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Iranian rial regains value by 40% in a year: CBI **4**



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Maximum pressure has failed

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EAEU gives Iran 3 years to become a permanent member

TEHRAN — The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), of which Iran became a temporary member in 2018, has given the Islamic Republic a three-year time to become a permanent member of the union, Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said.

Speaking to the press on the sidelines of a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, the official noted that Iran attended the recent EAEU summit in Armenia and the trade agreement between Iran and

the union will officially come into force on October 27.

The deal was finalized by Iran's Ambassador to Russia Mehdi Sanayee and chief of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) Tigran Sarkisyan in a meeting in Moscow in late August.

"Based on this agreement, about 840 commodity items will be subject to preferential tariffs, which means tariffs on some goods will be reduced and some will become zero tariffs," he said. **→4**

Iran 2nd among world's fastest growing tourist destinations

TEHRAN — Iran has been introduced by United Nations World Tourism Organization as the world's second fastest growing tourist destination in 2018, with 49.9 percent growth in arrivals year on year.

Surpassing rivals such as Egypt, Nepal, Georgia and South Korea, Iran was ranked the second after Ecuador, according to the UNWTO annual report which details the countries where tourism has grown the

most, and where it has fallen the furthest.

"Here's one that gladdens the heart. Iran's numbers might still be small – 7.3 million visitors in 2018, compared with, say, France's 89 million – but they're increasing sharply. More and more people are being drawn to one of the world's most misunderstood countries, which can only be a good thing. Get there now before everyone else does," the Traveller reported. **→10**

3 Saudi bases, over 150 square kilometers taken in 2nd phase of Najran offensive

TEHRAN — The spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces says three Saudi military bases and more than 150 square kilometers of land have been taken during the second phase of a recent large-scale military offensive carried out by Yemeni Army troops and allied fighters from Popular Committees in the kingdom's southern border region of Najran.

Speaking at a press conference in the capital Sana'a on Tuesday evening, Brigadier General Yahya Saree said video footage recorded by Yemeni forces on the second phase of Victory from God Almighty Operation attests to their full control over the Saudi military sites and seizure of considerable amounts of munitions. **→13**



PERSPECTIVE

M.A. Saki
Deputy editor-in-chief

MBS must swallow his pride

It is essential that Saudi Arabia put an immediate end to its futile and senseless war on the fellow Arab nation of Yemen. Saudi Arabia launched war on Yemen in March 2015 to immediately restore the toppled government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi.

However, since that date Saudi Arabia has become unbelievable vulnerable in the face of counterattacks by the Houthis and a segment of the Yemeni Army who are fiercely opposed to the military intervention of Saudis in their country.

Saudi Arabia has not been alone in its war against the Yemenis. The UAE army has also been directly involved in the war. The United States has also provided logistical support for the Saudi-led war coalition. Saudis have even recruited mercenaries from certain Arab countries to force the Yemenis into submission.

However, the war has proven disgraceful for the Saudi-led coalition both in terms of military failures and humanitarian disasters.

Despite using highly modern weapons and fighter jets – mostly bought from the U.S. – in the war, the Yemenis have grown more powerful and more threatening to the interests of the Saudi Kingdom.

Simply speaking, the new rulers in Riyadh have opened the doors of hell to their country. Now Saudi Arabia is caught in a quagmire that it cannot escape from.

The rulers in Riyadh were so stupid to understand that even much more powerful armies failed in the face of guerrilla wars in other parts of the world. The concrete examples are the failure of the Soviet Army in Afghanistan in the 1980s and the U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq in the 21st century, conflicts which Donald Trump has called "unending wars".

There is only one way that Saudi Arabia can get rid of this war and that is that Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS), the crown prince and de facto leader of the kingdom, swallow his pride and announce a ceasefire with Yemen.

In the four-and-half year war against Yemen, Saudi Arabia has committed indescribable crimes which some of them constitute examples of crime against humanity. It has targeted school buses as well as wedding and funeral ceremonies. **→3**

No need for translation when art speaks: Iranian artist Mehdi Qadyanlu

By Samaneh Aboutaleb

TEHRAN — Iranian artist Mehdi Qadyanlu, who has collaborated in several major international art projects, has said that the language of art doesn't need translation and people across the world can apprehend it directly.

In a recent project, he went into partnership with Italian artist Paolo Bordino in "The Urban Art Unites", an art project that was carried out on the exterior wall of Italian ambassador's residence in Tehran last week.

Two paintings by the artists were affixed to the wall in the project that was implemented based on an initiative by Italian Ambassador Giuseppe Perrone to enhance cultural relations between Rome and Tehran.

Qadyanlu, who has held several exhibitions

around the world including the U.S., Russia, the UK, Austria and Norway, has painted over 100 murals across Tehran from 2004 to 2011.

"Although I was occupied with some exhibitions abroad, I thought the project could provide a good opportunity for me to work in Tehran after seven years of hiatus from working in my homeland, and I dedicated the artwork to my own people," he told the Tehran Times.

"It has been some years now since I have been presenting my art overseas because it appears that Tehran's municipal authorities don't want to work with me anymore," he lamented.

Known for his surrealist paintings, Qadyanlu tries to depict fears, hopes and losses through his art by using symbolic elements such as stairs, balloons and airplanes.

"The balloon is a symbolic icon for me. It is neither positive nor negative. I look for a sarcastic concept in it. It gives people joy and hope as it is always used as birthday party decorations but yet it is so evanescent and unstable, the calm before the storm," he said.

"However, balloons bring colors to the city and most people enjoy them. Also, they will never be boring and every time you look at them you can get a different impression," he added.

In 2016, Qadyanlu completed a massive mural for the Rose Kennedy Greenway project in Boston, while the U.S. and Iranian governments were seeking to normalize relations between the countries. He found it an opportunity to play a role in building a bridge between the countries by his painting entitled "Spaces of Hope". **→16**

Cuban foreign minister: Optimistic on future of U.S. - Cuba relations despite the Blockade

By Ian Phillips & Michael Weissenstein

Cuba's foreign minister said Tuesday that he believes improvements in relations with the United States are irreversible despite the Trump administration's hardening of the embargo on the island.

Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla told The Associated Press that while the U.S. administration has cut off most communication with Cuba and is trying to pressure the communist government by restricting the flow of oil, progress made under former U.S. President Barack Obama has not been undone.

"I would describe myself as very optimistic," Rodríguez said. "There's a historical trend that's irreversible."

He said relations between the two countries

would never return to the way they were before December 2014, when Obama and then-Cuban President Raul Castro declared that they would reestablish diplomatic relations.

"There have been levels of communication and mutual familiarity between the peoples of both countries that are irreversible," Rodríguez said.

He said Cuba was prepared for a worsening of tensions during the presidential campaign season because the Trump administration believes that Cuban Americans in South Florida support a hard line on the island.

He called that an "erroneous political calculation."

"I believe it has been proven that the majority of Cubans in Florida support the progress achieved in the normalization of relations and the lifting of

the blockade, and the younger they are, the more they support it," Rodríguez said. "In any event, political moments are ephemeral. We have the political will to advance without delay."

He also says Cuba is finding ways to buy oil despite U.S. attempts to stop it by imposing sanctions on shipping firms and threatening third countries, insurance firms and others as a way of retaliation for helping Cuba obtain petroleum. The Trump administration says it is trying to force Cuba to stop supporting President Nicolas Maduro, whom the U.S. says receives military and intelligence help from Cuba.

Oil shortages led to cutbacks in government fuel consumption and distribution last month, resulting in long lines at gas stations and reductions in public transport. **→13**



REPORT

Ramin Hossein Abadian
Mehr News Agency
journalist

Baghdad's official reaction to Israeli attacks on Popular Mobilization Forces

The Iraqi Prime Minister's official reaction to the Zionist regime's attacks on Popular Mobilization Forces indicates that Baghdad has entered a new phase to respond to the attacks.

Air strikes against PMF, which has intensified recently, aroused dissatisfaction and disagreement among Iraqi officials. Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi explicitly mentioned the role of the Zionist regime in the attacks for the first time.

"Investigations on the recent attacks on the bases of PMF revealed that they were carried out by Israel. The shadow of the war should be removed from the region, everyone is talking about accepting negotiation to solve the region's crisis. There are many signs that no one agree with the war in the region except Israel," said Iraqi Prime Minister in an interview with Al Jazeera.

According to some Iraqi politicians, the attacks are a declaration of war against the country. The recent position of Iraqi Prime Minister prompted Qais Khazali, Secretary General of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq to react positively to the issue. He claimed, "All Iraqis must unite to confront the eternal enemy of Iraq. Iraq should take necessary steps against Israel in international communities, and we must have the right to respond fully to the attacks."

Air strikes by Israeli fighter jets against PMF's positions, which carried out several times, could not be performed without the U.S. support and information. Iraqi officials have repeatedly stated that the attacks are U.S.-backed, and foreign forces should leave the country on a timely basis.

Over two last months, several Israeli drones bombed PMF positions in various areas of Iraq. The most important attacked position was Camp Al-Saqr in Baghdad. U.S. forces deactivated the Iraqi air force radars. In fact, U.S. forces were assisting them because most of the radars were U.S.-made and were working under its watch in Iraq. **→13**



© Tehran Times / Majid Asgarpour

Recently returned Achaemenid-era clay tablets on display

TEHRAN — Hundreds of Achaemenid-era (550-330 BC) clay tablets took pride of place in an exhibit which opened to the public at the National Museum of Iran on Wednesday.

