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Oil revenues only go to development sector next year

TEHRAN — Iran is going to allocate all revenues from oil sales to the development projects following structural reforms in the next Iranian calendar year's (March 2020-March 2021) budget bill, IRIB reported on Monday, quoting the head of Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) as saying. Oil revenues are generated from selling the country's capital assets and should be spent on augmenting capital assets such as development projects, Mohammad Baqer Nobakht said.

Noting that current expenditures from oil revenues will be cut to zero in the next year's budget, the official said, "The number of provincial development projects has increased from 76 to 86 over the past couple of years, indicating that new projects have been initiated before the completion of the old ones." "The disproportionate rise in the number of development projects will be avoided, as per the reforms undertaken in next year's budget," he added. ➔ **4**

Senior Iranian officials felicitate China on national day

TEHRAN — Top-ranking Iranian officials have offered congratulations to the Chinese government and nation on the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). In a message to his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, President Hassan Rouhani said Tehran-Beijing ties have

turned "strategic" in light of a long-term outlook on historical ties between the two nations, their cultural affinities, and developments in international relations, Tasnim reported. The president also voiced certainty that concerted efforts by both sides would serve mutual interests and contribute to world peace and stability. ➔ **3**

Larijani welcomes Mohammed bin Salman's desire for talks

TEHRAN — Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani has welcomed Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's willingness to resolve disputes with Iran through talks, saying Iran's doors are open to the Saudis. "We welcome Mohammed bin Salman being quoted as saying he wants to resolve issues through talks with Tehran," Al Jazeera quoted Larijani as saying, according to Reuters.

The Saudi crown prince had said he preferred a political resolution rather than a military one to the issues with Iran in an interview with the CBS program "60 Minutes" broadcast on Sunday. A war with Iran would lead to "a total collapse of the global economy", he said, as he called for a political solution and backed talks between U.S. President Donald Trump and Iran's leaders. ➔ **3**



EDITORIAL
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The fate of 2020 U.S. election depends on public health insurance

“The Health Insurance Act” is the only winning card for Democratic Party and its supporters. Over 40 million Americans have no valid health insurance due to high costs of health care and their financial inability to afford it. In addition, about 160 million people are not satisfied with their private insurance, and believe it is very expensive and insufficient.

Therefore, getting the votes of 200 million dissatisfied people who are eligible, and form half of the U.S. population, could be crucial for the 2020 election.

Election debates of Democratic Party are carrying out based on two different views and plans. The debate's location and time is determined by National Democratic Committee. Choosing the main candidate in the 2020 election is carried out at a gathering called National Democratic Congress. It is likely that the winning candidate will be determined, few month before gathering, considering the percentage of popularity and votes in primary election. The last state primary election for determining the main candidate was held in New York State.

By April 2020, twelve debates will be held between Democratic candidates. The number of candidates participating in first and second debates were 20 people, with some leaving each debate.

The first debate was held in Miami, Florida, hosted by NBC, and the second debate was held in Detroit, Illinois, hosted by CNN.

The third debate was held in Houston, Texas, hosted by ABC channel, with the 10 top candidates that were arranged based on their popularity in polls, winning at least 2% of popular vote, and 130,000 financial contributors.

In the last three debates, 10 Democratic candidates presented different views on organizing public health insurance, and criticized health status in Trump administration. The statistics such as 86 million uninsured or underinsured Americans, Trump and Department of Justice's effort to repeal the Obamacare, and annual bankruptcy of over 500,000 Americans due to high treatment costs, were all cases for more pressure on Trump, and attracted more audience. ➔ **13**

China displays new hypersonic nuclear missile on 70th anniversary

TEHRAN — China's military has shown off a new hypersonic ballistic nuclear missile believed capable of breaching all existing anti-missile shields deployed by the United States and its allies.

The vehicle-mounted DF-17 was among weapons displayed on Tuesday in a large military parade led by President Xi Jinping to mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.

Some analysts have called the new missile a threat to regional stability because its speed allows far less time to determine whether to fire nuclear weapons in response.

That speed, and the missile's use of multiple independently maneuverable re-entry vehicles to deliver warheads, makes it far more difficult

to detect and intercept.

The DF-17's hypersonic glide vehicle technology also permits it to fly at a much lower altitude just before delivering its warhead, further frustrating attempts to detect and intercept the weapon.

During the 80-minute parade, Xi was seen waving as the military's latest weapons and equipment were paraded in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

Joining him at the stage were former Chinese leaders Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin.

Also on display was the DF-41 intercontinental ballistic missile, with a reach of between 12,000 and 15,000 kilometers (7,400-9,320 miles), reportedly the longest in the world.

According to an analysis of by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, the missile

is capable of striking the continental U.S. within 30 minutes.

Other weapons featured were the JL-2 missile, which can be launched from a nuclear submarine "providing sea-based nuclear deterrence", as well as a new generation of anti-ship missiles called YJ-18, according to state television CGTN.

A new and advanced radar system that could "detect jets and missiles" was also introduced, as well as new HQ-9B surface-to-air missiles "capable of intercepting multiple air strike weapons in a complex electro-magnetic environment".

In all, 160 aircraft and 580 pieces of military equipment, as well as 15,000 military personnel, were in the parade, according to the state-owned news website, Xinhua. ➔ **13**

Kabul to Taliban: 'Join us in peace or we will continue to fight'

TEHRAN — The Afghan government has used its platform at the UN General Assembly to urge the Taliban to join the government "in peace", days after a presidential election, boycotted by the armed group, was held in the country.

The Taliban, which has been waging an armed rebellion since it was toppled in a U.S.-led invasion in 2001, has dubbed the electoral process a "sham" and warned voters not to go to the polls.

In his address, National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib trumpeted the democratic commitment of Afghans who voted despite lingering threats - some had had their fingers cut off by the Taliban during the 2014 elections, he noted.

"Join us in peace, or we will continue to fight," Mohib said during his speech to the annual UN gathering on Monday.

In a country where a new generation of leaders has grown up in wartime, "the opportunities afforded to us through the gains of the past 20 years have allowed us to change hope into something much more powerful - belief," Mohib said.

"We believe in our abilities to bring about the peace we have hoped for all our lives." ■ **Allegations of irregularities**

The presidential election was marred by allegations of irregularities and low voter turnout amid threats from the Taliban, which control or hold sway over roughly half the country and have launched a number of attacks.

Afghanistan's political future looks uncertain amid the political wrangling over the election process and rising civilian casualties in attacks attributed both to the Taliban and the West-

backed government in Kabul.

The collapse of the U.S.-Taliban peace talks in September has put a question mark over whether a deal to end the U.S.'s longest war will come about.

The Afghan government had been sidelined in the talks, as the Taliban has refused to talk directly with an administration the armed group deems a U.S. "puppet".

The results of the elections are due in November.

■ **'Ongoing fight'**

Thousands of people have been killed over the past month as a result of violence by the Taliban as well as Afghan forces.

On Tuesday, Afghan officials said a multi-pronged Taliban attack on a district headquarters in northern Balkh province killed at least 11 policemen. ➔ **13**



Winners honored at Arbreen Intl. Awards

TEHRAN — Winners in various categories were honored during the 5th Arbreen International Awards on Tuesday at the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) in Tehran.

The awards ceremony was attended by a number of Iranian officials including First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri, Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Seyyed Abbas Salehi, the director of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel and ICRO director Abuzar Ebrahimi-Torkaman. ➔ **16**



ARTICLE
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Domestic manufacturing of home appliances thriving

As the current Iranian calendar year of 1398 is named the year of "Pick-up in Production" by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei and given that realization of this motto toward Iran's self-reliance is in fact the only way to tackle the U.S. cruel sanctions, all governmental bodies have defined programs to boost and flourish domestic production and are seriously pursuing them.

In this due, the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade has defined seven major plans to materialize this significant objective.

The plans include development of domestic production, boosting non-oil exports, development of mines and mining industries, promotion of technology and knowledge-based companies, market management and organizing trade logistics, improving business environment, providing financial resources and expansion of investment making.

Among the mentioned plans, the most important one which is development of domestic production has specified programs for boosting production of products in different sectors.

For home appliances, the set program is manufacturing of 1,000 refrigerators, 800,000 washing machines, and 300,000 gas fireplace stoves in the current Iranian year (ends on March 19, 2020).

As the import of many products of this group has been banned, it could be an opportunity for domestic manufacturers to promote their products, something which will lead not only to self-reliance but also to high quality of products which will create export markets.

The defined programs for this sector have already brought some fruitful results, as the latest data released by the Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade show that manufacturing of refrigerators and freezers has risen 13.6 percent during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22) from the same period of time in the past year. ➔ **4**

Iraqi PM says Riyadh wants to avoid war with Iran

By staff and agency

Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi has said that he believes Saudi Arabia is looking to de-escalate tensions with Iran.

In an exclusive interview with Al Jazeera published on Monday, he said that it is in everybody's interest to prevent further war in the region.

"Nobody possesses the weapons necessary to deal their adversary a fatal blow. Chaos and destruction will hit the region in its entirety," he said.



"Everybody is open to dialogue," he said. "Iran says [it is] willing to negotiate if sanctions are lifted; the U.S. [also] asks for dialogue ... neither does Saudi Arabia close the door for dialogue," Abdul Hadi added.

"There are many countries, and Iraq is one of them, that can offer a solution or a place for a solution to be found."

His comments came as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said in an interview with CBS's 60 Minutes program aired on Sunday that he preferred a peaceful resolution with Iran,

describing it as "much better than the military" option.

In a possible sign of diplomacy, Abdul Mahdi has announced that he would visit Tehran soon, in an effort to reduce tension in the region, according to Iraqi media.

"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," he was quoted as saying.

Earlier, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan had also said that he was making an effort to mediate between Tehran and Riyadh. He held talks with Saudi Arabia's leaders in Riyadh, as well as with Rouhani at the United Nations.

Rouhani warned world leaders on September 25 at the UN General Assembly that "the Persian Gulf region is on the edge of collapse, as a single blunder can fuel a big fire."

Jahangiri says Iran has defeated U.S. maximum pressure policy

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran has succeeded to defeat the United States' policy of maximum pressure against the Islamic Republic, First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri said on Tuesday.

"We have defeated the United States' policy of maximum pressure and they are aware that this plan does not work against Iran," he said in a ceremony.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the vice president attached great importance to national unity and integrity.

"The Iranians will get out of the troubles caused by the United States and anti-Iran countries. It is just essential to protect unity and integrity inside the country," he remarked.

In an interview with NPR published on September 22, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said that Iran will not succumb to economic pressure by Washington.

"Abandon the illusion that Iran can be defeated by pressure," he said.

"We are resisting an unprovoked aggression by the United States. I can assure you that the United States will not be able to bring us to our knees through pressure," he noted.

Zarif also told CGTN in an interview aired on September 22 that Washington's policy of sanction and pressure against Iran has not worked.

"The United States is running out of options. It is desperate. The policy of maximum pressure has not worked," he said.

Former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry has called policy of "maximum pressure" on Tehran bankrupt.

"We have been pressuring them. Maximum pressure... we're seeing the unfolding of really a bankruptcy of approach," he told CBS News.

Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei said on Monday that U.S. President Donald Trump will definitely become aware of realities in Iran.

Abbas Aragchi, a top nuclear negotiator and deputy foreign minister, has said Trump's "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran has produced "maximum resistance".

Trump quit the 2015 nuclear deal in May 2018 and introduced the harshest ever sanctions on Iran as part of "maximum pressure" against the country.

Talking in a press conference in New York on Thursday, President Hassan 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.

Iran hands death sentence, jail terms to nationals spying for U.S., UK

(PRESS TV) — Iran's Judiciary says a person has been handed a death sentence after being convicted of spying for the United States, while two others have been given jail terms on the same conviction.

Gholamhossein Esmaili, the Judiciary's spokesman, made the announcement at a news conference in Tehran on Tuesday, without identifying the individual.

He added, however, that the verdict had been sent to the appeals court upon the defendant's request.

The official said another defendant, identified as Ali Nefriyeh, had received a 10-year prison sentence for espionage for the CIA and had been ordered to repay \$55,000 which he had received from the American spy agency.

Similarly, Mohammad Ali Babapour, was given 10 years behind bars and ordered to repay \$55,000 over spying for the U.S., Esmaili said.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Amir-Nasab, he added, had been given a 10-year jail term for spying for Britain.

Back in July, Iran's Intelligence Ministry said it had captured 17 spies recruited by the CIA to spy on the country's nuclear and military sites and that some of them had been handed death sentences.

Rouhani meets dignitaries at Eurasia summit

Putin and Rouhani hold talks on nuclear deal, Persian Gulf security

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani who had visited Yerevan, Armenia, on Monday, held talks with a number of foreign leaders including the Armenian president and prime minister, Russian and Kazakh presidents, and Singaporean prime minister.

Rouhani attended the Eurasian Economic Union hosted by Yerevan.

Rouhani said strengthening ties with neighbors, especially Armenia, is Iran's principled policy.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran and Armenia have many capacities in various areas such as energy, transit, tourism and industry to use in line with benefiting the two nations," Rouhani said during a meeting with Armenian President Armen Sarkissian late on Monday.

Rouhani added that Iran is ready to share experiences with Armenia in different areas of technology, engineering, dam construction and energy.

For his part, Sarkissian said that Armenia seeks to expand ties with Iran in various fields.

Rouhani held a separate meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Tuesday during which he said that Iran will start its activities in the Eurasian Economic Union from next month.

"Task forces should be formed for co-



operation of Iran with Eurasia which study capacities of cooperation in various areas of energy, electricity and transport and follow the process of their implementation," Rou-

hani stated.

Pashinyan said that Armenia is determined to expand relations with Tehran.

"Iran is a sustainable source of energy and

Rouhani says expansion of ties with neighbors is Iran's principled policy

Iran, Russia, and Turkey to meet on Syria soon

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Vershinin said on Monday that Iran, Turkey and Russia, the three guarantors of the Astana peace process, will soon meet in Nur-Sultan, the Kazakh capital.

Nur-Sultan is the new name of Astana.

"The practice of international high-level meetings on Syria in the Astana-format will continue. The next such meeting will be held in the Kazakh capital in the near future," Trend quoted him as saying.

He warned against "attempts to interfere in the intra-Syrian dialogue and impose scenarios that are incompatible with their cultural, religious and ethnic traditions."

In line with their security cooperation, Iran, Turkey and Russia - three power brokers in Syria - launched the Astana peace talks on the Syrian crisis.

The Astana peace talks were launched in January 2017 with the aim of putting an end to the Syrian conflict.

Kazakhstan has hosted multiple rounds of talks on Syria since January 2017, backed by the three key players, most of which involved delegations from the Syrian government and opposition.

The 13th round of talks was held in Nursultan on August 1-2. Russian President Vladimir Putin said in August that Iran-Turkey-Russia talks have been "most effective" in tackling crisis in Syria.

According to Sputnik, in a meeting with Turkish President

Recep Tayyip Erdogan at Russia's MAKS-2019 air show in the same month, Putin praised the results achieved by the Astana format, calling it the "most effective mechanism" in resolving the Syrian crisis.

He added that the key task at hand for the format is to achieve stabilization of the situation "on the ground".

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met with UN Special Envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen in New York on September 27, discussing the latest developments in Syria and the Astana talks.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the 74th UN General Assembly.

The Iranian foreign minister and Pedersen had met on September 3 in Tehran.

In the meeting in Tehran, Zarif said that Iran is determined to help settle the crisis in Syria politically.

Pointing to Iran's efforts to fight terrorism and extremism in Syria, he expressed Tehran's support for formation of a constitutional committee with cooperation of all parties to the Astana talks.

Pedersen informed Zarif about the latest efforts and consultations with other countries in line with settling the crisis in Syria.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Putin and Erdogan held their fifth summit on Syria in Ankara on September 16.

The return of refugees to Syria, non-interference of for-

eign countries in Syria's affairs, fighting terrorism, facilitating humanitarian aid to the Syrian people, and helping the formation of a constitution were among the points emphasized by Rouhani.

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

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

Rouhani at EEU summit, urges joint investment

POLITICAL d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani who participated at the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) summit in Yerevan, Armenia, on Tuesday called for forming a special task force for joint investment.

"I welcome any kind of financial and banking cooperation with member states to Eurasian Union. So, I suggest formation of a special task force for joint investment," Rouhani told the delegates at the EEU summit.

EEU includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia.

He also said that the international community must counter the United States' unilateralism.

"The international community must take a firm decision and also take effective actions to counter the United States' unilateralism and hostile approach," Rouhani suggested.

He added, "The international system is based on multilateralism and cooperation among the members of the international community. All countries are duty bound to counter unilateralism based on their international commitment and responsibility and in line with protecting global security and stability."

He noted that Washington has adopted

the approach of unilateralism and violation of international agreements which must be countered.

The president said the United States is using dollar as a weapon.

"U.S. hostile moves and its use of dollar as a weapon will lead to economic terrorism and affects the ordinary lives of people," Rouhani remarked.

Pointing to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, Rouhani called the deal an "effective example of diplomatic success" and said that the signatories to the pact and also member states to the United Nations must support it.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran expects signatories to the JCPOA to take actions in line with implementing it. Under the current sensitive situation, it is essential to support

Rouhani says Iran supports cooperation within the framework of economic and political blocs such as the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

Iran condemns Saudi Arabia for trying to distract attention from massacre of Yemenis

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Gholamhossein Dehqani condemned the child-killer regime of Saudi Arabia for trying to distract attention from the bombing of Yemen.

"The Saudi child-killer regime is trying to distract attention from its support for terrorist groups, bombing of Yemen and other blatant violations of international law," Dehqani said, addressing the UN Security Council meeting on the political situation in Syria and in response to Saudi representative's remarks made at the meeting.

In relevant remarks on Monday, Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi stressed his country's continued support for the Yemenis against the Saudi-led coalition.

"Iran supports the legal government of Yemen against the aggressors. Iran has always supported the Yemenis spiritually and politically," Mousavi told reporters in a press conference in Tehran.

Asked about Iran's position on Yemenis' attacks against Saudi Arabia, he said, "In our view, what the Yemenis do are defensive measures."

Mousavi also underlined that resolution of the Yemen crisis depends on acceptance of ceasefire and stop of attacks on Yemeni civilians.

In relevant remarks in September, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani underlined that the Yemenis' offensives on Saudi oil installations were a warning to the enemies to end war and conflicts in the region.

"Enemies of the region should take lesson from this warning and should be after extinguishing the fire of war in the region to let the people live in freedom and welfare," President Rouhani said, addressing a cabinet meeting in Tehran.

He referred to the recent wars launched by the U.S. and its allies in the region, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and the Persian Gulf region, calling on them to bring peace at least one time.

"Why do you always send gunpowder to the regional nations and avoid helping them and then raise allegations against other countries while no one believes these allegations," Rouhani said.

He dismissed the U.S. allegations about

natural gas for Armenia, and his country wants to extend the gas-to-electricity barter agreement with Iran until 2040," he said.

In his with Lee Hsien Loong, the prime minister of Singapore, Rouhani said that Iran attaches great importance to expansion of relations with Asian countries.

He described Iran-Singapore relations as "constructive".

For his part, Lee said that Singapore seeks to expand ties with Iran.

In a separate meeting with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Kemelievich Tokayev, Rouhani said that Caspian Sea should be sea of friendship.

Iran, Azerbaijan, Russia, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan border the Caspian Sea.

In a separate meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Rouhani said that Iran expects that parties to the 2015 nuclear deal implement their commitments.

He also said that Iran's policy is protecting security in the Persian Gulf.

Putin, for his part, said that Russia supports the nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

The top officials also discussed the "Hormuz Peace Endeavor", an initiative that was proposed by Rouhani at the UN General Assembly's session on September 25.

General: Iran still digging missile tunnels 24/7

POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Amir Ali Hajizadeh, commander of the aerospace unit of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), has said Iran is still digging missile tunnels 24/7, thirty five years after it began the project.

“The idea behind these [underground] cities dates back to the year 1363 (1984-1985), and in fact the first tunnel was built before the first missile was imported,” Hajizadeh said on Monday in an interview broadcast on state TV, Mehr reported.

“Our enemies’ concern is that these capabilities cannot be accessed by them,” he stated.

In January 2016, the TV aired exclusive footage of the IRGC’s deep underground tunnel filled with numerous Emad ballistic missiles.

The IRGC’s first underground missile facility was unveiled on October 14, 2015.

Back in March 2016, Hajizadeh said, “We have underground tunnels around the country and under mountains, where we store our missiles.”

“These tunnels cannot be destroyed even if targeted by atomic bombs,” he added.

The Islamic Republic maintains that its military might poses no threat to other countries, and that its defense doctrine is merely based on deterrence.

Elsewhere in his Monday remarks, Hajizadeh said only the superpowers of



the world have the capability to design and produce precision-guided missiles and fewer than 10 countries in number produce precision-guided missiles.

“Today, we are the number one missile power in the region and we are among the 7 to 8 top missile powers in the world,” he added.

He went on to say that Iran’s achievements in the missile technology come while it had

no airspace facilities almost 10 years ago.

“We were seeking to buy while they didn’t sell us any equipment,” the top general explained.

In August, Iran unveiled a domestically-built missile defense system dubbed “Bavar-373”

Bavar-373 is a mobile missile defense system designed to intercept and destroy incoming hostile targets. The system em-

loys missiles that have a maximum range of 300 kilometers. The system is capable of simultaneously detecting up to 300 targets, tracking 60 targets at once and engaging six targets at a time.

President Hassan Rouhani said after the unveiling ceremony that the missile defense system is more powerful than S-300 missile system and is more like S-400.

Tensions have soared between Iran and the U.S. in recent months, especially after the U.S. drone downing incident and the drone attacks on Saudi Arabia’s Aramco facilities.

On June 20, the IRGC’s aerospace unit downed an American RQ-4 Global Hawk drone over the Strait of Hormuz after it violated Iranian airspace. Despite the U.S. claims that the drone had been flying over international waters, Iran put on show the retrieved parts of the drone in its own territorial waters where it was shot down.

The drone was shot by homegrown air defense missile system “Khordad-3rd”.

General Hajizadeh said at the time that the intruding drone had received warnings for four times before being shot down.

Following the incident, IRGC Chief Major General Hossein Salami said the downing of the drone sent a “clear message” to Washington.

“The message is that while Tehran is not seeking war it is completely ready to fight if necessary,” he said.

Larijani welcomes Mohammed bin Salman’s desire for talks

1 → “The political and peaceful solution is much better than the military one,” he added.

Larijani said if Iran and Saudi Arabia hold talks, many of the region’s security and political problems would be resolved.

“We want to create a security system in the Persian Gulf with cooperation of all Persian Gulf states,” ISNA quoted Larijani as saying.

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

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

Yemen’s Houthi movement has claimed responsibility for the attacks.

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

Larijani advised the Houthis to agree to any ceasefire with Riyadh and told the Saudis that a ceasefire will benefit them as well.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the parliament speaker said talks with Washington is not haram (forbidden) but the

U.S. needs to lift the sanctions first.

President Trump abandoned the nuclear deal in May 2018 and imposed the harshest ever sanctions on Tehran. However, the U.S. president has been repeatedly calling for dialogue with Iran.

Iran argues that it makes no sense to hold talks with the United States as long as sanctions are in place.

“From the viewpoint of the government, parliament and the people of Iran, negotiations with the United States make no sense when sanctions remain,” Rouhani said in a phone conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron last month.

Qassem Soleimani says IRGC destroyed grandeur of world’s biggest army



POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Major General Qassem Soleimani says the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has destroyed the grandeur of the world’s biggest army, which is the U.S. Army, and showed its emptiness to the world.

“The way of overcoming the enemies has been paved, but we must keep acting with wisdom, the same way we crippled the enemy and forced it to [accept] defeat in the last 20 years,” Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Quds Force, said on Tuesday, according to IRNA.

General Ali Fadavi, the deputy chief of the IRGC, also said on Tuesday that “today all acknowledge that the Islamic Revolution has found dominance over the United States as a great Satan.”

In similar remarks back in July, Hossein

Salami, chief of the IRGC, said Iran has managed to destroy the United States’ fictitious and artificial grandeur in the world.

The IRGC is tasked with calculating how to overcome the enemy in each and every scenario, Salami said.

