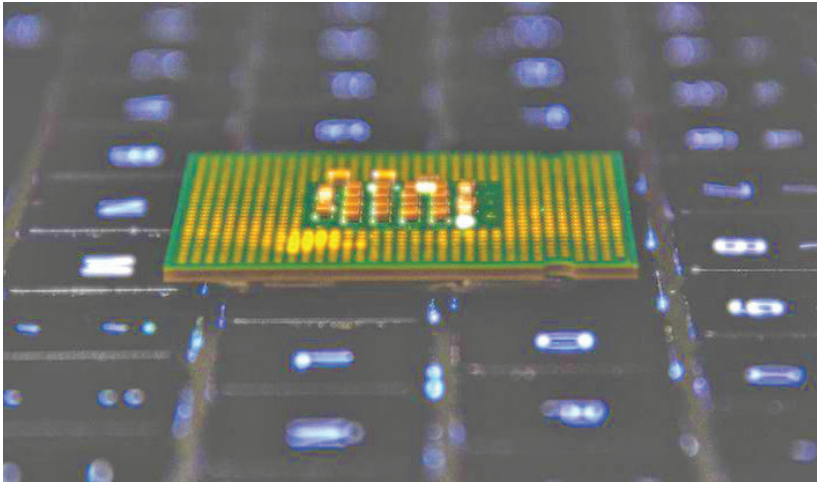
on the right. That’s because the light waves emitted by quickly approaching gas pile up on their way to the viewer, whereas waves from receding gas get spread out, Schnittman says.

Closer to the pit of the black hole, a “photon ring” appears. Whereas other light from the accretion disk is merely deflected by the black hole’s gravitational field, particles of light in this ring are snared by the black hole’s gravity such that they circle all the way around at least once before escaping. Inside that photon ring lies the black hole’s event horizon, beyond which nothing — not even light — can escape.

Simulations like this reveal not only how a black hole might appear in a single moment, but also how it could change over time, says Harvard University astrophysicist Avi Loeb, who was not involved in the work. In the future, astronomers hope to gather enough observations to make movies that unveil “what the weather is like around a black hole,” Loeb says. Comparing those real-world black hole films against simulations could reveal the underlying physics that governs an accretion disk’s appearance.

(Source: [sciencenews.org](#))

## This new chip could bridge the gap between classical and quantum computing



Quantum computers exist today, although they’re limited, cut-down versions of what we hope fully blown quantum computers are going to be able to do in the future.

But now, researchers have developed hardware for a ‘probabilistic computer’ — a device that might be able to bridge the gap between genuine quantum computers and the standard PCs and Macs we have today.

The special trick that a probabilistic computer can do is to solve quantum problems without actually going quantum, as it were. It does this using a p-bit, which the team behind this research describes as a “poor man’s qubit”.

Whereas classical computing bits can store either a 1 or a 0, qubits can be both at the same time, thanks to the laws of quantum computing — and that means a big leap in processing power. A p-bit, meanwhile, can only be a 1 or a 0, but they can switch between those two states very, very quickly.

By carefully controlling these fluctuations, scientists can tackle calculations of a kind that are generally considered to be quantum computing problems, but without an actual quantum computer.

As an added bonus, p-bits work at room temperature, whereas qubits need super-cold conditions to operate properly, so they’re easier to adapt into existing computers.

“There is a useful subset of problems solvable with qubits that can also be solved with p-bits,” says electrical and computer engineer Supriyo Datta, from Purdue University in Indiana. “You might say that a p-bit is a ‘poor man’s qubit’.”

The result of the research was a modified magnetoresistive random-access memory (MRAM) device, used to store information in some of today’s computers. Magnetic orientations are used to create states of resistance that represent 1s or 0s.

Eight of these custom-made MRAM p-bit units were put together with a controller chip to form a probabilistic

computer — one where units are only likely to adopt a specific value (which is where the “probabilistic” name comes from).

The researchers were then able to solve integer factorization problems, where numbers are broken down into smaller multiples. This is usually considered a quantum problem, one that quantum computers would excel at — classical computers can do it, just more slowly and less efficiently.

This probabilistic computer and its p-bits represents some sort of middle ground between the two. The researchers suggest that fully realized p-bit machines would handle integer factorization and similar problems using less space and energy than today’s computers.

“On a chip, this circuit would take up the same area as a transistor, but perform a function that would have taken thousands of transistors to perform,” says computer and electrical engineer Ahmed Zeeshan Pervaiz from Purdue University.

“It also operates in a manner that could speed up calculation through the parallel operation of a large number of p-bits.”

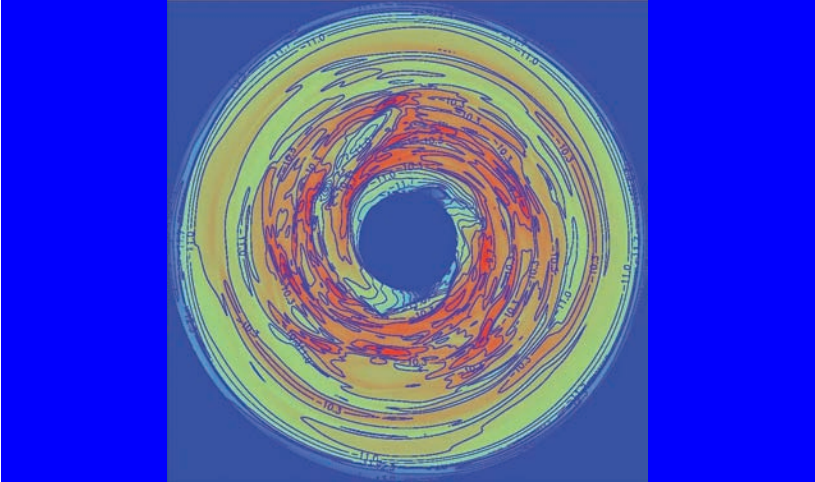
This machine is going to have to be scaled up and refined further to be of practical use, but the researchers think those advancements might not be too far off. These devices can then take over from classical computers for certain problems, until the quantum computing revolution finally arrives.

Scientists are making progress, but there’s still some way to go before qubits are stable and practical enough to actually run the sums we need them to run and to scale up properly. Making qubits and connecting them together remains a tough challenge.

“In the near future, p-bits could better help a machine to learn like a human does or optimize a route for goods to travel to market,” says one of the researchers, Kerem Camsari.

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

## Many gas giant exoplanets waiting to be discovered



There is an as-yet-unseen population of Jupiter-like planets orbiting nearby Sun-like stars, awaiting discovery by future missions like NASA’s WFIRST space telescope, according to new models of gas giant planet formation by Carnegie’s Alan Boss, described in an upcoming publication in The Astrophysical Journal. His models are supported by a new Science paper on the surprising discovery of a gas giant planet orbiting a low-mass star.

“Astronomers have struck a bonanza in searching for and detecting exoplanets of every size and stripe since the first confirmed exoplanet, a hot Jupiter, was discovered in 1995,” Boss explained. “Literally thousands upon thousands have been found to date, with masses ranging from less than that of Earth, to many times the mass of Jupiter.”

But there are still gaping holes in scientists’ knowledge about exoplanets that orbit their stars at distances similar to those at which our Solar System’s gas giants orbit the Sun. In terms of mass and orbital period, planets like Jupiter represent a particularly small population of the known exoplanets, but it’s not yet clear if this is due to biases in the observational techniques used to find them -- which favor planets with short-period-orbits over those with long-period-orbits -- or if this represents an actual deficit in exoplanet demographics.

All the recent exoplanet discoveries have led to a renewed focus on theoretical planet formation models. Two primary mechanisms exist for predicting how gas giant planets form from the rotating disk of gas and dust that surrounds a young star -- bottom-up, called core accretion, and top-down, called disk instability.

The former refers to slowly building a planet through the collisions of increasingly larger material -- solid dust grains, pebbles, boulders, and eventually planetesimals. The latter refers to a rapidly triggered process that occurs when the disk is massive and cool enough to form spiral arms and then dense clumps of self-gravitating gas and dust contract and

coalesce into a baby planet.

While core accretion is considered the consensus planet-formation mechanism, Boss has long been a proponent of the competing disk instability mechanism, dating back to a seminal 1997 Science paper.

The just-published discovery by an Institute for Space Studies of Catalonia-led team of a star that’s a tenth the mass of our Sun and hosts at least one gas giant planet is challenging the core-accretion method.

The mass of a disk should be proportional to the mass of the young star around which it rotates. The fact that at least one gas giant -- possibly two -- was found around a star that’s so much smaller than our Sun indicates that either the original disk was enormous, or that core accretion does not work in this system. Orbital periods for lower mass stars are longer, which prevents core accretion from forming gas giants before the disk gas disappears, as core accretion is a much slower process than disk instability, according to Boss.

“It’s a great vindication for the disk instability method and a demonstration how one unusual discovery can swing the pendulum on our understanding of how planets form,” said one of the IEEC research team’s members, Guillem Anglada-Escudé, himself a former Carnegie postdoc.

Boss’ latest simulations follow the three-dimensional evolution of hot disks that start out in a stable configuration. On a variety of time scales, these disks cool down and form spiral arms, eventually resulting in dense clumps representing newborn protoplanets. Their masses and distances from the host star are similar to that of Jupiter and Saturn.

“My new models show that disk instability can form dense clumps at distances similar to those of the Solar System’s giant planets,” said Boss. “The exoplanet census is still very much underway, and this work suggests that there are many more gas giants out there waiting to be counted.”

(Source: [Science Daily](#))

## How many humans could the Moon support?

By Emma Bryce

It’s the year 3000. Having used up all of Earth’s natural resources, humans have become a spacefaring race and established colonies on the Moon. Vast, sealed domes cluster across its surface, housing cities populated by hundreds of thousands of people. This cold, gray rock has somehow become humanity’s new home.

Of course, this is pure science fiction. But no vision of the future is complete without an extraterrestrial colony of humans, and since the Moon is the closest celestial body to our planet, it’s the easiest to imagine as our futuristic home.

But does this vision align with reality? Will the Moon one day be a hot property, and if so, how many people could its unwelcoming landscape realistically support?

One way to answer that question, simplistically, is to consider the area of the Moon. The Moon’s surface area is about 15.9% of Earth’s overall land area (excluding the area of Earth covered by oceans). Technically, if we packed this area at the density of Earth’s most populous cities, we’d be able to fit trillions on the Moon’s surface.

But how many people could fit on the Moon’s surface is a very different question than how many people that world could sustainably support. And in that regard, the Moon is definitely Earth’s poorer cousin.

“It’s a pretty barren place,” said Darby Dyar, a senior scientist at the Planetary Science Institute in Arizona and a professor of astronomy at Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts. “Every species seeks to expand its ecological niche. But the new ‘niche,’ which is the Moon, is very inhospitable for humans,” Dyar told Live Science.

### ■ Air to breathe

Unlike on Earth, water doesn’t rain down freely on the lunar surface and collect into bodies we could drink from. Crucially, the Moon also lacks an atmosphere with breathable air. Neither does Earth’s natural satellite have existing ecosystems that could conveniently support fields of agriculture. The Moon is also vulnerable to solar storms, eruptions from the sun’s surface that send out electromagnetic radiation, which the Moon — without the protection of a magnetic field — can’t deflect. There are also huge temperature extremes, and long, alternating periods of darkness and light, Dyar said.

All this may make life on the Moon seem impossible. Yet surprisingly, it isn’t. In fact, the essentials for human existence — air, water, food and shelter — theoretically aren’t as unattainable on the Moon as you might expect.

Take air. To support a starting population of a few hundred people on the Moon, we’d have to start by transporting air to the lunar surface, pumping it into sealed structures in which humans would live. That seems unsustainable, but in the short term, it would actually be fairly cost-effective, said Markus Landgraf, the Moon project manager with the European Space Agency. “People don’t use much air, and for a long time, we will not need to make the air on the Moon. We can bring it in,” he said. “Transportation costs for that are still manageable.”

If that population grew to tens of thousands, however, we’d need to synthesize oxygen on the Moon, an expensive process. But Landgraf said the growth of space exploration in the coming decades could make the process more economical.

That’s because propelling spacecraft requires oxygen, so if the demand goes up, “it makes more economic sense to build oxygen generators on the Moon for rocket propellant, rather than for drinking water and air for people,” Landgraf said. That would drive down the production cost, making it cheaper to produce air for Moon dwellers.

### ■ Water, water everywhere

What about water? Until a few decades ago, researchers believed the Moon was completely dry. But now they know there’s a surprising amount of liquid spread across the lunar surface.

“We think water is left over from when the Moon formed. And we know that comets, which are basically dirty snowballs, periodically impact the Moon’s surface,” Dyar said. “There’s good evidence to suggest that those [craters] where comets impacted the surface still have ice reservoirs in them.”

Another water source, she said, comes in the solar winds that roar across space; charged with protons, these collide with electrons on the Moon, forming hydrogen.

All this adds up to a decent amount of lunar water, perhaps enough to support a sizable population. And we’ve already developed technologies on the International Space Station to recycle drinkable water from astronaut’s shower water, urine and sweat. This can even use the moisture from their breath. On the Moon, that technology could create a closed-loop water source for inhabitants.

But even with recycling, Dyar said, those water reserves wouldn’t be infinite; recycling water over and over again does come with some loss, so reserves would need to be topped up once in a while. What’s more, extracting the Moon’s water by crushing lunar rocks and dredging up ice from deep craters, would require huge, costly amounts of energy, Dyar pointed out.