On Monday, Iran took delivery of 1,783 clay tablets that were on loan to the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago since 1935.

The objects reveal economic, social and religious history of the Achaemenid Empire and the larger Near Eastern region in the fifth century BC.

Zarif: Ground paved for expansion of regional trade within Eurasian Union

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that important progress has been made at the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) summit and ground has been paved for expansion of regional trade. “Important progress in Yerevan as Iran joins #EEU Summit, and together with Member States, ratifies PTA.



With parallel work on North-South & South-West Transit Corridors, ground paved for expansion in regional trade & cementing of our role as vital transit hub,” Zarif tweeted on Tuesday. The EEU summit was held in Yerevan, Armenia, on Tuesday. Iran also attended the conference. EEU includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia. During a speech at the summit, President Hassan Rouhani 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. He also noted that Iran supports cooperation within the framework of economic and political blocs such as the EEU, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). Elsewhere, he 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. Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus signed the massive new trading bloc in May 2014. The deal will guarantee free transit of goods, services, capital and workers.

Qatar says ‘Coalition for Hope’ initiative shows Iran’s willingness to engage in meaningful dialogue for regional security

By staff and agency Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lolwah R.M. Al-Khater has said that President Hassan Rouhani’s “Coalition for Hope” shows Iran’s willingness to engage in a meaningful conversation. “In terms of the initiative itself, we read it, just as you read it. It’s still a very early stage to talk about a comprehensive initiative. However, what we take from this is the willingness, hopefully, from their side, to engage in a meaningful conversation,” she told Al-Monitor in an interview published on September 28. She noted, “And for us in the region, not only Qatar — but other countries in the region as well that don’t want to see a military confrontation — we remain ready to facilitate any process, should, of course, the parties want to engage in such a process, in order to de-escalate the situation.”

During a speech at the 74th UN General Assembly on Wednesday, President Rouhani said, “Based upon the historical responsibility of my country in maintaining security, peace, stability and progress in the Persian Gulf region and Strait of Hormuz, I would like to invite all the countries directly affected by the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz to the ‘Coalition for Hope’, meaning Hormuz Peace Endeavor.” In a tweet on Thursday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif invited all regional states to join Iran’s initiative for securing the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. Zarif said the initiative entails “dialogue, confidence-building, freedom of navigation, energy security, non-aggression, and non-intervention.” Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Monday that Iran will soon announce details of Rouhani’s “Hormuz Peace Endeavor.” “Details of the plan will be announced soon in written format especially to the eight countries that we invited to join in the coalition. This plan seeks to create peace and security in the region,” he said during a press conference.

Interference is reason behind regional insecurity, Iran tells NATO chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Wednesday that foreign interference is reason behind insecurity and tension in the region. His comments came in response to recent remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg who expressed concerns over Iran’s missile program and what he called destabilizing behavior. Mousavi said, “The Islamic Republic of Iran condemns interfering remarks by foreign security institutions.” “Instead of interfering in regional affairs, the NATO secretary general should be held accountable for destructive consequences of this military institution’s interferences in West Asia,” he said. He noted that security in the Middle East region should be maintained by the regional countries and without foreign forces’ presence. Elsewhere, he said, “Like any other independent country, the Islamic Republic of Iran upholds its right to enjoy conventional defense program and its missile program is deterrent and defensive in this line. Expression of concerns will not affect Iran’s policy to strengthen its missile program.”

Ayatollah Khamenei says U.S. policy of maximum pressure has failed

Iran will continue reducing nuclear commitments: Leader

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said on Wednesday that Iran will continue to scale back its commitments to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

“Reducing nuclear commitments, for which the Atomic Energy Organization is responsible, should continue seriously and precisely as it was announced by the government till it reaches favorable result and it will definitely reach the result,” Ayatollah Khamenei said during a meeting with the High Council of the Commanders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. The Leader also said the United States’ policy of “maximum pressure” against Iran has ended in failure. “They imagined Iran would be forced to show flexibility if they applied policy of maximum pressure. With the help of God, they understand that the maximum pressure has caused problems for themselves,” the Leader stated. Referring to President Hassan Rouhani’s visit to the annual UN summit in New York last week, the Leader said, “Recently, they (the U.S.) made unfruitful efforts with the help of their European friends to form a symbolic show of Iran’s surrender and to make the Iranian president to meet with them.



However, Iran will continue reducing nuclear commitments seriously and determinedly till reaching favorable result.” U.S. President Donald Trump, who quit the nuclear deal in May 2018 and imposed the harshest ever sanctions on Tehran, has

been repeatedly calling for dialogue with Iran. On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the deal, Tehran began to partially reduce its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals. In the first stage, Iran announced that it

The Leader describes sanctions on Iran’s oil sale as a “short term problem”.

Rouhani says Iran’s status has improved over the past year and a half

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that despite economic pressure Iran’s status has improved over the past year and a half. “The Iranian nation’s power and status have improved after one-and-a-half-year of constant economic pressure,” Rouhani told a cabinet meeting. Pointing to his speech at the 74th summit of the UN General Assembly in New York on September 25, Rouhani also he said that Iran “foiled the plot by the enemies” that Tehran was seeking tension in the Persian Gulf region. “The anti-Iran lobby had hatched a plot and tried to tell the world that Iran was seeking to start tension in the sensitive region of the Persian Gulf,” he said, adding, “It was essential to break this plot and to tell the world that no one can deny the fact that Iran has been supporting resistance (against invaders) and fight against terrorism.” At the same time, Rouhani said, Iran proved

that it does not shun negotiations. “Iran foiled the plot which had been hatched, and proved that it does not escape negotiations.” He also said despite efforts by Israel and certain regional countries which have been trying to convey this idea that the treaty keeping the nuclear deal (JCPOA) has broken apart, the remaining members made efforts to give new life to it. “The 5+1 group, which was dead in view of Israel, regional reactionary countries and the White House, gathered and sought to revive the 5+1 group,” he said. He continued, “All the contacts and insistence revolved around the issue of reviving the 5+1 group. We agreed on the condition that those who caused harm to the group return to it and respect its regulations.” Rouhani held one-to-one talks at the UN with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister British Prime Minister Boris Johnson whose countries are signatory to the JCPOA.

Emails suggest UAE and Saudi Arabia funded U.S.-based anti-Iran pressure group

For the second year in a row, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo chose an unusual venue in which to present new escalations in the Trump administration’s “maximum pressure” strategy against Iran during the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York. Speaking last week at United Against Nuclear Iran’s (UANI) annual conference, Pompeo announced the administration was expanding its pressure campaign, targeting Chinese entities believed to be transporting Iranian oil. “[W]e’re telling China and all nations, know that we will sanction every violation of sanctionable activity,” said Pompeo. Pompeo’s choice of venues was a curious one. What UANI is and who is behind it appears to be a closely held secret but documents reviewed by LobeLog show a funding apparatus funneling over \$35 million over two years into anti-Iran and anti-Qatar advocacy work. LobeLog was provided emails that appear to show UANI principals soliciting diplomats and government advisers from regional rivals of Iran for funding, raising questions about UANI’s funding sources and whether the group is acting as an undeclared foreign agent. The “non-governmental” anti-Iran pressure group’s summit included Bahraini Ambassador to the U.S. Sheikh Abdullah bin Rashed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa, Saudi Minister of State for Arabian Gulf Affairs Thamer al-Sahban, Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. Ron Dermer, U.S. Ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell, and U.S. Under Secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence Sigal Mandelker. UAE Ambassador to the U.S. Yousef Al Otaiba was also visible in the audience. Billionaire Thomas Kaplan, who was shown to be the majority funder of UANI in 2013, was also in attendance. Earlier in the week, UANI drew notice from both U.S. media outlets and Iran’s foreign ministry. Last Tuesday (Sept. 24), Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Seyyed Abbas Mousavi announced the addition of UANI to Iran’s list of terrorist groups due its “close ties and cooperation with terrorist groups,” according to the Islamic Republic News Agency. The reference to “cooperation with terrorist groups” is presumably regarding a conference of Iranian opposition groups held last week in New York. The event had murky ties to UANI and was primarily attended by

supporters of the Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK), an opposition group that the U.S. listed as a terrorist organization until 2012. Iran still considers the MEK a terrorist group. Al-Monitor reported: UANI denied any involvement with Tuesday’s event and said Wallace convened it in his “personal capacity.” The program for the event at the Roosevelt Hotel, however, listed UANI as the organizer. UANI said that was an error. UANI’s support for Iranian opposition groups, including those who have engaged in terrorism according to the State Department, makes a lot more sense when clues to the organization’s financial backers are examined. In 2017, UANI received \$5 million of its \$5,084,533 in contributions from is umbrella group, the Counter Extremism Project United Inc (CEPU), according to publicly available tax documents. UANI’s sister group, the Counter Extremism Project (CEP), which receives State Department funding and echoes Saudi and UAE accusations about Qatar’s ties to terrorism, received \$7 million of its \$7.8 million in contributions from CEPU. CEPU received over \$22 million in 2017 and nearly \$15 million in 2016. UANI and CEP are the primary recipients of CEPU’s largesse, but former National Security Adviser John Bolton received \$240,000 between 2016 and 2017 from CEPU, according to CEPU tax filings, before he entered the Trump White House, an amount that differs from the \$165,000 he declared in his financial disclosure. The source of those funds is unknown but a previously unreported email, allegedly originating from the email account of UAE Ambassador to the U.S. Yousef Al Otaiba, offers a clue.