“Once, military action was the main focus of the enemy... but today, economic war is the main field in which the enemy encounters us,” the major general said, emphasizing that Iran is currently at an intersection of global economic pressure.

Salami described the tensions between Tehran and Washington as a “war of wills”, saying that in the current situation it’s the enemy that is concerned about the outbreak of a war.

“Such concern is evident in their physical and tactical behaviors,” he added.

Iran just providing advisory help to Yemen: military chief



POLITICAL DESK **TEHRAN** — Major General Hossein Baqeri, the Armed Forces Chief of Staff, has said Iranian military officers only provide advisory assistance to the popular forces in Yemen.

In an interview with China’s Phoenix TV during a recent visit to Beijing, Baqeri rejected reports that Tehran had supplied missiles to Yemen’s popular army, Tasnim reported.

“We are giving Yemen’s popular Army advisory and intellectual assistance and the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) is in charge of this,” he said.

“Today, Yemen is under a complete blockade (by Saudi Arabia), which has blocked all paths and prevented the delivery of food and even medicine”.

“How can one transfer several-meter-long missiles to Yemen when it is not

possible to send medicine (to the Arab country)?” the top general asked.

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

However, Saudi Arabia and its Western allies blamed the attack on Iran.

Baqeri also emphasized that the Islamic Republic will stand by the side of Yemeni people until the aggressors put an end to their atrocities.

Since March 2015, Saudi Arabia and some of its Arab allies have been carrying out deadly airstrikes against the Yemenis in an attempt to restore power to fugitive former president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, a close ally of Riyadh.

Senior Iranian officials felicitate China on national day

1 → In a separate message on Tuesday, Vice President Es’haq Jahangiri also congratulated Premier of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China Li Keqiang on the occasion.

“The relations between the two countries have developed and strengthened in all dimensions, particularly in the economic sector, and we are witnessing progress in bilateral ties in various arenas,” Jahangiri said in his message.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi also congratulated China, voicing hopes for further expansion of Tehran-Beijing ties.

Zarif made his congratulatory message in a tweet in Chinese.

Mousavi offered best wishes to the Chinese nation and government.

“I hope the strategic relations of Iran and China will expand and deepen more than ever,” he said in his Twitter account.

The PRC was founded on September 21, 1949, with a ceremony celebrating the forming of the Central People’s Government taking place in Tiananmen Square on October 1 that year.

The Central People’s Government passed the Resolution on the National Day of the People’s Republic of China on December 2, 1949, and declared October 1 as the National Day.

Iran supports Iraqi independence, sovereignty: ambassador

TEHRAN (MNA) — Iran’s ambassador to Iraq Iraj Masjedi has stressed that Tehran pays special attention and respect to preserving and respecting Iraq’s independence and sovereignty.



Speaking during a ceremony in the Iraqi city of Hamza in Hilla governorate in the south of Baghdad, Iraj Masjedi said that “some would like to point out that the Islamic Republic of Iran or the ambassador is not paying enough attention to the independence and sovereignty of Iraq. As the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I once again announce that Iran has always supported and will support the independence and sovereignty of Iraq and its territorial integrity.”

Masjedi added that as Iran stayed with Iraq during the toughest time of the fight against ISIL and it will continue staying beside its neighbor in the reconstruction period.

He further expressed his appreciation to the Iraqi government and people for providing services to the Iranian pilgrims during Arbaeen processions, stressing that the cultural and historical similarities between the two nations have brought the two together in such a way that one can say they are “a single soul inhabiting in two bodies.”

Currently, the annual bilateral trade value between the two countries is standing at \$ 10 billion, and the Islamic Republic of Iran currently supplies more than 3,200 MW of electricity to its neighbor, according to the Iraqi ambassador.

He further pointed out that as many as eighty Iranian technical-engineering companies are operating in Iraq during the post-ISIL reconstruction era with contracts valued at \$ 12 billion.

Over 1 ton of illicit drugs confiscated in SE Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) — The police forces of the Sistan-Baluchestan province, southeastern Iran, have seized 1.338 tons of narcotics in Khash.

Police Deputy Chief of Sistan- Baluchestan province General Ahmad Taheri said on Tuesday that 1 ton and 338 kilograms of different illegal drugs have been seized during an operation in Khash.

One AK-47, 115 cartridges and one RPG-7 were seized in addition to confiscation of 1,338 kilograms of illicit drugs, he added.

According to Taheri, two smugglers were arrested during the operation.

Recently, Police Chief of Sistan- Baluchestan province Brigadier General Mohammad Ghanbari said that the anti-narcotics police of the province confiscated 7.197 tons of drugs since August 23 to September 6, 2019.

Iran is at the forefront of the fight against drug trafficking and thousands of Iranian forces have been so far martyred to protect the world from the danger of drugs.

According to reports, in 2018 alone, Iranian forces carried out 1,557 operations against drug traffickers, seizing approximately 807 tons of different types of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

According to the World Drug Report 2019” of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in 2017, Iran had seized the largest quantity of opiates, accounting for 39% of the global total.

Lebanese paper reveals U.S.-Saudi plot to overthrow gov’t in Iran in 3 years

TEHRAN (FNA) — A leading Lebanese newspaper disclosed that Riyadh has worked on a plan to topple the Islamic Republic in Iran within 3 years in collaboration with Washington, but failed.

The Arabic-language al-Akhbar paper reported on Tuesday that the top secret plan which was presented to the U.S. in 2017 was aimed at weakening the Islamic Republic and its allies in the region, but eventually failed.

According to the document, Saudi Arabia intended to destabilize the Iranian government by a three-year-long plot. It includes initiatives to isolate Iran internationally to curb its nuclear program and transfer the battle to inside Iran so long as the Islamic Republic is toppled and a regime will replace it which serves the Saudi and the U.S. interests.

It added that supervising the plan is a Saudi-American task force known as the ‘Iran Working Group’, noting that the document includes special proposals to the U.S. to counter what it described as Iran’s hostile policies in the region in the wake of the Obama administration’s

overture to Iran which the Saudis resented.

Al-Akhbar noted that after analysis of the document, it was revealed that the Saudis’ were begging for the U.S. trust to be its reliable partner in the region while asking for the U.S. support to salvage its unsuccessful venture in Yemen and betting big on Donald Trump specifically.

The document confirms that the scope of the Saudi intervention in the neighboring states is serving the U.S. interests by weakening the Iranian government from inside and outside the country, enhancing Saudi animosity towards Hezbollah and over war against Yemen.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the aim of bringing the government of former Yemeni President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the Ansarullah movement.

Despite Riyadh’s claims that it is bombing the positions of the Ansarullah fighters, Saudi bombers are flattening residential areas and civilian infrastructures.

Weddings, funerals, schools and hospitals, as well as water and electricity plants, have been targeted, killing and wounding hundreds of thousands.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) announced in late August that the total number of reported fatalities in Yemen has passed the 91,000 mark over the past four and a half years.

France, the United States, the United Kingdom and some other Western countries have faced criticisms over arms sales to the Saudi Arabia and the UAE, whose aggression against Yemen has affected 28 million people and caused what the United Nations calls “one of the worst humanitarian crises in the world”. According to the world body, Yemen is suffering from the most severe famine in more than 100 years.

A UN panel has compiled a detailed report of civilian casualties caused by the Saudi military and its allies during their war against Yemen, saying the Riyadh-led coalition has used precision-guided munitions in its raids on civilian targets.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	326104.5
IFX	4293.92

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	45,747 rials
GBP	51,625 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$59.82/b
WTI	\$54.63/b
OPEC Basket	\$62.51/b
Gold	\$1,469.20/oz
Silver	\$817.21/oz
Platinum	\$888.00/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Domestic manufacturing of home appliances thriving

➔ Provided data indicate that 453,600 refrigerators and freezers have been manufactured during the mentioned five-month period, rising from 515,300 in the same time span of the previous year.

The rise is also seen in other appliances as the number of manufactured air coolers stood at 516,600 in the first five months of this year, increasing 5.5 percent year on year.

Now the experts believe that sanctions and bans on import of home appliances have encouraged domestic manufacturers for manufacturing more and better products.

They also predict that promotion of domestic production will continue by the yearend and we will witness a good market supply while lower prices in this year.

In addition, they are of the opinion that this trend of pickup in production will be also resulted in developing the markets of Iranian products.

IMF to support all members including CBI: Georgieva

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – International Monetary Fund (IMF)’s New Head Kristalina Georgieva said the fund will do its best to provide its support and technical services to all members including Central Bank of Iran (CBI) equally, IRNA reported.

In a phone conversation with the Governor of CBI Abdolnaser Hemmati, the IMF head said she strives to ensure that member states, especially developing countries, have a fair share of discussions and decisions in IMF.

As reported by CBI portal, in the phone conversation, Hemmati congratulated Georgieva for her new position and wished her success.

Bulgarian economist Kristalina Georgieva has been selected as the new head of the International Monetary Fund in late September.

Georgieva, who was previously chief executive of the World Bank, becomes the first person from an emerging economy to lead the IMF.

She succeeded Christine Lagarde, who is leaving to become head of the European Central Bank (ECB).

Georgieva was the only nominee for the job.

ECB’s Draghi backs France’s calls for further euro integration

By Silvia Amaro

The outgoing president of the European Central Bank (ECB) has called on euro countries to commit to further integration – in what’s a controversial and dividing topic among the 19 nations.

In an interview with the Financial Times over the weekend, ECB President Mario Draghi said “what matters is to make the (euro) union stronger” and “in some areas, further integration achieves that goal.”

The eurozone is made up of 19 European nations that share the same currency – the euro. Their monetary policy is decided by the ECB, which is based in Frankfurt. However, their fiscal policies are decided at the national level – which often creates discrepancies and makes the region more exposed to financial shocks.

While some countries argue that they need to share more when it comes to fiscal policy, other capitals are reluctant to delegate more power to European institutions, fearing to lose control over their economies or having to finance high-indebted nations.

To “have a stronger EMU (economic and monetary union), we need a common euro zone budget. Clearly the political debate on that still has a long way to go. But I am optimistic,” Draghi said, supporting a plan that the French President, Emmanuel Macron, has tried to implement.

Led by the French delegation, European finance ministers agreed to create a common euro zone budget earlier this year. However, details of how it will be financed and how big it will be have yet to be agreed upon. Nonetheless, the compromise that has been achieved between the 19 capitals is far less ambitious than the original proposal from President Macron.

Draghi has often criticized member states for not doing enough to support the euro economy. He said that monetary policy alone cannot lift the moribund growth and inflation levels seen in the region.

He told the FT that more government support “could greatly help” lower the pressure on the central bank.

Draghi ends his eight-year mandate at the ECB on October 31. Christine Lagarde will take over from Draghi on November 1. (Source: cnbc.com)

Domestic firms’ more presence in exhibitions a sign of thriving production

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — Participation of Iranian companies has noticeably increased in the national and international exhibitions in the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 21) which is a sign of thriving production in the country, according to the managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company.

Speaking in a press conference held at the place of Tehran Permanent International Fairground on Tuesday, Bahman Hosseinzadeh said: “This year has been named as the year of “Pickup in Production” by the Supreme Leader and to materialize this objective we have supporting domestic production on top of our agenda”.

Putting the number of Iranian participating companies at near 20,000, the official said that to support production by these companies, a system has been set up that makes access to the information of their products possible not only during their participation in the exhibitions but also during the whole year. such things help them increase their sales.

Hosseinzadeh further mentioned three major objectives of his company as active presence in the international exhibitions with focus on the exhibits of the neighboring countries, holding national exhibitions benefitting from the most modern technology, and creating all necessary infrastructures and removing the barriers.

■ Holding exhibitions a major approach for expansion of exports

Elsewhere in his remarks, the managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company referred to the significance of boosting the country’s exports of products and reiterated that holding exhibitions is a major approach in this due.

Iran’s Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021) has envisaged an export



growth of 21.7 percent and holding exhibition both inside and outside the country plays some significant role to this end, he noted.

Underlining the importance of benefitting from the 400-million population markets of the neighboring countries for expansion of exports, Hosseinzadeh said to materialize the objective of more non-oil export to the regional countries his company has defined an especial plan for holding different exhibitions.

“As most of our neighbors are some major importers of commodities we should benefit from this opportunity to boost our exports”, he added.

“We have also negotiations underway with other countries for example Eurasian countries and they are wiling for cooperation”, the official said.

■ Supporting startups, knowledge-based companies

Hosseinzadeh further mentioned that

his company’s supports to the startups and knowledge-based companies has resulted in flourishing of domestic production.

“We allocate one salon to these companies in every exhibition and this approach is fortunately supported by the related officials”, he added.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the official said “There are already 150-200 exhibition organizing companies in the country being supported by us.”

In addition to Tehran Permanent International Fairground there are 31 exhibition centers, mainly in the capital cities of the country, and Iran International Exhibitions Company has the responsibility of policy making, he added.

■ Iran on top of exhibition holders in region

Over 600 exhibitions are annually held in Iran and the planned figure for Tehran

Permanent International Fairground in this year is 90 exhibitions that over 40 percent of them have been already held, Hosseinzadeh informed.

The official further said that holding high number of exhibitions is a specification of the countries like Germany that has some strong economy and underlined that Iran holds the highest number of exhibitions in the region.

“We have at least 10 foreign delegations in each exhibition that their presence leads to signing contracts with Iranian exhibitors”, he stated.

“Recently, we have also negotiated with the Exports Guarantee Fund of Iran to take the advantage of existing potential for holding exhibitions outside the country”, he added.

The managing director of Iran International Exhibitions Company further referred to the recent opening of a representative office of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) at Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds as a very fruitful measure.

The office was set up in order to facilitate custom operations for exhibitors and participants of international exhibitions in the country and is aimed to facilitate customs services and commodity clearance for the exhibitors.

“The [representative] office has been launched in accordance with the existing customs conventions in order to encourage the presence of foreign companies in these exhibitions and their cooperation with Iranian companies,” Hosseinzadeh has previously said.

“The office provides important services to companies intending to import technology into Iran, and in the face of the U.S. sanctions this step can have a significant impact on developing the country’s industry,” he added.

Over \$6b of loans paid to SMEs in 5 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iran’s Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade announced that in the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22), some 264.943 trillion rials (nearly \$6.3 billion) worth of bank loans have been offered to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to complete semi-finished projects with an over 60 percent physical progress.

Over 16,500 production units registered for receiving bank loans in the mentioned time span of which 10,005 units received the facilities, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

In late July, the industry ministry released a report announcing that in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), some 256.17 trillion rials (nearly \$6.1 billion) worth of bank loans were offered to the country’s SMEs.

Earlier that month, the ministry had announced that banks and credit institutions provided both industrial and mining sectors with 300 trillion rials (about \$7.14 billion)

worth of loans in the first two months of the current Iranian year (March 21-May 21), registering a 41.5 percent rise year on year.

According to the data released by the ministry, the total amount of loans offered to the country’s economic sector stood at 923 trillion rials (about \$21.97 billion) in the mentioned period.

Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has defined supporting production as its major plan in the current Iranian calendar year, which is named the Year of Pickup in Production, and in this regard CBI Governor

Abdolnaser Hemmati has several times stressed that supporting production units to flourish production is the priority of the country’s banking system in current year.

In early May, the official outlined CBI plans for neutralizing or relieving the impact of U.S. sanctions on the country’s economy and mentioned providing liquidity and working capital to maintain and boost domestic production as one



of those plans.

CBI’s plans take two major approaches, one of which is to secure finance for production activities and also to provide the working capital needed for such activities.

Oil revenues only go to development sector next year

➔ According to the official, the revenues gained from elimination of hidden energy subsidies as well as increased tax incomes will replace oil revenues.

“This does not mean a rise in tax income; but by setting new tax bases and eliminating unnecessary exemptions at a time of economic warfare, more tax revenues will be provided,” he explained.

Back in September, Nobakht had announced that the government was going to submit the budget bill for the next Iranian calendar year (starts on March 20, 2020) to the parliament on December 6 as scheduled.

According to the official, this year, PBO has decided to send the information about the state-owned companies’ budget to the Majlis (Iranian parliament) a month

earlier so that the parliament would have enough time to review it.

The members of the budget preparation committee at PBO are seriously working on the bill and while the views may differ in some areas, the consensus among all members will be the base for the final decision making, Nobakht said.

Japan ups sales tax to 10% amid signs economy is weakening

By Mari Yamaguchi

Japan raised its national sales tax to 10% from 8% on Tuesday, risking short-term pain for the sake of the country’s future financial stability as it copes with a fast aging and shrinking population.

Previous tax increases, a 2-point increase to 5% in 1997 and another to 8% in 2014, brought on recessions. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe twice delayed the move out of fears it might derail the tenuous expansion of the world’s third-largest economy. But he said this time it was unavoidable.

“We are pursuing social security reforms to ensure everyone is covered, that all generations from children to senior citizens can feel secure. This is going to be a first big step,” Abe told reporters.

The sales tax increase covers most goods and services from clothes, electronics to transportation and medical fees. But the government sought to soften its impact with tax breaks for home and car purchases, while launching a rewards program for credit card and other “cashless” purchases at small- to medium-size restaurants and other retailers through next June. The tax for groceries is unchanged for low-income households, and the government is providing free pre-school education to families and a one-time payout to low-income pensioners.

Finance Minister Taro Aso noted Tuesday that the limited amount of extra purchasing to beat the tax hike suggests the impact may not be as severe as in the past, when there was a rush of buying before taxes were raised.

■ Fiscal deficits

After decades of fiscal deficits that have



taken the debt to more than twice the size of the economy, Abe has promised a return to balance by 2025. That will require growth is sustained at a healthy pace.

The sales tax hike coincided with the release of data showing business sentiment among large manufacturers deteriorated in September to its worst level since 2013.

The result was better than expected, but the outlook is forecast to weaken further by December’s quarterly report of the Bank of Japan’s survey, called the “tankan.”

“Particularly affected are producers of basic materials, reflecting recent commodity market movements, as well as producers of general-purpose and production machinery, who are exposed to risks posed by recent re-escalation of U.S.-China trade frictions,” Oxford Economics said in a commentary.

Other data released this week have shown

industrial output decreasing in August, while unemployment remained at a 26-year low of 2.2%.

The economy expanded at an annual pace of 1.8 percent in April-June, faster than anticipated. But slowing exports and rising prices for oil are expected to drag growth lower in coming months.

Analysts say the tax hike poses an extra deflationary risk at a time of growing uncertainty over tensions between the U.S. and China – the country’s two biggest export markets – and over Japan’s own dispute with neighboring South Korea.

It follows years of ultra-loose monetary policy aimed at convincing businesses to invest and frugal Japanese families to open their wallets.

“Considering the current economic conditions, the timing is bad,” said Toshihiro Nagahama, chief economist at Dai-ichi Life Research Institute.

■ Escaping a deflationary rut

The economy has slowed since late last year and demand generated by the construction boom for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics is fading, he said. The fear is that might undo years of efforts to escape a deflationary rut where falling prices due to slack demand depress investment, a main driver of growth.

It’s been more than six years since Bank of Japan Gov. Haruhiko Kuroda launched his “big bazooka” injections of billions of dollars of cash into the economy through central bank asset purchases, aimed at prying the country out of its deflationary doldrums.

Spending remains lackluster, held back by sluggish wage growth.

The tax hike will put an estimated additional burden on households of more than 2 trillion

yen (\$18 billion).

Critics say the exceptions and incentives built into the new sales tax regime are bound to cause confusion. For instance, purchases “to go” at Starbucks Coffee outlets are still taxed at 8%, while customers choosing to dine in have to pay 10%.

Still, shoppers seemed to be taking the changes in stride.

One elderly woman, coaxed by a clerk into trying out her credit card at a Tokyo supermarket, appeared delighted with the 5% discount from her 905 yen (\$8) grocery bill.

“This means I paid 45 yen less, right?” she asked, smiling, as she was interviewed by NHK television. “If you do the math and think about it, it’s rather significant.”

Businesses are adapting with price cuts and rewards for cashless payments to attract customers.

“Stores seem to provide discounts, so I will go for those, plus, I don’t plan to buy luxurious goods with big price tags,” Junko Matsumoto, a homemaker in her 60s, said as she walked past a Tokyo train station. “I must admit the tax increase was unavoidable.”

Toru Yokoyama, a 31-year-old office worker, was less upbeat.

“Before resorting to a tax increase, the government could have taken other measures, but it’s already done and there is not much I can do at this point,” Yokoyama said. “I don’t think my shopping patterns would change very much, but I may not be able to go on trips as often as used to.”

(Source: apnews.com)

Iran’s largest mobile power plant unveiled

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – The Passive Defense and Disaster Management Office of Iran’s National Water and Wastewater Company unveiled the country’s largest mobile power plant which is going to be used in sensitive water infrastructure in emergency situations like flood and earthquake.

As reported by IRIB, the 10-megawatt power plant was unveiled on the sidelines of the 15th Iran International Water and Wastewater Exhibition (Watex 2019) on Monday.

“This modular and portable power plant consists of five trailers, four of which are equipped with 2.5-MW generators and also one substation.” Director General of Passive Defense and Disaster Management Office of National Water and Wastewater Company Farhad Karkani said.

This unique complex is capable of electrifying loads at 33-kV voltages, he said, adding, “The transformer and substation of this power plant, which has been designed and constructed by domestic engineers, is able to provide output at different voltage



levels only by one transformer.” According to Karkani, this mobile power plant can be used to take various measures in critical conditions like supplying water in the shortest time possible in emergency conditions such as flood and earthquake.

Mobile power plants are versatile pre-engineered turbine power plants designed to provide quick delivery and installation.

The 15th Iran International Water and Wastewater Exhibition (Watex 2019) which kicked off on Monday at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds will wrap up on Wednesday.

Iran to build petchem complexes, refineries in Jask port

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said the country is planning to build petrochemical complexes as well as refineries in Jask Port in southern Iran.

The minister made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony for signing several contracts between Petroleum Engineering and Development Company (PEDEC), an NIOC subsidiary, and local firms for building electro-pumps for Goreh-Jask pipeline project, on Monday.

According to Zanganeh, the ministry has issued permits for construction of two refineries with daily refining capacities of 300,000 and 150,000 barrels per day (bpd), the projects which are going to be carried out by the Execution of Imam Khomeini’s Order (EIKO) and one of the subsidiaries of Bakhtar Petrochemical Company (Petro-refinery), respectively.

The official also noted that in the next Iranian calendar year (starts on March 20, 2020), Jask Export Terminal will be officially launched by exporting a gas condensate cargo from South Pars.

Zanganeh further noted that \$1.8 billion is going to be funded for Goreh-Jask pipeline project of which \$700m



alone would be spent for developing the port.

He also mentioned the issue of supplying low-sulfur fuel for vessels which would soon become mandatory, saying that Iranian refineries were capable of producing this type of fuel to some extent and would supply their excess demand from the market.

However, he said, if they fail to do so, according to a paragraph in the International Maritime Organization (IMO), ships that fail to get low-sulfur fuel by conventional efforts can use high-sulfur fuel.

NIOC to sign oil contracts with local firms

Also on the sidelines of the same event, Managing Director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Masoud Karbasian said the company was to sign nine contracts with domestic companies for oil production enhancement and maintenance projects.

He said the \$1.8b Goreh-Jask pipeline project would entail construction of 5 pumping houses valued at 143 million Euros, 1,000 km of 42-inch pipeline, construction of 20 500,000-barrel storage tanks, construction of Jask oil export terminal, etc. which will all be constructed by relying on domestic forces.

Karbasian said that for construction of each section of the project many jobs would be created in the country, besides tapping the potentialities of domestic producers.

He said currently, 30,000 tons of steel slaps are being produced by Oxin Steel Company and 20 km of the pipeline has been built, so far.

Global energy-related CO2 emissions will rise through 2050

Global carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions from energy-related sources will grow 0.6% per year from 2018 to 2050 in its reference, or base, case, the Energy Information Administration reports.

As per kallanishenergy.com, however, future growth in energy-related CO2 emissions is not evenly distributed worldwide. All future growth in energy-related CO2 emissions is among the group of countries outside the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Countries outside of the OECD collectively have more population, a larger gross domestic product, more energy consumption, and higher energy-related CO2 emissions compared with aggregated values from OECD countries.

As non-OECD countries continue to grow, so does their demand for air conditioning, electronics, personal vehicles, and other energy services. These countries also have relatively energy-intensive industries, primarily because energy-intensive industrial processes often shift to non-OECD countries.