“My personal feeling is that colonization of the Moon is going to depend on us bringing hydrogen there,” she said. Transporting that would be costly, too: around \$220,000 per kilogram, Landgraf said.

Without knowing how much water is currently on the Moon’s surface, it’s also difficult to estimate how many people it could support. But we do at least know that it’s possibly enough to provide a relatively sustainable water source. In any case, Landgraf estimated that lunar pioneers wouldn’t need to tap the Moon’s water resources for at least the first five to 10 years of settlement; it will be cheap enough to transport water up there and recycle it for the dozen or so humans who are first likely to call Moon their home.

As for lunar agriculture, we could mimic Earth’s growing conditions with “almost-ecosystem-like closed domes,” Landgraf said. Nurtured by long bouts of sunlight and showered with recycled water, lunar agriculture could feasibly scale up to feed thousands. There’s already plenty of research to suggest that growing crops in space will work.

### ■ Fly me to the Moon

There are still multiple unknowns about how we’d do all this in practice. But theoretically, natural resources could support tens of thousands, even millions, of people on the Moon. So then, why aren’t there already hundreds of us up there, gazing down at Earth?

Because the biggest constraints to colonizing the Moon aren’t necessarily limits to natural resources, Landgraf said, but the huge cost of transporting people up there by spacecraft. Doing it more economically would require bold technological leaps — like the invention of space elevators. If we had those, “then we’re talking about tens of thousands of people on the Moon,” Landgraf said. “So, really, water isn’t the constraint here. It’s transportation.”

There’s another caveat, and this is where we return sharply to reality: For now, colonizing the Moon isn’t actually the goal.

## Alien research group started by Blink-182 singer says it’s found ‘exotic UFO material’

Former Blink-182 singer Tom DeLonge has pulled off an astonishing career change. In 2017, after quitting the band, he co-founded a group called To the Stars Academy of Arts & Sciences, an organization committed to researching aliens.

And he apparently now has something to show for it. In a recent Q&A with The New York Times, a reporter asked whether the group had obtained “exotic material samples from UFOs.”

The spokesperson’s response: “certainly.”

It’s still unclear what precise materials the Academy has gotten its hands on, and whether they relate in any way to the three videos it obtained of “unidentified aerial phenomena” that a spokesperson for the Navy recently



revealed to be legitimate.

“What we have been doing is trying to find the most

qualified individuals at the most respectable institutions to conduct scientific analysis,” Luis Elizondo, the director of global security and special programs for DeLonge’s group, told the Times.

“That scientific analysis includes physical analysis, it includes molecular and chemical analysis and ultimately it includes nuclear analysis.”

And it might be a while until we learn more about the group’s activities.

As Elizondo puts it, “the last thing we want to do is jump to any conclusions, prematurely. Ultimately, the data is going to decide what something is or what something isn’t.”

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



## Elamite-era ‘ring of power’ to put on show

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** – An Elamite-era golden royal arm-let, known as “Arjan ring of power”, will be displayed at the newly-constructed museum in Izeh, Khuzestan province, where the object was unearthed in the early 1980s.

Named after Arjan, an ancient city of the Elamite era, the armlet dates back to Neo-Elamite period (c. 1100 – 540 BC). The armlet along with other counterpart objects, which are on loan from the National Museum of Iran, have been transferred to Izeh with special escort assistance for a temporary show, CHTN reported.

“The golden ring of Arjan is one of the distinguished relics that are being kept at the National Museum of Iran. And it will be [briefly] exhibited in Izeh to cherish inauguration of the city’s new museum,” said Jebrael Nokandeh who presides over the National Museum of Iran.

The armlet along with some other relics were discovered in a tomb reportedly belonging to the 2nd millennium BC.

Elam was an ancient pre-Iranian civilization centered in the far-west and south-west of what is now modern-day Iran, stretching from the lowlands of what is now Khuzestan and Ilam provinces as well as a small part of southern Iraq.

## Tehran museum to host meeting on Muharram rituals

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Glass and Ceramic Museum of Tehran will this evening host a meeting to discuss Muharram rituals which were held during Qajar era (1789–1925) at Tekyeh Dowlat, a royal theater in downtown Tehran.



Painting by Mohammad Ghaffari, better known as Kamal-ol-Molk (1848-1940), shows a view of Tekyeh Dowlat (“State Theater”) in downtown Tehran.

Wheeler Benjamin believed that Tekyeh Dowlat was comparable to Verona Arena, a Roman amphitheater in Piazza Bra in Verona, Italy.

During Muharram, a part from mosques, each neighborhood sets up its own establishment for the ceremonial processions of the month known as Tekyeh (or Tekkiyeh), which are venues for gathering of mourners known as ‘heyat’ (literally meaning group or delegation) who honor the life of Imam Hussein (AS).

Tekkiyeh (stemming from the word eteka, meaning backup or reliable) was historically a staying place for visiting pilgrims and dervishes who relied on the goodness of the benefactors for daily sustenance. Today Tekkiyehs, however, are specific locations for mourners who meet and participate in religious gathering after which they head out on the streets in groups known as dasteh (literally meaning cluster) to parade a dramatic mourning.

## ROUND THE GLOBE Mistaken Point

Mistaken Point is a globally significant Ediacaran fossil site almost entirely located within Mistaken Point Ecological Reserve on the south-eastern tip of the island of Newfoundland in eastern Canada.



The 146-hectare property consists of a narrow, 17-kilometre-long strip of rugged naturally-eroding coastal cliffs, with an additional 74 hectares adjoining its landward margin designated as a buffer zone.

The superbly exposed, 2-kilometre-thick rock sequence of deep marine origin at Mistaken Point dates to the middle Ediacaran Period (580 to 560 million years ago) and contains exquisitely preserved assemblages of the oldest abundant and diverse, large fossils known anywhere.

More than 10,000 fossil impressions, ranging from a few centimeters to nearly 2 meters in length, are readily visible for scientific study and supervised viewing along the coastline of Mistaken Point.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Ancient monument discovered in southwest of Tehran

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Archaeologists have unearthed some remains of an ancient monument in Mehrdasht village, which is situated in Malard county, southwest of Tehran.

“Excavations on Khatunlar hill in Malard’s Mehrdasht village led to the discovery of the remains of a vast, significant monument, which is estimated to date back to the Seljuk era (1037–1194) and Ilkhanate times (1256–1335/1353),” senior archaeologist Mohammadreza Nemati said on Saturday, IRNA reported.

The hill, with a land area of approximately 4,400 square meters, is situated in the center of Mehrdasht village, some 60 kilometers southwest of Tehran, the archaeologist who led the excavations said, adding that the hill is surrounded by streets and residential houses.

“[In the past] most parts of the hill have been flattened by loaders with the aim of making streets and houses.”

Nemati explained that two excavations have so far been carried out on the hill; one yielded a narrow brick hallway and rooms of rectangular and square shapes, while the other, which was conducted on the topmost height of the hill, resulted remains of a vast monument with an entry towards the west that leads to a passageway with small and large rooms.

Regarding to objects that have been found thus far, the archaeologist said, “Among the unearthed objects are a chess piece (the knight), coin(s), oil lamps, earthen manuscripts, a large number of jars and potteries, which are mostly unglazed and bear carved and stamped ornamentations.

Documentarian of the findings and initial safety measures have been commenced and the monument will be vaulted as soon as the proper outline is drawn, he concluded.

Earlier in January, some other relics and urban structures, dating from Seljuk era, were found during a construction project in the city of Rey, south of Tehran. The findings included two clay jars, [parts of] a water supply system, urban sewage disposal, and flowing bricks.

In the 11th and 12th centuries Rey (also known as Shahr-e



A view of Khatunlar hill, an archaeological site, in Mehrdasht village, southwest of Tehran province.

Rey) was one of the capitals of the Seljuk Empire. It was devastated in the 13th century when the Mongols swept through and, these days, has been swallowed up by the urban sprawl of Tehran.

Hulegu, a grandson of Genghis Khan, was given the task of capturing Iran by the paramount Mongol chieftain Mongke.

## ‘Passion, penchant for uncertainty’ are what you need for archaeology, says Prof. Barbara Kaim

By Marjohn Sheikhi

**TEHRAN (MNA)** — Renowned Polish Professor Barbara Kaim, an archaeologist with a focus on Iran and Central Asia, says you need passion and a penchant for uncertainty to venture into the realm of archaeology.

Professor Barbara Kaim is a renowned scholar and scientist from the Warsaw University, Poland, specializing in the archaeology of Iran and Central Asia.

Her archaeological excavations in Turkmenistan and Persia, particularly the Sassanian era, shed more light on the culture and heritage of Iran. Her focus has been directed to fire temples in Central Asia for the most part. Since 1997, Prof. Kaim has been conducting excavations in the Serakhs region in Turkmenistan, in the remnants of one of the best preserved Partho-Sasanian temples. This experience enabled her to compare the Central Asian temples with the Iranian ones and then share her knowledge with Iranian scientists. She is also an author of many publications on the Zarathustrian fire temples, as well as ancient Iranian art and culture.

Last Sunday, the University of Tehran, in collaboration with the Polish embassy, organized a program in honor of Professor Kaim, for her valuable achievements while conducting extensive research and excavations in Iran.

After the event, I had a chance to sit down with the renowned, yet extremely humble scholar, for an interview.

Prof. Kaim believes in the value of even the smallest of discoveries, ‘the not-so-interesting piece of pottery’, and how that value is not inherent in the object itself, but in the way the people from all walks of life interact with it.

Here’s what this great scholar had to share about her experiences as an archaeologist:

■ Will you please tell me a little about yourself, and how you got into archaeology and ended up here in Iran?

I was always interested in history, but because I also wanted to travel, I chose archaeology. During my studies, I didn’t know what branch of archaeology I wanted to get into deeper, but then I made a trip to Iran with a group of other students, which proved to be an eye-opener for me. This was the first time I saw the famous Persian monuments such as Pasargadae and Persepolis, not in the books but with my own eyes. And I realized this is exactly what I wanted to do: To study Iran’s past. While on the trip, we met several Iranian people who were really kind and friendly, so I thought it would be good to work here. This is how I realized what my dream was.

When I was finishing my PhD on a scholarship in Belgium, I had the pleasure to work with Professor Louis Vanden Berghe, who was very famous at the time in Iran because he spent several years in excavations in Lorestan. In fact, the ‘Luristan Bronzes’ were his subject. While in Belgium, I met Masoud Azarnoush, who became the director of the Iranian Center Archaeological Research several years later, and he invited me to visit Iran and maybe work on a site there. But at that time, I was already working in Turkmenistan. More precisely, on the border of Iran and Turkmenistan; which, I should note that while the border nowadays divides the two countries, the culture of antiquity is the same. It is the Iranian culture. So, for me it was very interesting and relevant to come here. For the excavations, we chose one place in Khorasan. The name of the place is Khune-ye Div, ‘House of Devil’ –

■ Did you choose that place for the name?

No, No. We chose that place because we were told that there’s probably remains of a fire temple. Because I was working on fire temples in Turkmenistan, it seemed natural to follow up the same subject in Iran. So, we signed the agreement, but after we returned to Warsaw, Dr. Azarnoush called me and told me he needs my help with an important rescue excavation in Tange Bulaghi near Pasargadae, where an artificial lake was going to be constructed and there was the fear that many archaeological objects would be submerged. So, it was our obligation as archaeologists to be there. That’s how my first mission in Iran began. We started working on the Sivand dam project there. We excavated some Achaemenid remains and also Sassanian villages. This was very important to me, because usually archaeologists



Photo taken by Irena Kolakowska-Falkwska, courtesy of the Polish embassy in Tehran.

choose a significant place to work on, like cities or temples, something exceptional, but when it comes to life in villages in antiquity, we know almost nothing. So, I think the results of that excavation are very important as they shed more light on rural settlements.

After that, we went to Sabzevar to start working on the Khune-ye Div. After three years of excavation, we could finally say it was another fire temple. Maybe a pilgrim center. And it was also in function during the Islamic period, which was another important finding.

Now, I’m still working in Turkmenistan on a Sassanian site. The site is important because it was a place where a big owner of land was living. So, we can see how life in this province was like. They were involved mostly in agriculture, which is very important for the reconstruction of ancient economy.

■ You mentioned that fire temples have been your main focus during the excavations. What about fire temples interests you so much? What secrets do they hold?

As you know, Zarathustrianism is a very traditional religion. For me, the most exciting thing is that we could find from the Parthian period, let’s say from the 1st century AD, the same instruments that they use nowadays. It is something exceptional that you can reconstruct religion having only the modern sources. While we don’t have any sources on the religious ceremonies in the past, when you see the same instruments being used you can imagine that they were used during the same ceremony. And this is a fantastic find.

■ Speaking of, what has been one of your most exciting discoveries?

The most exciting discovery was made before me, I think (laughs). But maybe Mele Hairam fire temple in the Sarakhs oasis in south-western Turkmenistan, which was very well-preserved. For an archaeologist, it is very unique to find a site that has been well-preserved through ancient times. And we also managed to uncover several items which are very important for the iconography of Zoroastrianism.

■ Have you ever unearthed an artifact that you wished you could keep for yourself?

No. Certainly not. Because I am convinced that not only me but a very broad audience should know about the discoveries. It is a pleasure for an archaeologist to see that the object which she has found is put into the museum.

■ So, you don’t find the value in the object itself but in the way other people could interact with it.

Yes, exactly. This is some kind of an ethic of our job.

■ What advice do you have for students wishing to become an archaeologist? What skill sets are required?