In September 2014, CEP president and former U.S. Homeland Security Advisor Frances Townsend emailed Otaiba: By the way can we chat about UAE support for the Counter Extremism Project? I had this whole idea about an Abu Dhabi Sheik Zaid conference. I know you have spoken with Mark Wallace and the (sic) Richard Mintz was briefed. I don’t want to see this get caught in the The (sic) bureaucracy and I think it is exactly something both you and MBZ would support. Mark Wallace is the CEO of UANI and CEP, Richard Mintz is the managing director of the Harbour Group which advises the UAE government, and “MBZ” is the crown prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Townsend did not respond to a request for comment about the email. Other emails previously published by LobeLog add to the evidence of Emirati and/or Saudi funding behind CEP and UANI. Earlier that same September, Wallace appeared to email Otaiba regarding a “cost estimate” for an upcoming “forum.” Wallace wrote: Forum concept. Was asked for an [sic] included very aggressive meaning high cost estimates and we included that. Believe that this will be self-funding in short order with donors and attendees that we would attract.. Thanks and look forward to actually meeting. Mark An email allegedly sent in January, 2015, appears to show Townsend soliciting Otaiba’s assistance in arranging a meeting in Abu Dhabi with Mohammed bin Zayed. Townsend concluded her email writing: And many thanks for your and Richard Mintz’ ongoing support of the CEP effort! Given the tragedy in Paris this effort becomes more urgent everyday! Many thanks, Fran Republican Party mega-fundraiser and Saudi lobbyist Norm Coleman also appears in the tranche of Otaiba’s emails, specifying the tax status of CEP on behalf of then-Saudi Foreign Minister Adel bin Ahmed al-Jubeir. He wrote: Ambassador, Foreign Minister Al Jubeir recommended that I follow up with you on the attached matter. The Counter Extremism Project is a 501c4. Let me know if you have any questions. Regards, Norm Mark Wallace, France Townsend, and the embassies of the UAE and Saudi Arabia did not respond to requests for comment about the possible role of Emirati and Saudi funding in fueling UANI, CEP, and Bolton’s advocacy work. Other efforts to identify the funders behind UANI and CEP have met little success.

will not limit its stockpile of the nuclear fuel to 300 kilograms allowed under the deal. However, on that date (May 8) Iran’s Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said if the remaining parties to the JCPOA, especially Europeans, devise a mechanism to protect it from the sanctions effect in the two-month deadline it will reverse its decision. But since European parties missed the deadline, on July 7 Iran announced that it has started enriching uranium to a higher purity than the 3.67%, thereby starting the second step. As Europe missed the second 60-day deadline, Iran moved to take the third step, removing ban on nuclear research and development (R&D). In a letter on September 5, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif notified European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini about Iran’s third step. ■ **‘Relying on domestic capabilities is solution to problems’** Ayatollah Khamenei also said that relying on domestic capabilities is solution to economic problems. He described sanctions on Iran’s oil sale as a “short term problem”. If proper actions is taken, the country can reach a “long-term benefit” from this “short term problem” which is non-reliance on oil revenues, the Leader remarked.

Iran has been insisting that the only path to negotiations between Tehran and Washington is that the United States lift all the sanctions that it has illegally and unilaterally imposed on the country. In an interview with Fox News aired on September 24, Rouhani said if the U.S. administration is really seeking dialogue with Iran “it must create the needed conditions.” Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that any meeting between Iran and leaders of the 5+1 group depends on the removal of sanctions. “Our condition was that there would be no bilateral talks between Rouhani and Trump and the meeting should be within the framework of the 5+1 group on the condition of removal of sanctions. However, Trump did not even say that the sanctions will be removed after the meeting. He said first the meeting should be held and then there was the possibility of removing sanctions,” ISNA quoted Zarif as saying on Monday in an interview with Al Mayadeen.

In 2015, the plaintiff in a lawsuit against UANI sought to review the group’s donor rolls as part of the discovery process. The Justice Department quashed the suit with an invocation of state secrets, a surprising occurrence since the U.S. government wasn’t a defendant in the suit. Also in 2015, CEP faced scrutiny for its funding after Twitter refused to participate in one of the group’s conferences. BuzzFeed reported: A Twitter spokesman told BuzzFeed News that Twitter declined to work with the group when it reached out to the company last year because of concerns over its “undisclosed funding.” Twitter was invited by the State Department to the event on Monday and declined to participate, again due to questions about the CEP’s funding, the spokesman said.

[...]

Asked about Twitter’s reasoning in an interview with BuzzFeed News, Wallace said it was “irresponsible” for Twitter to suggest that CEP should disclose its donors. Their being public, he argued, could put them at risk of being threatened. Fran Townsend, for example, has received death threats from ISIS-boosting Twitter accounts, he said. “We keep our donors confidential for security reasons.” If UAE and Saudi funding are underwriting CEP and UANI’s advocacy work, it raises serious questions about whose interests the groups are representing and whether they are acting as agents of foreign principals, a status requiring disclosure under the Foreign Agent Registration Act (FARA). The fact that the Secretary of State has twice chosen UANI as a venue for high profile speeches outlining new sanctions against Iran and its trading partners, and that the former National Security Advisor received \$240,000 in compensation from CEPU before entering the Trump administration—\$75,000 of which appears to have gone unreported—suggests that UANI is an influential force in shaping U.S. policy in the Persian Gulf and has access to the highest levels of the U.S. government. While UANI’s presence during the UN General Assembly last week was unmissable, whoever funneled \$35 million over two years into CEPU prefers to remain in the shadows. (Source: Lobe Log)

Putin defends Iran against Saudi oil attack accusations

Russian president describes U.S. sanctions on Iran as “detrimental” for global economy

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Russian President Vladimir Putin has condemned the September 14 attacks on Saudi Arabian oil infrastructure, saying there is no proof the Islamic Republic had a role in, or was responsible for, the strikes.

“We condemn such acts no matter who is behind (them). It is a destructive event that had a toll on the whole global energy market,” Putin told an audience at a NBC-moderated panel.

“But we’re against shirking the blame upon Iran, because there is no real proof behind that and yesterday we spoke about that with President (Hassan) Rouhani. His position is that Iran would not assume any responsibility and is in no way related to that act,” he added, NBC reported.

Yemen’s Houthi movement claimed responsibility for the attacks that initially halved the Saudi kingdom’s oil production. But Saudi Arabia and the U.S. claimed that Iran had a role in, or was responsible for, the attacks on Saudi Aramco’s Abqaiq and Khurais oil facilities. Iran has denied any involvement, calling the accusations “meaningless” and “pointless.”



Asked if he accepted Iran’s denial of involvement, even though U.S. intelligence services had pointed the finger of blame at the Islamic Republic, Putin said these

intelligence services “served the foreign policy of the U.S., but they have not come up with any evidence.”

“Let’s not be guided by emotions but

by facts,” he added.

Asked about a possible meeting between Presidents Donald Trump and Rouhani, Putin said Russia’s stance is that “dialog is always better than confrontation.”

“The Russian Federation has been supportive of Iran, wholeheartedly, trying to minimize the negative impacts and risks that are confronting the global energy market,” he added.

The Russian president also described U.S. sanctions on Iran as “detrimental” for the global economy.

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

Last month, the U.S. Department of the Treasury slapped sanctions on the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and the country’s sovereign wealth fund, a move Trump described as the “highest level of sanctions”.

Iran avoids any conflict with any country, says military chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Major General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, the Armed Forces Chief of Staff, has emphasized that the Islamic Republic seriously avoids any conflict with any country in any part of the region.

Talking to Phoenix Hong Kong Channel aired on Wednesday, Baqeri said Iran is very interested in maintaining the security of the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

He said, however, that Iran will strongly deal with any destabilizing efforts in the region, according to IRNA.

“Iran has always sought peace during the past three centuries without having any greed on other countries,” he stated.

The military chief pointed out that the armed forces have always defended the country in all wars that have been waged against the country.

“We are interested in the security of the Persian Gulf more than any other country because secured exploitation and export of oil resources and other commodities will be to our



interests and to the same reason the security of the Strait of Hormuz helps us materialize such goal,” said General Baqeri.

Tensions have spiked recently in the strategic Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly 30% of the global crude passes.

“Iran wants peace for the region and that’s why we are the most important country responsible for the security of the Strait of Hormuz,” he insisted.

Washington has in recent months called on other countries to join a coalition against Iran in the Persian Gulf.

In a countermove, Iran has invited all the countries directly affected by the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz to the “Coalition for Hope”, meaning Hormuz Peace Endeavor.

During his speech at the 74th UN General Assembly last month, President Hassan Rouhani said the “goal of the Coalition for Hope is to promote peace, stability, progress and welfare for all the residents of the Strait of Hormuz region, and to enhance mutual understanding and peaceful and friendly relations amongst them.”

U.S. unlawful sanctions block aid to Yemeni people: Iran



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Gholam-Hossein Dehghani has strongly criticized Washington’s illegal sanctions against Yemen, saying the sanctions block the delivery of humanitarian aid to the war-torn country.

“The U.S.’s illegal sanctions not only inflict great suffering on ordinary people, but they also block the delivery of humanitarian aid by other countries to the Yemeni people,” Dehghani said, according to Mehr.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Mark Lowcock, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.

He urged the United Nations to adopt a more decisive approach against the perpetrators of the Yemeni crisis,

and to make every effort to end the humanitarian crisis that has caused great suffering for the Yemenis.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the former Riyadh-friendly government back to power and crushing Ansarullah.