Energy consumption in non-OECD countries increases by 1.6% per year from 2018 to 2050, and energy-related CO2 emissions increase by 1.0% annually.

Fossil fuels

EIA projects coal-related CO2 emissions in non-OECD countries, especially China, will grow at the slowest rate among fossil fuels, as natural gas replaces coal in power generation and in industrial applications.

China emits the most energy-related CO2 emissions in the world, and EIA projects it will remain in that position through 2050. Although India’s coal-related CO2 emissions increase 2.8% annually from 2018 to 2050 — the highest

among the eight countries in EIA’s international outlook — China remains the single largest emitter of coal-related CO2 emissions in the world.

By comparison, OECD economies are relatively mature, so many energy services such as air conditioning, electronics, and personal transportation are fairly saturated.

Population and economic growth is relatively low compared with non-OECD countries, and technology improvements largely offset increases in energy demand in buildings and vehicles.

EIA projects energy-related CO2 emissions from OECD countries will decrease slightly (-0.2%) from 2018 to 2050 in agency’s reference case.

OECD CO2 emissions from petroleum liquids and coal consumption decline, but emissions from natural gas consumption increase.

EIA expects the U.S. to remain the largest emitter of energy-related CO2 emissions among OECD members and the largest emitter of natural gas-related emissions among all countries, regardless of OECD membership, through 2050.

Petroleum liquids-related CO2 emissions from the U.S. and China — the top two petroleum liquids-related CO2 emitters — are relatively similar throughout the projection period.

On a per capita basis, OECD countries emit far more energy-related CO2 than non-OECD countries: about 9.5 metric tons per person in OECD countries in 2018, compared with 3.6 metric tons per person in non-OECD countries.

The gap between those groups is decreasing; by 2050, OECD countries will emit 8.2 metric tons per person



compared with 3.8 metric tons per person in non-OECD countries.

Global energy intensities and carbon intensities also continue to decline. By 2032, non-OECD countries are expected to become less energy intensive than OECD countries, meaning they use less energy to generate economic activity.

However, non-OECD countries are expected to remain more carbon intensive than OECD countries through 2050, meaning they generate more CO2 emissions per unit of energy consumed.

Differences in energy and carbon intensities reflect the different mix of fuels used to provide energy in the two groups of countries.

By 2050, non-OECD member economies are about as carbon intensive as OECD economies are today, according to EIA.

Technology for reducing sulfur content of vessel fuel indigenized

E N E R G Y **TEHRAN** – Iran has indigenized the technology for reducing the sulfur content of the fuel oil, which is used by the vessels, to less than 0.5 percent, IRIB reported.

According to the Managing Director of Iran’s Exir Novin Farayand Asia Company, the knowledge-based company has achieved this goal in collaboration with the Oil Industry Research Institute, and National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC).

“By using this indigenous knowledge, Iranian fuel oil is desulfurized to be used in ships and tankers based on international standards,” Jalil Sobhani said.

The U.N. International Maritime Organization (IMO) has drawn new regulations to curb pollution produced by the world’s ships.

The new rule will ban ships using fuel with a sulfur content higher than 0.5 percent, compared to 3.5 percent now, unless a vessel has equipment to clean up its sulfur emissions.

The new regulations are coming into force from 2020.

Iran’s fuel oil is ranked among fuels with high amounts of sulfur due to the country’s crude type.

According to Vahid Sheikhi, a member of Iranian Oil, Gas and Petrochemical Products Exporters’ Union (known as OPEX), only a small share of the country’s refineries are currently producing fuel oil with a sulfur content of less than 0.5 percent.

The official noted that currently up to 30 percent of the country’s oil products share is fuel oil and so achieving this technology inside the country is a significant step in self-reliance of our shipping industry in the future.



OPEC’s Barkindo invites 97 oil producing countries to join Charter of Cooperation

By Leman Zeynalova

OPEC Secretary General Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo has invited all 97 oil producing countries to join the Charter of Cooperation.

He made the remarks at the 16th Annual Meeting of the Valdai Discussion Club, Special session on energy- “World Energy Markets: How to Avoid Instability and Ensure a Balance of Interests”, in Sochi, the Russian Federation, Trend reported citing OPEC’s website.

Barkindo noted that the ‘Charter’ is a platform to facilitate dialogue among the Participating Countries, aiming to promote oil market stability, cooperation in technology and other areas, for the benefit of oil producers, consumers, investors and the global economy.

“It is a means of enabling the long-term use of oil as a key component in the evolving global energy mix, as well as improving the environmental and efficiency credentials of oil. The ‘Charter’ will promote strategies and technologies to advance the global oil industry. Our 24 participating countries of the DoC have chosen the path of cooperation; the path of dialogue, the path of transparency and openness. The ‘Charter’ crystallizes these intentions and provides them with an overall framework,” noted Barkindo.

The “‘Charter’ can steer us through challenges we may face in the future. This is especially apparent given the fact that our industry is often vulnerable to external shocks beyond the capacity of any one stakeholder to control: geopolitics; trade tensions; monetary policy; natural disasters and other factors. However, the ‘Charter of Cooperation’ is a sturdy ship, which can navigate these tempestuous waters. Therefore, further and more intensified cooperation is the best prescription to treat volatility. For this reason, participation in the ‘Charter’ is voluntary and open to all producing countries. I would like to extend the hand of friendship to all 97 oil producing countries and invite them to join the ‘Charter of Cooperation’ as we seek to build a better world.”

The Charter of Cooperation is a high-level voluntary commitment, to enable the continued proactive dialogue between countries in the Declaration of Cooperation at both ministerial and technical levels.

(Source: Trend News Agency)

Oil prices recover on lower output from U.S., Russia, OPEC

Oil prices rebounded on Tuesday on reports that output from the world’s largest oil producers fell during the third quarter, although a resumption in Saudi supply and demand concerns kept a lid on gains.

As per reuters.com, Brent crude futures LCOc1 rose 57 cents to \$59.82 a barrel by 0852 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude CLc1 was up 59 cents at \$54.66 a barrel.

Front-month prices for both contracts posted their largest quarterly falls this year on Monday, hurt by a slowdown in global economic growth amid the U.S.-China trade war.

“Although oil has been given every opportunity to jump well above \$70 per barrel due to geopolitical events, the fact that it did not is telling,” Tamas Varga of oil brokerage PVM said.

“It suggests that the market is not concerned about eventual supply shortages but worried about global recession and possibly about supply surplus next year,” he added.

Oil prices are likely to remain steady, with Brent averaging \$65.19 a barrel and WTI \$57.96 in 2019, as flagging demand outweighs supply shocks, a Reuters survey showed.

Output from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries fell to the lowest in eight years in September at 28.9 million bpd, down 750,000 bpd from August’s revised figure and the lowest monthly total since 2011, a Reuters survey found.

Output at the world’s two largest producers, the United States and Russia, also fell in July and September respectively.

Russia’s output declined to 11.24 million bpd in Sept. 1-29, down from 11.29 million bpd in the previous month, sources said, although it is still above the quotas set in an output deal



between Russia and OPEC.

U.S. crude oil output fell 276,000 bpd in July to 11.81 million bpd as federal offshore Gulf of Mexico production slid, according to a U.S. Energy Information Administration monthly report released on Monday.

News that Saudi Aramco has restored full oil production and capacity to the levels they were before September 14 weighed on oil prices on Monday. Saudi Arabia pumped about 9.78 million barrels per day (bpd) in August.

Meanwhile, U.S. crude oil stockpiles likely rose 1.1 million barrels last week, a preliminary Reuters poll showed on Monday.

Second Announcement



1398.4032

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 01-31-9780017

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
06	PARTS FOR SOLAR GAS TURBINES MODEL MDG-1200 SERIAL NOS. 5426687, 5426688, 5430804, 5430805, SM77410, 5428394, 5428414 THRU 5428416 AND 428580 THRU 428582 REF. SOLAR DIVI. INTERNATIONAL	205 Nos

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

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 14,192 EURO or 668,639,520 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

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

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

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

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹/۸/۷۷ نوبت دوم ۹/۸/۷۰

Cross-border sharing, exchange key for scientific leaps

There seems to have been a change in how people are talking about Chinese science over the past 70 years. Slowly but steadily, artificial intelligence (AI) is changing everything about our lives. What are the strengths and weaknesses of China's AI ecosystem? Will the emerging AI industry be immune to geopolitical games? To find answers to these questions, Global Times reporter Hu Weijia (GT) talked to Xu Feiyu (Xu), vice president of Lenovo Group and head of AI Lab, in an exclusive interview in San Francisco.

■ You are one of several Western-trained, top Chinese scientists who have returned to China to work in the industry or academia. What is the reason behind your decision to return to China?

A: I studied for a master's and PhD in Germany, and worked at the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI) for nearly 20 years. Although I had an excellent position as principal researcher of DFKI, I had always wanted to contribute to China's AI development.

In 2016, several Chinese high-tech enterprises asked me if I could help them by leading their team in AI. Despite a few other invitations from top enterprises in the Western world, I realized the time had come to return to China.

■ What are the differences between the AI environments in China and Germany?

A: DFKI is a non-profit research organization. Most research at DFKI can only use public data, while enterprise data cannot be easily obtained. However, enterprise data is crucial for the commercialization of AI technology. Some German scientists at DFKI envy me because now I enjoy free access to all historical data from Lenovo.

If I take a taxi in Berlin, I will probably forget to pay. Why? People in China so accustomed to mobile payments, with no cash. This can be seen as the epitome of today's situation in China. The whole country is open to embracing new technology. It's a really good thing for scientists. In contrast, the West always takes a wait-and-see attitude when it comes to adopting new concepts. China has a much more urgent need to develop new technology than Western society because the country has a large population and relatively few resources. My average commuting time from home to the office is about one hour. If we make progress on smart cities with AI technology, commuting time can be reduced to ensure a better quality of life.

■ How do you evaluate the development of AI technologies in China, the US and Europe in past decades?

A: China is one of the best-performing players in the world in AI commercialization, venture capital and government-led promotion. The country is likely to take the lead in the global race for the commercialization of AI technology. However, China is a latecomer among big powers in terms of AI technologies, so more efforts are still needed in basic research, frontier research and original innovation. Europe is good at basic research for AI technology, but lags behind the US and China in terms of commercialization. The US is successful in basic research, talent development and commercialization. Continuous investment in research and development has made the US a global leader in AI technology.

■ Do you keep an open mind toward technology cooperation with US entities? Can China-US cooperation push forward technological development in the US?

A: We are a global company based in China. We are inclusive and open to technical cooperation. We have worked with a team from Duke University and won a global competition in voice activity detection. We have opened an internship program to the students of Stanford University. We are seeing more and more students taking internships at our Lenovo Research labs - not only Chinese from America, but also non-Chinese students, because the Chinese market is becoming increasingly attractive due to China's economic growth. We benefit from open-source projects. In return, we would like to contribute to them. But to be a responsible contributor, we need to clean the codes and make explicit notes to be in line with international standards. That would mean a lot of extra work, but we will overcome this issue because we want to contribute to global innovation and technology.

■ Currently, there are concerns that China and the US will likely decouple their economies from each other. Is there any possibility that the technological worlds in China and the US will be completely split?

A: A senior Chinese official recently said that no country can develop alone in the era of globalization, and no cutting-edge technology can be developed without mutually beneficial cooperation. I agree with this. Scientific work extends beyond national boundaries. ➔ 13

China can play more active role in mediating Japan-South Korea spat

GLOBALTIMES — The brewing spat between Japan and South Korea after Seoul's withdrawal from the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) marks a new low in Seoul-Tokyo relations. What's driving Seoul's decision to withdraw from the pact? Will it cast a shadow on the US alliance system in East Asia? Moon Chung-in (Moon), special advisor for foreign affairs and national security to South Korean President Moon Jae-in and distinguished professor at Yonsei University, shared his insights with Global Times (GT) reporter Li Aixin on these issues during the Third Taihe Civilizations Forum held in Beijing in early September.

■ What are the main reasons for South Korea's withdrawal from the intelligence-sharing pact with Japan?

A: Very simple. In early July, the Japanese government imposed export control against South Korea. In August, Japan demoted South Korea from the list of A-category countries to B-category countries (in trade). Japan took restrictive economic punishment against South Korea. Japan argued that it is imposing economic restrictions because it does not trust South Korea. Our government believes the GSOMIA cannot be implemented if Japan does not trust us. If Japan does not trust us, how can we exchange sensitive military intelligence with them?

■ Under the backdrop of the GSOMIA collapse and escalating tensions between South Korea and Japan, how do you think US alliance system in East Asia will develop?

A: We usually call it the trilateral security cooperation and coordination among Washington, Tokyo and Seoul, because we do not have any military alliance with Japan.

Yes, it was true that in the past, the US intervened to narrow the differences between Seoul and Tokyo. For example, in 2015, when there was a conflict between the two countries over the comfort women issue, the Barack Obama administration intervened and narrowed differences so the two countries could reach an agreement on the issue.

However, the Trump administration did not intervene, and has said that it is a matter between Japan and South Korea. Maybe that is one reason why the conflict between Japan and South Korea became deeper.

■ Will the move affect the South Korea-US alliance?

A: A lot of South Korean conservatives and Washington's mainstream (politicians) argue that South Korea's failure to renew GSOMIA will undermine the alliance. However, we should understand one thing that GMOSIA is between Japan and South Korea. The US has nothing to do with the agreement, even though it was the US which mediated Japan and South Korea to sign the agreement. Furthermore, we have a Trilateral Information Sharing Arrangement (TISA) that involves US, Japan, and South Korea. So I don't think our decision not to renew the GSOMIA will affect the South Korea-US



alliance negatively. Washington must be very disappointed, because the US always wants Japan and South Korea to have close military cooperation and coordination, including the exchange of military information.

However, our government thinks the South Korea-US alliance is healthy. We have a mechanism to exchange information with Japan through US mediation.

■ Lately, observers say there might be some friction between South Korea and the US, since President Trump has been pushing for South Korea to pay more for US troops, while South Korea has recently pushed for a prompt return of US military bases in the country. Do you think such friction exists?

A: Yes. The overall structure of South Korean-US alliance system remains intact. We have a defense treaty between South Korea and the US. We have a combined forces command between US and South Korea, and we have US troops in South Korea, and there is a relative strong support of US forces in South Korea and the alliance by South Korean people. We have been paying defense costs for US troops in the country. Therefore, from an overall structural point of view, the South Korea-US alliance remains intact. But there are some pending issues that might need adjustment. For example, the Trump administration has been putting a lot of pressure on South Korea to increase defense costs. Last year, we agreed to pay \$1 billion for US forces. Now, the US is demanding that we pay about \$5 to \$6 billion. That's too much. This will lead to disputes between the US and South Korea.

Another issue is that the US just hinted it might need to set up bases for its intermediate range ballistic missiles in South Korea. But our government officially said no. That could become a future problem. There's another issue, the so-called return of wartime operational control, which belongs to the US commander in South Korea, to South Korea. So far, everything is going well. But in the process, there could be some difference of opinion between Washington

and Seoul. I believe that we will overcome those differences because alliance is a tool for enhancing our national interest.

The US has its national interests. South Korea has its national interests. From time to time, there can be differences in their priorities. Therefore, it is natural for us to have differences in terms of defining national interests. But I think we will adjust to the differences.

■ Will the differences between South Korea and the US bring Seoul and Pyongyang closer?

A: It is important for North Korea and the US to have a more productive negotiation about the nuclear issue. If the US-North Korea relations get better, then there is a great chance for improved inter-Korean relations.

■ After South Korean President Moon Jae-in assumed office, the crisis on the Korean Peninsula has been eased. But the fundamental problems remain, such as the distrust between Seoul and Pyongyang. After Kim-Trump summits, there have been few improvements on the Korean Peninsula issue. How do you think the situation on Korean Peninsula will further develop? What can relevant parties do to break the current stalemate?

A: The Korean Peninsula has gone through a roller-coaster pattern of interactions. 2017 was the year of crisis. 2019 was the year of great hope for peace. This year, we are facing precarious uncertainties. One of the reasons is the failure to reach an agreement in Hanoi between Trump and Chairman Kim Jong-un in February. On June 30, Trump and Kim met in Panmunjom. The two leaders agreed to resume working level talks within two to three weeks.

It was later discovered that the Trump agreed with Kim to suspend a South Korea-US joint military training exercise. But we continued with the exercise on a much smaller scale. North Korea considers this is a hostile activity against Pyongyang.

I think that is one reason why North Korea has not attended working level talks.

But there is another factor, if North Korean officers show up at the talks, then North Korean officials should get some tangible outcomes. Apparently, they might have not read any such signs from the US. Therefore, they are not confident that the working level talks will produce very tangible outcomes, and those two reasons might have prevented North Korea from attending the working level talks.

■ China-Japan-South Korea Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Beijing. What role do you think can China play in mediating the conflicts between South Korea and Japan?

A: China can be an important mediator between Japan and South Korea. Up until now, the US played the role, but it is time for China to play that role, because cooperation among China, Japan, South Korea is extremely important for peace and stability, as well as the common prosperity in Northeast Asia. I hope China will play a more active role in narrowing the difference between Japan and South Korea, and I hope that China would take a more proactive diplomacy in promoting peace, stability, and common prosperity in Northeast Asia.

■ This year marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. What do you think is the biggest change in China over the past 70 years?

A: It's an amazing transformation. Look at Chinese history. You won the war against the Kuomintang. Then you get into the Korean War (1950-53). After that there was a lot of chaos in China. You had a famine, and the Cultural Revolution (1967-77). From 1949 up until 1978 was rather gloomy. However, Deng Xiaoping's adoption of the Four Cardinal Principles in 1979 and the pursuit of reform and opening-up greatly transformed China.

China has gone through enormous transformation. China has become No.2 country in the world in terms of economic power. China is No.1 exporting country in the world. China is No.1 in terms of foreign exchange reserves. Now you're pushing the Belt and Road Initiative. The new China is a completely different China, nobody would have expected that kind of transformation. Therefore, I would say the last 70 years have been the greatest success story for China. Of course, success always brings new challenges.

The current trade conflict with the US might mirror that kind of new challenge. Also you have a lot of domestic problems, including growing inequality in China, environmental problems and resources problems. You have 56 different ethnic groups in China. Unity among diversity has become another big challenge. But as you transformed yourself in the past 70 years, I believe you will overcome those challenges so that you can celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of PRC in 2049. Maybe by then you might be able to achieve the Chinese Dream.

President Trump, Please End the American Era in the Middle East

By Andrew J. Bacevich

Reflecting on the latest Iran war scare, New York Times columnist and über-hawk Bret Stephens worries that "we may be witnessing the beginning of the end of the American era in the Middle East." If so, then faster, please. What is this "American era" to which Stephens refers? If the phrase implies some approximation of U.S. dominion or control, then no such era has ever existed. For several decades now, the United States has been engaged in attempting to

establish some form of regional Pax Americana. That effort has failed irretrievably and at enormous cost to the United States and to others. What we have endured is an era of ineffectual American meddling. Yet Stephens is by no means ready to throw in the towel. His confidence in the efficacy of U.S. military might remains undiminished. Disturbed by President Trump's timid response to a series of recent provocations attributed to Iran, the most recent being a September 14 attack on Saudi oil facilities, Stephens urges retaliation. While not spelling out the scale of the punitive action he favors, he expresses confidence that a "limited military reprisal" will almost certainly "re-establish deterrence with Tehran."

He does not explain the basis for his confidence, which remains defiantly intact despite the myriad failures, disappointments, and never-saw-it-coming surprises that the United States has experienced in the Middle East going as far back as the Iranian Revolution of 1979. Yet Stephens and other proponents of attacking Iran (with regime change in Tehran the tacit goal) have conveniently short memories.

The "beginning of the end" for the would-be American Pax in the Middle East didn't occur in mid-September when Trump once more went wobbly on Iran, but in 2003, when the United States invaded Iraq. Of course, prominent among the journalistic cheerleaders for that disastrous war was Bret Stephens himself. Since then, U.S. forces have been more or less continuously engaged in what ought to be called Operation Damage Control, trying to clean up the mess created as a direct consequence of our own recklessness.

Now Stephens and others of his ilk are keen to open up a new front on this open-ended military campaign. Arguing with all the assurance that they showed when fingering Saddam Hussein as the source of all evil, they would have us believe that, once spanked, Iran will behave, with the "America era in the Middle East" magically restored. This is, to put it mildly, wishful thinking, as President Trump himself appears to appreciate. Now our president is many things, but he is not a sophisticated thinker. His own grasp of history appears to be quite limited. He possesses few if any principles from which to formulate a coherent approach to policy. Convinced of his own genius, he doesn't take advice. Yet at some gut level, Trump has a deep—and commendable—aversion to war. In contrast to Stephens, he appears to believe that engaging in long, drawn-out armed conflicts is inherently undesirable. One imagines that from Trump's perspective, it's like a business venture

that turns sour. You cut your losses and move on, ideally sticking some other sap with the bill.

No doubt reinforcing this inclination is Trump's determination to win election to a second term. The fact is that this president has not delivered on his campaign promise to end our endless wars. Nor has he achieved any significant foreign policy successes, unless you count withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal and instigating a trade war with China (which I don't). The last thing Trump needs politically is to start another shooting war to go along with the several he inherited.

So the president has no wish to lurch into another morass in the Middle East. However pure or impure his motives, let us acknowledge that this qualifies as a rare and welcome bit of good sense emanating from the Oval Office.

Sadly, however, neither Trump nor anyone in his administration seems to have the capacity to devise an actual alternative to the fantasy of creating an "American era in the Middle East." Thus far at least, the administration's response to this crisis has amounted to a little more of the same—more sanctions, more U.S. troops deployed to the region—but not nearly enough to make any meaningful difference. As is so often the case, instead of a meaningful policy, Trump offers a gesture. Devising a real alternative would require this admission: in the Middle East, the military power of the United States has played a large part in exacerbating problems rather than contributing to their solution. With few exceptions, members of the establishment, Bret Stephens among them, lack the gumption to make such an admission.

The beginning of wisdom lies in acknowledging that the overriding U.S. interest in the Middle East is to restore stability. Period. It is not to pick winners. Stability requires not more war but less, nudging rivals such as Iran and Saudi Arabia—neither qualifying as "friends" of the United States—to realize that they too will benefit from reducing the level of violence. No doubt this qualifies as an enormous challenge, requiring patience and diplomatic sophistication. But to quote an old adage, perhaps it's time to give peace a chance. And should Tehran and Riyadh disregard such peacemaking efforts and opt for war, well, it is not incumbent upon the United States to underwrite their folly. How likely is it that Trump will aggressively pursue peace in the Middle East? Not very. Yet should he do so, the era of American meddling in the Middle East just might yield to an actually existing era of mutual coexistence. Talk about a legacy.

First Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9280071

1398.4057

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
21	P/F "KOBELCO" SCREW GAS COMPRESSOR MODEL KS 16SMZ REF. "KOBE STEEL" LTD	169

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

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 9,517 EURO or 1,153,400,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

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

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

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

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۸/۷/۱۰ نوبت دوم ۹۸/۷/۱۳

The Biden-Trump war continues

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — Biden and Trump’s political battle in the United States continues. Meanwhile, the President of the United States finds himself in a position of weakness. Here’s a look at the latest news and analysis:

Trump’s Claims About Biden Aren’t ‘Unsupported.’ They’re Lies.

As Newyorktimes reported, On Sept. 24, 2015, Geoffrey Pyatt, then the American ambassador to Ukraine, spoke in Odessa about the scourge of corruption. It was about a year and a half after what is sometimes called the Revolution of Dignity, when Ukrainians overthrew the kleptocratic, Russian-aligned regime of Viktor Yanukovych. The country was trying to move in a more liberal, European direction. Corruption, said Pyatt, threatened to hold the new Ukraine back.

Pyatt called out the office of Viktor Shokin, then the prosecutor general of Ukraine. “Corrupt actors within the prosecutor general’s office are making things worse by openly and aggressively undermining reform,” he said. Pyatt specifically lambasted Shokin’s office for subverting a British case against a man named Mykola Zlochevsky, Yanukovych’s former ecology minister.

In 2014, as part of a money-laundering investigation, British authorities froze \$23 million Zlochevsky had in London. They requested supporting documentation from Shokin’s office. Instead, it intervened on Zlochevsky’s behalf. “As a result the money was freed by the U.K. court and shortly thereafter the money was moved to Cyprus,” said Pyatt.