The passion is the most important quality to have. I think archaeology is a very good job for people who like to be in situations where you don’t know what tomorrow has in store for you. Because of the new discoveries, new obstacles...you can plan something but after several days, there’s nothing left of your plans because somebody in the team has decided something else. For Iranian archaeologists, what is important, I think, is to work on the archaeology of the modern time. When I see here in Tehran the buildings from the Qajar period, which are so beautiful, I think it’s very important to document these buildings. Maybe carry out some small

Hulegu set out in about 1253 with a Mongol army of about 130,000. He founded the Il-Khanid dynasty in 1256, and by 1258 he had captured Baghdad and all of Iran. The Il-Khans consolidated their position in Iran and reunited the region as a political and territorial entity after several centuries of fragmented rule by petty dynasties.

excavations to know when exactly the building was constructed, when it stopped to be in function, and so on. You have so many beautiful and old buildings in Tehran, which you have to care about. I think working on these buildings is very important for the future.

■ So, although archaeology is the study of the past, you think the discoveries can be relevant to the future?

Of course. We are all still very much involved in the past because our culture has roots in the past. It’s not possible for the human beings to cast aside the past of previous generations. Everything we do now has roots in the experiences of our previous generations. This is very important for the human race.

■ In your opinion, what makes being an archaeologist so rewarding?

Our work is very hard, but it becomes better as we work in teams. The collective efforts of our research are very important. The discussions that happen among your colleagues is very important. And also, the uncertainty. You are never certain that you will still be working in this place tomorrow. This is, for me, very exciting.

Most people, when they think about archaeological discoveries, tend to think in terms of conventionally valuable objects like gold artifacts or something like that, but this is usually not the case. Making major discoveries is of course important, but what is even more important to us is the small things, the not-so-interesting pieces of pottery, for example. This kind of object is important for chronology. So, it’s not just about the big discoveries, but also the small things.

■ Looking back, how do you view the changes in archaeology since you started out working in the field?

The most important change is the more attention that has been given to stratigraphy while excavating. The Layer by layer process. For example, if this building became an archaeological site, and unprofessional archaeologists were to carry out excavations on it, they could just say that this is the floor, but they couldn’t tell you this building was in function from this year, for several years or even centuries, and when it went out of function. Therefore, the most important thing to pay attention to on excavation sites is stratigraphic principles.

Another important change is that archaeologists have been publishing the results of their excavations. If you don’t publish the results, your work is for nothing.

■ How can we make archaeological discoveries more accessible and relevant to the public?

There is in fact a branch of archaeology called ‘public archaeology’, in which the excavation team is obliged to organize a lesson for the local people about what they have worked on and discovered. This is very important work, because if people understand about their past, they could inform the relevant bodies about the discoveries they made by chance. This is how public archaeology introduces our work to the public.

■ Archaeological discoveries are nowadays being used in reimagining and rebuilding ancient civilizations in the world of entertainment, for example in video games. There are certain games in which you as the player can walk through, for example ancient Egypt or Renaissance Italy, and interact with the people and take into the scenery. If you were approached by a game studio team and consulted about ancient Persia, what aspect of it would you like to see come to life?

Well, last year, I had a lecture about the Achaemenid court. After the lecture, a student of history told me that in their class, they are taught about the Greek civilization and the barbarians, and that I was the first who opened their eyes and showed them that there was another great civilization at the same time as the Greek. And I think that it is important for all students, no matter which field they’re studying, be it engineering or medicine, to know that during the ancient times, the people tried to discover some instruments to make their lives easier as they do now, and it was a practice carried out throughout the whole world, not just in Greece. And if you do this reconstruction, what is important is to make it as exact as possible. It’s not easy to make a movie or a video game about the past. For that, you have to make extensive studies to make the reconstruction as true as possible.



# Corporate media uses Yemen drone attacks to paint Saudi Arabia as victim

**INTERNATIONAL d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The western political and media establishment has been using the September 14 attacks into Saudi oil facilities to invert the truth of the Yemen conflict, portraying Saudi Arabia as a victim of the devastating invasion of Yemen waged by Riyadh itself.

The western outlets have been hyping the attack into Saudi Arabia as an Iranian agenda, with Tehran being shown hell bent on pursuing expansionist policies in the region.

The agencies are injecting towards the top of their articles that “Iran-backed” Houthis had claimed responsibility for the attack but Iran is thought to be the main culprit.

Providing ambiguous and evidence-free description of the supposed attack, the news agencies include paragraphs after paragraphs in articles dedicated to politically expedient speculations aimed ultimately at Tehran.

But the narrative provided lack key facts, pushing the audience to draw conclusions that propel forward the Western agenda versus Iran.

The articles imply that Saudi Arabia is leading a campaign in Yemen to restore democracy to the country and that Riyadh is victim of Houthis’ savagery.

No, Saudi Arabia is no victim. **■ How Yemen war started?**

The latest crisis in Yemen started in 2015, when a vassal regime aided by the U.S. was ousted from power.

Before that, the Houthis had for years demanded greater representation in government and free speech rights to no avail.

This prompted the US and Saudi Arabia to ravage Yemen, triggering one of the worst humanitarian crises in the 21st century.

The situation is being regarded by the UN as the world’s gravest humanitarian crisis, one which has already seen the estimated deaths



Saudi Aramco’s Abqaiq oil facility in eastern Saudi Arabia.

of 85,000 children through starvation.

The main reason for this catastrophe is the blockading and bombardment of Yemen.

**■ Tit-for-tat conflict?**

The western outlets try to portray the war in Yemen as a tit-for-tat conflict, rather than Yemen’s desperate struggle for independence and survival.

The western mainstream media have consistently accused the Houthis of being

proxies for Iran. Although Iran has publicly announced support for the Houthi movement, the Houthis have ignored Iranian advice on frequent occasions.

This indicates they are not puppets, although some would like the western people to presume they are.

But despite the magnitude of the crisis and the fact that the fighting has been raging for nearly five years, the western corporate

media has hardly covered Yemen crisis at all.

This is yet another manifestation of the Western hypocrisy in terms of upholding human rights and the western media’s complicity in advancing this hypocrisy.

**■ Last hope to quell Saudi attacks**

Yemen was already the poorest country in the Arab region when it was invaded by Saudi Arabia and now it has little else to lose.

The Yemeni fighters are well within their rights to strike the economic engine driving what a war aimed at erasing a nation off the map through a combination of bombings, starvation and disease.

If Washington can predicate its invasion of Iraq on deliberately false claims of possessing “weapons of mass destruction”, wouldn’t Yemen and its allies be justified in using any means possible to undermine Saudi Arabia’s fighting capacity as it wages a war of aggression condemned by the UN?

In the eyes of Yemenis, an attack on an oil producing facility that contributes to the Saudi war machine is entirely legitimate.

It was a retaliation against Saudi Arabia for its criminal activities in Yemen, raising the costs for Riyadh to continue down its current foreign policy path.

The realization that there is a very serious capability to interrupt, halt or destroy Saudi Arabia’s oil production may be enough for the Kingdom to rethink its actions in Yemen.

Yemen’s Ansarullah has warned that Saudi Arabia would face new, “more painful, deadly and destructive” attacks if Saudi Arabia’s “ongoing shelling, blockade and aggression” of Yemen continued.

For many, such attacks represent the last hope to quell Saudi attacks on Yemen and put an end to the devastating conflict in the country.

**The narrative provided by western outlets lack key facts, pushing the audience to draw conclusions that propel forward the Western agenda versus Iran.**

## Palestine: Read all about it... but not in the mainstream media

By Yvonne Ridley

This time of year is always a period of personal retrospection for me, ending in trips down memory lane. It was, for example, when I became a cub reporter back in the seventies with high ideals and a determination to change the world through my stories.

Already inspired by Washington Post investigative journalists Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward who broke the Watergate political scandal which led in August 1974 to the resignation of US President Richard Nixon, I’d previously been fired up by Seymour Hersh’s dramatic 1969 exposure of the My Lai Massacre in Vietnam. Two days after the Hersh exclusive, around 250,000 Americans gathered around the Washington Monument to demand an end to the Vietnam War. A rally had been planned anyway, but I doubt it would have had the same impact if not fuelled by Hersh’s powerful words. That was the sort of journalism which inspired me.

However, my lofty ambitions were soon knocked out of me as I signed up for a training apprenticeship with the Durham Advertiser Series and went to work at its ramshackle branch offices in Stanley and Consett. The grim reality of covering agricultural shows (“Best of breed in cows and sheep” a speciality); reporting the non-events at the Women’s Institutes, when it really was all Jam and Jerusalem; and taking the names of mourners at the funerals of local dignitaries, were the order of the day.

A little later I moved to regional morning newspapers and my ambitions were reignited by another journalist, Robert Fisk, whose reporting on the massacres of Palestinian refugees at Sabra and Shatila were so powerful that they made me weep. The 1982 atrocity in which up to 3,500 people were slaughtered by Phalange Christian militiamen under the watchful eyes of the Israeli military still haunts Fisk today.

By then my name was regularly on front pages with national newspapers following up my stories and, almost inevitably, Fleet Street beckoned. I ignored the call for a while and pursued a series of major exclusives, including the first Western interview with Ahmed Jibril, the founder and leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine – General Command (PFLP-GC). This was picked up by other newspapers, something that simply would not happen in today’s anti-Palestinian climate.

Then, in the late 80s, I was handed an intelligence story which saw the Northern Echo publish photo montages of IRA suspects after I’d been handed the largest dossier of images of terror suspects during the so-called Troubles. Not only was the IRA irritated by my story, but so too were the British intelligence services and, despite being threatened with prison during police interviews, I never named my source.

A few years later I was the first journalist to do an in-depth interview with Ian Davison, a Geordie carpenter who was serving a life sentence in Cyprus for the killing of three Mossad agents in Larnaca. He had been a member of the elite PLO unit known as Force 17 when he and two Palestinians killed the Israeli spies on board a yacht in the Cypriot port. The incident triggered a chain of events, including Israel’s bombing of the PLO headquarters in Tunis, which killed scores of civilians.

Times have changed, though, and it is becoming more and more difficult to break news in the mainstream media on this sort of scale. Embarrassing the Establishment or promoting an ounce of sympathy about the Palestinian cause or the anti-war movement is virtually impossible to do today.

The great investigative journalist John Pilger wrote recently about how independent journalists like Hersh have been driven from the “mainstream”. It was disappointing that he did not make a special reference to Palestine because quite a few journalists have found themselves out in the cold after striving to bring the daily injustices of Palestine to the fore.

As far as the mainstream media is concerned anyone



Palestinians mourn during a funeral ceremony of two Palestinian men who were killed by Israeli forces in Jenin, West Bank.

who shows any degree of sympathy towards the Palestinian cause is decried as anti-Semitic or demonised, and usually both. I’m speaking from personal experience; every story I’ve ever written on Palestine is met with threats, accusations that I am an anti-Semite and worse. If you don’t believe me, read the abusive comments which will follow this article or check out my previous work for MEMO.

The influence of media moguls with vested interests in the status quo and ties to the Establishment, and the editors they appoint, is all-pervasive. I will never forget how my personal account post-Jenin massacre in April 2002 was spiked by the Sunday Express. It was dumped unceremoniously in favour of a shocking piece written by the late Labour peer and former MP Greville Janner.

The West Bank city of Jenin, a name now synonymous with heroic resistance, was under siege and there were several reports of an Israeli military-led massacre. I was one of the first journalists to get inside within hours of the siege being lifted; to this day, I am haunted by what I saw. I simply cannot mention Jenin without tears coming to my eyes.

The stench of death left me gagging as Palestinians recovered the bodies of their loved ones from the rubble where their homes once stood. Around 50 people were missing and 25 of those had been buried alive as Israelis used their tanks to crush the buildings. I saw one widow whose hands were shredded and bloodied as she dug desperately through the concrete, stones and crushed mortar to try to find the body of her wheelchair-bound uncle. “We had less than two minutes’ notice to get out and he didn’t make it,” she cried.

Not one home had escaped the onslaught as F16 fighter jets and Apache attack helicopters sent their hellfire missiles and shells into the residential area. A man called Marwan told me how he watched the lifeblood of his wife ebb agonisingly from her body after shrapnel from one of the shells tore through the kitchen window and sliced her jugular vein as she peeled vegetables in her kitchen. Israeli soldiers refused to let him carry her to a nearby hospital for help while medics were held back and were refused permission to enter.

Amidst all of this carnage, some Palestinian women told me, Israeli soldiers stole their jewellery. Others told how they were used as human shields while the soldiers went about their dirty work. I walked around the town with a delegation of Labour MPs and saw the evidence with my own eyes. The world knew that something horrific had happened in Jenin but few were allowed in to give an eyewitness account.

In the meantime, friends and allies of the Zionist state were scrambled to Jerusalem to carry out some damage limitation. Among them was Lord Janner, a leading light in Westminster’s pro-Israel lobby, and Colin Powell, the then

US Secretary of State. Powell gave a press conference in the luxurious King David Hotel in Jerusalem and told the media that he had seen no evidence of a massacre in Jenin. This was the same man who in December 1968 said that there was no evidence of a massacre at My Lai in South Vietnam.

Powell “saw no evidence” because he never left the hotel, and I have often wondered, as I wrote in an earl MEMO article, if Janner ever did. If he didn’t, then he lied to his House of Lords colleagues about going to Jenin; if he did go and saw what I saw, then he lied about there being no massacre. He claimed that he did not find “evidence of allegations of disproportionate force.” Either way, his lordship lied, but it his story that made the front page of the Sunday Express instead of mine.