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

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

Araghchi urges protection of nuclear deal against unilateralism



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araghchi said on Tuesday that the 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, must be protected against the U.S. unilateralist approach.

During a ceremony held at the German embassy in Tehran to commemorate German Unity Day, he said that the JCPOA is not in a good situation and is now “in the ICU”.

He noted that cooperation among Iran and the remaining parties to the nuclear deal must result in “breaking the wall of sanctions and unilateralism”.

Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the UN-endorsed JCPOA in May 2018 and imposed the toughest ever sanctions against Iran in line with his administration’s “maximum pressure” policy against Tehran.

The remaining parties, particularly the European sides, have so far failed to honor their commitments since the U.S. returned sanctions and imposed new ones.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Monday that Europe has linked implementation of its commitments to the U.S. demands.

At the conclusion of his visit to the annual UN General Assembly in New York on September 26, Rouhani said the European countries have either been unable or shown no will to save the nuclear deal.

He said Iran cannot be the only party that pays the price for keeping the JCPOA alive.

In a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Yerevan on Tuesday, Rouhani said that Iran expects parties to the nuclear deal implement their commitments under the agreement.

Riyadh gives ‘green light’ for talks with Tehran: report

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — An Iraqi government official says Saudi Arabia has given a green light to Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi to arrange a meeting with Iran as a first step towards de-escalating tensions in the region, the Middle East Eye reported on Tuesday.

MEE quoted Abbas al-Hasnawi, an official in the prime minister’s office, as saying on Tuesday that Abdul Mahdi was mediating between the leaderships in Riyadh and Tehran and had communicated each side’s conditions for talks to the other.



The remarks came after Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiee said Saudi Arabia had sent messages to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani via the leaders of some countries.

Hasnawi confirmed that Abdul Mahdi was acting as an intermediary with the aim of easing tensions since the September 14 attacks on Saudi oil facilities blamed on Iran appeared to have tilted the Persian Gulf rivals closer to open conflict.

“The Iraqi leadership has channels with both sides. Our Sunni brothers [in the government] liaise with the Saudis and our Shia brothers with the Iranians,” he said.

“The Saudis have conditions before the negotiations process starts and the same with Iranians. We have liaised these conditions to each side. It is not an easy task to get together two opposite sides in terms of their ideology, sect and their alliances in the region.”

Earlier, the Iraqi prime minister had said he believed Saudi Arabia was looking to de-escalate tensions with Iran.

In an 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.”

In an interview with the CBS program “60 Minutes” broadcast on Sunday, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said he preferred a political resolution rather than a military one to the issues with Iran.

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.

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

Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani welcomed the Saudi crown prince’s willingness to resolve disputes with Tehran through talks, saying Iran’s doors are open to the Saudis.

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 the attack on Saudi oil fields, which Riyadh and their Western allies, especially the U.S., blamed on Iran.

Iran has rejected the claim that it is behind the attack on the Saudi oil sites, calling it a “great deceit” in line with “great pressure” campaign on the Islamic Republic.

Yemen’s Houthi movement has claimed responsibility for the attacks. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said last month that “even the Saudis themselves don’t believe the fiction of Iranian involvement” in the attacks on the Aramco oil facilities.

Israel has always been seeking to destroy Hezbollah: General Soleimani

TEHRAN (IRNA) — Major General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Quds Force, said on Tuesday night that the Zionist regime has always been seeking to launch war against Hezbollah with a reliance on the U.S. and a promise by certain Arab countries.

“The Zionist regime has always been after destroying Hezbollah. It was planning to destroy 30% of Hezbollah in a surprise attack,” said General Soleimani in an interview broadcast on IRIB TV on Tuesday night.

They were then planning to use the powerful presence of the U.S. on Iran and Afghanistan and the support from some Arab states of the region to launch a war against Hezbollah to wipe it out, General Soleimani said.

He added that in the 2006 Lebanon War, there was information that showed the Zionist regime was planning to destroy Hezbollah, but the war took place in a condition that 40% of U.S. forces were in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The commander of Qods Force said that after Iraq invaded Kuwait and was later defeated in 1991, 60% of the U.S. military was in the region – taking other reserves into draft.

He went on to say that the Zionist regime made use of the chance and started the war against Hezbollah and the people of Lebanon.

MBS must swallow his pride

1 → The United Nations has officially announced that the war in Yemen has resulted in one of the worst humanitarian disasters in living memory.

It has also announced that more than 3 million people have been displaced and some 14 million more are at risk of starvation.

The U.S.-based Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a nonprofit conflict-research organization, has also estimated that the war has claimed the lives of over 60,000 Yemenis since January 2016.

Nothing justified the war on Yemen and insisting to continue it will make Saudi Arabia to look more humiliated in terms of military power and more shameful in terms of human values.

Zanganeh: Energy market must be ‘non-political’

Iranian oil minister says Saudis exaggerating damage from Aramco attack

(Press TV) — Iran’s Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh says the impact on Saudi Arabia’s oil facilities from Yemeni attacks on Sept. 14 has been blown out of proportion.

According to Saudi officials, the brazen attack by Yemeni forces shut down 5.7 million barrels per day (bpd) of Saudi Arabia’s oil production, which represents more than half of the kingdom’s or five percent of global output.

“I never believed that with this attack half of the oil production of Saudi Arabia was made unavailable,” Zanganeh said Wednesday upon arrival in Moscow for a meeting of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF).

“I think Saudi Arabia has resorted to political exaggeration about this in order to say that the energy security of the world has been put in danger,” he added.

Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman sought to whip up a sense of global emergency on Sunday when he tied up the attack to Iran and the alleged need to confront the country.

“If the world does not take a strong and firm action to deter Iran, we will see further escalations that will threaten world interests,” he said in an interview with the CBS program “60 Minutes”.

“Oil supplies will be disrupted and oil prices will jump to unimaginably high numbers that we haven’t seen in our lifetimes,” he added.

The predawn attack which hit two of state oil giant Saudi Aramco’s largest facilities was claimed by Yemen’s Houthis, but the kingdom and the U.S. were adamant to blame it on Iran without evidence.

According to Saudi officials, oil production was restored fully by end-September despite initial claims that it could take months to recover. A Reuters survey released on Tuesday put Saudi Arabia’s oil exports in September at 9.05 million bpd, 700,000 bpd less than in August.

Saudi Arabia has had a subordinate role in U.S. President Donald Trump’s avowed campaign to bring Iran’s crucial oil exports down to zero through stepped-up production.

The campaign is part of “maximum pressure” being applied by the United States to bring Iran to the negotiating table for concessions on its nuclear and missile capabilities and the country’s influential role in the Middle East.

Zanganeh said on Wednesday the energy market must be non-political in order to prevent interference.

“The energy market must be non-political in order

to prevent unilateral and illegal interference,” he said.

The minister also said he was ready to meet his new Saudi counterpart whom he described a friend for more than two decades despite tensions between the two countries.

“Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman has been a friend for over 22 years,” Zanganeh said of the Saudi minister of energy who replaced Khalif al-Falih last month.

On Tuesday, London-based Middle East Eye news outlet said Saudi Arabia had given a green light to Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi to arrange a meeting with Iran as a first step towards de-escalating tensions in the region.

A spokesperson for the Iranian government said on Monday that Saudi Arabia had sent messages to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani via “the leaders of some countries”.

Iranian parliamentary speaker Ali Larijani told Al Jazeera Tuesday that Iran welcomed the Saudi crown prince’s apparent willingness to talk.

“We welcome Muhammad bin Salman being quoted as saying he wants to resolve issues through talks with Tehran,” Larijani was quoted as saying.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	326118.6
IFX	4272.19

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	45,917 rials
GBP	51,583 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$59.03/b
WTI	\$53.96/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.09/b
Gold	\$1,487.75/oz
Silver	\$\$\$17.37/oz
Platinum	\$881.95/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Value of trades at Iran’s stock market exceeds \$95b

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — The value of trades at Iran’s four stock exchanges has reached four quadrillion rials (about \$95.238 billion) since the beginning of current Iranian calendar year (March 21), Amir Hamooni, the managing director of Iran’s over-the-counter (OTC) exchange market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), announced in a TV program on Sunday night, IRIB reported.

The four stock exchanges include Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), IFB, Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), and Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX).

Hamooni also put the value of trades at IRENEX at 150 trillion rials (about \$3.571 billion) since the start of this year.

He further said that the reason for the investors to coming more and more toward stock market is that this market is currently more profit making compared to the other parallel markets in the country.

While lagging the parallel markets of foreign currency, gold coin, and real estate behind, Iran’s stock

market hit a new record during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-September 22), as TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange, closed at an all-time high of 302,103 points.

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

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

Also as reported, IFB has experienced a noticeable positive performance during the first half, as its main index, IFX, gained 78 percent during the mentioned period of time.

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

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

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

Brazilian industrial production rose in August at its fastest pace in over a year

Industrial production in Brazil rose in August at its fastest pace in more than a year, official figures on Tuesday showed, a sign that Latin America’s largest economy may slowly be turning a corner after flirting with recession earlier in the year.

As per en-mercopress.com, the recovery may be on an uneven footing, however, as intermediate goods production was the only one of four broad economic categories to grow, and only 10 of the 26 narrower sectors surveyed managed to expand in the month

Overall output jumped 0.8% in August from July, government statistics agency IBGE said, the first increase in four months and more than twice as fast as the 0.3% rise expected.

It was the biggest increase since a 12.8% surge in June last year. Barring that anomalous rebound from an 11.1% plunge in the previous month because of a nationwide truckers’ strike, it was the fastest rate of growth since December 2017.