“Shokin was seen as a single point of failure clogging up the system and blocking corruption cases,” a former official in Barack Obama’s administration told me. Vice President Joe Biden eventually took the lead in calling for Shokin’s ouster.

As all this was happening, Biden’s son, Hunter, sat on the board of Burisma Holdings, a natural gas company that Zlochevsky co-founded, at some points earning \$50,000 a month. Zlochevsky might have thought he could ingratiate himself with the Obama administration by buying an association with the vice president. All available evidence suggests he was wrong.

Turning this history on its head, Trump has accused Joe Biden of coercing Ukraine to jettison Shokin in order to protect Hunter. He has pressured Ukraine’s current president to open an investigation into the Bidens, which would make Trump’s charges seem more credible. As the president faces impeachment, his surrogates are parroting his attack on Biden, and his campaign is reportedly spending a staggering \$10 million on an ad to amplify the smear.

Journalists, perhaps seeking to appear balanced, have sometimes described Trump’s claims about Biden as “unsubstantiated” or “unsupported.” That is misleading, because it suggests more muddiness in the factual record than actually exists. Trump isn’t making unproven charges against Biden. He is blatantly lying about him. He and his defenders are spreading a conspiracy theory that is the precise opposite of the truth.

Like most effective conspiracy theories, this one is built around a speck of something real. Hunter Biden’s place on Burisma’s board was untoward, even if it’s preposterous for Trump to complain about nepotistic corruption. Biden’s son doesn’t seem to have broken any laws, but the way he traded on his name was still sleazy.

Joe Biden appears to have been uncomfortable with his son’s involvement with Burisma; in a New Yorker profile, Hunter recalled his father saying, “I hope you know what you are doing.” Hunter said they never spoke further about the issue; Biden has made a point of not talking to his son about his business dealings.

It’s not hard to imagine why Biden didn’t press Hunter. The Biden boys and their father had been through hell together. Hunter has said his first memory was waking up in the hospital next to his older brother, Beau, after the car crash that killed their mother and baby sister. He grew up to be a troubled man, his life pockmarked by addiction and failure.

Beau died of brain cancer a few months before Biden traveled to Ukraine to push the government to crack down on corruption. It’s not shocking that, at a moment when his family was consumed by grief, Biden wasn’t inclined to confront his surviving son.

But even if you’re not inclined to empathize with Biden — even if you assume the worst about him — Trump’s conspiracy theory makes no sense. To believe it, you’d have to first believe that the foreign affairs apparatus of the Obama administration was willing to put its credibility on the line in service of the black sheep of the Biden family. After all, Joe Biden wasn’t freelancing in Ukraine; he was carrying out White House policy.

Further, if the Trump administration truly believes that Obama’s Ukraine policy was crooked, one might ask why it has Pyatt, who helped accomplish that policy, representing America as ambassador to Greece.

Most important, getting rid of Shokin made an investigation of Burisma more likely, not less. “He didn’t want to investigate Burisma,” the Ukrainian anti-corruption activist Daria Kaleniuk told The Washington Post. “Shokin was fired not because he wanted to do that investigation, but quite to the contrary, because he failed that investigation.”

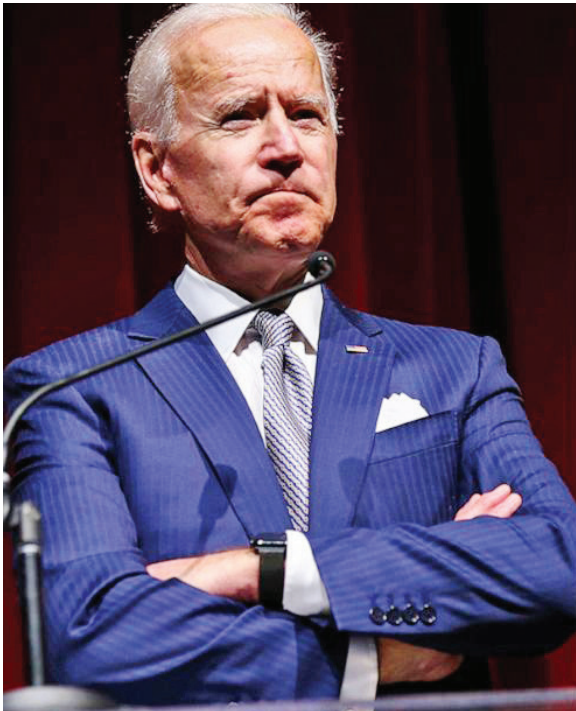
However bad the optics around Hunter Biden, Joe Biden was not serving his son’s interests. If anything, they were working at cross-purposes.

As I’ve written multiple times, I don’t want Biden to be the Democratic nominee. There’s much in his legislative record that troubles me, and I don’t think he’s as electable as his champions claim. In some ways, my preferred political outcome would be advanced if Trump’s Ukraine scandal ends up tarring Biden as well.

But Trump’s weaponized disinformation is corrosive to democracy no matter whom it targets. Like many authoritarians, he depends on getting people to accept a big lie or to give up on the idea of truth altogether. If he succeeds in defaming Biden today, he’ll be even more audacious in using the same strategy against anyone else who threatens him. What’s at stake isn’t just Biden’s political future. It’s how much Trump can erode the political salience of reality, and how much the media helps him.

Biden Tries to Defend Electability Against Trump Ukraine Assault

Also Blommborg reported that Joe Biden has framed his campaign around the pitch that he’s the strongest Democrat to take on President Donald Trump. He’s now facing his toughest test yet to prove it.



Biden, who entered the 2020 Democratic primary race late as its instant front-runner, enters a critical and unpredictable phase. He must look for a way to stop rival Elizabeth Warren’s surge, even as Trump and other Republicans try to paint him as corrupt, based on discredited claims about his involvement in stopping a probe into his son’s work in Ukraine.

Allies say Biden’s strategy is to fend off the allegations by repeatedly insisting there’s nothing to them, and retraining the focus on the impeachment inquiry into Trump’s behavior. The campaign even went so far Sunday as to write to television networks demanding they not interview Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani because they said he lies on air.

The campaign also is trying to refocus on issues such as health care, but that message has mostly been drowned out by coverage of Ukraine, which Biden has used as an opportunity to draw contrasts with Trump in personal appearances before reporters, voters and donors.

“This is Joe Biden’s best opportunity to show voters, especially Democratic primary voters, what a general election between Trump and Biden would look like,” said Democratic consultant Mary Anne Marsh, who’s neutral in the primary contests. “If Biden can show voters how he’d take on Trump and defeat him in this debate about Ukraine, then Joe Biden will not only stop the slide in the polls in the early states, he could turn this around.”

She added: “But that is a big if. A big if.” Some worry the attacks could damage Biden if the Trump campaign and its allies are able to create a perception of wrongdoing.

The 2020 campaign was upended last week when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced an impeachment inquiry of Trump after he asked the president of Ukraine to “look into” whether Biden tried to intervene in the country’s law enforcement to protect his son. Biden’s son Hunter sat on the board of Burisma Holdings, a Ukrainian gas company, which was under investigation by the country’s prosecutor general. Biden, as vice president, joined European countries in urging the prosecutor’s dismissal at a time when the Burisma probe had been dormant for more than a year.

There’s no evidence that Joe Biden acted improperly. But for Biden, the danger lies in Trump’s ability to smear his political opponents: if Trump is trying to uncover dirt, some people may think, there must be dirt to be uncovered.

Some Democratic primary voters seem prepared to look beyond Trump’s attacks.

“If anything, it might be a positive,” Al McWilliams, a 62-year-old retiree from Las Vegas said about Trump’s attacks after a Biden event on Friday. “This happened a long time ago and everyone has been cleared.” But others, like accountant Emsie Hapner, 25, of Dayton, Ohio, said “whether or not Joe Biden has things to answer for is a separate issue.”

Biden, 76, also needs the backing of independent and Republican-leaning voters and it’s there he could face headwinds, especially as the Trump campaign and the Republican National Committee prepare to spend \$10 million on television ads showing Biden talking to Ukrainian officials and suggesting wrongdoing.

Trump’s strategy carries some deja vu from 2016, when he branded Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton as so corrupt and careless with classified information that his rallies featured chants of “Lock Her Up!”

Biden’s strategy is different than Clinton’s. Clinton often appeared defensive and allowed herself to be drawn into extended debates about her actions, which led to her giving conflicting answers. And Biden isn’t burdened by an FBI investigation, as Clinton was.

The 2004 Democratic nominee John Kerry was slow to respond to allegations that he exaggerated his combat record in Vietnam, for which he received a Purple Heart, a Bronze Star and a Silver Star. His advisers failed to see that voters would take the allegations seriously and, although false, they sowed doubt on Kerry’s war record, which was his strength in competing against President George W. Bush after the Sept. 11 attacks.

The Biden campaign refuses to engage on the premise that Biden has to answer for any of his actions in Ukraine.

On Sunday, two top Biden advisers sent a letter to news and cable TV executives asking them to stop booking Giuliani on their shows because he is sharing “false, debunked conspiracy theories on behalf of Donald Trump.”

“By giving him your air time, you are allowing him to introduce increasingly unhinged, unfounded and desperate lies into the national conversation,” Biden aids Anita Dunn and Kate Bedingfield wrote in the letter.

At the same time, a campaign aide said Biden could benefit from Trump’s attacks because the impeachment proceedings will consume the media’s attention while still giving Biden airtime. It also places Biden as the chief antagonist to Trump. The aide also said the campaign raised more money last week than at any time since the second week of his campaign last



spring, but provided no details.

Still, wary of looking like he’s taking the attacks personally, Biden has been less aggressive than other Democrats in calling for the impeachment inquiry, saying it should only occur if the White House stonewalled House Democrats’ investigations. His strongest words about impeachment came during an interview with ABC talk show host Jimmy Kimmel on Wednesday.

“It’s awful hard to avoid the conclusion that it is an impeachable offense and a violation of constitutional responsibility,” Biden said of Trump.

Biden has generally refrained from discussing impeachment directly. Instead, he’s made Trump’s actions part of a pattern of abuse of power.

“But folks, this isn’t about me. It’s never been about me,” Biden told donors at a fundraiser in California last week that he opened by reading from the complaint by the whistle-blower who heard about Trump’s July 25 call to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. “It’s a tactic that’s used by this president to try to hijack an election, so we do not focus on the issues that matter in our lives.”

Biden had seen his towering lead over the Democratic field narrow to single digits even before the whistle-blower news became public. Recent polls show Warren, the Massachusetts senator, steadily gaining the lead spot in the first two contests of Iowa and New Hampshire, as well as in California and one national poll. Sean McElwee, a left-wing organizer, said progressives shouldn’t join in attacking Biden.

“Progressives and the left should not take this opportunity to use this as an attack on Biden. But one can’t help but remember the sort of way that Trump and Republicans manipulated the media to drag out specious stories about Hillary Clinton,” McElwee said.

Democratic hopefuls are treading carefully and generally keeping the focus on Trump. But some are also gently critiquing the arrangement Hunter Biden had in Ukraine while his father was vice president.

California Senator Kamala Harris told reporters Saturday she’d “probably not” allow a child of her vice president to serve on the board of a foreign company. But she called the issue “a distraction” and “a game” that Trump is playing to deflect from his own transgressions, according to a video posted by a CBS News reporter.

Colorado Senator Michael Bennet, a 2020 hopeful who’s barely registering in the polls, told Politico that it’d “be better not to have that kind of arrangement” as a vice president.

Last week in Keene, New Hampshire, Warren demurred when asked if her anti-corruption plan would bar a vice president’s child from serving on the board of a foreign company, saying she’d have to study the details.

Beto O’Rourke, the former Texas Representative, called a recent Trump campaign ad lacing into Biden for his son’s work in Ukraine “a disgrace.”

“Every one of us needs to call this exactly what it is: propaganda,” O’Rourke said on Twitter. “Doing anything less is playing right into his hands.”

Impeachment... or CIA coup?

By Ron Paul



ANTIWAR — You don’t need to be a supporter of President Trump to be concerned about the efforts to remove him from office. Last week House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced impeachment proceedings against the President over a phone call made to the President of Ukraine. According to the White House record of the call, the President asked his Ukrainian counterpart to look into whether there is any evidence of Ukrainian meddling in the 2016 election and then mentioned that a lot of people were talking about how former US Vice President Joe Biden stopped the prosecution of his son who was under investigation for corruption in Ukraine.

Democrats, who spent more than two years convinced that “Russiagate” would enable them to remove Trump from office only to have their hopes dashed by the Mueller Report, now believe they have their smoking gun in this phone call. It is about politics? Yes. But there may be more to it than that.

It may appear that the Democratic Party, furious over Hillary Clinton’s 2016 loss, is the driving force behind this ongoing attempt to remove Donald Trump from office, but at every turn we see the fingerprints of the CIA and its allies in the US deep state.

In August 2016, a former acting director of the CIA, Mike Morell, wrote an extraordinary article in the New York Times accusing Donald Trump of being an “agent of the Russian Federation.” Morell was clearly using his intelligence career as a way of bolstering his claim that Trump was a Russian spy — after all, the CIA should know such a thing! But the claim was a lie.

Former CIA director John Brennan accused President Trump of “treason” and of “being in the pocket of Putin” for meeting with the Russian president in Helsinki and accepting his word that Russia did not meddle in the US election. To this day there has yet to be any evidence presented that the Russian government did interfere. Brennan openly called on “patriotic” Republicans to act against this “traitor.”

Brennan and his deep state counterparts James Comey at the FBI and former Director of National Intelligence James Clapper launched an operation, using what we now know is the fake Steele dossier, to spy on the Trump presidential campaign and even attempt to entrap Trump campaign employees.

Notice a pattern here?

Now we hear that the latest trigger for impeachment is a CIA officer assigned to the White House who filed a “whistleblower” complaint against the president over something he heard from someone else that the president said in the Ukraine phone call.

Shockingly, according to multiple press reports the rules for CIA whistleblowing were recently changed, dropping the requirement that the whistleblower have direct, firsthand knowledge of the wrongdoing. Just before this complaint was filed, the rule-change allowed hearsay or secondhand information to be accepted. That seems strange. As it turns out, the CIA “whistleblower” lurking around the White House got the important things wrong, as there was no quid pro quo discussed and there was no actual request to investigate Biden or his son.

The Democrats have suddenly come out in praise of whistleblowers — well not exactly. Pelosi still wants to prosecute actual whistleblower Ed Snowden. But she’s singing the praises of this fake CIA “whistleblower.”

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer once warned Trump that if “you take on the intelligence community, they have six ways from Sunday at getting back at you.” It’s hard not to ask whether this is a genuine impeachment effort... or a CIA coup!

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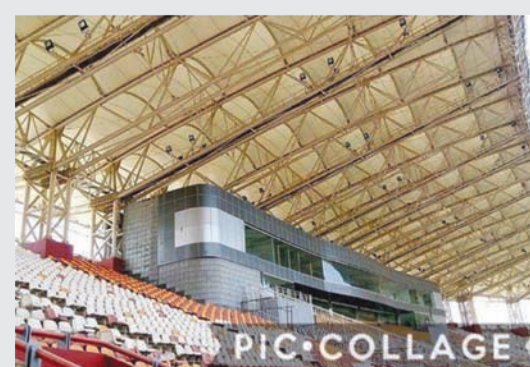
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Spitzer Space Telescope images bubbly interstellar nebula rich in newborn stars

By Brooks Hays

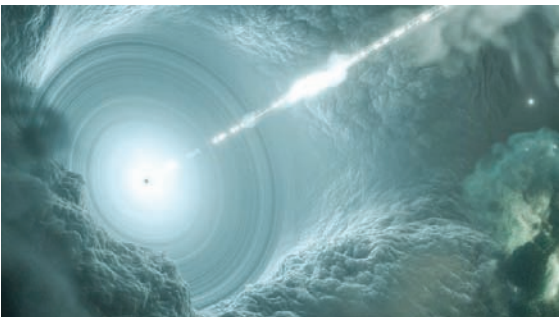
New images captured by the Spitzer Space Telescope suggest parts of the Milky Way are bubbling over, like a pot of boiling water. The bubbles reveal the region's intense rate of star formation. Each of the massive, newborn stars found in the imaged interstellar cloud, a dense region of gas and dust, emits wind and radiation, pushing the interstellar debris out in all directions -- forming bubbles. Astronomers estimate the bubbles are between 10 and 30 light-years across. The newly published Spitzer image features at least 30 bubbles produced by new stars. "This active region of star formation is located inside the Milky Way galaxy, in the constellation Aquila," according to a NASA news update. "Black veins running throughout the cloud are regions of especially dense cold dust and gas where even more new stars are likely to form."



The image's different colors represent different wavelengths of infrared light. The blue light represents radiation emitted by the regions stellar population. Cooler dust and gas particles appear green, while gas and dust warmed by the energy of a newborn star glow yellow and red. The image also features several bow shocks, arcs of red gas and dust accelerated by the radiation of large and powerful stars. Many of the bubbles and bowshocks in the new image were identified by citizen scientists participating in the Milky Way Project, a citizen science effort on Zooniverse.org. For the project, volunteers scan images in Spitzer's public data archive, pinpointing bubble candidates. This month, researchers published the Milky Way Project's citizen scientist-compiled catalog of 2,600 bubbles and 599 bow shocks in Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.

Faster-than-light speeds could be why gamma-ray bursts seem to go backwards in time

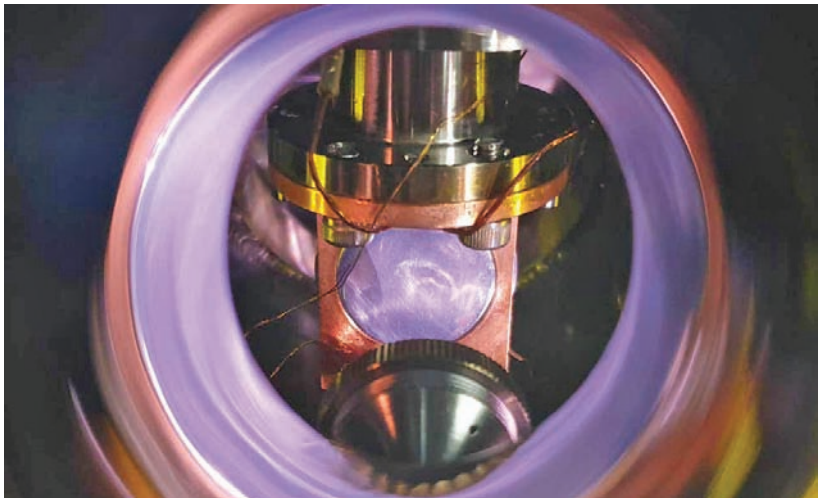
Time, as far as we know, moves only in one direction. But last year, researchers found events in some gamma-ray burst pulses that seemed to repeat themselves as though they were going backwards in time. Now, new research suggests a potential answer for what might be causing this time reversibility effect. If waves within the relativistic jets that produce gamma-ray bursts travel faster than light - at 'superluminal' speeds - one of the effects could be time reversibility. Such speeding waves could actually be possible. We know that when light is travelling through a medium (such as gas or plasma), its phase velocity is slightly slower than c - the speed of light in a vacuum, and, as far as we know, the ultimate speed limit of the Universe. Therefore, a wave could travel through a gamma-ray burst jet at superluminal speeds without breaking relativity. But to understand this, we need to back up a little to look at the source of those jets. Gamma-ray bursts are the most energetic explosions in the Universe. They can last from a few milliseconds to several hours, they're extraordinarily bright, and we don't yet have a comprehensive list of what causes them. We know from the 2017 observations of colliding neutron stars that these smash-ups can create gamma-ray bursts. Astronomers also think such bursts are produced when a massive, rapidly spinning star collapses into a black hole, violently ejecting material into the surrounding space in a colossal hypervolcano. That black hole is then surrounded by a cloud of accretion material around its equator; if it's rotating quickly enough, the fallback of the initially exploded material will result in relativistic jets shooting from the polar regions, blasting through the outer envelope of the progenitor star before producing gamma-ray bursts.



Now, back to those waves travelling faster than light. We know that, when travelling through a medium, particles can move faster than light does. This phenomenon is responsible for the famous Cherenkov radiation, often seen as a distinctive blue glow. That glow - a 'luminal boom' - is produced when charged particles such as electrons move faster through water than the phase velocity of light. Astrophysicists Jon Hakkila of the College of Charleston and Robert Nemiroff of the Michigan Technological University believe that this same effect can be observed in gamma-ray burst jets, and have conducted mathematical modelling to demonstrate how. "In this model an impactor wave in an expanding gamma-ray burst jet accelerates from subluminal to superluminal velocities, or decelerates from superluminal to subluminal velocities," they write in their paper. "The impactor wave interacts with the surrounding medium to produce Cherenkov and/or other collisional radiation when travelling faster than the speed of light in this medium, and other mechanisms (such as thermalized

Compton or synchrotron shock radiation) when travelling slower than the speed of light. "These transitions create both a time-forward and a time-reversed set of [gamma-ray burst] light curve features through the process of relativistic image doubling." Such relativistic image doubling is thought to occur in Cherenkov detectors. When a charged particle travelling at near light-speed enters water, it moves faster than the Cherenkov radiation it produces, and therefore can hypothetically appear to be in two places at once: one image appearing to move forward in time and the other appearing to move backwards. Mind you, this doubling has not yet been experimentally observed. But if it does occur, it could also be responsible for producing the time-reversibility seen in gamma-ray burst light curves, occurring both when the impactor wave travelling through the jet medium accelerates to speeds faster than light, and decelerates to subluminal speeds. More work is needed, of course. The researchers assumed that the impactor responsible for creating a gamma-ray burst would be a large-scale wave produced by changes in, say, density, or the magnetic field. That will need further analysis. And if the plasmas involved aren't transparent to superluminal radiation, all bets are off. However, the researchers said, their model provides better explanations for the characteristics of gamma-ray burst light curves than models that don't include time reversibility. "Standard gamma-ray burst models have neglected time-reversible light curve properties," Hakkila said. "Superluminal jet motion accounts for these properties while retaining a great many standard model features." (Source: sciencealert.com)

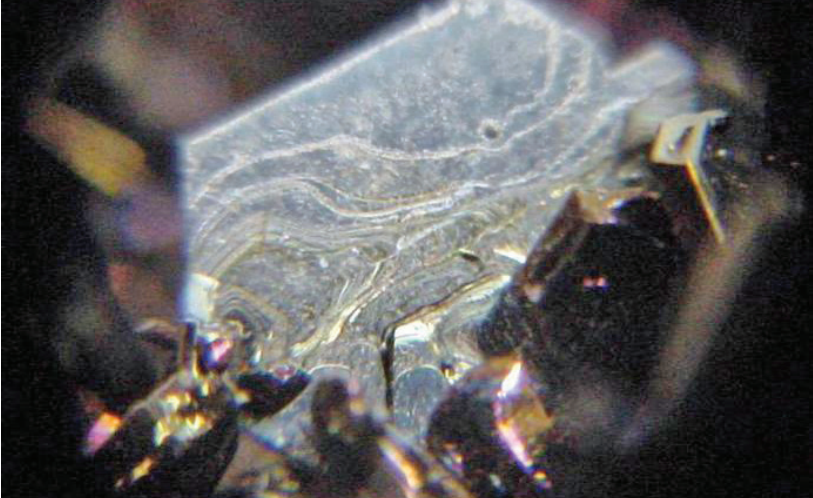
Building blocks of life could have formed in huge clouds between the stars, scientists say



The building blocks of life could have formed in vast, ancient clouds hanging between the stars, according to new research. One of the basic and essential units of life - known as nucleobases, which help make DNA - have been found by Japanese scientists who simulated the environment of those huge gas clouds. The findings could help us get closer to understanding some of the most fundamental questions about how life on Earth arrived, the researchers say. «This result could be key to unravelling fundamental questions for humankind, such as what organic compounds existed during the formation of the solar system and how they contributed to the birth of life on Earth» says Yasuhiro Oba of Hokkaido University's Institute of Low Temperature Science. Researchers have already spotted some of the basic organic molecules that are needed for life, inside of comets, asteroids. They have also been spotted in interstellar molecular clouds, or the vast, gaseous clouds that are strung between stars. Those molecules are thought to have come down to Earth through meteor impacts, with seeded the key ingredients required to start the beginnings of life. But it is still unclear how they might have formed, a question to which the answer could shed important light on how humanity and all

other life on Earth was able to begin. To conduct the experiment, the researchers used an ultra-high vacuum reaction chamber to create a simulation of the conditions inside of those huge gaseous clouds. They constantly sprinkled a gaseous mixture of water, carbon monoxide, ammonia, and methanol onto a material made to simulate cosmic dust, which was cooled down to -263C, and then hit with lamps that could kick off chemical reactions. Out of that machine came an icy film that gathered on the simulation of the dust that was inside the chamber. When researchers warmed that up and then analyzed it, they found those nucleobases that are required to create DNA and RNA, which are in turn required for life. They also found other interesting materials, such as amino acids, which make up proteins. «Our findings suggest that the processes we reproduced could lead to the formation of the molecular precursors of life,» said Yasuhiro Oba in a statement. «The results could improve our understanding of the early stages of chemical evolution in space. Previous experiments might actually have created those nucleobases, the researchers said, but those conducting them did not have the highly precise measuring techniques to see that they were there. (Source: The Independent)

Scientists seeking quantum breakthroughs subject crystalline materials to sound waves

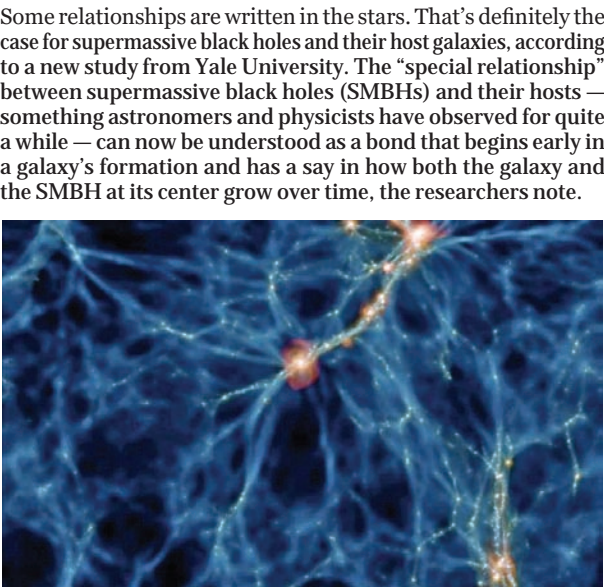


By Brooks Hays

To develop the next generation of quantum technologies, scientists need to find materials with unique optical and electrical properties. Often, when materials are put under stress and strain, they reveal unusual physical properties. But measuring the nanoscale effects of strain isn't easy. To aid the search for quantum properties, scientists at the Argonne National Laboratory set out to precisely measure the effects of sound waves on silicon carbide crystal. Researchers used X-rays to observe the atomic changes triggered by the strain of sound waves passing through the material. The X-rays helped scientists study the behavior of defects, holes where atoms should be, buried deep inside the crystalline material. Defects in crystalline materials often feature unique quantum properties. The defects in silicon carbide crystal fluoresce naturally, but researchers wanted to find out whether the properties of the defects can be manipulated by strain. In the lab, the team of scientists used stress to induce electrons trapped near the defects to change spin states, and as a result, release energy in the form of photons.