I realised then that telling the truth to those in power, or even attempting to get it into the mainstream media, was a one-sided battle. Thankfully, I think the public is waking up to the fact and this is reflected in tumbling newspaper circulations giving way to online news outlets, some of which are good while others are woefully inadequate; yet more are mere propaganda.

“By Yvonne Ridley” may not be seen these days in the mainstream media, but I’m certainly not out in the cold. Thanks to social networks and excellent online media outlets such as MEMO, I now have a global following. I’m not one to boast, but there are some mainstream media which would be delighted to have as many hits on their sites as I do.

With all of this happening, I am watching with growing interest the outcome of probably the most seismic story I ever broke, involving the biggest intelligence leak suffered by the US long before WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange and whistle-blower Edward Snowden’s names came to our attention. Back in 2003, I was handed an intelligence communication which came from a contact within Britain’s GCHQ spy agency in Cheltenham. The contents were mind-blowing and contained an order from America’s National Security Agency (NSA) to British intelligence to spy on the UN Security Council. I knew that if my name was linked to the story the Blairites planted in newspaper offices – yes, it’s true – would do their best to kill the story; a few individuals did indeed try to stop my exclusive. One individual now working for the BBC metaphorically jumped up and down on my reputation and character to discredit the story.

Initially, I tried to get the story placed in the anti-war Daily Mirror under then editor Piers Morgan, but it was swatted away, so I contacted a former colleague at the Observer, the only other anti-war newspaper in Fleet Street, and handed him the document. Apparently there are now plans for a movie, so it seems likely that the story will be told on the silver screen focussing on the heroic GCHQ whistle-blowers who helped me.

The Observer eventually published the story on 2 March 2003 and, as I predicted, it caused an international storm and was followed up by every single newspaper chain in the world. Being so close to the anti-war movement, I sacrificed the chance of having my byline under the story because I knew there would be plenty of others who would try to discredit both it and me. This was not about me; it was a genuine attempt to stop the war in Iraq and it took a lot of courage to hand that original source document to me.

The important thing is that the story did get out, but it was not enough to stop an illegal invasion which is still having dire consequences in the Middle East today. The good news is that the mainstream media is losing its grip and influence in the world, but the need for journalists of integrity is more important now than ever before, as the evidence of injustice around the world grows daily, especially in occupied Palestine. As John Pilger said in his ground-breaking documentary, “Palestine still the issue” and we should definitely read all about it, but that is unlikely to happen in the mainstream media.

(Source: Middleeastmonitor.com)

## Mainstream media loves the term ‘if true’ when reporting on so-called ‘facts’

By Paul Curry

Imagine for a moment: you go to the same doctor every few weeks. Every time he tells you that you have cancer. Every time you find out that he was not only wrong, but that he never actually ran any tests or lab work. How many times would you go back to that same doctor? Hopefully not very often. To do so would be illogical and counterproductive. Yet, for some reason, many people, albeit a rapidly dwindling amount, still tune in to CNN and MSNBC. They still read the New York Times. And, strangely enough, they still refer to them as “the news.”

This past Saturday the New York Times chose to run a ridiculous story dredging up the Brett Kavanaugh smear from a year ago. The Times story alluded to a new book discussing Kavanaugh’s time at Yale and baseless allegations against him. Eerily similar to last year’s hoax against the, now-Supreme Court Justice. Also, eerily similar to last September, the Times failed to disclose the non-accuser’s refusal to confirm the allegations, and her friends’ denial of any memory of the highly questionable and salacious events. Much like NBC News covered up evidence favorable to Kavanaugh last year.

These are the same media outlets that habitually downplayed the glaring holes in the Christine Blasey Ford story, and have, more recently, gone out of their way not to cover Ford’s own attorney stating that her baseless attack was politically motivated. Because it was part of their narrative. Of course, the Times has since walked back their story, but not until after it sat in the media sphere long enough to fuel their narrative, “Kavanaugh is a conservative, and therefore evil,” to take full hold of the Democrats. It didn’t really matter to the New York Times, or the rest of the mainstream media, that the story, and narrative, was false.

For nearly three years now, we have been inundated with countless, fantastical, fantasies of some Trump-Russia collusion. Democratic Congressman Adam Schiff even said he had personally seen the evidence of this collusion. Not surprisingly, after \$32 million was spent on an army of pro-Clinton lawyers to investigate, not a shred of Russian collusion surfaced. But what about all of the media’s stories leading up to the Mueller Report? Either the media reports were fraudulent, or the Mueller Report was.

Just last week, former Obama political appointee, and current CNN reporter, Jim Sciutto, reported, wrongly, that the CIA was forced to extract an intelligence asset, or spy, from Russia due to President Trump’s handling. Sciutto’s report was debunked by several sources, but not before the damage was done and the false Russia narrative furthered. Where was the accountability for Sciutto or CNN?

All of this follows on the heels of MSNBC’s Lawrence O’Donnell reporting, just three weeks ago, that Russian oligarchs had co-signed Deutsch Bank loan documents for President Trump. Not surprisingly, O’Donnell could not name any sources or even confirm his own reporting. But he did use the all too familiar MSNBC qualifier, “if true.” Less than a day later, O’Donnell had to walk back his story, but it had served its purpose. It kept the false narrative of Russian collusion going. MSNBC uses “if true” so often they might want to make it their new motto while replacing the peacock logo with a question mark.

This is the current operating procedure for the left-leaning media. Simply report what the left would like to be true, but don’t bother to confirm. Trumpet baseless allegations as loud as possible, but omit, or cover up, any exculpatory evidence not favorable to the narrative. And most of all, keep the narrative going. Just qualify it with, “If true.”

Watching CNN or MSNBC, or reading the New York Times, for news and facts is like smoking cigarettes for the high concentration of vitamin C. The media no longer is, or possibly never has been, interested in the independent and unbiased presentation of facts. The driving force behind, the unrepentant goal of, the left’s media outlets is the perpetual advancement of false narratives to further a leftist political agenda. They do so for the simplest of reasons. They believe that it furthers their cause, liberals believe them, and they can get away with it. To deny this is to deny the plain, and televised, reality of the past twenty plus years.

(Source: townhall.com)

## How news media should handle Trump’s lies

By B. R. Gowani

Saints, politicians, capitalists, news media and Trump all lie – bigly.

The difference is that most of Trump’s lies are impossible to defend.

But Trump’s supporters do defend him with undefendable lies.

The liberal media, including MSDNC, ridicules and attacks Trump’s lies.

But the media strategy is waste of time as Trump strikes back with more lies.

What media should do is to fight back Trump with a similar approach.

For example:

Trump’s father Fred Trump was born in the Bronx, New York, United States.

But for Trump his dad was born in Germany:

“My father is German – was German.” “Born in a very wonderful place in Germany, so I have a great feeling for Germany.”

Rather than telling Trump that his was father was not born in Germany, the media should counter Trump’s lie with another lie:

“President’s father was born in one of the ‘shit-hole countries’”

Or say in Mexico, Iran, China, or any country he hates.

Then the ball would be in Trump’s court to waste his useless time, which the President of the United States has plenty of.

Or let’s take the case of Hurricane Dorian forecast.

Trump altered the map of the Hurricane’s path with a black marker.

He added Alabama as one of the states to get hit with the Dorian.

But the NWS’s Birmingham bureau contradicted President Trump:

“Alabama will NOT see any impacts from #Dorian. We repeat, no impacts from Hurricane #Dorian will be felt across Alabama. The system will remain too far east. #alwx”

But the US dictator continued his lie with the altered map.

This is how the media should have handled Trump’s false information.

It should have further altered the map by including the White House, plus Trump Towers in New York and Chicago, and Ivanka Trump’s house.

And present the further doctored map as being presented by Trump.

Keep Trump busy by fighting back the new Hurricane Dorian forecast.

(Source: Counterpunch.org)



## Tehran Municipality earmarks \$2.3m for Arbaeen pilgrimage

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Municipality has allocated 100 billion rials (nearly \$2.3 million) to provide people with various services during the Arbaeen pilgrimage, IRNA news agency reported.

Arbaeen pilgrimage, which is also known as Arbaeen trek, is a spiritual trip participated by hundreds of thousands of Shia and Sunni Muslims as well as followers of other religions such as Christians and Zoroastrians, etc. every year to mark the end of the 40-day mourning period of Imam Hossein (AS).

Every year pilgrims start their walk from various cities to the holy shrine of Imam Hossein (AS) in Karbala days or even weeks before Arbaeen- 40th day of Imam Hossein (AS) martyrdom falling on October 30- to grieve the doleful passing of the Imam and his loyal companions at the Battle of Karbala on Muharram 10 in the year 61 AH (680 CE).

This year, visa requirements are removed for the pilgrims as a “positive step” toward paving the way for Iranian pilgrims visiting the neighboring country.

According to the latest official data, 1.2 million Iranians have so far registered to participate in the pilgrimage.

## Dinosaur extinction event disrupted oceans for millions of years, study claims

The mass extinction event that killed the dinosaurs led to the world’s oceans being disrupted for millions of years, research has found.

Scientists who examined fossil records spanning 13 million years found that global species of plankton at the base of the ocean ecosystem were disrupted for 2 million years after a massive asteroid strike on Earth.

And it took a further 8 million years for their numbers to recover, the research published in the journal Nature showed.

About three-quarters of plant and animal species on Earth were made extinct when an asteroid caused global environmental devastation 66 million years ago, researchers from the universities of Southampton, Bristol, UCL, Frankfurt and California found after examining how the ocean ecosystem “rebooted”.

“[The event] is well known for killing off the dinosaurs, but also laid waste to much smaller creatures, such as ocean plankton – removing crucial food sources from the base of the marine ecosystem which were critical for the recovery of large species,” a spokesperson for the University of Southampton said.

Their findings also showed how a loss of diversity can impact the effectiveness of the ecosystem.

Sarah Alvarez, the lead author of the study, explained that scientists analysed records of ocean plankton using calcareous nannofossils.

“We measured abundance, diversity and cell size from over 700,000 fossils, probably the largest fossil dataset ever produced from one site,” said Ms Alvarez, who works at the University of Gibraltar.

Dr Samantha Gibbs, a paleobiologist and co-lead author, added that the research highlights the risk posed by diversity loss, such as the species extinctions currently happening around the world.

“Losing species today runs the risk of eliminating key creatures in ecosystems,” she said. “What we’ve demonstrated from this fossil record is that function is achieved if you have the right players fulfilling key roles. Today, by reducing biodiversity, we are running the risk of losing our critical ecosystem players, many of whose importance we don’t yet fully appreciate.”

In 2017, scientists warned that a sixth mass extinction in Earth’s history was under way due to the loss of wildlife in recent decades caused by human overpopulation and overconsumption.

A separate study in 2018 said that it could take between 3 and 5 million years to recover the levels of biodiversity that are expected to be lost over the next 50 years.

(Source: The Independent)

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Mount Kilimanjaro

(November 7, 2001)

From the upper slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro, once an ice field but now bare rock, Greenpeace campaigners - via video-link - have offered participants in the negotiations on climate change in the Moroccan city of Marrakech a vivid example of the effects of global warming. This report from Elizabeth Blunt. The snows of Kilimanjaro are one of the **wonders** of the natural world. Year-round winter right on the Equator, high on the roof of Africa. But as the world gets warmer, **the snows are retreating**. Greenpeace members had set up their video-link right on the snow line. Participants in Marrakech could see the shadowy figure of Joris Thijssen **perched** on bare rock, with snow on the pinnacles behind.

“Hello ladies and gentlemen, welcome to this press conference live from the Kilimanjaro. At the moment I am at approximately five thousand meters high, the roof of Africa...”

**Nothing could be more dramatic** than the retreat of the Kilimanjaro ice cap. When it was first mapped in 1912, there were twelve square kilometers of ice and snow. Research published at the beginning of this year showed that more than eighty percent of that has now disappeared. A third of the original **ice mass** has melted in just the last twelve years, and it looks as if the rest of the permanent ice cap could be gone by 2020. If the **shining cone** of Kilimanjaro melts, the world **will have lost** something of great beauty. But there will be **practical consequences** as well. The melting glaciers water **the lower slopes of the mountain**, and those are the most **densely farmed and densely populated** parts of Tanzania.

■ **Words**

**wonders**: something remarkable to be admired  
**the snows are retreating**: there is less and less snow, it’s moving back from where it used to be  
**perched**: if you perch, you sit lightly on the edge of something - like a bird on a branch

**nothing could be more dramatic**: the retreat of the ice cap has been very sudden and noticeable  
**ice mass**: the volume and weight of the ice  
**shining cone**: the dazzling white snow and ice on the top of the mountain

**will have lost**: if the snow and ice melt, the result will be the end of this beautiful site - but it’s not yet certain this will happen  
**practical consequences**: real, rather than theoretical, results  
**the lower slopes of the mountain**: the areas of the mountain nearer the ground

**densely farmed and densely populated**: there is a lot of farmland and a lot of people in a small area

(Source: BBC)

# For dedicated firefighters who give up their lives to save ours

**1 → Challenges facing those tackling fierce fire**

Although firefighters are committed to rescue the citizens from natural or hazardous incidents, namely, fires, car rollovers or crashes, quake-hit areas, wildfires, floods and etc., they sometimes have to make immediate and life-threatening decisions in high-pressure situations which might end up in losing their own lives; so this what makes their performance outstanding and honorable.

Although everyone acknowledges the difficult and harmful job of a firefighter, it was not included in the list of hard jobs until last year when on the anniversary of the Plasco accident, firefighting was finally included in the harmful occupations list.