The biggest driver was mining. It grew by 6.6% on the month, the fourth monthly increase, which brought the accumulated rise in that period to 25.2%. But IBGE noted that this followed three monthly declines when output fell an accumulated 24.2%.

The “better-than-expected rise in Brazilian industrial production was driven by rapid growth in the mining sector, which won’t be sustained,” William Jackson, an economist at Capital Economics, wrote in a client note.

“Even so, the figures add to the evidence that the economic recovery gathered momentum in the third quarter.”

Among the other best-performing sectors were petroleum and biofuels, which rose 3.6%, and food production, which was up 2.0%, IBGE said.

Of the four wider economic categories covered by IBGE, intermediate goods output rose 1.4%. Durable consumer goods production fell 1.8%, while output of semi-durable and non-durable consumer goods, and capital goods, shrank 0.4%.

While the monthly figures may offer a chink of light for Brazilian industry, the bigger picture is less rosy.

EAEU gives Iran 3 years to become a permanent member

1 → “We have invited EAEU’s secretary general to visit Iran, to assess the country’s infrastructure like roads and maritime transportation systems and also to visit affiliated organizations such as customs, the central bank, Institute of Standards and Industrial Research of Iran and Trade Promotion Organization (TPO)”, the minister informed.

Ardakanian said the accession would be a major breakthrough for Iran’s trade

as it would allow exports on zero tariffs for 70 products while 503 other items would enjoy lowered duties.

“We can supply our goods and products to their markets through the land borders of the Republic of Armenia as well as sea borders of the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan,” said Ardakanian, making a reference to the countries members to the EAEU which also includes Belarus and Kyrgyzstan.

Accompanied by a delegation including



the energy minister, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani visited Armenia to attend the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) Summit on Tuesday.

The summit, which began on October

1 in the Armenian capital, was aimed at building closer economic ties between member states Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Russia, as well as with nonmember states.

Annual steel ingot output estimated to reach 28m tons by Mar. 2020

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Annual production of steel ingot in Iran is predicted to reach 28 million tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020), according to Khodadad Gharibpour, the head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

Making the remarks during the annual general assembly meeting of Iranian Steel Producers Association on Tuesday, the official put the steel ingot output at 25 million tons in the past year, IRNA reported.

Today, Iranian steel industry is meeting most of its requirements relying on domestic capabilities and it is just a little dependent on the foreign resources, the official underlined.

As previously announced, Iran’s steel production capacity is projected to reach around 40 million tons this year with crude steel production reaching between 25 and



27 million tons.

According to the World Steel Organization (WSO), Iran became the world’s tenth largest steel producer in 2018. The country is expected to become the world’s seventh biggest steel producer by 2021, reaching 55 million tons of steel capacity.

According to the WSO’s report, Iran produced 25 million

Iranian rial regains value by 40% in a year: CBI

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** – Governor of Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said the value of Iranian currency, rial, has recovered by over 40 percent against U.S. dollar in the past 12 months, IRIB reported.

Today, the national currency has strengthened by 40 percent compared to exactly a year ago; the inflation has been controlled and indications of economic growth are starting to show,” Abdolnasser Hemmati wrote in an Instagram post on Wednesday.

As reported, Hemmati underlined the significant impact of the bank’s new policies on the country’s currency market and economy.

Iranian rial was traded at historic low of 190,000 against the dollar in September 2018 before it regained some of its value and rose against foreign currencies a month later.

A series of measures adopted by the Iranian government this year helped control the prices in the unofficial market, allowing the rial to trade at a year-long



high of 109,000 against the dollar in July.

In late August, the CBI governor had stated that the bank was continuing to take all necessary measures to control the foreign exchange market in order to maintain market equilibrium in the country.

“The foreign exchange market is stable, and the reinjection of exports revenues into NIMA are getting better which is a sign that the country’s businessmen and traders are welcoming CBI’s recent foreign exchange policies,” he said.

‘Worth of Iran’s minerals, mining industry output to reach \$21b’

ECONOMY d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade Minister Reza Rahmani said the value of the country’s minerals and mining industry products is expected to reach \$21 billion in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020), ILNA reported.

According to the official, the value of the mentioned commodities stood at \$20 billion in the past calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019) and considering the data for the current year’s first half, the \$21-billion goal is quite reachable.

Rahmani noted that Iran’s mining industry has witnessed great developments in recent years, adding that “Currently, the country’s capacities and production chains in the steel and copper sectors are in balance.”

“In the past few years, Iran was exporting 23 million tons of iron ore every year, however the figure fell to eight million tons in the past year. This is an indication of a decline in selling raw minerals and an increase in production of commodities with higher value added and more domestic consumption,” he said.



According to the official, the capacity of the country’s mines is large enough that it can be considered a serious alternative for replacing oil revenues in the future.

Last week, Rahmani put the country’s minerals extracted in the past Iranian calendar year at 500 million tons.

Speaking in a conference on Iran’s mining exploration development, opportunities and challenges in Tehran, he noted that his ministry has implemented several programs for promoting domestic production and increasing exports in the current Iranian calendar year.

Are Europe’s economic prospects brighter than they appear?

By Anatole Kaletsky

In the year since U.S. President Donald Trump escalated America’s trade war with China, policymakers and financial markets have been obsessed with the dangers to both countries’ economies. Yet the real threat the conflict poses to the global economy lies elsewhere.

Despite all the lurid headlines about the trade war causing a recession in the U.S. or some kind of collapse in China and its Asian neighbors, recent economic data reveal a very different picture: the U.S. and Chinese economies have performed quite decently and in line with trends that were already well established before the escalation of the trade war.

The unexpected distribution of damage can be clearly seen in the International Monetary Fund’s quarterly revisions of its economic projections. The latest revisions, published in late July, forecast 3.2% global growth in 2019, down from 3.7% in the IMF’s October 2018 projection.

But this downward revision was attributable to neither the U.S. nor China. The Chinese economy is expected to grow by 6.2%, exactly the rate predicted a year ago. The forecast for U.S. growth is 2.6%, up 0.1 percentage points from a year ago. The projections for Japan and other Asian economies are also essentially unchanged.

This leaves Europe responsible for almost the entire global slowdown.

The IMF now expects eurozone growth to reach 1.3% this year, down 0.6 percentage points from its forecast a year ago, and German growth is expected to amount to just 0.7%, compared to the 1.9% rate predicted a year ago. Thus, if any region will soon pull the world into recession, it is Europe, and specifically Germany, not the U.S., China, or Asia.

■ **European economy has suffered**

There are three reasons why the European economy has suffered far more this year than either of the belligerents in the U.S.-China conflict.

For starters, Europe is extremely vulnerable to collateral damage from a trade war, because it is more dependent on trade. Exports account for 28% of the eurozone’s GDP, compared to only 12% for the U.S. and 19% for China.

Moreover, Europe’s policy response to economic shocks is almost always wrong. When the U.S. or China experience a shock that threatens to reduce economic



growth, they generally respond with a pre-emptive and counter-cyclical demand stimulus. In response to the trade war, the U.S. Federal Reserve Board almost immediately reversed its monetary-policy course and began cutting interest rates.

China has expanded monetary, fiscal, and credit policies to ensure that consumption, housing construction, and infrastructure spending compensate for lost exports and private investment. In Europe, by contrast, the policy response to weak demand tends to be pro-cyclical: When growth falters, instead of expanding fiscal policy, European governments raise taxes and cut public spending to “control” budget deficits. And financial regulators tighten credit conditions by forcing banks to build up their capital and increase their provisions for risky loans.

Third, Europe has been hit by two internal political shocks that were even more damaging than the U.S.-China trade war. Last summer’s budget clash between the European Commission and Italy’s new populist government revived fears of a currency and banking collapse even worse than the euro crisis that erupted a decade ago. And in March, just as the Italian risk subsided, a no-deal Brexit suddenly emerged as a serious threat. Because the EU exports almost twice as much to the UK as it does to China, a sudden stop in commercial relations with the UK could be as damaging as the sudden stop in finance that occurred in 2008.

Now for the good news. Two of the three reasons for Europe’s poor performance — misguided macroeconomic policies and conflict with Italy or Britain — are moving toward resolution. And although excessive exposure to

global trade — especially in Germany — continues, at least Europe’s overdependence on exports is starting to be recognized as a structural vulnerability, not a sign of “competitiveness” or fundamental economic health.

■ **The fiscal policy**

Starting with macroeconomics, an easing of fiscal policy is now being seriously debated in almost every European country, within the incoming European Commission, and at the European Central Bank. While opposition to any significant fiscal expansion remains strong in Germany, the largest eurozone economy, resistance there is likely to crumble under the combined pressure of weak economic growth, fears of populist parties, demands for green investment, and increasingly pointed criticism from the European Commission and the ECB. And even if Germany sticks to fiscal retrenchment for another year or two, the rest of Europe will move toward lower taxes and higher public spending for a reason that is not widely recognised: the interaction between monetary and fiscal policy.

The ECB’s recent decision to resume quantitative easing and maintain negative interest rates without any time limit guarantees that debt-service costs will fall drastically for highly indebted governments such as those in Italy, Spain, Belgium, and France. Lower interest payments will give these governments more budgetary space to cut taxes or increase public spending. This is especially true for Italy, whose interest costs currently exceed 3.5% of GDP.

This easier fiscal environment has ended Italy’s conflicts with the EU over budget rules, which seemed to threaten a euro breakup a few months ago. At the same time, the UK Supreme Court’s decision striking down Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s suspension of Parliament has virtually eliminated the risk of a no-deal Brexit.