"We wanted to see the coupling between the sound strain and the light response, but to see exactly what the coupling between them is, you need to know both how much strain you're applying, and how much more optical response you're getting out," Argonne nanoscientist Martin Holt said in a news release. Holt and his research partners used a technique called stroboscopic Bragg diffraction microscopy to observe the effects of stress on the defects from a variety of angles. "We're interested in how to manipulate the original spin state with acoustic waves, and how you can spatially map out the mechanics of the strain with X-rays," said Argonne materials scientist Joseph Heremans. By synchronizing the frequency of both the sound waves and X-rays being supplied to the silicon carbide crystal, scientists were able to capture detailed images of the local strain in the material's nanomechanical structures. "We're directly imaging sound's footprint going through this crystal," Heremans said. "The sound waves cause the lattice to curve, and we can measure exactly how much the lattice curves by going through a specific point of the lattice at a specific point in time."

Black holes and their host galaxies, growing old together



A black hole is a point in space where matter has been compacted so tightly that it creates intense gravity. This gravity is strong enough that even light can't escape its pull. Black holes can be as small as a single atom or as large as billions of miles in diameter. The biggest are called "supermassive" black holes and have masses equal to that of millions - or even billions - of suns. SMBHs are often found at the center of large galaxies, including our own galaxy, the Milky Way. Although SMBHs were theoretically expected to exist, the first observational hints were detected in the 1960s; earlier this year, the Event Horizon Telescope released the first silhouette of a black hole in the galaxy Messier 87. Astrophysicists continue to theorize about the origins of black holes, how they grow and glow, and how they interact with host galaxies in different astronomical environments. "There has been a lot of uncertainty regarding the SMBH-galaxy connection, in particular whether SMBH growth was more tightly connected to the star formation rate or the mass of the host galaxy," said Yale astrophysicist Priyamvada Natarajan, senior investigator of the new study, which appears in the journal Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society. "These results represent the most thorough theoretical evidence for the former - the growth rate of black holes appears to be tightly coupled to the rate at which stars form in the host." Natarajan has made significant contributions to our understanding of the formation, assembly, and growth of SMBHs, with respect to their environs. Her work speaks to the underlying question of whether these connections are mere correlations or signs of deeper causation. Natarajan and her team - first author Angelo Ricarte and Michael Tremmel of Yale and Thomas Quinn of the University of Washington - used sophisticated sets of simulations to make the discovery. Called Romulus, the cosmological simulation follows the evolution of different regions of the universe from just after the Big Bang until the present day and includes thousands of simulated galaxies that reside in a wide variety of cosmic environments. The Romulus simulations offer the highest-resolution snapshot of black hole growth, providing a fully emergent and sharper view of how black holes grow within a wide range of host galaxies, from the most massive galaxies located in the center of galaxy clusters - very dense regions like crowded city centers - to much more common dwarf galaxies that inhabit the sparser suburbs. "At a time when the drivers of black hole growth are unclear, these simulations offer a simple picture. They simply grow along with the stars independent of the galaxy's mass, the larger environment, or the cosmic epoch," said Ricarte, a former graduate student of Natarajan's who is now a postdoctoral fellow at Harvard. One of the more intriguing findings of the study, Ricarte noted, has to do with the way the largest black holes in the universe interact with their host galaxies over time. The researchers found that SMBHs and their hosts grow in tandem, and that the relationship is "self-correcting," independent of the kind of environment they inhabit. "If the SMBH starts to grow too rapidly and gets too big for its galactic home, physical processes ensure that its growth slows down relative to the galaxy," Tremmel explained. "On the other hand, if the SMBH's mass is too small for its galaxy, the SMBH's growth rate increases relative to the size of the galaxy to compensate." Support for the research came from a number of sources, including NASA and the National Science Foundation. The research is part of the Blue Waters computing project supported by the National Science Foundation and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. (Source: Science Daily)

The world's most freakishly advanced robot dog is now for sale

We've watched the Spot robot quadruped grow up and evolve, from its earliest days as a larger, more cumbersome beast to a carefully refined machine capable of pulling trucks. Now maker Boston Dynamics is putting the robo-dog on sale. The idea is not to provide a friendly pet that curls up in front of the fire each evening, though. Spot is designed for industrial use, whether that's carrying goods through a warehouse or inspecting a remote site that human operators would find it difficult to get to. With that in mind, you can't just put down your cash and walk away with a Spot. Instead, Boston Dynamics will lease the Spot bot to companies with genuine uses for it: prices vary and are on request, but think in the tens of thousands of US dollars. "A nimble robot that climbs stairs and traverses rough terrain with unprecedented ease, yet is small enough to use indoors," is the description on the Boston Dynamics sales page. "Built to be a rugged and customizable platform, Spot autonomously accomplishes your industrial sensing and remote operation needs." For your money you get a robot that can operate for 90 minutes between charges, with a maximum speed of 1.6 meters-per-second (about 3.5 miles-per-hour). It can work in temperatures of between -20°C (-4°F) and 45°C (113°F), and has 360-degree camera vision that enables it to avoid obstacles. Spot can operate in the rain, too, and is able to carry payloads of up to 14 kilograms (that's nearly 31 pounds). Buyers can add bespoke sensors and hardware modules to Spot to adapt it for a variety of tasks. (Source: sciencealert.com)

Deputy minister cuts ribbon on handicrafts exhibit in Shahr-e Kord

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Iran’s deputy tourism minister **d e s k** Pouya Mahmoudian on Monday opened a national handicrafts exhibit in Shahr-e Kord, the capital city of western Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province.

A total of 150 stalls have been set up for the event, of which 120 are dedicated to crafters and artisans, 20 to tour operators and travel agents, and 10 to traders of local souvenirs, IRNA reported.



Currently, 52 fields of handicrafts such as kilim carpets, traditional locks, and givhe shoes -- a traditional, lightweight footwear -- are practiced across the province, the report said.

The sales exhibit will be running through October 4, featuring arrays of personal ornamentation, woodwork, illuminated manuscript, miniature, textile printing, enamel, leatherwork, handwoven textile, calligraphy, traditional musical instrument, metalwork, and marquetry to name a few.

Handicrafts exports from the Islamic Republic reached \$289 million in the past Iranian calendar year 1397 (ended March 20), showing three percent growth year on year.

Britons spend two weeks of their lives waiting for flights

On the day that a new Club Aspire launches in Gatwick South, new research finds that Brits will take to the sky 174 times during their lifetime, spending over 383 hours – a whopping 15 days – in the airport waiting for a flight.

But though we’re taking more flights than ever before, one in five of us find the airport experience stressful, with 20% of all UK travelers saying they’d avoid it altogether if they could.

The study of 2,000 UK adults, commissioned by airport lounge provider, Club Aspire, also found that young Brits will travel a third more than their grandparents during their lifetimes, with Generation Z taking 220 flights – 69 more than over 65s who’ll fly 151 times.

When asked what would improve the airport experience, almost half of us (48%) want to fast-track through security and passport control. As well as this, 45% say they’d like more places to sit, and 37% would like access to an airport lounge with complimentary food and drink.

Beyond the airport itself, a third of Brits (38%) also find packing for their trips an incredibly stressful part of travelling. Unsurprisingly, many therefore forget to pack essential items, resulting in a dash around the terminal to purchase them.

The research identified the top 10 flying essentials most frequently forgotten from our suitcases.

The study coincides with the launch of Club Aspire at Gatwick South, a brand-new lounge experience operated by Airport Dimensions and Swissport.

(Source: Travel Daily News)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Antique town of Tyre

Located on the southern coast of Lebanon, 83 km south of Beirut, the antique town of Tyre was the great Phoenician city that reigned over the seas and founded prosperous colonies such as Cadiz and Carthage and according to legend, was the place of the discovery of purple pigment.



From the 5th century BC, when Herodotus of Halicarnassus visited Tyre, it was built for the most part on an island reportedly impregnable, considered one of the oldest metropolises of the world, and according to tradition founded in 2750 BC.

Tyre succumbed to the attack of Alexander of Macedonia who had blocked the straits by a dike. First a Greek city, and then a Roman city were constructed on this site, which is now a promontory.

Tyre was directly associated with several stages in the history of humanity, including the production of purple pigment reserved for royalty and nobility, the construction in Jerusalem of the Temple of Solomon, thanks to the material and architect sent by the King Hiram of Tyre; and the exploration of the seas by hardy navigators who founded prosperous trading centers as far away as the western Mediterranean, that ultimately assured a quasi-monopoly of the important maritime commerce for the Phoenician city. The historic role of Tyre declined at the end of the period of the Crusades.

The site of the town comprises important archaeological vestiges such as baths, a residential quarter and a cathedral. (Source: UNESCO)

Achaemenid-era clay tablets returned home after 84 years

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — A total of **d e s k** 1,783 Achaemenid-era clay tablets, which were on loan from Iran to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago since 1935, have been returned home.

The fourth batch of the Achaemenid objects, composed of 1783 clay tablets, entered the country from the Oriental Institute after 84 years, CHTN reported.

They are part of thousands of clay tablets and related fragments, which were kept at Chicago’s Field Museum of Natural History and the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute.

The artifacts were recuperated with great deal of efforts made by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts and the presidential office for legal affairs, tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan said.

The tablets were handed over to the National Museum of Iran, where they are supposed to be put on show as of today.

“These treasured documents decipher an important segment of recorded history of Achaemenids during the reign of Darius I (Darius the Great who reigned from 522 to 486 BC),” said Jebrael Nokandeh, director of the National Museum of Iran.

Last December, Mounesan announced that over 11,000 flawless [Achaemenid-era]



clay tablets and a large number of fragments of their kind will be back home.

“Of the cited number, 1784 clay tablets have been endorsed by the U.S. Department of the Treasury in order to be shipped to Iran, in the first stage... and they are currently

being packed by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago,” Mounesan said.

In February 2018, and following years of ups and downs, the fate of those ancient Persian artifacts, was left in the hands of a U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled in favor of Iran.

Conference to discuss tourism growth in eastern Iran



TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Six east-**d e s k** ern Iranian provinces are scheduled to discuss ways to expand tourism in a conference which will be held in the city of Mashhad on October 10, CHTN reported.

The event will bring together tourism officials, public and private investors, hoteliers, travel agents and tour operators form provinces of North Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, South Khorasan, Semnan, Kerman, and Sistan-Baluchestan.

Introducing tourism potentials of eastern provinces, exploring opportunities for tourism investment and identifying barriers in this regard, and ways to attract overseas Iranian investors are among goals of the event.

A specialized exhibit is also scheduled to be held on the sidelines of the conference in order to introduce the latest and most up-to-date tourism equipment and services.

Each day, Mashhad, the capital of Khorasan Razavi province, welcomes thousands of travelers, who come from

various cities, neighboring countries and even every corner of the globe to visit the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims.

The big and sprawling Kerman province has been a cultural melting pot since antiquity, blending Persians with sub-continental tribe dwellers. It is home to myriad historical sites and scenic landscapes such as Bazaar-e Sartasari, Jabalieh Dome, Ganjali Khan Bathhouse, Malek Jameh Mosque and Shahdad Desert to name a few.

Experts say that Sistan-Baluchestan has a considerable potential to be a major tourist destination as it is home to several distinctive archaeological sites and natural attractions, including two UNESCO World Heritage sites, namely Shahr-e-Soukhteh (Burnt City) and Lut desert, shared with Kerman province.

The provinces of Semnan, North Khorasan and South Khorasan are also embracing rich cultural, natural and archaeological heritage that should be made known to travelers.

Indonesia says scrapping plans to close Komodo island

JAKARTA (Reuters) — Indonesia has decided it does not need to close the eastern island of Komodo next year as planned because its population of rare Komodo dragons is relatively stable and not under threat, the environment minister said on Monday.

East Nusa Tenggara Governor Viktor B. Laiskodat said in July that the island needed to be closed to the public to stop tourism from interfering in the dragon’s mating and hatching processes and to cut the risk of poaching of the reptiles’ prey, including deer, buffalo and wild boar.

The island would be reopened after about a year as a premium tourist destination, according to the plan.

But Environment and Forestry Minister Siti Nurbaya Bakar said data showed the population of dragons, the largest living species of lizard, had been stable for more than a decade.

“(The number of) Komodo dragons on Komodo island during 2002 to 2019 observations has been relatively stable. There is no threat of a decline,” Bakar said by text message.

The ministry also said the provincial and central governments would work together to revamp tourism spots, improve the training of rangers and provide better equipment for patrols, as well as set up a research center for Komodo dragons.

The plan announced in July was controversial among

both environmentalists and the tourism industry, as well as among residents who depend on visitors for their livelihood.

More than 176,000 tourists visited Komodo National Park in 2018, with many visitors coming just to see the dragons, which are only found in the wild in eastern Indonesia.

According to government data, 1,727 Komodo dragons currently live on the island. Rinca, another island in the national park, is home to another 1,049 dragons.

Komodo island will become a special conservation tourism destination with different arrangements compared with Rinca, the ministry said.

Laiskodat could not immediately be reached for comment.

Six out of top 10 internationally visited cities in 2018 are from Asia, finds GlobalData

Tourism friendly policies, low cost connectivity and weak currencies played a vital role in attracting international visitors to Asia with six out of the top 10 cities in terms of international visitor arrivals in 2018 were from the region, according to GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company.

Bangkok, Singapore, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Seoul and Shenzhen from Asia were among the top 10 destinations by international visitors in 2018.

Greater London and Greater Paris from Europe, Dubai from Middle East and New York City from America were the other cities that featured in the top 10 list.

Aditi Dutta Chowdhury, Economic Research Analyst at GlobalData, comments: “Visitors from China and European countries are driving the growth of international arrivals to Asian cities.”

“Tourism friendly visa policies of Thailand, strong promotional efforts and low cost connectivity have made Bangkok as the top international destination. In addition, weak Asian currencies along with diversity of visitor interests in Asian cities played vital role in attracting international visitors.”

■ Greater London and Greater Paris

Greater London was the second most preferred destination in terms of international visitor arrivals. The city being key financial hub of the world and home to leisure tourist attractions are the main reasons for the high influx of international visitors.

Depreciation in the value of British Pound since Brexit referendum in 2016 has further fuelled the growth of international visitors to Greater London. Nearly 50% of international visits to London are for leisure purpose.

A total of 13.2 million foreign visitors

visited Greater Paris in 2018. Cultural heritage, art, monuments and cafe culture were some of the main visitor attractions in the Greater Paris region.

Tourism sector accounted for approximately 9% of the total employment in Greater Paris region in 2018.

■ Dubai benefits from friendly visa regulations

Dubai led the Middle East and North Africa region in terms of visitor arrivals. Visa on arrival and 30-day and 90-day free visa policy offered to countries, including China, India, Russia, the US and the UK, have significantly contributed to the growth of visitor arrival in Dubai city.

■ Tokyo exhibited fastest growth of international visitors during 2014-18

Among the top 10 cities, Tokyo exhibited sharpest growth of 60.5% during 2014-18. The growth of international visitor arrivals in

Archaeologists affiliated with the University of Chicago discovered the tablets in 1930s while excavating in Persepolis, the ceremonial capital of the Persian Empire. However, the institute has resumed work in collaboration with colleagues in Iran, and the return of the tablets is part of a broadening of contacts between scholars in the two countries, said Gil Stein, director of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago.

The tablets reveal economic, social and religious history of the Achaemenid Empire (550-330 BC) and the larger Near Eastern region in the fifth century BC.

Darius I, byname Darius the Great, (born 550 BC—died 486), king of Persia in 522–486 BC, one of the greatest rulers of the Achaemenid dynasty, who was noted for his administrative genius and for his great building projects. Darius attempted several times to conquer Greece; his fleet was destroyed by a storm in 492, and the Athenians defeated his army at Marathon in 490.

The Achaemenid [Persian] Empire was the largest and most durable empire of its time. The empire stretched from Ethiopia, through Egypt, to Greece, to Anatolia (modern Turkey), Central Asia and to India.

Six million Iranians expected to visit Turkey in 2020



TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Some six **d e s k** million Iranian nationals are anticipated to visit the neighboring Turkey in 2020, president of Iranian Scientific Ecotourism has said.

Having ranked first among Iranian’s most preferred countries during public holidays and vacation periods, Turkey is expected to welcome more than 6 million Iranian tourists throughout next year, Farid Javaherzadeh, told Anadolu Agency on Monday.

Some experts say that Turkey’s steps toward improving relations with the neighboring country as well as promotional efforts and close attention to visitors have led to an increase in the number of Iranian arrivals.

“Having reached about five million Iranian tourists last year thanks to friendly relations, agreements and convenient holiday opportunities, Turkey is expected to see a continuous increase in the arrivals in the years ahead,” the report said.

Iranian tourists vacationing in Turkey have increased hotel occupancy rates in many cities, particularly in the eastern

province of Van, to 100%, while their shopping is a lifeline for tradesmen, Daily Sabah reported.

Mehrdad Naseri, representative of the Raja Railway Transport Company, was cited by the Anadolu Agency as saying that the number of tourists will increase thanks to the resumption of Tehran-Ankara and Tehran-Van train services between Iran and Turkey.

Indicating that they aim to bring 40,000 passengers from Iran to Turkey by rail next year, Naseri said: “We had talks with tourism companies in Van. We talked about taking Iranian tourists to other cities. We will have services to Istanbul. There are many beautiful places and many beautiful cities in Turkey. We will bring as many passengers to Turkey as we can in the coming period.”

Located near the Iranian border, Van is a tourist attraction for its natural wonders and historic monuments. Over the years, it has become a top destination for Iranian tourists, especially during the Iranian national holidays.

Tokyo was aided by initiatives by the public and private sector to promote Tokyo’s tourism and create a welcoming environment for visitors, along with measures taken to relax visa requirements for foreign visitors from Asia and other regions.

■ Emerging Asian nations potential feeder markets of global visitor destinations

Global destinations witnessed a huge influx of Chinese visitors while countries such as South Korea and Japan are also named as the key source markets.

Demand for China outbound tourism grew continuously in line with rise in personal disposable income.

According to China National Tourism Administration (CNTA), outbound travel grew by 262% since 2008 and is expected to reach 166 million departures by 2019.

(Source: Travel Daily News)

Internationally-syndicated columnist offers suggestions on how to deal with Trump’s sanctions game

By Alireza Hashemi

TEHRAN – Ramzy Baroud, an internationally-syndicated columnist, shared suggestions on how Iran should deal with the U.S. sanctions game, saying a “united Iranian front” is perhaps the most important strategy that Iran can lead to challenge the U.S. sanctions.

Baroud, who has been writing about the Middle East for over 20 years, made the remarks in a recent interview with Tehran Times on an intense sanctions campaign U.S. President Donald Trump has been conducting against Iran.

For the Trump administration, who pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal in May 2018, using the full force of U.S. economic power has been the preferred way to conduct a so-called “maximum pressure” campaign on Iran.

The latest round of U.S. sanctions came two weeks ago, when Washington imposed sanctions on Iran’s central bank and a development fund following attacks on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia that Riyadh and U.S. officials have blamed on Iran.

Baroud said, “The Donald Trump administration has understood that catering to Israel and its conservative supporters would require disruptive actions such as the cancelation of the U.S. commitment to the JCPOA, sanctions on Iran and other measures against Palestinians, such as the cutting off of funds to UNRWA, and so on”.

Baroud, an author of several books and the founder of PalestineChronicle.com, said Trump has made a “strategic folly” by going out of the 2015 nuclear deal.

“By walking away from the treaty, the U.S. has lost one of its remaining levers that allowed it to claim a role of leadership. It is a strategic folly, but Trump doesn’t seem to care or even understand,” he said.

However, Baroud said the sanctions can be of terrible consequences on Iran, because the unabashed Trump regime feels unhinged and holds no accountability to any party, not even the United Nations, or even his own country’s constitution.

“The U.S.’s erratic behavior under Trump could lead



Ramzy Baroud

even to greater negative outcomes on Iran, and other countries, if not tamed”.

“Iran, naturally, has the legal and moral right, even obligation to challenge the U.S. sanctions in every possible way”.

Following are Baroud’s 10 suggestions on how Iran should deal with Trump’s sanctions game:

1. Iran must find alternative methods to keep its oil and other exports flowing and it must utilize all of its allies to achieve this important mission.
2. Iran must continue to pursue the matter – of U.S. violation of JCPOA- in international courts, to hold the U.S. accountable, and to expose the illegal U.S. action.
3. Iran should continue to work with EU powers who

still support the JCPOA but it must be wary of possible strategic changes to their position. EU countries are important for them, at least till now, insist on defying the U.S. stance on JCPOA but if recent history is of the essence, they cannot be fully trusted. Their betrayal of Libya, for example, is a fairly fresh example of French and Italian breaking of their promises.

4. Iran should cultivate friendly relations with as many countries as possible, especially those within its immediate environs, including Arab countries, India, Pakistan, Russia, China and central Asian republics, among others.

5. Iran should also work to expand its support among friendly countries worldwide, including African and South American countries, for their votes in the Security Council and other UN bodies are of practical and symbolic importance.

6. While Iran must remain decisive in its rejection of the U.S.-Israel anti-Iranian camp, it must not burn any diplomatic bridges. It must work within the reasonable expectations of the JCPOA but constantly explore other alternatives shall the treaty, for whatever reason collapse.