Mohammad Ali Najafi-Davari, director of Tehran fire department, told IRNA on Sunday that in summer only, about 350 accidents occurred daily in Tehran, 40 percent of which are related to fire incidents that half of them are massive fires.

Firefighting community is in good condition regarding the preparation of the firefighters and the equipment, but it



Firefighters in Tehran observed the National Firefighters’ Day on Sunday

cannot be denied that the facilities must be up dated and replace them with new

advances, he highlighted.

In past few years, measures have been

## Tehran to host WHO Regional Committee for Eastern Mediterranean



**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Tehran will host the 66th session of the World Health Organization Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean on October 14 to 17.

Health ministers and high-level representatives of the 22 countries and territories of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, partner organizations and civil society, are scheduled to take part in the summit.

Key technical health issues which will be discussed during the event include ending preventable newborn, child and adolescent deaths, strengthening nursing and mid-wifery as well as hospital sector, developing national institutional capacity for health policy-making and accelerating regional implementation of the UN Political Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases.

The 4-day event will also include progress reports on eradication of poliomyelitis; health, environment and climate change;

civil registration and vital statistics systems; implementation of the Eastern Mediterranean vaccine action plan and regional malaria action plan; mental health care; implementation of the regional framework on cancer prevention and control; and implementation of the global action plan on antimicrobial resistance.

Mohsen Asadi Lari, an official with the Ministry of Health, said that the summit is one the most important events in the field of health, IRNA news agency reported on Sunday.

WHO Representative in Tehran Christoph Hamelmann and representatives of Eastern Mediterranean countries including Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen will attend the summit, he noted.

## UK ‘needs billions a year’ to meet 2050 climate targets

The UK will need investment worth billions of pounds every year to remove enough greenhouse gases from the air to meet its 2050 climate targets, according to a report commissioned by the government.

The report, by analysts at Vivid Economics, estimated that the UK would need as much as £20bn a year to remove up to 130m tonnes of carbon dioxide from the air.

This will be necessary in the coming decades to make up for industries such as aviation, agriculture and heavy industry as the UK works to build a net-zero carbon economy.

“Even if emissions are reduced aggressively across the economy, the UK is expected to continue to emit a significant amount of greenhouse gases annually,” the report said. “The rate of rollout will need to be rapid, particularly in the 2030s

and 2040s, and will require significant policy support.”

The report has urged ministers to consider supporting investment in greenhouse gas removal. This could mean offering new subsidies and grants for carbon capture technologies and projects, or demanding that companies that supply fossil fuels and agriculture products offset a percentage of their carbon emissions by investing in greenhouse gas removal.

A spokesman for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said: “This report presents a variety of different options for consideration, and we will look closely at its findings.

“We recognise the importance and urgency of taking action right across the economy to deliver on our world-leading

## More than 130 dolphins die in mystery beach stranding



More than 130 dolphins have died after a mysterious mass stranding on a west African beach.

About 200 melon-headed whales – mid-sized dolphins – were found on a beach at the Cape Verde Islands.

Officials, residents and tourists managed to drag some of the animals back out to sea, but many returned.

Bulldozers buried 136 dead dolphins, local media reported.

Shortly afterwards, off the US east coast, about 26 pilot whales beached themselves on an island off Georgia, leaving 15 dead. It was the species’ second mass stranding along the state’s coast since July.

Vets from Spain are preparing to travel to Boa Vista Island off west Africa to carry out tests to investigate why the animals died.

A volunteer environmental group in the former Portuguese colony said

taken to equip the capital’s firefighting stations with proper facilities; the public awareness, however, plays a more vital role in reducing the damages in the incidents, he stated.

The most important thing in preventing accidents is educating and informing people on how to behave during emergency conditions, he added.

Firefighting is a job directly related to the people’s lives, and given the importance of quick response of the firemen during the accident, it is necessary to pay a more serious attention to such jobs, he concluded.

■ **International Firefighters’ Day**

International Firefighters’ Day is also observed each year on 4th May. On this date people are invited to remember the firefighters, who lost their lives while serving the community, by proudly wearing and displaying blue and red ribbons pinned together or by participating in a memorial or recognition event.

The ribbons are linked to colors symbolic of the main elements firefighters work with – red for fire and blue for water. These colors also are internationally recognized as representing emergency service.

it took samples from 50 dolphins, and that the local council placed four others in a deep freeze.

Experts say factors that could contribute to mass strandings include sickness, navigational error, a rapidly falling tide, being chased by a predator and extreme weather.

In the first three months of the year, more than 1,100 mutilated dolphins washed up in south-western France. Experts said most of the deaths were caused by the animals being captured by industrial-sized fishing nets.

Last year around 150 short-finned pilot whales stranded themselves on Australia’s western coast south of Perth.

If marine mammals land on solid surfaces, their chest walls start to compress their internal organs because they are no longer supported by the weight of the water.

(Source: The Independent)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → چ

## ‘Welfare Organization helps 15,000 breadwinning women to become financially independent annually’

On average, 15,000 female heads of households who have been under Iran Welfare Organization’s assistance, become financially independent annually through employment and entrepreneurship programs, Derakhshan-Nia, director general of family and women capacity building office at the Welfare Organization has said.

### PREFIX/SUFFIX

#### “demi-”

■ **Meaning:** half

■ **For example:** He caused the horse to make a *demi*volute across the path.

### PHRASAL VERB

#### Open up

■ **Meaning:** if opportunities open up, or a new situation opens them up, they become available or possible

■ **For example:** With a microscope, a whole new world of investigation opens up.

### IDIOM

#### Cross the line

■ **Explanation:** to go beyond the authorized limits and do something which is not acceptable

■ **For example:** He has an unpleasant habit of telling jokes that really cross the line.

## سالیانه ۱۵ هزار زن سرپرست خانوار از چرخه حمایت بهزیستی خارج می شوند

فریبا درخشان نیا، مدیر کل دفتر توانمندسازی خانواده و زنان سازمان بهزیستی کشور گفت: به طور میانگین سالیانه ۱۵ هزار نفر از زنان سرپرست خانوار تحت پوشش، از طریق اشتغال و کارآفرینی در قالب انفرادی یا گروه های همیار، بازتوان شده و از چرخه حمایت خارج می شوند.



# U.S., Turkey must end illegal military presence in Syria: Muallem

**TEHRAN** — Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem has slammed as “illegal” the military presence of the U.S. and Turkey in northern Syria, demanding an immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces from his country.

“The United States and Turkey maintain an illegal military presence in northern Syria,” Muallem said in his address to the 74th session of the United Nations General Assembly at UN headquarters on Saturday.

“Any foreign forces operating in our territories without our authorization are occupying forces and must withdraw immediately,” he said, asserting, “If they refuse, we have the right to take any and all countermeasures authorized under international law.”

The United States has kept around 1,000 troops in Syria with the purported aim of tackling Daesh terrorists. Turkey, too, has already launched two military incursions into northern Syria to stop the advance of Daesh and Kurdish militants.

Muallem also criticized Ankara-Washington talks on establishing a so-called safe zone in the area, saying what they are planning is a “violation of international law and the UN Charter.”



Last month, the U.S. and Turkey agreed to set up the buffer zone to the east of the Euphrates River between the Turkish border and Syrian areas controlled by US-backed Kurdish militias, which Ankara views as

terrorists affiliated with the homegrown Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militant group.

The zone is also said to be aimed at settling around one million displaced Syrians.

The Syrian government — which has authorized neither the Turkish nor the U.S. military activities on its soil — has slammed the U.S.-Turkish agreement, labeling it as a violation of Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as international law.

According to Press TV, Muallem also lashed out at Turkey for providing “terrorists with all forms of support, including weapons that are more sophisticated,” adding that Ankara's action undermines all agreements reached during the Astana talks in Kazakhstan.

“If Turkey is truly committed to the security of its borders and the unity of Syria, as it claims, it must choose whether to respect the Astana understandings and the bilateral agreements on counter-terrorism to secure the borders and to withdraw its forces from Syria, or to be the aggressor and the occupier — and to face the consequences,” he said.

Muallem said that “any agreement about any part of Syria without the consent of its government is condemned and rejected” by Damascus.

He said a peace process should be owned and led by Syrians without any foreign interference.

## Netanyahu, Gantz trade blame over breakdown in Israel coalition talks

**TEHRAN** — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his rival Benny Gantz traded blame Sunday over the failure so far of efforts to reach a unity government deal following deadlocked elections.

A new round of negotiations between Netanyahu's right-wing Likud and Gantz's centrist Blue and White broke down Sunday and the two sides appeared far from reaching a compromise.

Likud said Netanyahu would make a “last effort” to reach a deal before informing President Reuven Rivlin he is unable to form a government. That would leave Rivlin to decide whether to ask Gantz to try to do so or call on parliament to agree on a candidate for prime minister by a vote of at least 61 out of 120 members.

Netanyahu “will make a last effort to realise the possibility of forming a government at this stage, before returning the mandate to the president,” Likud said in a statement.

It called the latest round of negotiations a “big disappointment.” Blue and White accused Likud of “throwing around slogans with the sole aim of generating support in preparation for dragging Israel into another round of elections at the behest of Netanyahu.”

This month's poll was the second this



year, after Netanyahu failed to form a coalition following April polls. Israel marks the two-day Rosh Hashanah holiday beginning Sunday night and serious negotiations are not expected during that time.

Likud said Gantz and Netanyahu had spoken by phone, agreeing that negotiators for both sides would meet Wednesday morning followed by talks between the two leaders.

Blue and White had not confirmed the meetings. Likud wants to negotiate on the basis of a compromise set out by Rivlin to form a unity government, which takes into account the possibility of Netanyahu being indicted for corruption in the weeks ahead.

The proposal could see Netanyahu remain prime minister for now, but step aside if indicted. Gantz would step in as acting premier under such a scenario.

## Johnson vows to stay put to hit Oct 31 Brexit deadline

**TEHRAN** — Boris Johnson vowed Sunday to stay on as Britain's prime minister even if he fails to secure a deal to leave the European Union, saying only his Conservative government can deliver Brexit on October 31 no matter what.

At the beginning of his party's annual conference in the northern city of Manchester, Johnson wants to rally his party with the “do or die” message that he will deliver Brexit by the end of October, with or without a deal.

But there are hurdles to clear, not least of which is what Johnson calls “the surrender act” — the law parliament passed to force the prime minister to request a Brexit delay if he has not secured a deal with Brussels by an October 17-18 EU summit.

Johnson again declined to explain how he plans to circumvent that law and deliver on his Brexit promise, deepening uncertainty Britain's biggest trade and foreign policy shift for more than 40 years.

Asked if he would resign to avoid having to ask for a delay, Johnson said: “No, I have undertaken to lead the party and my country at a difficult time and I am going to continue to do that. I believe it is my responsibility.”



Opposition lawmakers have been highly critical of Johnson's reference to “the surrender bill”, saying his language is stirring even more division in a country that his remained split since the 2016 referendum on EU membership.

Though the option of bringing a vote of no confidence in Johnson has been mooted in some quarters, Labour's education policy chief Angela Rayner said the party wants to “get no deal off the table” before it does anything else.

But time is running out on efforts to avoid a potentially chaotic departure from the EU, which many businesses say could hurt the economy and tip the country into recession, Reuters reported.

## Pelosi: Trump impeachment worth losing House in 2020

**TEHRAN** — U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says that a successful impeachment of President Donald Trump would be worth losing the Democrats' House majority in 2020.

Pelosi's latest remarks come days after she announced the launch of a formal impeachment inquiry into the president. Nearly all House Democrats have publicly backed the inquiry, though about a dozen have yet to endorse it.

Speaking in an interview at Tribune Fest, hosted by the Texas Tribune, the California Democrat suggested that complying with Congress' mandate to hold the president answerable is more important than politics.

When asked by Tribune CEO Evan Smith whether “any of the stuff we're talking about” would impact her “ability to hold control of the House in 2020,” she said, “It doesn't matter.”

“Our first responsibility is to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States.”

“People say you have to take a political risk doing that.

That doesn't matter. That doesn't matter. Because we cannot have a president of the United States undermining his oath of office, his loyalty to his oath of office, undermining our national security, and undermining the integrity of our elections.”

She also said more Americans now favor the impeachment inquiry against Trump.

“In the public, the tide has completely changed; it could change now - who knows - but right now after seeing the complaint and the IG (Inspector General) report and the cavalier attitude the administration had towards it, the American people are coming to a different decision,” Pelosi said at the journalism event.

In a recent Hill-HarrisX poll, 47 percent of respondents said they supported the move, while 42 percent said they opposed it.

Also, a NPR-PBS NewsHour-Marist survey found that 49 percent of American adults favored impeachment, whereas 46 percent disliked the idea, Press TV reported.



Support for the move surged following revelations this week that Trump had pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to look into former Vice President Joe Biden and had temporarily held up aid for the country over the summer.

## Saudi king's bodyguard killed in personal dispute: State media

**TEHRAN** — A prominent bodyguard to Saudi Arabia's King Salman has been shot and killed in a personal dispute, according to state media.

Major General Abdulaziz al-Fagham was killed in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah, where the government relocates for the summer months, the al-Ekhbariya broadcaster

reported on Sunday.

The state-run Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said al-Fagham was shot and killed while visiting a friend's home.

Citing a police statement, SPA said a conversation between al-Fagham and Mamdouh bin Meshaal Al Ali - a third man present, described as a friend - grew heated and Al

Ali retrieved a firearm from outside and opened fire.