With the political and macroeconomic climate improving, Europe should be able to overcome the structural handicap of excessive exports and avoid recession. Germany may be less fortunate, because it cannot be cured of its export addiction until it abandons its misguided budget consolidation. Until then, Germany will be stuck in its unfamiliar new role as the laggard of Europe.

For the rest of the world, however, this may not matter. What matters for the global economy is whether Europe as a whole enjoys a strong recovery. The chances of that are considerably better now than they were a few months ago.

(Source: fnlondon.com)

Global energy market should be depoliticized: Zanganeh

E N E R G Y TEHRAN — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said the global energy sector should be depoliticized and politically-motivated interferences should be substituted by economic logic, multilateralism, partnership and cooperation, Shana reported.

Speaking at a Russian Energy Week specialized panel dubbed “Towards Leadership in the Global Energy Mix: Priorities of the Gas Industry,” in Moscow on Wednesday, the official said: “Imposition of unilateral sanctions on Islamic Republic of Iran and its extraterritorial application by President Trump is best described as “economic terrorism” and is in violation of international laws, it targets ordinary people’s livelihood.” Zanganeh said.

The official further noted that despite the U.S. obstruction efforts against the Islamic Republic of Iran over the past 40 years, Iran has managed to boost its gas production rate to 750 million cubic meters per day (MCM/d).

“Given the 17 percent share of Iran in the world’s proven natural gas reserves, Iran’s role in the global energy security is undeniable, and next year our output is expected to surpass 1 billion cubic meters per day,” He added.

He went on saying that over the last three decades, the share of gas in Iran’s energy basket has grown annually and now its share in the energy mix has reached over 70 percent, largely by replacing oil in the household, power generation and industry sectors.



Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh (L) and Russia’s Energy Minister Alexander Novak attended the Russian Energy Week 2019 in Moscow on Wednesday.

“At present, around 95 percent of urban and rural households have access to natural gas,” Zanganeh said, adding that “Iran has annually prevented emission of Green House Gases (GHG) by around 3 percent, since the access of rural population to natural gas has significantly contributed to woodland protection and has prevented deforestation by

replacing fuel wood by natural gas.”

Iran fully adhering to international commitments

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zanganeh stressed the fact that Iran is completely complying with its international commitments in all areas.

“Our strategy is respecting and fulfilling

international commitments, as well as development of cooperation in the context of multilateralism. Regional and international cooperation are among our priorities in the energy sector,” he said.

Iran has been one of the founding members of the GECF and OPEC. It is a great pleasure to note that Iran, Russian Federation and Qatar which paved the ground for establishment of the GECF are present in this event, he added.

The official finally proposed to set a goal for increasing the share of natural gas in the world energy mix to 30 percent, by 2040.

“Given the growing role of conventional natural gas as a clean fossil fuel in curbing GHG emissions growth; I propose setting an elevated goal of achieving 30 percent share of natural gas in the world energy mix by 2040 to be achieved through various means with emphasis on the power sector.”

Iran, Russia energy ministers meet

On the sidelines of the event, Zanganeh met with his Russian counterpart Alexander Novak on Wednesday to discuss global and region’s energy issues.

In this meeting, the officials stressed the expansion of mutual energy ties in all areas.

Russian Energy Week International Forum was established in September 2016, with further changes instigated by order of the Russian Government in March 2018.

This year’s edition of the Forum is taking place during October 2-5 in the Central Exhibition Hall ‘Manege’ in Moscow.

Oil prices mixed ahead of U.S. crude stocks data

Oil prices were mixed on Wednesday as Brent crude extended losses partly in response to weak global stock markets, but U.S. crude rose slightly after industry data showed an unexpected fall in inventories in the United States.

According to reuters.com, Brent crude futures, an international benchmark for oil prices, were down 24 cents at \$58.65 a barrel by 0932 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures rose 6 cents to \$53.68 a barrel.

Front-month WTI prices settled down for a sixth straight session on Tuesday, their longest losing streak this year, after U.S. manufacturing activity dropped to a 10-year low as U.S.-China trade tensions weighed on exports.

But prices found some support from American Petroleum Institute (API) data which showed U.S. crude stocks

fell last week by 5.9 million barrels, against expectations for an increase of 1.6 million barrels.

“It seems to be a fight between two opposing forces; On the bullish side another draw in U.S. inventories, on the bearish side concerns on weaker economic data, and currently ebbing tensions in the oil market,” said Giovanni Staunovo, an oil analyst at UBS.

“I still hold a constructive outlook short-term,” he added. The Energy Information Administration’s weekly oil inventories report was due at 1030 EDT (1430 GMT) on Wednesday.

“Even if the EIA were to confirm the API crude oil number this afternoon, the momentum off a single number can easily fade as the economy is front and center for global markets right now,” said Harry Tchilinguirian,

global oil strategist at BNP Paribas.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said in an article in Energy Policy magazine that global oil demand is expected to rise by 1.4 million barrels per day (bpd) next year after growing at a rate of one million bpd in 2019.

Novak also said that output caps in place as part of the global oil production deal between OPEC and its allies were temporary and Russia would only undertake such cuts when they were in the national interest.

Meanwhile, Ecuador, one of the smallest members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, said it would leave the 14-nation bloc from Jan. 1 due to fiscal problems.

Ecuador will be the second country to withdraw from OPEC in the last year after the departure of Qatar.

OPEC suffers another departure with Ecuador seeking more cash

By Stephan Kueffner and Peter Millard

Ecuador said Tuesday it will leave the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in January. For OPEC, the departure matters more in symbolism than barrels -- Ecuador is one of its smallest producers, but stated clearly it wants to leave the group to boost oil revenues at a moment when the whole cartel is suffering from low prices. It also comes less than a year after Qatar announced it would leave, saying it wanted to focus on natural gas production.

“Ecuador is being honest about not being able to subject itself to further cuts,” said Schreiner Parker, vice president for Latin America at consultant Rystad Energy. The departure comes amid efforts by Ecuadorian President Lenin Moreno to reverse economic policies imposed by his predecessor. “Moreno wants to pursue his own policies, and is more market-friendly than people originally thought,” said Parker.

Ecuador has been in breach of its promised production limits every month this year. In 2017, Ecuador said it wasn’t going to abide by the quotas, prompting a phone call from Saudi Arabia’s then-energy minister, Khalid al-Falih. In February, Ecuador’s Resources Minister Carlos Perez said again that the nation would produce more than its limit.

“We will continue to produce what we need,” Perez said at the time. “Do not forget that what is decided in OPEC is not mandatory.”

Ecuador has left before -- it joined OPEC in 1973 and suspended its membership in 1992. Former President Rafael Correa restarted its membership in 2007. Other countries have left and returned, including Gabon and Indonesia.

■ OPEC-related constraints

The exit sends a message to the oil industry that Ecuador



is open for business in a region where Venezuela is hobbled by sanctions and economic collapse, Mexico has halted any new bid rounds, and political uncertainty is restraining investments in Argentina. Removing the risk of future OPEC-related constraints on production will make it easier to attract drillers and get financing.

“It sends a signal that at the moment their interest is in bringing in a lot of investment, and it may open up new markets. You have to figure all that was part of the decision making,” said John Padilla, managing director of IPD Latin America LLC. “Particularly given the vacuum created by the sanctions in Venezuela and the drop off in Mexican production, it’s an interesting marketing signal.”

Oil fell to the lowest in almost two months on Tuesday as the outlook for the global economy darkened, signaling that OPEC will need to cut production further if it wants to balance out the global market.

The cartel will need to cut 3 million barrels a day by the end of 2020 to shore up prices, according to estimates from

Rystad. OPEC output sank the most in 16 years last month after an attack on Saudi Arabia’s energy facilities. The group and its allies have committed to cutting supply by 1.2 million barrels a day to support prices.

OPEC didn’t immediately respond to a telephone call and email made after normal business hours.

■ Developing oil industry

Ecuador is currently developing a 1.6-billion barrel heavy crude oil field in part of the Yasuni National Park. Protests by indigenous and environmental organizations have stopped efforts to develop the oil industry in the southern half of its Amazon territories, which officials have pushed for opening to tenders as soon as 2020.

Perez, a career private sector oilman, has scrapped plans for a refinery project and reintroduced production-sharing agreements that helped to attract foreign oil investment until the prior president scrapped them. Correa raised taxes on the industry and seized assets, including from oil company Perenco SA, which won an arbitration case last month that will force Ecuador to pay close to \$500 million.

“Ecuador didn’t fulfill quotas at 100%. Occasionally, the government used the argument of quotas to impose limits on private companies’ output,” said local oil analyst Fernando Santos, a former chief legal adviser to OPEC and Ecuadorian oil minister.

Ecuador’s reversal of Correa’s brand of 21st Century socialism also includes a renewal of ties with the International Monetary Fund and other multilateral lenders, who have pledged to provide \$10.2 billion in loans through 2021. The exit announcement came just before the president was due to unveil structural reforms to meet IMF program requirements.

(Source: bloomberg.com)

Renewables spell fading role for power markets: RWE

(Montel) Wholesale electricity markets were of dwindling significance to Germany’s biggest power producer, as renewable energy would render them increasingly unprofitable, RWE finance chief Markus Krebber told Montel on Monday.

According to montelnews.com, “Our reliance on the wholesale market for the generation fleet will definitely shrink over time,” Krebber said on the sidelines of a press conference in Essen to announce the company’s planned transition to clean energy by 2040.