7. Although the Trump phenomenon is maybe a fleeting one, Iran should work with the assumption that it is the new status quo, which can be fortified by changing political moods in the West and the rise of the far-right.

8. At home, it is important that the people don’t feel that they are shouldering the negative impact of the sanctions alone while the elites remain sheltered and unaffected. There has been clearer indications that every attempt at achieving social justice and equality within Iran itself is being taken.

9. Also, at home, it is important that there is a massive and systematic educational campaign through all available mediums to engage with and explain to the people the nature and reasons behind the U.S.-Israel attempts at destabilizing Iran through levying of sanctions and cancelling of the JCPOA.

10. A united Iranian front is perhaps the most important strategy that Iran can lead to challenge the U.S. sanctions at the moment.

MSM continue to push misinformation about Venezuela and drug trafficking

By Lucas Koerner and Ricardo Vaz

(FAIR) — In recent years, Western corporate journalists have turned to systematically citing unnamed sources and secret documents from the US national security state. Indeed, one would be forgiven for thinking it was standard operating procedure.

The Wall Street Journal (9/15/19) takes this “deep state” fan fiction genre to new heights with its latest on Venezuela, titled “Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez Worked to Flood US with Cocaine, US Prosecutors Say.”

As advertised, the Journal’s Juan Forero echoes allegations against the Venezuelan government by US officials, which are contained in undisclosed “documents obtained by the Wall Street Journal.”

There is only one slight problem with this news: It’s not new, and is based entirely on the word of US prosecutors and defector-turned-witness testimony.

■ A stale, evidence-free tale

Like the conspiracy theory of Hezbollah activity in Venezuela, which Nicholas Casey recently dusted off for the New York Times (5/2/19), allegations of Chavista drug trafficking count among the corporate media’s favorite Venezuela soundbites.

Back in 2008, President Bush’s Treasury Department accused top Venezuelan officials of “materially assisting the narcotics trafficking activities of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).”

At the time, the New York Times (9/12/08) and other outlets repeated the allegations, while ignoring then-OAS Secretary General Miguel Insulza’s testimony before the US Congress that there is “no evidence” tying Venezuela to the FARC.

The Guardian (2/12/08), ever willing to serve Washington’s foreign policy interests, also debuted its own bombshell “investigation” in 2008, headlined “Revealed: Chávez Role in Cocaine Trail to Europe.” All these spectacular claims rely on the testimony of anonymous intelligence officials and alleged FARC deserters, to whom readers are expected to give the benefit of the doubt.

Fast forward to 2015, the Journal’s Forero and Jose de Cordoba (5/18/15) quoted unnamed Justice Department officials accusing Venezuela’s ruling Socialist Party’s No. 2, Diosdado Cabello, of heading a drug cartel. No evidence was presented to support the claims, and the Justice Department has, four years later, yet to unseal an indictment against Cabello.

Forero’s latest article rehashes the same allegations regarding the mythical “Cartel of the Suns,” but extends them to taint late President Hugo Chávez, who is purported to have “wielded cocaine trafficking as a weapon.”

■ Relying on traitors’ testimony

Most of Forero’s report is an uncritical recitation of the claims contained in the “documents.” Unsurprisingly, all of the

sources mentioned are Venezuelan government defectors, who have a clear incentive to fabricate information in order to secure their status in the United States and protect themselves against possible prosecution.

Since 2015, the Journal has reported the Justice Department’s “star witness” to be former Chávez bodyguard Leamsy Salazar, who defected to the US in 2014. Over the subsequent years, Salazar has proven himself a steady source of wild, unsubstantiated allegations involving Cabello and other top Bolivarian officials that have been repeated by corporate journalists.

On this occasion, we are expected to take at face value Salazar’s claims of having seen “what appeared to be cocaine” shipped on Venezuelan speed boats, overhearing Chávez order weapons for the FARC over the phone, and witnessing the late president promise to divert funds from state oil company PDVSA to the guerrilla group.

Forero does not cite additional, independently verifiable evidence that might support these allegations, which suggests that the Justice Department doesn’t have any.

This procedure is repeated with other state witnesses, including former Venezuelan Supreme Court Justice Eladio Aponte, who “fled to the US in 2012 and has been a witness on drug cases, said a person familiar with his role in the investigations.”

Here Forero commits a particularly glaring omission. Aponte only fled Venezuela with DEA help after he was identified as the business partner of Venezuelan drug lord Walid Makled. As we examined in the case of the drug-trafficking accusations against current Industry Minister Tareck El Aissami, US officials and corporate journalists have frequently drawn unproven links between Makled and high-ranking Caracas officials, despite the former being handed a 14-year sentence by a Venezuelan court in 2015.

In lieu of incorporating other

perspectives that might challenge the US prosecutors’ claims, Forero opts to consult “experts” more than willing to echo them. He quotes Zair Mundaray, a former prosecutor who fled to Colombia in 2017. Mundaray served as No. 2 in the public prosecutor’s office under former Attorney General Luisa Ortega Díaz.

Forero again suppresses crucial details, namely that Ortega was herself accused of running an extortion ring from her office, prompting her successor to open various high-profile graft probes in 2017–18. Nor does Forero mention that Mundaray is currently serving as “legal advisor” to self-proclaimed “Interim President” Juan Guaidó’s “embassy” in Colombia, giving him all the more motivation to proffer damning “information” about Chávez and Chavistas to US prosecutors and journalists.

In another case, the Journal correspondent cites an anonymous US ex-official to confirm what other unnamed US officials have alleged in an undisclosed “document”:

A former senior US official who was shown the documents filed in Spain said it was the first time he had seen American authorities alleging that Mr. Chávez’s sponsorship of drug trafficking constituted a formal strategy to debilitate the US “That said, it makes sense for a regime that has long seen itself in an asymmetric war with us,” said the former official.

Very far from “speaking truth to power,” corporate media have almost completely surrendered the floor to anonymous US officials, allowing the official narrative to go unchallenged.

■ Poisoning the well

The Journal report, while not original in content, has the novelty of patching together half-baked claims into a Machiavellian plan hatched by Chávez himself. With Washington and Western media previously going after high-ranking figures such as Cabello and El Aissami, this time the target is the legendary leader of the Bolivarian Revolution. The story reads as a substitute script for the new season of Amazon’s Jack Ryan, which came under fire for its fantastical plot premise of Venezuela requiring US intervention after acquiring a nuclear weapon—no doubt the fantasy of recently fired National Security Advisor John Bolton.

Crucially missing is the historic fact that it was the CIA, not Chávez, that flooded US inner cities with crack cocaine in the 1980s as part of the Iran/Contra operation, of which current US special envoy to Venezuela Elliott Abrams is a veteran. The only thing Venezuela’s former president shipped to poor urban communities was free heating oil every winter.

Reading Forero, one almost loses sight of US authorities’ active complicity, both at home and abroad, in the drug trade. Cocaine is consumed first and foremost in the United States, and its profits have been laundered by the US-dominated



U.S. probe targets No. 2 official Diosdado Cabello, several others, on suspicion of drug trafficking and money laundering



The Journal (5/18/15) published much the same allegations more than for years ago—and they were shopworn even then.



Documents prepared by U.S. federal prosecutors outline for the first time the possible role of the former Venezuelan president in drug trafficking



The Wall Street Journal (9/15/19) claims that Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez “ordered his top lieutenants to work with Colombian Marxist guerrillas to flood the US with cocaine in his government’s efforts to combat the Bush administration.”

financial system. Meanwhile, the DEA’s ever-growing multi-billion dollar budget has done nothing to fight the booming drug trade (assuming that is the goal). In fact, US-allied Colombia is the world’s largest cocaine producer and the source of 90 percent of the cocaine seized in the US, according to the State Department. Furthermore, the drugs are transported to the US mainly through Central America and Mexico, all countries with a heavy presence of US agencies.

The “Communist narco-terrorist” conspiracy theory invented by the US national security state and its far-right Colombian allies serves to conflate Colombia’s drug and guerrilla problems, with the FARC a convenient scapegoat. For one thing, the FARC was involved in the drug trade only at its lowest levels, levying taxes on coca sales. Moreover, since the 2016 peace accords and FARC demobilization, coca crops in Colombia have reached record levels year after year, confirming that the guerrillas played no major role in the illicit trade.

“The corporate grip on opinion in the United States is one of the wonders of the Western world,” Gore Vidal remarked. “No First World country has ever managed to eliminate so entirely from its media all objectivity—much less dissent.”

Even Forero outdoes himself by this standard, producing what is for all intents and purposes a press release for the US Justice Department.

The goal is never to prove anything or present substantive debate, but to further poison the well of US public opinion against Venezuela, legitimating regime change as US state policy. Rather than victims of murderous US sanctions, Venezuelans are depicted as the purveyors of an anti-American drug war. In fact, the most egregious dealers of death and deceit in the hemisphere are, as always, US policymakers and their stenographers in the corporate media.

CNN: Facts first, just not on Israel

By Mariam Barghouti

(AlJazeera) — Last week, the US mainstream media demonstrated once again that it has a Palestine problem. CNN suspended the contract of commentator and Temple University Professor Marc Lamont Hill, after he gave a speech at the United Nations in which he criticised the Israeli occupation and the abuse of Palestinian rights.

Hill based his speech very much on facts. He cited Israeli laws that discriminate against Palestinians; the use of arbitrary violence by the Israeli security apparatus; the use of torture against Palestinian detainees; the denial of due process to Palestinians by Israeli courts; the restriction on movement in the occupied territories, etc - all violations that have been well-documented and condemned by the UN and a myriad of human rights organisations.

Yet CNN, which last year adopted a new slogan - “Facts first” - did not seem to agree with these facts. After pro-Israel organisations like the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) condemned the speech, the TV station was quick to sever its ties with Hill.

While CNN did not announce why it chose to do so, it is clear to many of us it caved in to pressure from pro-Israel groups. Hill was accused of being anti-Semitic for using the phrase “free Palestine from the river to the sea”, which supposedly is a “Hamas slogan” and a call for the destruction of Israel. Well, it is neither.



Professor Marc Lamont Hill spoke at the Special Meeting of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People on November 28, 2018.

Throwing accusations of anti-Semitism at people criticising Israel and supporting the Palestinian right to self-determination is a convenient tool of the Zionist lobby. But calling for the freedom of Palestinians and for the recognition of their rights is not anti-Semitic; it is pro-Palestinian.

Conflating anti-Semitism with pro-Palestinian positions and criticism of Israel is not only ill-intentioned but also dangerous, as it does a disservice to Jews who have faced hate speech and hate attacks.

In Palestine, the Israeli authorities have brought this tactic to the extreme and have already passed a number of laws curbing freedom of speech. This means that those of us who dare criticise Israeli policy or call for resistance to Israeli occupation, even if in the form of a poem, face the risk of imprisonment.

In the United States, those who do so clearly face the risk of being fired, as in the case of Professor Hill and as in the case of many others before him- and probably many others after. The way CNN (mis)handled this situation offers us an opportunity to discuss how media organisations succumbing to Israel’s campaign of silencing critics is particularly problematic.

For a long time, mainstream media organisations in the West, like the CNN, have been hiding behind the veneer of objectivity when it comes to issues such as the Palestinian struggle.

These outlets claim to be covering these issues objectively - applying certain procedures and high standards of verification that supposedly guarantee full and balanced reporting. With that grand declaration of objectivity, they then claim to present the true picture of what is going on. But they often don’t.

The language employed by many mainstream media networks in the West when reporting on Palestine is often imprecise and misrepresents certain objective realities. CNN and its peers often talk of a “conflict” between Palestinians and Israelis, skipping the fact that the latter are - legally and objectively speaking - occupiers. They talk of “contested lands” - as if there is no illegal settler-colonialism going on in Palestine, pushing Palestinians out of their land. They would often call the Israeli army’s violence against peaceful protesters “clashes” (as if the two sides are equal) and conveniently use the passive voice in titles reporting killings of Palestinians (as if Israeli soldiers were not the ones who shoot Palestinians dead).

Claiming objectivity but then, clearly using obfuscating language and intentionally skipping certain facts is not only damaging to the media profession but also spreads disinformation. The firing of Professor Hill has exposed once again this disingenuity, the apparent political bias, and perhaps even the fear of the Israeli lobby within Western mainstream media.

It also shows that even media institutions that claim to be fighting for freedom of speech, to be delivering “facts first”, to be “speaking truth to power” can also partake in the silencing of critical voices. What is particularly disconcerting, in this case, is that CNN is not only succumbing to political pressure and Israel’s speech policing policies but also perpetuating them - even if indirectly.

CNN is clearly not ready to take on the “controversial” topic of the Palestinian question and pursue “facts first”. Instead, it has chosen to stay on the political “safe side”: report only on certain events with bias, obscuring the real dynamic of relations between oppressor and oppressed and using a certain preset discourse.

Unfortunately, this “safe side” logic has also been adopted not only by media outlets but also by Western institutions - both academic and political ones - and even by governments. Just recall all those fake condemnations by political leaders in the West during Gaza’s Great March of Return, when in one day Israeli snipers shot dead more than 50 unarmed, peaceful Palestinian protesters and wounded hundreds of others, with local hospitals unable to cope. They all called on Israel to exercise “restraint” and threw in there for “balance” and “objectivity” a reference to Hamas, which killed no Israelis that day - or any other day of the march for that matter.

Those who do not stand on the “safe side” of things - people like Marc Lamont Hill - have been taking clear positions on Palestine, based on facts and critical thinking. They - like others throughout history who stood up for oppressed peoples’ rights - are vilified and viciously attacked, but they will persevere and continue to speak truth to power, objectively and factually.

Meanwhile, Western institutions (academic, media and others) will eventually have to engage in self-scrutiny because they are not only regularly succumbing to political pressures and adopting misrepresentations, but are also complicit in reproducing Israel’s policing and silencing strategies.

Iran, Cuba ink MOU to expand co-op in health sector

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Iran and Cuba have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to expand ties in the field of medical equipment production and export. ISNA news agency reported on Tuesday.



A delegation consisting of representatives of Cuban Ministry of Public Health paid a visit to a number of pharmaceutical and medical equipment production lines at Tehran's Pardis science and technology park.

Rafael Perez Cristia, director of Center for State Control of Drugs, Medical Devices affiliated to the Cuban Ministry of Public Health, lauded Iran's efforts in the field of medical equipment production, expressing readiness to use Iran's experiences in this regard.

According to director for medical equipment and supplies of the Food and Drug Administration, Seyed Hossein Safavi, the MOU is seeking to boost bilateral cooperation in healthcare issues including producing pharmaceuticals and equipment as well as exchanging knowledge in the field of medical production.

As per the agreement, Iranian experts will launch a production line in Cuba, and in return, Cuba is supposed to help Iran in export of the products to other countries in Latin America, said Safavi.

Currently, Iran manufactures 105 medical equipment products meeting international standards, including the European CE marking, and exports the products to 55 countries.

Giant iceberg breaks off east Antarctica

A gigantic iceberg about the size of greater London has calved from the Amery ice shelf in east Antarctica, according to expert monitors.

The tabular iceberg, officially named D-28, separated from the ice shelf on 26 September. The iceberg is 1,636 square kilometres in size, or about 50 x 30km, the Australian Antarctic Division said.

Ice shelves are platforms of floating ice that form where the Antarctic ice sheet meets the ocean. Working in a similar way to architectural buttresses, they hold back the flow of the grounded ice.

The Amery ice shelf has an estimated floating ice area of 60,000 sq km and water penetrates over 550km underneath it.

It is the first major calving event on the Amery ice shelf since 1963-64 although scientists said they did not believe it was linked to climate change.

The calving occurred next to a location known as the "loose tooth" that scientists had been watching because the ice appeared to be precariously attached.

Scientists from the Australian Antarctic program, the Institute of Marine and Antarctic Studies and Scripps Institution of Oceanography have been monitoring the site for almost 20 years.

Helen Amanda Fricker, a Scripps professor, said scientists first noticed a rift at the front of the ice shelf in the early 2000s and had predicted a large iceberg would break off between 2010 and 2015.

"I am excited to see this calving event after all these years," she said.

"We knew it would happen eventually, but just to keep us all on our toes, it is not exactly where we expected it to be."

The Amery ice shelf is the third largest in Antarctica and is located between Australia's Davis and Mawson research stations.

Researchers have been studying the ice shelf since the 1960s and currently have instruments on the ice that are measuring the impact of ocean melt and ice flow.

Fricker said: "It's part of the ice shelf's normal cycle, where we see major calving events every 60-70 years."

(Source: The Guardian)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Cricket outrage in India

(November 21, 2001)

In India this week there has been outrage after six cricketers were fined for on-field offences in South Africa. This report from Alistair Lawson.

Cricket is a sport that is **passionately** followed in India, and news of the punishment **meted out** to six players for various **misdeemeanors** during the **test series** has received front page coverage on nearly every paper.

Members of Parliament say they intend to raise the issue in the House, with some calling for the Indian team to return home from South Africa because of their **unjust** treatment. But the Board of Control for Cricket in India has rejected this option, even though it has taken the unusual step of issuing a statement describing the punishments as **shocking** and **inconsistent**. The English match referee, Mike Denness, has been **vilified** in the press for his decision to issue a variety of punishments ranging from **fines** to **suspended match bans**.

Words

passionately: to feel passionately about something is to care very, very strongly about it

meted out: the punishment given

misdeemeanors: unacceptable acts

test series: a series of matches played between two national teams in different locations in the same country

unjust: unfair

shocking: something that is shocking makes people upset or angry

inconsistent: here, not the same as the punishments given previously

vilified: if you have vilified someone you have said or written unpleasant things about them

fines: sums of money that someone has to pay as a punishment

suspended match bans: a sportsman is stopped from playing in a match if they commit the same offence

(Source: BBC)

Over 1m Iranians donate blood in 6 months

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — A total of 1,051,029 individuals donated blood in Iran during the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), Bashir Haji, the Blood Transfusion Organization spokesman said on Tuesday.

There are currently 178 blood donation centers in the country, with Fars, Khorasan Razavi, Khuzestan, Tehran, and Mazandaran provinces having the largest number of blood donation centers, he stated, adding, Fars province has 14 blood donation centers in the country.

Women donated 43,464 units of blood in the past six months, while the women's blood donation index is 4.2 percent, he noted.

He went on to say that the provinces of Lorestan, Markazi, Kordestan, Sistan-Baluchestan have the highest rate of women blood donors in the country.

The rate of continuous blood donation (with at least two blood donations per year) in the country is nearly 60 percent. On the other words, 60 percent of blood donors regularly refer to such centers, he explained.

Currently, Semnan, South Khorasan, and Bushehr provinces have the highest number of regular blood donors, he added.

Over the first six months of this year, the highest number of blood units has been collected from provinces of Tehran, Fars, and Khorasan Razavi, which constitute 30 percent of the whole blood donated in the country, Haji highlighted.

Blood donation rates in Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Qazvin, and North Khorasan provinces in the aforementioned period were significantly higher than in the same period a year earlier, he stated.

Also, in three provinces of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari, Alborz and Markazi, women were more likely to donate blood than in the same period last year, he added.



According to the World Health Organization, blood transfusion saves million lives and improves health, but many patients requiring transfusion do not have timely access to safe blood, while about 117.4 million blood donations are collected worldwide.

Most blood donors in Iran have O-positive blood type accounting for 34 percent, however, AB negative blood type with 1 percent blood donor is the rarest blood group in the country, he stated.

During the aforementioned period, 1.8 million of blood units and products, including, red blood cells, platelets and

blood plasma, were distributed to medical centers and hospitals across the country, which increased by 3 percent compared to the same period last year, he concluded.

■ Blood donation saves millions of lives

According to the World Health Organization, blood transfusion saves million lives and improves health, but many patients requiring transfusion do not have timely access to safe blood. Providing safe and adequate blood should be an integral part of every country's national health care policy and infrastructure.

About 117.4 million blood donations are collected worldwide. 42 percent of these are collected in high-income countries, home to 16 percent of the world's population.

About 12,700 blood centers in 170 countries report collecting a total of 100 million donations. Collections at blood centers vary according to income group. The median annual donations per blood center is 1,300 in the low-income countries, 4,100 in lower-middle-income countries and 8 500 in upper-middle-income countries, as compared to 23,000 in the high-income countries.

Data about the gender profile of blood donors show that globally 32 percent of blood donations are given by women, although this ranges widely. In 14 of the 119 reporting countries, less than 10 percent of donations are given by female donors.

Moreover, 62 countries collect 100 percent of their blood supply from voluntary, unpaid blood donors. Some 108 million blood donations are collected globally, half of these are in high-income countries. Meanwhile, blood donation by 1 percent of the population can meet a nation's most basic requirements for blood.

WHO assists Iran to enhance health system resilience against floods

TEHRAN — World Health Organization (WHO) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME) of the Islamic Republic of Iran hold a two-day (1-2 October 2019) expert meeting in Tehran on Science-Policy-Practice Interface for Enhancing Health System Resilience against Floods in the country. The meeting has been organized in support of the Special Commission for National Report on Floods appointed by President Dr Hassan Rouhani.

The event brought together a diverse array of international experts and national stakeholders from science, policy and practice to better understand how to work both individually and collaboratively in improving health system resilience to floods. The results of this expert meeting will be incorporated into the report of the "Special Commission".

In the aftermath of the floods, the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran appointed a "Special Commission for National Report on Floods" consisting of independent experts and scholars. According to the President's letter of appointment, "people have the right to receive scientific, credible and precise answers about the different aspects of these floods, the degree of the country's readiness to deal with floods, and the practices concerning disaster management, damage estimation, damage compensation, and the necessary reforms for increasing national readiness for dealing with floods." The Special Commission's report is expected to serve as a key reference in resilience-building against floods in different sectors of the country, including the health sector.

Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, the WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean in a message to the meeting underscored that while the science of flood risk management continues to advance, countries often struggle to make policy on the basis of the existing science, and the challenges are even greater when it comes to putting policy into practice.

"The interface between science, policy and practice represents the space in which technical experts, poli-



cy-makers and practitioners can pool their diverse areas of expertise to develop a holistic understanding of an issue in order to create effective policy and plans" he added in the message that was read by Dr. Ali Ardalan, Regional Advisor and Manager of Health Systems in Emergencies Lab (HSEL) at the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO).

Laleh Najafizadeh, the Health Emergency Programme Coordinator at the WHO Country Office Iran also in her presentation by highlighting the fact that building resilient health systems requires a holistic approach to health system development, said: the engagement of government at all levels, as well as civil society organizations, the private sector and local communities is crucial.

"WHO provides facilitates cooperation between health authorities and other relevant stakeholders to strengthen health system capacity and resilience for disaster risk management," she added.

The initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish this Special Commission is a model for prioritizing science-policy dialogues at the highest level of a government. It also reveals the country's commitment to the systematic use of science in policy-making for disaster risk reduction.

An example of this commitment is the development of a post-graduate programs on health disaster management at PhD level and establishment of corresponding academic

departments by the Ministry of Health and Medical Education (MoHME) in the affiliated universities.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, like many countries, faces emergencies and disasters that have severe public health impacts. By the end of 2018, natural disasters in Iran caused over 73,000 deaths, affecting 42 million people and caused 20 billion USD of economic damage. While the country has invested considerably in disaster risk reduction, the recent floods in March and April 2019 proved that the country is still extremely vulnerable to such hazardous events.

The floods and subsequent landslides have affected 43 out of 83 million people in 25 out of 31 provinces, leaving 2 million in need of humanitarian assistance. The floods have killed 86, injured 2,193, and displaced roughly 365,000 individuals. The destruction of infrastructure, both private and public property, was extensive and widespread – an estimated 65,000 houses were destroyed and over 114,000 were damaged. The floods also destroyed, either partially or completely, 927 health facilities, disrupting health service delivery at a time when it is needed most. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran estimates the total economic loss to be at 4.7 billion USD. Despite the extensive damage, the early warning systems throughout the country helped save the lives of thousands of citizens during the emergency.

Although focusing on the March-April 2019 floods in Iran, this initiative will serve as a pilot for similar expert discussions on different types of emergencies in the Eastern Mediterranean Region – and beyond. It is also aligned with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) that emphasizes: the enhancement of scientific and technical work on disaster risk reduction, the promotion and support of the availability and application of science and technology to decision-making, the support of the interface between policy and science for decision-making, and the support of action by local communities and authorities.