The shooter refused to surrender to police who had surrounded the site and subsequently shot him dead, the statement said. Another Saudi, a Filipino and five members of the security forces were also wounded by gunfire, it added.

According to Al Jazeera, Al-Fagham was transferred to a hospital but died from his wounds.

Tributes poured in on social media for al-Fagham, with many posts including images of the bodyguard at work.

“May you rest in peace, hero ...” senior Royal Court adviser Turki al-Sheikh tweeted.

## Kashmiris hail Imran Khan's UN speech

**TEHRAN** — Firecrackers were set off and slogans shouted in Srinagar, the main city in Indian-administered Kashmir, immediately after Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan finished his speech at the United Nations.

In his UN General Assembly address on Friday to world leaders, the Pakistani prime minister said he feared a “blood-bath” in Kashmir when the security lockdown in place since early last month is lifted.

In his 45-minute address, Khan invoked the spectre of a potential nuclear war between India and Pakistan over the disputed Himalayan region if the UN and the international community did not act soon.

“What's he going to do when he lifts the curfew? Does he think the people of Kashmir are quietly going to accept the status quo?” asked Khan, referring to his Indian coun-



terpart, Narendra Modi.

On August 5, Modi's Hindu nationalist government abrogated Article 370 of the Indian constitution, which granted the part of Kashmir it administers a degree of autonomy, pushing India's only Muslim-majority state into its worst political crisis in 70 years.

India and Pakistan claim the Kashmir territory in its entirety but rule over parts of it. Many Kashmiris demand either a merger with Pakistan or an independent state.

“What is going to happen when the curfew is lifted will be a bloodbath,” said Khan. “They will be out in the streets. And what will the [Indian] soldiers do? They will shoot them ... Kashmiris will be further radicalized.”

## Just how swampy are U.S-Saudi arms deals?

➔ Such realities have found little place in the outpouring of commentary on the attacks, with little or no attention paid to easily available evidence. For example, published pictures of the damage at Abqaiq clearly show a number of liquified natural gas storage tanks pierced in the same place on their western sides. As former Pentagon analyst Pierre Sprey pointed out to me, this clearly shows that the attacks came from the west, not the north, as claimed in numerous media reports.

The consistent accuracy demonstrated by these impact holes indicates that the terminal guidance was not GPS, but rather human drone controllers, manually steering the slow flying drones, via the drones' video cameras, into the target. For control purposes they would have to have been in line of sight to the drones (the only alternative would be an easily detectable satellite link) so they could have been no further than 36 miles away at most, assuming the drones were flying at a likely 300 feet altitude.

Instead of such cogent analysis, we have been presented with unquestioning reports of Saudi “evidence” that the attacks came directly from Iran in the form of pictures of an alleged wrecked Iranian drone discovered somewhere close to the targeted area. Motivated and inspired, presumably, by the enormous sums of money to be made, the Boston Consultants and others advising the Saudi regime must have little interest in drawing attention to such tiresome details. There are arms to be bought and sold, and that is the whole point, bringing that old maxim, “the U.S. government exists to buy arms at home and sell arms abroad,” into a sharper, and yet more twisted, focus.

## Voter turnout falls sharply in Afghan presidential election

➔ About 9.6 million citizens of the war-torn nation - with an estimated population of 35 million - had registered to vote in Saturday's election, which was held at some 4,900 polling stations.

In the 2014 election, about 60 percent - or seven million out of 12 million eligible voters - participated.

Voting on Saturday took place amid tight security, with tens of thousands of troops and police deployed to guard polling stations and prevent the Taliban from launching attacks.

The vote was held in relative calm but was marred by a number of small attacks and complaints about the usage of a biometric identification system.

Al Jazeera Rob McBride, reporting from the Afghan capital, Kabul, said the government was hailing the election as a success despite the low turnout.

“They are trying to put a brave face on it that, yes despite the threats from the Taliban, the government has been able to maintain the certain level of security throughout the country even to the point that they extended the voting by two hours,” he said.

The Afghanistan Analysts Network said more than 400 attacks were reported across the country over the course of election day.

The Taliban claimed to have conducted 531 attacks, while the interior ministry said “the enemy” had carried out 68 assaults.

More than a dozen candidates are vying for the country's top job, led by incumbent Ashraf Ghani and his former deputy Abdullah Abdullah.

Preliminary results are not expected before October 19 and final results not until November 7. If no candidate gets over half of the votes, a second round will be held between the two leading candidates, Al Jazeera reported.

## Saudi's new debacle

**TEHRAN** — After the Aramco attacks, the Yemeni Ansarullah movement shows another ability to Saudi Arabia.

The spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces says three Saudi military brigades were completely destroyed after Yemeni Army troops, backed by allied fighters from Popular Committees, mounted a large-scale military offensive in the kingdom's southern border region of Najran.

Speaking at a press conference in the capital Sana'a on Saturday evening, Brigadier General Yahya Saree described the major and efficient operation, dubbed God's Victory, as the biggest-ever since Saudi Arabia and some of its allies embarked an atrocious military campaign on Yemen more than four years ago, noting that the offensive lasted several months and inflicted dramatic losses — both in terms of military hardware and personnel — upon the enemy, the media bureau of Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement said in a statement.

“The operation resulted in the complete destruction of three military brigades of the enemy (Saudi) forces, seizure of large quantities of military equipment, including hundreds of vehicles and armored vehicles, capture of thousands of enemy forces, mostly traitors and the beguiled (Saudi-sponsored Yemeni militiamen loyal to Yemen's former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi). Hundreds more were killed and wounded in the process as well,” Saree pointed out.

The high-profile Yemeni military official highlighted that Saudi commanders, officers and soldiers are among those captured by Yemeni forces and Popular Committees fighters.

“Only 72 hours after the start of the operation, our forces laid full siege to enemy troops. Three brigades of traitors with units of the Saudi army were completely destroyed, and scores of people taken hostage,” Saree said.

He added, “Under the directives of the leadership [of Ansarullah movement, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi], all prisoners were treated according to the principles of Islam, Yemen's customs and traditions as well as human ethics. Our forces worked to protect thousands of surrendered enemy forces against retaliatory raids by the coalition of aggression.”

Saree then assured all families of the prisoners that Yemeni forces and their allies would take further measures to save them from harm against Saudi-led airstrikes.

The spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces went on to say that several specialized units of Yemeni Armed Forces participated in the operation in different geographical areas, and that Yemeni army forces and their allies could wrest control over hundreds of square kilometers of land in Najran.

According to Press TV, Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of Hadi back to power and crushing Ansarullah.

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

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



## Irish governing body fully parts ways with ex-boss Delaney

Former Football Association of Ireland (FAI) boss John Delaney left the governing body completely on Saturday after being on gardening leave for months amid probes into the association's corporate governance practices, the FAI said.

Delaney has been at the center of a series of scandals surrounding the FAI since the Sunday Times newspaper reported in March that he provided it with a personal loan two years ago to help with what the FAI called a short-term cash flow issue.

He was initially moved to a newly created role of executive vice-president after the loan, which the FAI said was a one-off and was fully repaid, was first reported and offered weeks later to leave completely pending the investigations.

The FAI said in a statement released late on Saturday night that Delaney had resigned with immediate effect following talks and that it would fulfil certain notice and pension obligations as agreed between the parties.

Delaney, who had led the association since 2005 and remains a member of the executive committee of European soccer body UEFA, faced heavy criticism from fans, players and politicians, including Ireland's prime minister, for his role in the controversies.

Ireland's state corporate watchdog began legal proceedings against the FAI in May after the association acknowledged it had broken state funding rules and its auditors said the 98-year-old association's accounts were not being properly kept, contravening two sections of Irish company law.

The FAI's state funding was also suspended and audit firm Mazars has been undertaking a separate investigation into it, including into board expenses and payments to third parties.

(Source: Reuters)

## Defoe involved in car crash but not seriously injured

Former England striker Jermain Defoe has thanked concerned fans after he was involved in a three-car crash following his side's Saturday 5-0 win over Aberdeen. Defoe had been pictured speaking to Strathclyde Police near the Clyde Tunnel in Glasgow after the cars, including a Range Rover, were badly damaged. The Glasgow Rangers forward, 36, escaped without injury from the incident in the Broomhill area of Glasgow. A Police Scotland spokesperson said they received reports of the crash at 6.05pm. A witness told the Scottish Sun: 'Defoe and a lady – who looked like she was his girlfriend – were in the Range Rover. 'The BMW M4 sports car was travelling south. It appeared somehow to go through the central reservation and clipped Defoe's car.

'It was absolutely shocking to see. A really awful smash. 'I thought, "oh no – someone is bound to be badly hurt here". 'Reports suggest nobody was severely injured, with the former West Ham, Tottenham and Sunderland player taking to Instagram to post a message to fans saying he was alright. Defoe said: 'Hi guys just want to say thank you for all your lovely messages. 'I know you must have been so worried. Nah but I'm fine, I'm all good. 'I'm just gonna go home and rest up. Still a bit in shock but I'm all good. 'Thank you for all your messages again.'

(Source: Metro)

## Bekele wins Berlin marathon, misses record by two seconds

Ethiopian Kenenisa Bekele won his second Berlin Marathon on Sunday in a time of two hours one minute and 41 seconds, just two seconds short of the world record.

Bekele left it late to hit the lead, overtaking countryman Birhanu Legese on the 38th kilometer before hitting top speed as he chased the world record of 2:01:39 set in Berlin last year by Kenyan Eliud Kipchoge.

Bekele was more than a minute behind the world record time with 10 kilometres to go, but finished in a flurry to better his personal best of 2:03:03 set at the 2016 Berlin Marathon.

Legese finished second with fellow Ethiopian Sisay Lemma in third.

Ashete Bekere, also from Ethiopia, was the fastest of the women, finishing just eight seconds ahead of countrywoman Mare Dibaba in a time of 2:20:14, highlighting the African nation's dominance in the sport.

Bekere and Dibaba were elbow to elbow as they ran through the Brandenburg Gate with just a few hundred metres to go, before Bekere pulled away with the finish line in sight.

Bekele was more than a minute behind the world record time with 10 kilometers to go, but finished in a flurry to better his personal best of 2:03:03 set in 2016.

Bekele put his slow start down to a hamstring complaint. "I felt something in my hamstring early on and of course I am coming back from injury, I was still in rehab two or three months ago," he said.

"My preparation wasn't 100 percent. I feel sorry to have missed the world record, it is painful.

"I'm not lucky, but I know my potential and I know I can do this."

Women's winner Bekere was thrilled with her victory, saying she put her performance down to intuition rather than tactics.

"I am especially delighted to have managed it. I didn't prepare especially for this race, tactics wise, I just ran my own race today."

While Bekele was favorite for the men's event, women's pre-race favorite Gladys Cherono left in tears with half of the course completed due to an apparent muscle problem.

(Source: Eurosport)

## Thieves rob Casemiro's house during Madrid derby

While Casemiro was playing for Real Madrid at the Wanda Metropolitano, his house was reportedly robbed with his wife and son inside.

Both his wife and son are fine after the incident but possessions were taken from the Brazilian's house.

This is according to El Chiringuito, who say that Casemiro has become the latest footballer to have his house robbed in recent times.

Real Madrid have warned players about uploading videos of their homes on social media for security reasons.

(Source: Marca)

# Hamilton wins in Russia to foil Ferrari renaissance

Lewis Hamilton was handed victory in the Russian Grand Prix after a virtual safety car cost Ferrari's Charles Leclerc the lead.

Hamilton's first win in four grands prix inched him closer to a sixth world title and came after Ferrari's chances of victory fell apart following a controversy over Leclerc's team-mate Sebastian Vettel disobeying team orders.

Ferrari's pre-race plan was for Leclerc to tow Vettel down into the first corner to remove the risk of Hamilton, starting second, taking the lead.

Leclerc played his side of the bargain, but once Vettel was in the lead, he refused a demand to let his team-mate back past him.

After a series of conversations over the radio, Ferrari decided to do the swap later and Leclerc recovered first place when he was pitted four laps earlier and allowed to benefit from fresher tyres.

But Vettel's engine developed a problem in its hybrid system on his first lap out of the pits and when he was told to park the car, that led to the virtual safety car being deployed.

It was bad timing for Ferrari, because it meant Hamilton, who had been promoted



into the lead by Ferrari's pit stops, could stop under the VSC and lose far less time than under racing conditions, allowing him to keep the lead.

Leclerc then lost second place as well

when George Russell crashed with an apparent braking problem just as the VSC was ending, bringing out the safety car.

Ferrari decided to pit Leclerc again to swap his medium tyres for softs, the same

## 'I do everything the right way' – 100m world champion Coleman responds to critics



Christian Coleman defended himself against criticism over his three missed doping tests after his stunning win in the World Championships 100m final.

The 23-year-old blew away his rivals to win his first major title in 9.76 seconds - the sixth-fastest time ever.

His win came just weeks after he avoided a ban for missed tests over a technicality.

He said: "It's sad when people say the things they say when they don't really know me."

Dreams of winning gold in Doha appeared more distant in August, when the US Anti-Doping Agency charged Coleman with missing three drugs tests in 12 months.

However, it then withdrew the case after it was proved there had been a filing irregularity regarding the date of the first missed test.

"I have proved myself over the years to be a guy who does everything the right way," added the American, who won silver two years ago.

"All I can do is focus on myself and my family. I came out with a gold medal, I'm blessed."

In the interview with BBC World, he added: "Coming from where we come from, you're not supposed to be here and be a world champion. From Atlanta. People don't make it outside of that bubble, especially being a black man in America."