RWE plans to refashion itself into a generation company built around renewable energy, storage and green sources of gas that will make the company carbon neutral within the next 20 years, it announced earlier on Monday.

The utility still owns Germany’s largest fleet of coal-fired power plants and remains the single-biggest emitter by company on the EU carbon market. Its transformation comes as German policymakers prepare legislation to

phase out coal-use by 2038 in a bid to tighten climate policy.

Yet the switch to cleaner forms of energy did not just imply a change in assets, said Krebber. It also meant eschewing a business model centered around earning money from power plants that compete on operating costs.

■ Renewable energy

A rising share of renewable energy in the power mix would pressure prices too low for any technology to be profitable at times of high clean energy supply, Krebber said.

“With very high penetrations of renewables – say 40-50% – then the baseload power prices as we know them today are more or less dead,” said Krebber.

Germany is on track to secure around 40% of power through renewables this year and aims to raise this to 65% by 2030.

“For renewables ... you should not expect to earn your money back through wholesales markets, which only prices on marginal costs,”

said Krebber.

“You need something else. Not a subsidy – because it is still cheaper than building new coal or new nuclear plants – but let’s say a framework that ensures the profitability of new investment.”

Regulated systems that “assured” revenue streams to investors would be crucial to encourage new investments and would provide utilities with greater earnings stability.

They would also be necessary for the rest of the conventional fleet – whether in the form of a capacity market, or some other payment for being ready to supply power on demand.

Flexible sources of conventional generation – like gas – might be able to make money when solar and wind were unavailable, but these diminishing periods in a year would not cover gas plants’ fixed costs without some form of additional remuneration, Krebber said.

Now that the European Commission has approval its asset swap deal with rival Eon,



the nature of RWE’s transformation is be reflected in its balance sheet.

Renewables would account for 60% of RWE’s operational result – three times the contribution of the conventional generation division and six times the contribution of the trading arm.

The latter segments make up more than half the company’s earnings at present.

The pros of solar energy (beyond just being ‘green’)

The greatest benefit of solar energy is how green it is. Once you make and deploy the solar panels, you have clean energy, meaning there is no carbon dioxide produced during their operation. However, there are a number of reasons to adopt solar and go green, and they go well beyond protecting the environment.

As per zmesience.com, when solar panels are installed, they begin producing electricity. This continues day after day for years. Maintained solar panels are good for decades.

For people living off the grid, it is a clean source of energy that also saves them from having to buy kerosene for light and gasoline to run a generator – they save money without sacrificing quality of life.

Solar equipment manufacturing is high tech but long-lasting. By buying solar power, you’re encouraging long-term investment in solar power plants. There are some logistical and infrastructure requirements such as wiring the solar panels and maintaining the electrical equipment, but there’s no need to constantly supply gasoline or mine coal to generate power. This helps close the foreign trade gap since we can make power ourselves.

A secondary environmental benefit is eliminating the wasted energy and the associated cost of transporting tankers full of oil and coal to power plants.

If you’ve put solar panels on the roof, they’ll generally improve the resale value of the home. They’re seen as a cost-savings just like extra insulation in the roof. This is in sharp contrast to a complex organic garden or geothermal system, since the maintenance requirements scare many potential home buyers away.

■ Renewable energy provider

And if you select a renewable energy provider for your home, you don’t have to worry about what potential home buyers might think. Conversely, you don’t have to own a home to take advantage of renewable energy delivered by your electric company.

Supporting solar power has a number of social benefits. And you’re encouraging local power production through solar panels put up on rooftops and solar farms. You’re creating local high-tech, good-paying jobs, too.

These jobs are often distributed throughout the area, whereas oil field jobs are typically far from civilization. By supporting solar power, you aren’t asking people to trek to Alaska or Saudi Arabia to fuel your modern lifestyle. They’re not exposed to toxic chemicals working in a refinery or trying to sail oil tankers past pirate-infested Somalia.

There are long-term benefits to adopting solar energy. Once we have solar panels, we can reuse the silicone and other metals as required. We can store the energy for future use via batteries; that has to be done anyway since the sun and solar power production both go down at night.

A side benefit of setting up batteries and other energy storage devices across the power grid is that it increases the grid’s overall resilience. If local power lines went down, a facility could rely on power produced by solar panels on the roof or pull from their batteries. They may run for several hours before things go down, and service is likely to be restored by then.

■ The power transmission

If power transmission lines went down for a given community, it may not be able to send excess power to its neighbors but may meet part of its local energy needs via solar power and stored energy reserves. Some power producers rely on a mix of solar, wind and other renewable energy sources to provide a steady stream of power, all of it green.

Use an energy comparison site to shop for green energy suppliers and sign up for a plan today. You could find a renewable energy company that matches or beats your current energy provider on service and price, and you’re supporting renewable energy development with every electric bill. You’re also encouraging energy providers to invest in renewable energy through the free market. That you may save on your energy bill by putting solar panels on the roof or lead the energy provider to save money through tax credits is an added bonus.

We’ll set aside the doom and gloom projections of global warming, climate change, climate catastrophes and every other name that’s been applied to everything from hurricanes to flooding. Shifting to solar power has a direct impact on everyone’s quality of life.

By moving to solar power and other renewable sources of energy, you reduce the production of particulate pollution through the burning of coal and natural gas, thereby improving air quality for everyone. This reduces problems from asthma attacks in children to emphysema deaths in adults.

Novatek announces plans to build third massive LNG plant in northern Siberia

Novatek, the largest natural gas supplier in Russia, has said it will have sufficient gas reserves to add a \$10bn LNG plant to its processing complex in northwest Siberia, and that it plans to build a series of transshipment complexes.

As per globalconstructionreview.com, the company began producing LNG at its Yamal plant on the Gydan peninsula in 2017 and plans to start a second, Arctic LNG 2, in 2023 at a cost of \$10b. Now Leonid Mikhelson, Novatek’s chief executive, has told reporters that the company has acquired sufficient gas licenses to build another \$10bn plant, although he did not say when work might begin.

Speaking at a press conference in Tokyo, Mikhelson said Novatek’s holdings on the Gydan gave it the “necessary resource base for another LNG project of the size of Arctic LNG 2”, which has a production capacity of 20 million tons of LNG a year, Reuters reports.

Novatek last week concluded an agreement with a number of Japanese firms to develop a reloading complex for LNG in the Gydan. A press release from the company said a cooperation agreement had been reached with logistics company Mitsui OSK Lines and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation to build a number of LNG transshipment complexes in the territory of Kamchatka and Murmansk.

Mikhelson said in the release: “We have already started successful cooperation with Japanese companies in large LNG projects, including Yamal LNG and Arctic LNG 2, and, accordingly, we see great potential in expanding further this mutually beneficial cooperation.

The “construction of the Kamchatka and Murmansk transshipment complexes will help to optimize logistics and maximize the efficiency of LNG deliveries from Yamal and Gydan to LNG key markets of the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, the largest global LNG consumer. We think we will reach final arrangements for these projects by year end”.

The expansion in based on an expected surge in demand for LNG. The latest forecast from Shell says global demand will rise 27 million tons to 319 million tons in the course of this year.

‘Economic superpower’ label doesn’t fit China

An analysis on the US media outlet CNBC website on Monday called China an “economic superpower.” On the same day, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison called China the “newly developed economy.” It is really not easy to respond to these comments by Westerners.

The 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China is approaching. China is also showcasing its economic achievements at home. China’s installed power generation capacity has reached 1.9 billion kilowatts, ranking first in the world according to figures released by the National Development and Reform Commission on Tuesday. The length of high-speed railways and expressways is also the highest in the world. Many of China’s economic figures top the world.

Yet the labels such as “economic superpower” and “newly developed economy” still strike many Chinese as hyperbole. No one knows China better than the Chinese themselves. Our country’s economy is diverse and complex, and its various dimensions do not point to the conclusion that it is a developed economy. Very few Chinese think that our country is already a developed society. There is a general aversion to self-proclaimed economic superpower.

The power of a country is often showed in terms of the GDP, but the real life of ordinary people is shaped more by GDP per capita. China with a huge population occupies a rare position in international relations: its comprehensive national strength is rising relatively fast compared to other countries, while the modernization of people’s real life needs more time to improve.

Whether China is an economic superpower or a newly developed economy is not only an assessment, but also bears on China’s actual interests. In recent years, Western public opinion likes to claim that China is a developed country. One of the most important reasons is the intent to deprive China of all the rights it is entitled to as a developing country and to ask China to shoulder some of the responsibilities of developed countries. In other words, they define China’s level of economic development based on selfish considerations.

Facts show China’s level of development. Despite the WTO’s tariff preferences for developing countries, China is continually reducing the average tariff rate and reducing negative list for foreign capital. This is not what ordinary developing countries will do. China has been adjusting its foreign economic and trade relations according to the actual situation and has adopted a positive attitude in response to some demands of Western countries. But we are not a developed economy. It is a fact. Chinese society needs to summarize its achievements, which is necessary to enhance social confidence. But China seeks to emphasize the extent of its progress and never exaggerate its development.

Powerful countries are not necessarily developed countries. India now has more national power than many moderately developed countries, but it is obviously not appropriate to include India in the ranks of developed countries. The Chinese people have the right to continue to improve their living standards. If the West does not mistake China for a developed country, it is conducive to support this right of the Chinese.

The fundamental thrust of economic development is the desire of the people of all countries to lead a better life. If the West pushes to include China in the list of developed countries, this is not true at first, and certainly will not get support and response from Chinese society. It is therefore unlikely to have a lasting impact on international relations.