(Source: WHO office in Tehran)

Second Announcement

N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 08-38-9240056

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

Items	Material Description	Quantity
01	ROCK BITS. JET TYPE , LESS NOZZLES WITH API REGULAR TOOLJOINT PIN CONNECTION 8-3/8IN.X4-1/2 IN 8-3/8 IN I.A.D.C.5.1.7	40

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

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit .a bid bond of 13,088 EURO or 617,500,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC

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

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

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex
Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran
Tel. No.: 061 341 23523 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437
Public Relations www.shana.ir www.nisoc.ir
تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۸/۷/۷ نوبت دوم ۹۸/۷/۱۰

Both Afghan presidential rivals claim victory, heading for potential political gridlock

TEHRAN — The two main contenders in Afghanistan's presidential election have declared victory, even as ballot counting has just begun, with final results not being expected in a month.

Incumbent President Ashraf Ghani and his opponent, Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah, both claimed a win on Monday, two days after the election was held under tight security measures across the country.

Ghani's vice presidential candidate, Amrullah Saleh, told a press conference on Sunday that the president had won a clear first-round victory.

Saleh said Ghani had garnered "60 to 70 percent" of the votes, without providing any evidence.

"The figures we have is that it will be a landslide victory for us," he added. "There will be no runoff. I have an intelligence background and I triple-check everything before discussing."

Abdullah also said in a press conference on Monday that his "votes are the highest in the election, and the election will not go to the second round."



The remarks were made as the country's Independent Election Commission is still gathering ballot boxes from the Saturday

election. Authorities are transferring the boxes from remote areas around the country to the capital, Kabul, for counting.

The executive of the commission, Habiburrahman Nang, said that no candidate had the right to declare himself the winner before the votes were tallied.

Preliminary results, however, are not expected for almost three weeks and final results not until early November, according to the commission.

According to Press TV, if no candidate wins more than half of the ballots, a runoff vote will be held between the two candidates with the highest number of the votes.

The situation now is reminiscent of the election five years ago, when Ghani and Abdullah both claimed victory and pushed the country into months of political turmoil, which came to an end with a United States-brokered deal. Under the power-sharing agreement in 2015, Ghani became president and Abdullah accepted the new post of chief executive.

The latest competing claims could trigger yet another political crisis just weeks after peace talks collapsed between the Taliban militant group and the U.S. in Qatar's capital, Doha.

McConnell: Impeachment rules are clear, we'll have to take it up

TEHRAN — U.S. Senate Majority leader Mitch McConnell says the upper chamber of Congress would have "no choice" but to hold impeachment trial for President Donald Trump.

The Republican senator made the comments on Monday as Democratic-led House was engaged in an impeachment inquiry against Trump.

"I would have no choice but to take it up," McConnell told CNBC. "Under the Senate rules, we are required to take it up if the House does go down that path. The Senate impeachment rules are very clear."

Trump has apparently pressured Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to investigate Joe Biden, his potential opponent for the 2020 presidential election.

McConnell further undermined the impeachment process, suggesting that it would be too lengthy.

"How long you're on it, is a whole different matter, but I would have no choice but to take it up," the Kentucky senator said.

■ Giuliani subpoenaed

As part of the effort, House Democratic leaders slapped Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani with a subpoena.

"Pursuant to the House of Representa-

tives' impeachment inquiry, we are hereby transmitting a subpoena that compels you to produce the documents set forth in the accompanying schedule by October 15, 2019," wrote House Intelligence Committee chairman Adam Schiff and the chairs of two other panels conducting investigations, as cited by Reuters.

The president is meanwhile trying to find the whistleblower, whose revelations lie at the heart of the impeachment proceedings.

"We're trying to find out about a whistleblower when you have a whistleblower that reports things that were incorrect," Trump said. "The whistleblower reported a totally different statement like the statement itself was not even made, I guess statement you could say with call, I made a call. The call was perfect. When the whistleblower reported that he made it sound terrible."

Trump has reportedly also pressed Australian Prime Minister Morrison to help investigate origins of the so-called Russia probe.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is also part of the investigation as he also took part in the July phone conversation between Trump and the Ukrainian president.

Khashoggi suspects made 'chilling' jokes before killing

TEHRAN — Saudi operatives suspected of killing the journalist Jamal Khashoggi at the country's Istanbul consulate were heard joking and talking about dismemberment before his arrival, according to secret tapes heard by U.N. investigators.

Helena Kennedy, a British lawyer assisting the U.N. probe into Khashoggi's death, said recordings she had heard from inside the kingdom's mission in Turkey referred to the Saudi critic as a "sacrificial animal."

"There was a discussion about 'will the body and the hips fit into a bag this way?', she told BBC television's Panorama documentary programme broadcast on Monday night.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, a self-styled modernizer, was feted by global leaders and business titans before the gruesome murder on Oct. 2 last year.

But the global fallout from the killing rendered him a pariah.

Kennedy said Turkish bugs in the Saudi consulate picked up a forensic pathologist suspected of cutting up Khashoggi's body as saying, "I often play music when I'm cutting cadavers. Sometimes I have

a coffee and a cigar at hand."

The pathologist also says, "It's the first time in my life that I've had to cut pieces on the ground - even if you are a butcher and want to cut, he hangs the animal up to do so," she added.

"They speak about waiting for Khashoggi to arrive and they say, 'Has the sacrificial animal arrived?'. You could hear them laughing, it's a chilling business."

Turkey handed over 45 minutes of recordings to the United Nations in order for them to investigate the incident.

According to AFP, Khashoggi visited the consulate to secure the divorce papers needed to marry his fiancée but did not make it out alive.

"There's a point where you can hear Khashoggi moving from a man who is being a confident person, towards a sense of fear, a sense of rising anxiety, rising terror and then knowing something fatal is going to happen," said Kennedy.

UN special rapporteur Agnes Callamard, who also heard the tapes, said Khashoggi asked his suspected killers, "Are you going to give me an injection?", to which they replied 'yes'."

Erdogan says Turkey has no choice but go its own way on Syria 'safe zone'

TEHRAN — Turkey has no choice but to act alone given too little progress has been made with the United States forming a "safe zone" in northeastern Syria, President Tayyip Erdogan said on Tuesday in his most direct indication of a cross-border offensive.

After eight years of war in neighboring Syria, Ankara and NATO ally Washington have agreed to establish a zone along 480 km (300 miles) of the border that Turkey wants to be 30 km deep.

Under the Turkish plan, up to 2 million Syrian refugees would be settled in the area that would be cleared of the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia, which Ankara deems a terrorist organization.

Since agreeing to set up the zone in northern Syria, Turkey has repeatedly warned of unilateral military action if efforts do not meet its expectations, saying it would not tolerate any attempts by Washington to stall the process.

It set an end-September deadline for action. "We have not achieved any of the results we desired in the



east of the Euphrates. Turkey cannot lose even a single day on this issue. There is no other choice but to act on our own," Erdogan said at the parliament's opening ceremony in Ankara.

"We plan to settle two million people in the safe

zones we will establish. We calculated the costs and we will carry out efforts to improve. We will start taking steps as soon as the region is saved from the invasion of terror," he said.

While diplomats, analysts and Turkey's main opposition say Ankara would be unwilling to anger Washington with a military incursion as the allies try to repair strained ties, Erdogan's comments on Tuesday marked the clearest indication of an offensive in the region.

He added that Turkey aimed to host an "international donors meeting" to get funding for its plans in the area, which he said would stretch from the Euphrates river in Syria east to the Iraqi border.

Erdogan has repeatedly called on Turkey's allies to provide financial support for the plans, including in his speech at the United Nations last month. But Ankara is unlikely to receive a response for any plan that settles people hundreds of kilometers from their homes and alters the demographics of northeast Syria, Reuters reported.

Johnson on defensive again over groping accusation

TEHRAN— British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is known for his colorful love life, but the accusation he grabbed a young woman's thigh when he was a magazine editor risks a scandal as he seeks to unite his party over Brexit. Johnson, who is attending his Conservative party's conference in Manchester, northwest England, is accused of giving a female journalist's leg "a squeeze" at a private lunch 20 years ago. He never comments on his personal life but his spokesperson issued a clear denial, an acknowledgement the claim is more serious than gossip about his affairs.

It follows accusations that Johnson gave

special access to a U.S. businesswoman with whom he is alleged to have had a relationship when he was mayor of London.

He denies any impropriety, but it is yet another headache after his defeats in Parliament and the courts over his pledge to leave the EU on Oct. 31, come what may. Powerful men In an article published in The Sunday Times, journalist Charlotte Edwardes described a boozy lunch in the offices of The Spectator magazine around two decades ago, when Johnson was editor.

She was sitting next to him and wrote that "under the table I feel Johnson's hand on my thigh. He gives it a squeeze."

"His hand is high up my leg and he has enough inner flesh beneath his fingers to make me sit suddenly upright," she added.

Edwardes said that a woman she spoke with after the dinner, who was sitting on Johnson's other side, said that the same thing happened to her.

Johnson was married at the time to his second wife. They are now divorced and he currently lives with his girlfriend, Carrie Symonds.

Downing Street said Edwardes' claim was "untrue," and the prime minister himself denied it in a television interview, while refusing to comment further. But Health

Minister Matt Hancock said he knew Edwardes well, and "I entirely trust what she has to say."

Former Conservative minister Justine Greening, who is now an independent MP, said the claim was "deeply concerning."

It went "to the heart of this question about character and integrity of people in public life and what standards the electorate have a right to expect," she told BBC radio.

The allegation comes two years after Defense Minister Michael Fallon quit following revelations he tried to kiss a journalist, AFP reported.

The fate of 2020 U.S. election depends on public health insurance

➔1 The first Democrats' plan is a totally socialist, which will establish a health care system, and propose a %100 governmental and developed health care system. One of the good points of the plan is to cover all Americans, and to reduce people's share of health care with the federal government funding.

This annual plan imposes a huge cost of \$ 3 trillion on the government, and reduces the competitiveness and executive efficiency by eliminating private sector from health care system. The key point is that the plan will frighten capitalists and political and economic critics, so will push them to support Trump.

Famous supporters of the plan include candidates like Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Kamala Harris. The plan's supporters are mostly transformational or hard-line Democrats.

The second plan is the reformation of the existing health system, which is based on the Obamacare health insurance. The plan will maintain the private sector, but will significantly reduce its share and influence in the market, while increasing the government's control over health system. Currently, the U.S. health system is being ran by large profit-oriented companies that are inefficient because of the control of free trade in the field of health care.

The strengths of the plan are that it is short-term, inexpensive and pragmatic, backing by a moderate Democrat Joe Biden. The lack of full coverage of American population and lack of transparency are among the weaknesses of the plan.

During Obama presidency, a health insurance policy called the Obamacare was applied, which Trump sought to repeal and replace it with "Trumpcare".

The Obamacare is the most comprehensive law since Social Security Act effective in 1935. The law was passed to guarantee the quality of health insurances and reduce the number of uninsured people. It also aimed insurance companies to cover certain diseases, and insure people with almost same price regardless of gender or previous disease. In the Obamacare, parents can cover children up to the age of 26 with their own insurance. In 2017, the Obamacare considered an amount for the franchise of insured people, which was \$ 7150 for each person and \$14300 for each family per year.

With the Obamacare, the number of uninsured people dropped from %16 to %9. According to the statistics about 11,800,000 people used the Obamacare in 2018, and 20 million people were covered by health insurance.

Since the cost of health care in the U.S. is annually over \$ 3500 billion, the government must provide %50 of this amount. Under the Obamacare plan, some taxes are increased, and people with over \$ 200,000 income per year were required to pay higher taxes.

With paying more taxes, the Obamacare was not so popular among people in the first few years, but polls show that the majority of people now oppose its repealing.

Repealing the Obamacare was one of the main slogans in Trump's campaign.

The Republicans considered the Obamacare as a government intervention in private sector and seriously resisted the Democrats. Eventually, the plan to repeal the health care system failed to be passed by 51 votes against and 49 in favor in the Senate on July 28, 2017. It was another failure for Trump.

Names of 10 candidates in the third debate are as follow:

1. Joe Biden (vice president to former President) 2. Bernie Sanders (Vermont Senator) 3. Elizabeth Warren (Massachusetts Senator) 4. Kamala Harris (California Senator) 5. Pete Buttigieg (Mayor of Indiana) 6. Andrew Yang (Technology Entrepreneur) 7. Julián Castro (Former United States Secretary of Housing and Urban Development) 8. Cory Booker (New Jersey Senator) 9. Beto O'Rourke (former U.S. representative) 10. Amy Klobuchar (Minnesota Senator)

China displays new hypersonic nuclear missile on 70th anniversary

➔1 In 2018, China spent an estimated \$250bn on its military, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. In comparison, the U.S. spent \$649bn during the same period.



China has the largest standing military in the world, with a total of two million active members, compared to 1.29 million in the U.S.

Tan Min, the parade organizer, was quoted as saying that all the weapons and equipment displayed were "domestic and in active service" complete with advance technology for "better strike accuracy".

Hu Xijin, editor-in-chief of the state-owned Global Times newspaper, wrote on social media that the display was a show of "military transparency".

"China with strong military strength is conducive to curb the strategic impulse of external powers towards China," he said.

A total of 188 military attaches from 97 countries were reportedly invited to watch the military display, Al Jazeera reported.

Kabul to Taliban: 'Join us in peace or we will continue to fight'

➔1 Munir Ahmad Farhad, spokesman for the provincial governor, said the attack started early on Tuesday morning and triggered a gun battle that is still under way around the Shortepa district headquarters. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the fighters overran the district - a claim that Farhad denied, adding that reinforcements were on their way to Shortepa.

Mohammad Afzel Hadid, head of the Balkh provincial council, said he feared the death toll could rise further unless reinforcements arrive soon.

➔6 I fully support data sharing and exchange. Take the example of a rare disease; it is possible that there are only 100 cases in China, 20 cases in Germany, and 10 cases in the U.S. Data sharing is a precondition for smart medical care which adopts AI technologies. The world must establish an information sharing mechanism among different countries. Smart medical care is not just a challenge for China or the EU, but also a matter for the UN. If there is a global organization that can promote better sharing of data for wider research and application, such efforts will be beneficial to every country and all human beings.

So, in your opinion, technology exchange among different

countries should not be reduced, but needs to be increased?

A: Increased. Yes, of course. Actually, I also believe international exchange will be boosted in coming decades.

What is China's overall advantage in the AI field?

A: China may have an advantage in smart manufacturing. The country has a good industrial base. After decades of development, China is transforming from the "world factory" into a new smart manufacturing powerhouse, as AI technologies serve as a driving force for development.

As China's population ages, pressure is building for policy-makers to force an upgrade of the industry toward higher-value products. It is a sensible choice

for the country to develop smart manufacturing and AI technologies.

If China combines AI technologies with manufacturing under the concept of Industry 4.0, it may stand shoulder to shoulder with Germany in the next few years in smart manufacturing. At present, almost all companies globally are talking about smart transformation. Many US companies want to do business in China, while many Chinese firms have turned their eyes toward overseas markets. We have to offer AI solutions with a global vision. We can promote the smart transformation of foreign and domestic firms, and help them to internationalize effectively.

Farah has ‘no tolerance’ for anyone breaking the rules after Salazar banned

Britain’s four-time Olympic champion Mo Farah said on Tuesday he has “no tolerance for anyone who breaks the rules or crosses the line” after his former coach Alberto Salazar was given a four-year ban for doping violations.

The 36-year-old worked with Salazar at the Nike Oregon Project (NOP) from 2011 until 2017 during which time he won four Olympic gold medals at 5,000 metres and 10,000m.

“I’m relieved that USADA has, after four years, completed their investigation into Alberto Salazar,” Farah said in a statement.

“I left the Nike Oregon Project in 2017 but as I’ve always said, I have no tolerance for anyone who breaks the rules or crosses a line.

“A ruling has been made and I’m glad there has finally been a conclusion.”

There has never been any suggestion or allegation of wrongdoing made against Farah, who it is understood learned of the ban for Salazar when it was made public on Tuesday morning.

Farah denied his decision to leave the Nike Oregon Project, in October 2017, was to do with the doping claims.

Salazar was banned by the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) for a catalogue of drugs violations.

The 61-year-old American was suspended following a years-long investigation by USADA and a prolonged battle behind closed doors, the agency said.

Jeffrey Brown, a Texas endocrinologist who treated many of Salazar’s athletes at his Nike-backed Oregon Project, was also suspended for four years.

Salazar denies the accusations and intends to appeal against the sanctions.

(Source: AFP)

Atletico Madrid’s Thomas Partey house robbed

Atletico Madrid midfielder Thomas Partey’s house has been robbed ahead of his side’s clash at Lokomotiv Moscow this midweek.

The 26-year-old’s residence in Boadilla del Monte was targeted on Monday afternoon while his housekeeper - who escaped unharmed - was present, as outlined by Marca.

It follows on from the news that Real Madrid midfielder Casemiro had his house robbed during Saturday’s Madrid derby at the Wanda Metropolitano.

The scoreless draw at the home of Los Rojiblancos kept Madrid at the top of the early La Liga table, with few clear-cut opportunities created by either side.

A number of players have had their properties robbed while living in Spain, with the report citing Casemiro’s Madrid teammates Lucas Vazquez, Isco, Karim Benzema alongside his Coach Zinedine Zidane as being previous targets.

Jordi Alba, Geoffrey Kondogbia, Philippe Coutinho, William Carvaho, Alvaro Morata, Joaquín, Ezequiel Garay, Kévin-Prince Boateng, Karim Benzema, Ramiro Funes Mori, Arthur, Gabriel Paulista and Gerard Piqué are others to have suffered similar fates in recent times.

(Source: Football Espana)

Toro Rosso F1 team seeking a more fashionable name

The Toro Rosso name could disappear at the end of the Formula One season with the Italy-based team seeking to race in future as Alpha Tauri, a fashion brand also owned by Red Bull.

Speedweek.com quoted Red Bull’s motorsport consultant Helmut Marko as saying at last weekend’s Russian Grand Prix that governing body FIA and commercial rights holders Liberty Media had approved the move.

“Now the application goes through the different teams,” said the Austrian. “I expect no difficulties.”

There has been no official word from the team, but Formula One sources confirmed the process was ongoing.

Any change of name has to be approved by the FIA’s Formula One commission and World Motor Sport Council.

The Council holds its third meeting of the year on Friday at Motorworld, which houses the Michael Schumacher private collection, in the German city of Cologne. The F1 commission could vote before then by email.

Scuderia Toro Rosso, the Italian translation of “Red Bull Team”, were the tail-enders known as Minardi before the change of ownership at the end of 2005.

They won the Italian Grand Prix from pole position at Monza with Sebastian Vettel in 2008, a rare occasion of a Ferrari-powered team beating the works outfit. Toro Rosso now use Honda engines.

Formula One is no stranger to teams changing names: Racing Point are the direct successors to Force India, who were previously Spyker, Midland and Jordan, while Alfa Romeo are the renamed Sauber. Champions Mercedes were previously Brawn, Honda, BAR and Tyrrell.

The main Red Bull team started out as Stewart and then became Jaguar before their most recent change in 2005.

It would not be the first time a team has raced under the name of a fashion brand. Benetton, previously Toleman, won world championships with Schumacher in 1994 and 1995 before the German moved to Ferrari.

The team is now competing as Renault, after also racing as Lotus.

(Source: Reuters)

Real Madrid advise players against use of social media to avoid robberies

Casemiro was the last victim of a series of robberies in the houses of La Liga Santander stars and Real Madrid have attempted to provide some advice to their players in order to avoid similar incidents.

Los Blancos encouraged the players against showing the interior and exterior of their homes, nor their personal belongings on social media.

They also urged the players to avoid showing off pictures of their private holidays, which could provide the perfect timing for thieves to break into their houses.

Real Madrid also asked them to tighten their security measures with surveillance cameras to avoid robberies in the future.

As many as 13 La Liga Santander players, including Karim Benzema, Lucas Vazquez, Marco Asensio, Isco, Alvaro Morata, Gerard Pique, Jordi Alba, Kevin-Prince Boateng, Joaquin, William Carvalho, Ezequiel Garay and Gabriel Paulista, have seen their houses being robbed in the past, while thieves also tried to break into Zinedine Zidane’s house last June.

(Source: Marca)

Alberto Salazar: Top athletics coach banned for four years for doping violations

High-profile athletics coach Alberto Salazar has been banned for four years for “multiple anti-doping rule violations.”

The American is head coach of the Nike Oregon Project (NOP), the prolific long-distance running group that has produced some of the world’s best athletes, including four-time Olympic gold medalist Mo Farah, who Salazar coached between 2011 and 2017.

Salazar, 61, and Jeffrey Brown, a consultant doctor for the NOP, were ruled to have trafficked testosterone, tampered with the doping control process, and administered a banned intravenous infusion.

He was suspended by the US Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) after a four-year investigation.

“The athletes in these cases found the courage to speak out and ultimately exposed the truth,” said USADA boss Travis Tygart.

“While acting in connection with the Nike Oregon Project, Mr. Salazar and Dr. Brown demonstrated that winning was more important than the health and well being of the athletes they were sworn to protect.”

Two independent panels said that the pair had also repeatedly exchanged information about athletes’ performance and medical conditions “without any apparent formal authorization by the athletes.”

Cuban-born Salazar enjoyed a distin-



guished athletics career, winning the New York marathon for three consecutive years between 1980-82. He also held American track records over 5,000 and 10,000 meters.

The news comes during a grim week for the sport of athletics with poor attendance levels at the World Championships in Doha, Qatar.

“I am shocked by the outcome today,” said Salazar in a statement released by the NOP.

“Throughout this six-year investigation my athletes and I have endured unjust, unethical

and highly damaging treatment from USADA. This is demonstrated by the misleading statement released by Travis Tygart stating that we put winning ahead of athlete safety.

“This is completely false and contrary to the findings of the arbitrators, who even wrote about the care I took in complying with the World Anti-Doping code.”

Salazar said he would appeal against the decision to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Switzerland.

FIFA orders Cardiff to pay £5.3m for Sala transfer



FIFA has ordered Cardiff City to pay a transfer fee of £5.3 million (€6m) to Nantes for Emiliano Sala.

Sala died in a plane crash in January while travelling from Nantes to Cardiff after the two clubs agreed upon a transfer for the Argentine striker. After his death, the clubs failed to reach an agreement over the striker’s outstanding £15m transfer fee so Nantes referred the case to FIFA in April.

In a statement on Monday, FIFA said: “The FIFA Players’ Status Committee established that Cardiff City FC must pay FC Nantes the sum of 6,000,000 euros, corresponding to the first instalment due in accordance with the transfer agreement.”

A Cardiff City spokesperson said: “Cardiff City FC acknowledges the decision announced today by FIFA’s Players Status Committee regarding the transfer of Emiliano Sala.

“We will be seeking further clarification from FIFA on the exact meaning of their statement in order to make an informed decision on our next steps.”

Sources tell ESPN that Cardiff City will be seeking clarification over whether FIFA’s ruling is one of multiple instalments or the final fee.

Nantes have yet to issue a response to

FIFA’s statement.

Back in April, Nantes called on FIFA to intervene after Cardiff City failed to make the first payment of the full transfer fee. FIFA originally gave both clubs until April 3 to submit their evidence but the deadline was extended after Cardiff wrote to Nantes in March in hopes of sorting the matter out internally. The clubs failed to reach an agreement so FIFA stepped in.

Nantes wanted the full transfer fee for Sala and sources said in April the French club were “extremely confident” of FIFA ruling in their favour.

The first instalment of Sala’s transfer fee was initially due on Feb. 20, but the deadline passed without Cardiff making the payment.

Sources say Cardiff see the transfer as null and void as they believe certain criteria in the original contract were unfulfilled. Nantes, in turn, are adamant the transfer was completed and Sala was a Cardiff player when he died.

Both clubs have 10 days to request a copy of the grounds of the decision and decide whether they wish to appeal it to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland.

(Source: CNN)

Murray going ‘in right direction’ after biggest win since return



Andy Murray said his return to tennis is going “in the right direction” after the former number one claimed his biggest scalp Tuesday since career-saving hip surgery.

The Briton defeated US Open semi-finalist Matteo Berrettini 7-6 (7/2), 7-6 (9/7) in just over two hours at the China Open in smoggy Beijing.

Murray meets compatriot Cameron Norrie in the last 16 after a gutsy victory over the 13th-ranked Italian.