Coleman will look to complete a sprint double when he begins his challenge for the 200m title on Sunday.

Compatriot Justin Gatlin, who has served two doping bans, produced an exceptional display to take silver in 9.89.

The 37-year-old, who made his mark on the world stage with victory in the 100m at the Athens Olympics in 2004, said he now wants another crack at Olympic gold in 2020.

"It's surreal for me, it's like my career is in reverse," Gatlin told BBC World. "I felt like I arrived at the beginning of my career and now I have crossed that finishing line so many times I am just thankful.

"I find motivation from the fans, they still wish me well. I've got a few races left in me. Hopefully I'll be in Tokyo - I don't get a bye for that one so I'll have to run hard."

(Source: BBC)

## Van Bronckhorst signs with Man City in Guardiola succession plan



Manchester City are preparing for life after Pep Guardiola after giving Dutch coach Giovanni van Bronckhorst an access-all-areas role at the club.

Van Bronckhorst, 44, has spent the last month working behind the scenes at the Etihad after being persuaded by City chiefs to ditch his plan to take a one-year sabbatical following his decision to step down as boss of Feyenoord at the end of last season.

The Premier League champions have claimed that their relationship with the former Barcelona, Arsenal and Rangers midfielder is an informal arrangement designed to help him further develop his expertise.

But Sunday Mirror Sport understands that City approached Van Bronckhorst – who has signed a contract that has put him on the payroll.

The plan is for him to remain in Manchester if it proves a good fit.

And after seeing rivals Manchester United flounder in the six years since Sir Alex Ferguson retired, the Spanish executives who run the club for Sheikh Mansour want to put a succession plan in place.

Van Bronckhorst will spend the next year getting to know the inner workings of the club that has become the dominant force in

as the Mercedes drivers, and that dropped him to third behind Hamilton's team-mate Valtteri Bottas.

Try as he might, Leclerc could not quite get close enough to attack Bottas, and Mercedes were able to deliver their first one-two since the British Grand Prix back in mid-July.

Hamilton scored an extra point for fastest lap and his championship lead is now at 73 points. Mathematically, he cannot win the title at the next race in Japan - but he could well do it the race after that in Mexico.

Losing the win was bad luck for Ferrari - although there will be questions as to whether they could have asked Vettel to make it back to the pits and avoided the VSC that looked to have cost them the race.

But they will be as nothing compared to the debate over Vettel's actions at the start of the race.

At the start, Leclerc seemed to have made a mistake in leaving the door open on the inside for Vettel into the first corner.

But a radio message within a couple of laps betrayed a pre-race plan, as Leclerc was told: "We are looking into doing the swap later in the race."

(Source: BBC)

## 'I'll give my life to PSG,' says Neymar



"It's obviously a pleasure to link up with Kylian again. He came back with his smile and with his football talent," he added.

■ **Mbappe's Neymar 'admiration'**

French World Cup winner Mbappe said he was delighted to link-up again with Neymar although he admits their partnership remains a work in progress.

"There are things that have been said, but we have always had a relationship based on honesty and admiration," said Mbappe.

The last time Mbappe and Neymar had appeared together was in the French Cup final last April, a match

which ended in defeat.

As Bordeaux pressed, Mbappe and PSG began to carve open the home defence.

He burst through on his own, but goalkeeper Benoit Costil anticipated the chip.

Then Costil again reacted quickly, diving at Angel Di Maria's feet as the Argentine ran onto Mbappe's angled through ball.

PSG, who had suffered a shock 2-0 loss to Reims on Wednesday, survived a late video review for a potential Bordeaux penalty to recapture first place.

Angers are second in the table after a 1-1 draw with Amiens.

Nantes, also two points off the pace, had briefly moved to the top when they won 1-0 win at Lyon earlier in the day.

Lyon had the best of the chances but conceded the only goal in freakish fashion just before the hour.

As Samuel Moutoussamy broke into the home area, left-back Fernando Marcal slid in and attempted to poke the ball out for a corner. Instead, it struck his other leg and looped over goalkeeper Anthony Lopes and into the goal.

As the home fans whistled their team, the Lyon players appeared increasingly lost, although the brilliance of Nantes goalkeeper Alban Lafont was a major factor in their failure.

For Nantes, it was a first win at Lyon since December 1996. Monaco's revival continued when a 4-1 home win over Brest allowed them to move into 12th spot.

Monaco have now taken seven points from their last three league games.

(Source: AFP)



# FIBA Asia Champions Cup: Naft Abadan come third, Alvark Tokyo win title

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Naft Abadan of Iran finished in third place at the 2019 FIBA Asia Champions Cup on Sunday.

Naft Abadan defeated feisty Bahrain's Muharraq squad, 81-69, to secure 3rd place.

Saeid Davarpanah had his way against Muharraq and finished with 31 points from 7 three-pointers to lead all scorers in the win.

Alvark Tokyo displayed their determination to avenge last year's loss to beat Al Riyadi 98-74 and claim their first ever FIBA Asia Champions Cup title.

The two-time B. League champions had lost in Final of the 2018 edition of the competition and came back stronger and focused to win it all this time. The title is the first ever by a Japanese Club in the FIBA Asia Champions Cup.

The championship game was tightly contested early on with Riyadi's Ekene Ibekwe trading points with Alex Kirk in the first few minutes of the game. Alvark Tokyo then put the clamps on the defensive end to build up a 21-point lead heading into the halftime break. Riyadi managed only 8-33 shooting from the field in the first half, good for only 24.2%.

Coach Luka Pancevic's team never looked back and continued to rain three-pointers to hold off any comeback attempts by their Lebanese counterparts. After a red-hot shooting game in the Semi-finals, Alvark maintained their hot hand by shooting 12-21 (57.1 percent) from beyond the arc.

Milan Macvan led the winning side in scoring with 20 points for Alvark Tokyo who had 6 players scoring in double-digits. Riyadi had the highest scorer in the game with 31 points from Ekene Ibekwe, but it wasn't enough to withstand the firepower of Alvark Tokyo in the title game.

Alex Kirk had 18 points, 12 rebounds, 3 assists, and 2 blocks in the win and was named the FIBA Asia Champions Cup 2019 MVP. He is joined by Daiki Tanaka, Wael Arakji, Hamed Haddadi, and Kevin Murphy.



## Tokyo 2020 athletes to sleep on recyclable cardboard beds



The Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (Tokyo 2020) has unveiled the special bedding furniture and materials that will be

provided at the Olympic and Paralympic Villages during the Tokyo 2020 Games, including beds made from high-resistance lightweight cardboard and mattresses specifically designed to improve sleeping quality and comfort.

Around 8,000 beds for the Paralympic Village will be provided by Airweave inc., an official Tokyo 2020 partner company.

The design of the mattress leverages the latest innovations in bed surface technology. It comprises three distinct sections supporting the upper, middle and lower body, and the hardness of each section can be customized to suit each athlete's body shape. The pillows have an indentation in the center, providing good support for the neck and head regardless of whether athletes are sleeping on their backs or on their sides.

All of the bed frames will be made from high resist-

ance cardboard, which will be able to support weights of up to 200kg. They will be recycled into paper products after the Games, with the mattress components being recycled into new plastic products. This will be the first time in Olympic and Paralympic history that all Villages' beds and bedding are made almost entirely from renewable materials.

Tokyo 2020 has established as its guiding sustainability principle "Be better, together - For the planet and the people" and aims to minimize resource waste and ecosystem depletion in its use of materials. It has set a target of 99 per cent of items and goods procured for the Games being reused or recycled afterwards. This project represents another positive demonstration of ways in which a more sustainable society can be realized using resources more efficiently.

(Source: Paralympic)

## Triumphant Kano praises Japan's mental strength

Michihisa Kano hailed the composure of his victorious Japan side after they won the AFC U-16 Women's Championship Thailand 2019 title on Saturday.

The Little Nadeshiko produced their best performance of the tournament to beat a previously irresistible DPR Korea 2-1 in the final at Chonburi Stadium, becoming the first nation to win the tournament four times and denying their East Asian rivals a third successive title.

Making Japan's success even impressive was the fact that they achieved it having fallen a goal behind within the opening 10 minutes, with terrific goals from Suzu Amano and Manaka Hayashi overhauling Hong Song-ok's opener.

Speaking after the match, head coach Kano praised his young charges for their ability to retain cool heads in a white-hot atmosphere.

"We tried to go aggressively from the front, however we conceded early with a penalty kick," said Kano.

"Afterwards, the players remained very calm and analysed the game very well, and we were able to equalise, then score the second goal.

"The players trained to be able to apply, and play under, high pressure, so the intensity of this match was very normal for the players. In the previous two days, we prepared for



this match and everything we prepared for came into play."

Kano had spoken the day before the game about his belief that every player in his squad could play a role, and – as if to prove it – he replaced tournament top scorer Maika Hamano with eventual tournament MVP Hanon Nishio at half-time.

Few, if any, other teams in the tournament would have had the luxury to use some of their most effective players for only a portion

of such a crucial match, but Kano revealed it was all part of his pre-match strategy.

"I had a plan to use Nishio for the second half," he revealed.

"I believed if I could bring her on in the second half, she would be more effective than if I used her from the start."

The AFC U-16 Women's Championship success came on a red-letter for Japanese sport, with the national rugby team earning a shock World Cup win over Ireland in Shi-

zuoka, while the national women's basketball side earned a place in the Asia Cup Final.

But, while Kano applauded his sporting counterparts, football remains his love, and helping to grow the women's game is where his focus lies.

"Of course, we welcome it, when Japanese sport enjoys success, but it is more important to me to think about women's football as there is still so much to do," said Kano.

While Japan toasted its new young stars, DPR Korea boss Hwang Yong-song was left to reflect on what went wrong after his side picked the worst possible moment to suffer their first defeat in the competition.

Hwang believes his players failed to keep their composure on the big stage but considers the tournament – which provided DPR Korea with a place at next year's FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup in India - a crucial learning experience.

"Looking not just at today's match, but at the whole tournament, the girls learned a lot about things like strategy and attacking," said the DPR Korea head coach.

"Overall, the players learned quite a lot. The experience they have gained in this tournament will help them prepare moving forward, particularly ahead of the (FIFA U-17 Women's) World Cup."

(Source: AFC)

## AFC Champions League Semi-Finals – Preview

The four remaining teams in the 2019 AFC Champions League will return to action in the coming days with the first legs of the semi-finals to be played on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Two-time winners Urawa Red Diamonds of Japan and China PR's Guangzhou Evergrande are aiming to lift the coveted trophy for an unprecedented third time, while 2011 winners Al Sadd from Qatar and Saudi heavyweights Al Hilal will be looking to return Asian football's club crown to the West for the first time in eight years.

### ■ Al Sadd v Al Hilal

The first of the semi-finals features the last side from the West to lift the trophy, Al Sadd, and visitors Al Hilal, winners of six Continental titles but yet to claim the AFC Champions League since the tournament revamp in 2002-03.

The two teams are familiar foes having faced each other eight times in the AFC Champions League since their first meeting at the 2010 edition. This stage of the competition is also familiar territory for the pair.

Al Sadd were semi-finalists in last year's edition, while Al Hilal have reached this phase four times in their last six campaigns.

In terms of history between the sides, Al Hilal have the edge on results with four wins to one, with three of their meetings drawn. The most recent meeting on May 6, 2015, resulted in a 2-1 win for the Saudi Pro League side.

The hosts will see victory at their ground, Jassim bin Hamad Stadium, as vital, as they are still yet to win away from home in this year's campaign. Hilal, meanwhile, have only lost once on the road. However, it was in the Qatari capital, the neutral venue for their Group Stage match against IR Iran's Esteghlal.

### ■ Urawa Red Diamonds v Guangzhou Evergrande

In the quarter-finals, Urawa eliminated the Chinese champions Shanghai SIPG while AFC Champions League holders Kashima Antlers of Japan were beaten by Guangzhou Evergrande.

At the semi-final stage, one of the pair will replicate their efforts from the last eight and take a giant step towards becoming the first three-time winners of the AFC Champions League.

Urawa have the better record in past meetings with two wins from the four fixtures with Guangzhou winning just once, and the two sharing a draw.

However, Urawa will know it is vital to win on Wednes-



day at Saitama. Guangzhou are on a 21-match unbeaten run at their home fortress of Tianhe Stadium, and will be firm favorites should they return from Japan with any kind of advantage.

Brazilian-born players may play a decisive role in the tie with as many as six set to feature. Of those, Guangzhou's Anderson Talisca has scored five times in his six appearances on the Continent, while Urawa will welcome back defender Mauricio Antonio from suspension.

(Source: the-afc)

## Tractor, Padideh into Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 16

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Tractor and Padideh football teams qualified for the 2019 Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 16 on Sunday.

Tractor defeated Pas 2-1 in Hamedan. Padideh also edged past Nassaji 1-0 in Ghaemshahr.

Furthermore, Naft Masjed Soleyman defeated Gol Gohar Sirjan 1-0, Navad Urmia beat Nirooye Zamini 2-0, Qashqai lost to Sanat Naft 2-1 and Saipa defeated Damash 1-0.

On Monday, defending champions Persepolis will face Machine Sazi in Tabriz, Sepahan meet Kheibar Khoramabad, Pars Jonoubi face Zob Ahan, Fajr Sepasi host Foolad, Esteghlal play Gol Reyhan, Shahin Bushehr face Khooshe Taleai Save and Paykan meet Shohadaye Razakan Karaj.

The 2019–20 Hazfi Cup is the 33rd season of the Iranian football knockout competition and the final match will be held in Shiraz.

## Iran to host next meeting of Olympic Council of Asia

**MNA** — The next meeting of Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) will be held in Iran.

According to a report by the Public Department of the National Olympic Committee of the Islamic Republic of Iran, today, the presiding board of Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) and the authorities of the Sanya City 2020 Asian Beach Games and Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games discussed the necessary preparations for those games. They decided to give hosting the 2025 Asian Youth Games to Tajikistan.

The attendees unanimously approved Iran's formal request to host the Executive Board of the Asian Olympic Council and they decided that Iran will host the next meeting of the OCA's Executive Committee. At the end of the meeting, Sheikh Fahad Al-Sabah, the OCA President congratulated Iran on becoming the host of the next OCA gathering.

## Added time goal steers India to title

Ravi Bahadur Rana's stoppage time strike gave India the SAFF U-18 Championship 2019 title as they edged Bangladesh 2-1 in a tense final at the APF Stadium on Sunday.

It was a dramatic end to a final which had seen India reduced to 10 men and Bangladesh nine.



The final started promisingly for India, who took the lead in just the second minute through Vikram Partap Singh.

Both teams - who had played to a 0-0 draw in the group stage - were reduced to 10 men in the 22nd minute when Gurkirat Singh and Md Fahim were given the marching orders following a melee. Bangladesh, the 2017 runners-up, kept pressing and drew level in the 40th minute through Yeasin Arafat but his celebrations ended with the skipper being sent off.

Despite their numerical disadvantage, Bangladesh held their own in the second half but there was to be heartbreak at the end as Rana struck the winner for India in the first minute of added time.

"I had maintained that it will take a moment of brilliance to end this SAFF Championship, and it was fitting that Ravi finished it off with a wonderful strike," head coach Floyd Pinto said.

"We were not just the best footballing team in the tournament, but also the most effective team. I am really happy for the boys. They earned it. The sacrifices and the commitment of the boys was exemplary."

India's Ninthoingamba Meetei was adjudged the Most Valuable Player of the tournament.

The U-18 triumph follows India's SAFF U-15 Championship win in August and sets Pinto's team nicely for the AFC U-19 Championship 2020 Qualifiers in November.

India are in Group F of the Qualifiers with Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan while Bangladesh are in Group E with Jordan, Bahrain and Bhutan, who were defeated 1-0 by Maldives in the SAFF U-18 Championship 2019 playoff for third place earlier on Sunday.

Maldives are in Group C of the AFC U-19 Championship 2020 Qualifiers with Tajikistan, Syria and Lebanon.

(Source: Sportstar)

## Ball boys sent off for time-wasting, leaving referee to do their job

Yeovil Town's ball boys were all sent off in the closing minutes of Saturday's 3-1 non-league win over Bromley, leaving the referee to retrieve the ball himself, as the bemused club took to social media to discuss the bizarre end to the game.

"The referee has, no joke, just sent off one of our ball boys..." Yeovil said on Twitter, a post that was retweeted by more than 2,000 users, before adding: "Update: he's dismissed all of them." Yeovil's match report called the game a "fiery affair" and said of the incident: "In a unique turn of events, the referee sent all the Yeovil ball boys to the stands due to claims of time-wasting."

Local media said referee Aaron Johnson had sent off one boy for not returning the ball to a Bromley player fast enough late in the National League (fifth-tier) match at Yeovil's Huish Park.

The other boys followed soon after, leaving no-one to return the ball for the final minutes of the game, with Yeovil saying on Twitter that Johnson himself had then been obliged to run to retrieve a ball.

(Source: ESPN)



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Bad temper is a kind of madness, for a fiery man very soon repents, and if he does not repent, his madness is permanent.

Imam Ali (AS)

“A 250-Year-Old Person” comes to German bookstores

CULTURE TEHRAN — “A 250-Year-Old Person”, a book containing a collection of speeches and writings of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei about the household of Prophet Muhammad (S), has been published in German.

Eslamica, a publishing house based in the German city of Bremen, has released the book under the title of “Der 250-jährige Mensch”.

An English version of “A 250-Year-Old Person” has previously been published by Ahl Al-Bayt World Assembly.

The book arranged in 17 chapters also gives a chronological account of the lives of Prophet Muhammad (S) and the Shia Imams (AS).

Earlier in 2016, Iran’s Islamic Cultural Relations Organization announced a plan that Asgharia Pakistan, a major Shia Muslim organization of students in Pakistan, and the Cultural Center of Iran in Karachi would translate the book into Sindhi.

“Shadow House” appears at Iranian bookstores

A R T TEHRAN — American young adult writer Dan Pablocki’s horror series “Shadow House” has recently been published in Persian.

Mohammadreza Maleki is the translator of the series composed of the novels “The Gathering”, “You Can’t Hide” and “No Way Out”, the Tehran-based publisher, Peydayesh, announced on Sunday.

Published from 2016 to 2018, the series is about five teenage friends, Dash, Dylan, Poppy, Marcus and Azumi, who each think they’ve been summoned to the haunted Shadow House for innocent reasons.

Something within the house’s walls is wickedly wrong. Nothing and nobody can be trusted. Hallways move. Doors vanish. Ghosts appear. Children disappear and there is no way out. It seems that someone or something is there with them, and it knows more than they do.

“Shadow House” also contains “The Missing”, which hasn’t been translated into Persian yet.

Crazy Body performs “Mysterious Gift” at Canadian festival

TEHRAN — The Iranian theater troupe Crazy Body led by director Yasser Khaseb performed “Mysterious Gift” at the IMPACT International Theater Festival, which was organized in the Canadian city of Ontario from September 24 to 29, the organizers have announced.

“Mysterious Gift” is the story of birth to death of a human being. The physical theater meets mime, puppetry and contemporary dance in this witty piece about birth, death and the relationship with the “other”.

The troupe gave two performances on September 27 and 28.

A festival in Montreal will be the next destination of the troupe. A number of workshops and meetings with Iranian and Canadian artists have also been arranged on the sidelines of the event.

Art Bureau honors “Barren” writer Mohammadreza Bairami

TEHRAN — Mohammadreza Bairami, the writer of the acclaimed Persian novella “Barren” who was also selected as Iran’s best writer of the past 40 years in February, was honored during a ceremony at the Art Bureau in Tehran on Saturday.

The ceremony was attended by a number of cultural officials and literati, including Art Bureau director Mohsen Momeni-Sharif and writers Reza Amirkhani, Ahmad Dehqan and Hossein Fattahi.

In his brief speech, Momeni-Sharif said that Bairami knows the Persian language perfectly and that’s why his works are flawless.

“He is also very successful in rural literature, and his readers can feel his bond with rural life,” he added.

Calling Bairami the greatest author of his generation, Dehqan said: “He has some masterpieces that no one else could have written.”

“He is a born writer. Bairami is not only a writer but also an artist who can inspire others,” Fattahi noted.

Expressing his gratitude, Bairami said that he is ready to write for teenagers once again and to continue his series, “The Tales of Sabalan”.

“The world of writing is really amazing. It will never end and I will always live in this world,” he concluded.

Bairami was born in 1965 in northwestern Iran in a village at the foot of Sabalan Mountain. He is the author of more than 30 novels and collections of short stories, for which he has received many literary awards.

His credits include “The Smoke behind



Mohammadreza Bairami (L) accepts his own picture from writer Reza Amirkhani during a ceremony held by the Art Bureau to honor the writer in Tehran on September 28, 2019. (M. Hossein Movahhedejad/Tasnim)

the Hill”, “The Eagles of Hill Sixty”, “Wolves Aren’t Scared of Snow”, “The Fifth Chapter of Silence”, “The Last Seven Days” and “The Mountain Called Me”.

His novella “Barren” on the blight of war was picked as best novel at the Jalal Al-e Ahmad Literary Awards, Iran’s most lucrative literary award, in 2016.

In a poll conducted by the Shahrestan Adab Cultural Institute in February, Bairami was selected as Iran’s best writer of the past 40 years.

Filmmaker Puran Derakhshandeh on panel of Slemani festival

TEHRAN — Puran Derakhshandeh, the director of the acclaimed dramas “Hush! Girls Don’t Scream” on child abuse and “Under the Smoky Roof” about emotional unavailability in Iran, is on the jury of the 4th Slemani International Film Festival in Iraq.

Heinz Hermanns, the director of the Berlin International Short Film Festival, will preside over the juries in the international and national competitions, the organizers have announced.

Other members are film director and cinematographer Adrian Belic from the United States, Tampere International Film Festival executive director Juhani Alanen from Finland, and film and media manager Zulfiey Akkulak from Germany.

In addition, a lineup of Iranian films will be competing in various sections of the festival, which will take place in Sulaymaniyah from October 1 to 7.

Reza Mirkarimi’s drama “Castle of Dreams” will go on screen in the official competition.



Iranian filmmaker Puran Derakhshandeh in an undated photo.

Yasser Talebi’s acclaimed documentary “Beloved” will be competing in the international documentary section.

“Umbra”, a narrative short by Saeid Jafarian is an entry to the international short film section, and “Dreams in the Depths” by Reza Mohammadi will compete in the animation section.

“Castle of Dreams” is about two young children whose mother has just died, and their father, Jalal, after long years of absence, returns to sort things out, but he does not want to take the children with him.

The film has been screened at several international events, including the 22nd Shanghai International Film Festival, where it won awards in three categories, including best film and best director.

The film’s star, Hamed Behdad, also shared the award for best actor with Chinese actor Chang Feng at the event.

“Beloved” is about an 82-year-old woman who prefers a hard, solitary herder’s existence with her cows to a more comfortable life among people.

The documentary has received many awards at several international festivals.

“Umbra” is about a young woman who is looking for her missing partner at midnight.

“Dreams in the Depths” centers on a number of immigrants from different countries of the Middle East who deal with war, adverse social conditions and poverty.

Schiller to promote new album “Morgenstund” at Tehran concert

TEHRAN — The German electronic music band Schiller plans to perform tracks from the new album “Morgenstund” at a Tehran concert in November, the band has announced on its website.

“Morgenstund”, which was released in March, is the tenth studio album by Schiller.

This will be Schiller’s third concert in Iran. The band, which is led by musician Christopher von Deylen, gave performances

in the country during 2017 and 2018.

Schiller will give performances for two nights at the Grand Hall of the Interior Ministry in Tehran on November 7 and 8.

Von Deylen composed “Berlin-Tehran” specifically to perform during his Tehran concerts in March 2018.

According to Von Deylen, Iranian rhythms characterized the piece, but no Iranian instruments were used in the “Berlin-Tehran” performances.

The performances were warmly received by Iranian concertgoers and Von Deylen said that he was happy that Iranian audiences liked his music.

Von Deylen has worked with Iranian musicians on several projects. He recorded a single track in collaboration with Iranian singer Hojjat Ashrafzadeh in September 2018.

In addition, Iranian dotar player Yalda Abbasi accompanied Schiller on its tour of Germany in May 2019.



Schiller performs a concert at the Grand Hall of the Interior Ministry in Tehran on December 12, 2017. (Tasnim/Meqdad Madadi)

Tom Hanks to get lifetime award at Golden Globes

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Tom Hanks, one of Hollywood’s most beloved actors, is to add another honor to his name with a lifetime achievement award from the organizers of the Golden Globe awards.

The Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) said on Tuesday it would present the prolific actor and producer with its Cecil B. DeMille award at the Golden Globes ceremony in Beverly Hills on Jan. 5.

The boyish-looking Hanks, now 63, made his movie breakthrough in “Big” in 1988, playing a teenager who wakes up to find himself in the body of an adult.

He went on to win back-to-back Oscars and Golden Globes in 1994 and 1995 for his roles in AIDS drama “Philadelphia” and comedy “Forrest Gump.”

“For more than three decades, he’s captivated audiences with rich and playful characters that we’ve



Cast member Tom Hanks attends the UK premiere of “Toy Story 4” in London, Britain, June 16, 2019. (Reuters/Simon Dawson)

grown to love and admire,” HFPA president Lorenzo Soria said in a statement.

“As compelling as he is on the silver screen, he’s equally so behind the camera as a writer, producer and director.”

Hanks’ next movie appearance will be in November as the much loved U.S. children’s television host Mister Rogers, in “A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood.”

He also starred in more than 80 other movies, including “Sleepless in Seattle,” and “Private Ryan” and was the voice of cowboy Woody in the “Toy Story” animated movie franchise.

The Cecil B. DeMille award is given annually to an actor, director or producer who has made a lasting impact on the film industry. Past recipients include Steven Spielberg, Meryl Streep, Oprah Winfrey, Jeff Bridges and Harrison Ford.

Court jails man who walked out of Moscow art gallery with million-dollar masterpiece



A screen grab taken from video footage shows a man walking with a painting by prominent artist Arkhip Kuindzhi at Tretyakov art gallery in Moscow, Russia January 28, 2019. (Reuters TV/via Reuters)

MOSCOW (Reuters) — A man who stole a Russian masterpiece worth about \$1 million from a Moscow art gallery in broad daylight in January was sentenced to three years in prison on Wednesday.

Police arrested Denis Chuprikov after he was caught on camera taking the 1908 landscape painting “Ai Petri. Crimea” by artist Arkhip Kuindzhi off the wall of the Tretyakov Gallery and strolling out with it under his arm.

The painting depicts a mountain scene and was valued at about \$1 million, state television said at the time, though it was insured for only \$200,000.

Police recovered the work on a nearby building site after Chuprikov told them where he had hidden it.

He pleaded guilty to the theft before a Moscow court. He plans to appeal his sentence, the RIA news agency reported.