Murray, 32, a three-time Grand Slam winner, said he had made big strides since the first singles match of his return, a defeat at the Cincinnati Masters in mid-August.

Last week in Zhuhai he won his first ATP singles match since January’s major operation.

“I didn’t really feel like I was playing at a great level,” he said of his match against Richard Gasquet in Cincinnati

“Whereas even last week (in Zhuhai), although I lost in the second round, I felt like I was playing tour-level tennis.”

“I think things are going in the right direction,” added Murray.

Now ranked 503 in the world, he fought back from a break down to force a tiebreak in the first set against the Italian Berrettini.

British distance runner Farah split from Salazar in 2017 when he moved away from track running to focus on the marathon.

“I’m relieved USADA has completed their investigation into Alberto Salazar,” said Farah, a gold medalist over 5,000 and 10,000 meters at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics.

“I left the Nike Oregon Project in 2017 but I have no tolerance for anyone who breaks the rules or crosses a line. A ruling has been made and I’m glad there has finally been a conclusion.”

Salazar’s accreditation for the World Championships has been deactivated, according to the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), meaning he cannot enter Doha’s Khalifa International Stadium, nor have access to any of his athletes.

In a statement, Nike, which provides financial backing for the NOP, said the decision has “nothing to do with administering banned substances to any Oregon Project athlete.”

It added: “As the panel noted, they were struck by the amount of care Alberto took to ensure he was complying with the world anti-doping code.

“We support Alberto in his decision to appeal and wish him the full measure of due process that the rules require. Nike does not condone the use of banned substances in any manner.”

(Source: CNN)

Warholm seals hurdles double as Lasitskene clinches hat-trick



“I’m used to talking to myself so it wasn’t a problem,” Warholm joked.

“It was something else in London (in 2017) when there was 60,000 people there. I’ve got to be honest about that. But at the same time, with the gold medal, I couldn’t care less.”

Warholm’s win came just moments after high jump Lasitskene won a third consecutive world championship title to set alongside her wins in 2015 and 2017.

The 26-year-old, who is one of only 30 Russian athletes allowed to compete in

Doha under the authorised neutral athlete banner, took gold ahead of Ukraine’s Yaroslava Mahuchikh.

■ Career milestone

Lasitskene claimed the gold after clearing a height of 2.04m to win on countback ahead of Mahuchikh.

Vashti Cunningham of the United States took bronze.

The win marked another career milestone for Lasitskene, who has dominated international high-jumping in recent years.

“It was like in a fairy tale to get a third world title,” Lasitskene said. “My whole country expected me to be on the podium. I had to cope with this pressure.”

Lasitskene was barred from the 2016 Olympics after Russia was banned from the games over the country’s doping scandal.

But she has since been allowed to compete as a neutral athlete, a status handed to athletes who are deemed to be above suspicion by the International Association of Athletics Federations.

There was also success for another defending champion in the 5,000m, where Ethiopia’s Muktar Edris retained his 2017 crown in a time of 12 minutes 58.85 seconds.

His compatriot Selemon Barega, 19, took silver in 12:59.70 and Canada’s Mohammed Ahmed the bronze in a time of 13:01.11.

Also on the track Monday saw African runners claim victories in the women’s 800m and women’s 3,000m steeplechase.

Uganda’s Halimah Nakaayi took advantage of the absence of defending champion Caster Semenya to win the 800m, conjuring a sprint finish to take gold in 1min 58.04sec, with the fast-finishing Raevyn Rogers of the United States taking silver in 1:58.18.

(Source: AFP)

Iran fall to Russia at FIVB World Cup

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran national volleyball team lost to Russia 3-1 (25-21, 25-18, 24-26, 25-22) at the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) Men's World Cup at the White Ring Hall in Nagano on Tuesday.

Yaroslav Podlesnykh led the Russia team with 18 points and Milad Ebadipour scored 18 points for Iran.

"In the first two sets, we were sleepy, we didn't play well, without focus on our game. Russia were better than us in all elements, especially in service, and we didn't find a way to solve the problems in the first two sets. In the middle of the third set we changed the situation and started to play as we know, but in the last set also, in the last period after 20-20, again Russia were really good in the service. One service was on the line, it's not possible to cover all of the court in that moment, and that was a really important point for Russia," Igor Kolakovic told FIVB.com.

"If you compare the number of blocks between us and Russia, it's a big difference. This means we are not a blocker team and we can play block defense tactically, but without kill blocks because our players are not able to make a lot of kill blocks like the Russian team. Not just because the Russian team are so much taller than us, just because our game is completely different. We play with really good energy and big fight, but in the match against Russia we didn't have it, especially in the first two sets. I hope we can continue our game with high fight and big motivation. I know this game needed a lot of energy, but we can't play volleyball without this," he added.

Team Melli will meet Egypt on Wednesday.

The 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup is the 14th staging of the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup, contested by the senior men's national teams of the members of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), the sport's global governing body. The tournament is being held in Japan from Oct. 1 to 15.

Japan played hosts for this event for the twelfth consecutive time since 1977.

This is the first time since 1989 that FIVB decided not to allocate any spots in the Olympics, due to Japan hosting the 2020 Summer Olympics.



Doha 2019: Iran's Hadadi finishes seventh



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian discus thrower Ehsan Hadadi finished in seventh place at the IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019 on Monday.

He came seventh in the men's discus with a throw of 65.16m.

Sweden celebrated its first world gold medal in six years as Daniel Stahl won the gold medal with 67.59m.

Jamaican Fedrick Dacres earned a silver,

throwing 66.94m.

The bronze medal went to Austrian Lukas Weißhaidinger who threw 66.82m.

The prestigious event is being held in Doha, Qatar from Sept. 27 to Oct. 6 at the renovated multi-purpose Khalifa International Stadium.

A total of 1972 participants comprise 1054 men and 918 women from 210 teams are in action at the IAAF World Athletics Championships Doha 2019 in the Qatari capital.

Iran down Oman at IBSA Blind Football Asian Championships



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran football 5-a-side humiliated Oman 10-0 at the IBSA Blind Football Asian Championships Group B on Tuesday.

Iran, who started the competition with a 4-0 win over Malaysia on Monday, will meet Japan on Thursday.

Reigning Asian champions and world number three China are in Group A along with hosts Thailand, South Korea and new-

comers India.

The 2019 IBSA Blind Football Asian Championships in being held in Pattaya, Thailand, from Sept. 30th to Oct. 7th.

The top two teams at the competition will qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

The 2019 Asian Championships are the 8th edition of the event, which took place for the first time in 2005 in Vietnam.

Tokyo 2020: World record Powerlifter Rahman adds weight to campaign

The Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (Tokyo 2020) launched the final visual of a new campaign highlighting outstanding Paralympic athletes and iconic Tokyo landmarks and symbols.

The final campaign visual features Powerlifting superstar Siamand Rahman, a two-time gold medalist in London 2012 and Rio 2016 targeting a new world record at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, in front of Kabukiza Theatre in Ginza.

Kabukiza Theatre is home to kabuki, a traditional Japanese theatre form with over 400 years of history. Rahman also holds the world record in his category (men's over 107 kg), lifting 310 kilograms – roughly two sumo wrestlers in weight.

"It's great to be part of this awesome campaign. We are only one year out from Paralympic Games and I am so excited to see we are getting closer to the Games," said



Rahman. "I can't wait to compete in Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games. In Tokyo, everything is going to be between the bar

and me. I will redraw the boundaries."

In 2020, Tokyo will become the first-ever city to host the Paralympic Games twice and the city is readying for a never-before-seen festival of sports, as the people of Japan are joined by visitors worldwide to witness first-hand the dynamic and breath-taking performances of Paralympic athletes.

The Ticket Lottery for residents of Japan ran from 22 August to 9 September with tickets for the biggest and most exciting Paralympic Games yet available at affordable prices. Seats at competitive events will be priced from just JPY 900 and will cost no more than JPY 7,000. Powerlifting events will take place at Tokyo International Forum from 27 August to 31 August, and cost no more than JPY 2,000.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Paulinho: I returned from Barca a better player

Paulinho has claimed that his year-long spell with FC Barcelona helped turn him into a better player, as the Brazilian midfielder prepares to spearhead Guangzhou Evergrande's quest for an unprecedented third AFC Champions League title.

Following a disappointing period at Tottenham Hotspur, the 31-year-old resurrected his career during his first stint with Guangzhou, when he won the 2015 AFC Champions League, two Chinese Super League titles and earned a recall to the Brazilian national team.

Barcelona came calling and, during a year in Spain, Paulinho won the La Liga–Copa del Rey double before returning to Guangzhou after reaching the quarter-finals of the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018 with La Selección.

And, ahead of the 2019 AFC Champions League semi-final first leg against Urawa Red Diamonds at Saitama Stadium on Wednesday, Paulinho admits he is under no illusion regarding the benefit of his season in Spain.

"When I was at Barcelona I played in so many important competitions like La Liga

and the UEFA Champions League so since returning I am a much more experienced player," Paulinho told the AFC.com.

"I have a better understanding of how to play with my teammates in important competitions such as the AFC Champions League, and that experience is a big help."

Just over four years ago, Paulinho announced his AFC Champions League arrival in emphatic fashion when his stunning 40-yard free-kick put Guangzhou 2-1 up against Kashiwa Reysol in the first leg of the 2015 quarter-finals.

Luiz Felipe Scolari's side eventually progressed 4-2 on aggregate before defeating another Japanese side, Gamba Osaka, in the semi-finals and edging past the United Arab Emirates' Al Ahli 1-0 over two legs in the final to add to the title they won in 2013.

Fast forward four years and a number of key players remain the same, but fresh talent such as defenders Park Ji-soo and Gao Zhunyi, along with forward Wei Shihao, have all been added to head coach Fabio Cannavaro's starting line-up.

"In 2015, we had very experienced players and at that time many of them had a lot of Continental experience, having played many games in the AFC Champions League," said the Brazilian.

"Now our team is much younger but with a lot of potential. So it's really a totally different side, but we believe that if we work hard and compete well we have a good chance to win the title this year too."

Wednesday's opponents Urawa, meanwhile, are one of four sides to have lifted the AFC Champions League trophy on two occasions, having been crowned champions in 2007 and 2017.

The pair last met in the 2016 group stage, playing out a 2-2 draw in Guangzhou before Urawa won the return meeting 1-0 at Saitama Stadium as the holders eventually exited and the J.League team progressed to the last 16.

"We know Urawa Reds very well; they are a team with a lot of quality and a very strong opponent," noted Paulinho, who has three goals to his name in the 2019 competition.

"But we also have to be aware that at this stage of the AFC Champions League there are two games and this first leg will not decide the result of the semi-final, so we have to play a very intelligent game."

"If we can play a tactically good game in Japan, I believe we have a chance to qualify when we return to Guangzhou."

While Guangzhou have not won in seven attempts in Japan (drawn four, lost three) since Paulinho's Continental debut, they have also never been eliminated by Japanese opposition and indeed ousted defending champions Kashima Antlers in the previous round.

Their home form in the 2019 competition, though, has been in stark contrast to that of their form on the road, with Cannavaro's team unbeaten at Tianhe Stadium, but having yet to win away.

"I think the difference is because in away games, we have often suffered much more pressure from the opponent in the second half," added Paulinho.

(Source: the-afc)

Iran beach soccer fifth in world ranking

The Iranian national beach soccer team sit fifth in the world ranking.

Team Melli still are the best Asian team in the ranking with 2019 points.

Iran failed to book a place at the 2019 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup after losing to Japan 3-2 at the 2019 AFC Beach Soccer Championship quarters in Thailand in March.

Brazil, who won the 2017 FIFA Beach Soccer World Cup, stayed atop of the ranking with 3750 points.

Portugal are second in the rankings with 2650 points.

Russia and Italy sit third and fourth with 2527 and 2260 points, respectively.

(Source: beachsoccer)

Will Branko Ivankovic return to Iran?

TASNIM — Former Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic is reportedly a candidate to replace Farhad Majidi in Iran's U23 football team.

The Croat was sacked as Al Ahli coach in mid-September and Saudi Arabian media reports suggest that he has been linked with a move to the Chinese Super League.

Ivankovic has also been linked with Iran U23 football team.

Iran have a difficult task at the 2020 AFC U23 Championship in Thailand, since the team has been drawn in Group C along with Uzbekistan, Korea Republic and China.

Ivankovic won title with Iran U23 football team at the 2002 Asian Games.

Iranian woman sprinter Fasihi linked with Partizan

TASNIM —Iranian woman sprinter has been linked with Atletski Klub Partizan from Serbia.

She could be the first Iranian woman runner to join a European club.

Farzaneh Fasihi represented Iran at more than 10 competitions both outdoor and indoor Asian Athletics Championships.

She is the Iranian record holder of the 60 meters indoor with 7.35 seconds.

Her first international experience was at the 2016 Asian Indoor Athletics Championships in Doha, where she finished 5th in 60m. Fasihi claimed a silver medal in 4 x 400m relay.

In 2017, she participated in the Islamic Solidarity Games in Baku and advanced to semifinals in 100 m.

In 2018, she participated in Asian Indoor Athletics Championships in Tehran, where she won the bronze medal in the 60m with a 7.44 seconds record.



Al Rayyan in talks to sign Atletico Madrid's Diego Costa

Qatari club Al Rayyan have held negotiations with Atletico Madrid striker Diego Costa with a view to a summer move, say Diario AS.

It is claimed that the Middle East club see Costa as an alternative to signing Mario Mandžukić, with whom negotiations have broken down.

Costa netted just five goals in 21 matches for Los Rojiblancos last season and it has been reported the club were open to a sale this summer, with English clubs Everton and Wolves both linked. The 30-year-old has scored once in six appearances so far this campaign but doubts remain over his goal return rate, with just six goals in La Liga since his return from Chelsea in January 2018.

Previous reports claimed the striker has the backing of boss Diego Simeone but Atleti's leading figures could overrule the Argentine and would be open to a transfer out depending on the circumstances.

Costa was said to have damaged his relationship with the club after a sending-off at Barcelona last year, which got him an eight-match suspension.

Former Sevilla defender and Argentina international Gabriel Mercado alongside former Porto star Yacine Brahimi are currently on the books of Al Rayyan.

(Source: Football Espana)

Abramov names training squad ahead of Uzbekistan return

Returning Uzbekistan head coach Vadim Abramov has named an extended 28-man squad ahead of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Asian Qualifiers against Yemen and Singapore.

Returning to the job he previously held from 2010 from 2012 following the dismissal of Argentina Hector Cuper earlier this month, Abramov will get to know his new charges in a training camp starting on Wednesday, with the group to be cut to 23 before the White Wolves face Yemen eight days later.

Overseas-based stars like Shanghai SIPG's Odil Ahmedov and FC Rostov forward Eldor Shomurodov, with Korean-based pair Rustamjon Ashurmatov and Ikrom Alibaev and Sharjah midfielder Otabek Shukurov are the remaining legionnaires on Abramov's list.

Newly-crowned domestic champions FC Pakhtakor are represented by nine players, while FC Bunyodkor – also coached by Abramov – have four new or returning faces in the national squad with Abdumavlon Abdujalilov, Dilshodbek Akhmadaliev, Khursid Giyosov and Lutfulla Turaev all selected.

Eager to qualify for a first ever FIFA World Cup, Uzbekistan are under pressure to bounce back from a poor start to their Asian Qualifiers, with a 2-0 defeat to Palestine on September 5 bringing the Cuper era to an end.

The Central Asians will face Yemen in Tashkent on October 10, before travelling for an away fixture against Singapore five days later.

(Source: the-afc)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING



Tolerate pain in order to be always contented.
Imam Ali (AS)

“Asak” named best film at Turkey Golden Saffron festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Mehdi Zamanpur’s movie “Asak” was crowned best at the 20th International Golden Saffron Documentary Film Festival in the northern Turkish town of Safranbolu.



A scene from Iranian director Mehdi Zamanpur’s documentary “Asak”.

“Asak”, which means a small hand-mill in the local language of southern Iran, is about the life of a blind 80-year-old man who lives in that area. He earns money by making handicrafts and utensils from stone. He chooses his required stones from the mountains by touching and tasting them. The Golden Saffron Documentary Film Festival was held on the theme of cultural heritage and conservation from September 25 to 28.

Winners honored at Arbaeen Intl. Awards

1 → Over 4000 works from 19 countries competed in the film, photo and travelogue categories. The organizers have established the awards to promote the Arbaeen gathering, which is held by Shia Muslims in Iraq every year. Hundreds of thousands of Iranians and Shia Muslims from other countries embark on a journey to the Iraqi city of Karbala to observe the day of Arbaeen at the holy shrines of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of the Shia, and his brother, Hazrat Abbas (AS). Arbaeen, which will be observed on October 19 this year, marks the end of the 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of the Imam and his loyal companions on Ashura.

“The Woman in the Mirror” comes to bookstores

CULTURE **d e s k** TEHRAN — A Persian translation of Australian writer Rebecca James’ novel “The Woman in the Mirror” has recently been published by Qoqnus Publications in Tehran. The book has been translated by Nastaran Zahiri. “Haunting and moving, ‘The Woman in the Mirror’ is a tale of obsession tinged with suspense, perfect for fans,” Amazon writes about the book. “You’ll be the woman of this house, next, miss. And you’ll like it,” it adds.

U.S. opera singer Jessye Norman dies at 74

NEW YORK (Reuters) — American opera singer Jessye Norman died on Tuesday at the age of 74, her family said, after suffering complications from a 2015 injury. Norman died in a New York hospital of septic shock and multiple organ failure related to complications from a spinal cord injury four years ago, the family said in a statement. Norman, a soprano, was born in the U.S. state of Georgia and spent much of her early career in Europe before making her debut at the Metropolitan Opera in New York in 1983. As one of the most popular opera singers of the 1980s and 1990s, she sang at the presidential inaugurations of Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, as well as the 60th birthday celebrations of Britain’s Queen Elizabeth. “We are so proud of Jessye’s musical achievements and the inspiration that she provided to audiences around the world that will continue to be a source of joy,” the family statement said. “We are equally proud of her humanitarian endeavors addressing matters such as hunger, homelessness, youth development, and arts and culture education.”

Mehrdad Oskui on Slemani documentary competition jury

A R T **d e s k** TEHRAN — Mehrdad Oskui, the Iranian director of acclaimed documentary films such as “Starless Dreams” and “Nose, Iranian Style”, has been selected as a member of the documentary competition jury at the 4th Slemani International Film Festival in Iraq. Anomaa Rajakaruna, an assistant professor of film studies at the University of Zagreb in Croatia, will preside over the jury, which is also composed of Etami Borjan, an assistant professor of film studies at the University of Zagreb, the organizers have announced. In addition, Puran Derakhshandeh, also from Iran, is on the jury of the festival judging the films competing in the international and national competitions. Heinz Hermanns, the director of the Berlin International Short Film Festival, will preside over the jury in the official competition. 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 Zulfiye Akkulak from Germany. Moreover, 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. Yasser Talebi’s acclaimed documentary “Beloved” will be competing in the international documentary section. “Umbra”, a narrative short by Saïed 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,



Director Mehrdad Oskoui attends the awards of the Independent Juries press conference as part of the 66th Berlinale International Film Festival on February 20, 2016 in Berlin, Germany. (Anadolu Agency/Mehmet Kaman).

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.

“Tattoo” named best short at Tirana festival, qualifies for Oscars



Behdokht Valian acts in a scene from “Tattoo” by Farhad Delaram. (Mohammad Masumi)

A R T **d e s k** TEHRAN — “Tattoo” by Iranian director Farhad Delaram won the Golden Owl for best short on Sunday at the 19th Tirana International Film Festival, Albania’s Academy Awards short films qualifying event. The film is about a young girl who wants to renew her driver’s license but she is sent to the traffic police center for her tattoos. Iranian producer and director Farnuh Samadi, Greek filmmaker Konstantina Kotzamani and Serbian critic Vladan Petkovic were the members of the jury for the short competition, which also featured “Staircase” by Mohsen Banihashemi and “Dissect” by Siavash Shahabi, all from Iran. In addition, “A+”, a short film by Iranian director Behrang Mirzai, won the Ron Holloway award, which is presented to the best debut film.

“The Father”, a co-production between Bulgaria and Greece co-directed by Petar Valchanov and Kristina Grozeva, won the Golden Owl for best feature film, and the award for best director went to Bosnian filmmaker Ena Sendjarevic for her “Take Me Somewhere Nice” co-produced by the Netherlands and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The festival also organized a retrospective of Iranian filmmakers Ali Asgari and Samadi. Asgari’s “Tonight Is Not a Good Night for Dying”, “Barbie”, “More Than Two Hours”, “The Baby”, “The Pain” and “Delay” were reviewed during the festival. The retrospective also screened “The Silence” co-directed by Asgari and Samadi. “Gaze” and “The Role” by Samadi were also screened in this section. Asgari and Samadi also held master classes during the event.

“Axing” scoops awards at San Francisco Iranian filmfest



A scene from “Axing” by Iranian director Behruz Shoeibi.

A R T **d e s k** TEHRAN — “Axing” was the big winner of the 12th Annual Iranian Film Festival in San Francisco as it collected awards in the main categories, including best film and best director, during the closing ceremony on Sunday. Directed by Behruz Shoeibi, the film also brought Amin Hayai and his co-star, Sara Bahrami, the awards for best actor and best actress, the organizers have announced. The film written by Hossein Torabnejad and Azita Irani won the award for best screenplay. “Axing” is about Mahsa, an addicted woman who thinks that her girl is dead but when she finds out that her daughter is alive and lives with her father (Mahsa’s ex-husband), she decides to take her back.

This forces her to face her ex-husband and his new wife. The award for best children’s film was given to “Absent” by Ali Khamenar, while the award for best animation went to “Once Upon a Time” by Mahin Javaherian. The Iranian Film Festival in San Francisco is the first independent Iranian film festival outside of Iran. Its 12th edition was held on September 28 and 29. “Axing” has won several international awards, including the AAFCCJ Award, which was presented by the Armenian Association of Film Critics and Cinema Journalists at the 16th Golden Apricot International Film Festival in Yerevan, Armenia in July. Bahrami also won the award for best actress for her role in the film at the 3rd Malaysia Golden Global Awards in July.

Happy now? Everyone is talking about “Joker”

LOS ANGELES (AP) — There may be no such thing as bad publicity, but the spotlight on “Joker” is testing the limits of that old cliché. The origin story about the classic Batman villain has inspired pieces both in defense of and against the movie. It’s been hailed as the thing that’s going to finally get Joaquin Phoenix an Oscar and also decried for being “dangerous,” “irresponsible” and even “incel-friendly.” Last week, some parents of victims of the 2012 Aurora movie theater shooting even wrote to the Warner Bros. CEO asking for support for anti-gun causes. The studio issued a statement in response saying that the film is not “an endorsement of real-world violence of any kind.” In his 80 years as part of the culture, the Joker has always had a way of getting under people’s skin, whether it’s because of who the character appeals to, what he represents or even the stories actors tell about how they got into character. But perhaps the biggest irony of all this time around is that for all the discourse and hand-wringing, the film has yet to even open in theaters. That doesn’t happen until Thursday night.



This Sept. 20, 2019 photo shows actor Joaquin Phoenix during a portrait session for the film “Joker” at the Four Seasons Hotel in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP Photo/Richard Hartog)

It’s made for a complicated release for the high-profile film, which got off to a triumphant start premiering at and then winning the top award from the Venice Film

Festival. And while reviews are mostly positive, it’s also been heavily scrutinized and put the filmmakers on the defensive. Director and co-writer Todd Phillips doesn’t mind the discussion. “I’ll talk about it all day,” he said. “I’m not shy about it.” He just wishes people would see the movie before drawing conclusions. “It’s a little troubling when people write think pieces without having seen it. And even in their think pieces write, ‘I don’t need to see it to know what it is.’ I find it astounding, to be quite frank, how easily the far left can sound like the far right when it suits their agenda,” Phillips said. “To that point, I’ve been disappointed.” The pre-emptive backlash is all the more baffling to Phillips because he hopes it inspires conversations: About guns, about violence and about the treatment of people with mental illness. “Part of the reason we made the movie is a response to the comic book world of movies,” Phillips said. “Like, ‘Why is this celebrated? Why is this funny? Why is this fun? What are the real world implications of violence?’”