HK needs stronger common interests

The number of people participating in radical protests in Hong Kong has significantly dropped. However, few violent protesters still act rampantly. Because Hong Kong is at the crossroads of worsening the situation or restoring order, there is greater confrontation among people with different positions. The voice against violence has become louder, but those who raise the US flags and the British flags are also more unscrupulous.

With the support of the central government, both the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Hong Kong police have shown a greater ability to control the situation. But it is still difficult to restore order in Hong Kong, rebuild the authority of the rule of law and unite most Hong Kong citizens.

Hong Kong is a separate customs territory and adopts capitalism. It is open to Western society. If the US wants to infiltrate into China, Hong Kong would be the easiest. Because of the sensitivity of the “one country, two systems” principle, it may not be a serious matter if American or British special agents slip into Hong Kong and even engaged in activities. However, if the mainland’s police cooperate with Hong Kong police, some people will make a big fuss. This shows how radical and complicated current public opinion is.

Is Hong Kong destined to be chaotic? Definitely not. Although some in Hong Kong want damage on all sides, most Hongkongers would not agree. Long-term chaos is not in line with the interests of most Hong Kong citizens. Whether these citizens have national recognition as Chinese people or hold passports from Western countries, they would prefer Hong Kong’s prosperity and stability because their interests are linked to the city.CBC News reported in August that there are over 300,000 Canadians in Hong Kong. The Wall Street Journal reported in July that there are about 80,000 Americans in the city. There are even more Hongkongers who hold British overseas passports, but these holders are still different from British people.

Most of those who hold American, British or Canadian passports in Hong Kong have settled in Hong Kong. They either have nowhere else to go, or face difficulty moving back to the US, the UK or Canada. They enjoy welfare and freedom in Hong Kong, and it would be best if Hong Kong’s situation remains good. Indeed, their values are in line with American, British and Canadian societies, but this does not mean they will stand with these countries if these countries want to mess Hong Kong up.

Such being the case, Hongkongers who do not hold Western passports should have more reason to support an orderly Hong Kong.

Hong Kong society has a complicated internal structure and faces various external factors that disturb society. To maintain its harmony, all classes and groups in Hong Kong need to have strong common interests. Hong Kong needs prosperity, and there must be paths for everyone in such prosperity. Hong Kong needs magnanimity to face the world, and equality to face the bottom of society. Thus, there would be less division in the city.Hong Kong should restore stability as soon as possible based on the Basic Law. Hong Kong’s politics has been deviated. Some forces regard Hong Kong’s politics as a country’s politics. These forces are doomed to fail.Hong Kong has broad space for profit distribution and cultural diversity, as long as the city is politically stable. To treasure Hong Kong’s rule of law is to treasure Hong Kong’s future.

China’s military strength guarantees world peace, stability

By Li Qingqing

GLOBALTIMES — The New York Times published an article on Saturday titled “Tanks, Missiles and No Pigeons: China to Celebrate 70th Birthday of the People’s Republic.” The article, written by Steven Lee Myers, said Chinese authorities have banned homing pigeons before the upcoming National Day parade on Tuesday.

Pigeons are a symbol of peace. By deliberately placing the words “tanks,” “missiles” and “pigeons” together in the title, the article was trying to create an atmosphere of Chinese oppression, and to meaningfully convey the idea that China’s upcoming parade is only a show of muscle and power.

Some Western people should review their history. Many Western countries’ development resulted from invasion and plunder especially in the 18th and 19th centuries. The New York Times is using imperialism and expansionism to observe China.China’s development has always remained stable and peaceful. Pigeons have been flying through People’s Republic of China’s history over the past seven decades. The country’s great achievements, including the giant leap in economy, national strength



and people’s livelihood, have been realized in a completely peaceful way.

This is the major difference between China’s rise and the Western countries’ industrialization and modernization. However, Western countries are not willing to admit it, even though most of them achieved prosperity through wars and colonialism. These Western countries’ development

was based on other countries’ suffering and humiliation. Now that most Western countries are enjoying the development dividend, they have become selectively blind to history and to China’s peaceful rise.

Military strength is of great importance to China’s stable development over the past seven decades. The country’s defense power has increased substantially after decades of

A picture of a war crime is worth a thousand words

By Maj. Danny Sjursen

ANTIWAR — As U.S. induced Afghan civilian casualties spiked this month (and year), few Americans noticed these veritable atrocities. This wasn’t always the case. Consider the Philippine War.

by Maj. Danny Sjursen, USA (ret.) Posted onOctober 01, 2019

“I want no prisoners, I wish you to kill and burn, the more you kill and burn the better you will please me.”

US soldiers pose with Filipino Moro dead after the First Battle of Bud Dajo, March 7, 1906, Jolo, Philippines

Not so long ago, in November 2010, I took command of B Troop, 4th Squadron, 4th US Cavalry in a ceremony at Fort Riley, Kansas. It was, for me, a proud day. Army officers are taught to revel in their unit’s history, and the 4th Cavalry Regiment had a long, storied past indeed. On that cool, late fall day, the squadron’s colors – a flag with battle streamers – fluttered. One read: Bud Dajo, Philippine Islands – a reference to one of the regiment’s past battles. The unit crest pictured on the flag and pinned on our uniforms included a volcano and a kris – the traditional wavy-edged sword of the regiment’s Moro opponents in the Philippines – but hardly a trooper in the formation knew a thing about that war, battle, or the 4th Cavalry’s sordid past in the islands.

Bud Dajo was hardly a battle at all. It was a massacre. Some 1,000 Moro separatists, including their families, who opposed the US military occupation of Jolo Island, had fled to the crest of a volcano to avoid American conquest and retribution. Then, from 5-8 March 1906, the 4th Cavalry, along with other army formations, bombarded the overmatched Moros – few had firearms at all – then rushed the summit. The Moro men fought desperately and managed to inflict some 20 deaths on the charging American troopers, but they’d never stood a chance. Reaching the volcanic top, the cavalrymen fired down into the crater until all but six defenders and occupants were dead, a 99% casualty rate. The victorious troopers then proudly posed for a photograph, standing above the dead – which included hundreds of women and children – as though they were naught but big game trophies on a safari hunt.

Few Americans remember the US invasion, occupation, and pacification – a neat euphemism, that – of the Philippine Islands, but Filipinos will never forget. Perhaps half a million locals died (one-sixth of the total population) at the hands of superior US military technology, induced disease and starvation. The war also reflected and affected the US Army culture of the day. Most of the generals were veterans of the vicious Indian Wars of extermination in the previous decades. Racially pejorative terms for the Filipinos entered the military vernacular. Some, such as “nigger,”

were reappropriated; others, like gugu – thought to be the etymological precursor to the Vietnam-era epithet gook – were new. The war also informed the army’s leadership for many years. The first twelve of the US Army’s chiefs of staff, including General John Pershing of World War I fame, had all served in the Philippines. The legacy was quite long. Even General George Marshall, architect of World War II victory and a future Secretary of State, had served in the islands as a fresh lieutenant.

The war bloodied and frustrated the US Army, too. Some 4,000 soldiers died, many more were wounded, and the conventional conflict and counterinsurgency raged from 1898-1913, making the Philippine War the second longest in American history, after Afghanistan, that is. The war did, in a peculiar moment during the 2016 presidential campaign, briefly earn a shout out from Donald Trump. In order to bolster his own calls for war crimes against terrorists and their families, he told an apocryphal – and debunked – story about how Pershing had once ordered bullets dipped in pig’s blood (considered unclean in Muslim culture), had 49 prisoners executed with them, and then set the one survivor free to inform his comrades of what awaited them should they continue to resist. The result, said Trump, “for 25 years there wasn’t a problem, okay?”

It made for great rhetoric, but awful history. Not only had the incident never occurred but the war had dragged on for years after even the army’s worst atrocities, including the 1906 Bud Dajo massacre. A cool seven further years, in fact. Besides, Pershing – though himself flawed and later architect of his own volcanic Moro massacre of 200-300 souls in 1913 – had been largely sympathetic to the locals. He learned their language, ate their food, traveled unarmed to meet their leaders, and became the honorary father to a local sultan’s wife. When his superior, General Leonard Wood – who today has a prominent active fort named after him in Missouri – ordered the assault on Bud Dajo, Pershing had surveyed the results and declared “I would not want to have that on my conscience for the fame of Napoleon.”

Back home in the states, many prominent consciences were indeed shocked by the massacre, and, in particular, the trophy photo taken by the victorious troopers. The image flooded the papers, the 1906 version of going viral. At that time, unlike today, there was a substantial (if not majority) anti-imperialist movement brewing. It’s lead literary spokesman, Mark Twain, said of the Bud Dajo “battle,” “We abolished them utterly, leaving not even a baby alive to cry for it’s dead mother.” These words were hardly trifling, and the rhetoric and activism of anti-imperialists succeeding in getting opposition to empire and the Philippine occupation into the platform of even the highly racist, Jim Crow-era, Democratic Party.

U.S. hawks’ ‘China threat’ paranoia knows no bounds

GLOBALTIMES — Hawks in the US have found a convenient pretext to push the “China threat” propaganda in the garb of the Hong Kong protests. By ramping up anti-China hysteria, they are trying to tar the country’s name closer to a momentous occasion — the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China.

Washington’s foreign policy became militarized during the Cold War. Diplomacy played second fiddle to Washington’s global system of military alliances directed against the former Soviet Union and China. So the “China threat” meme is an old theme in America’s military-industrial complex.

With the demise of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991, the new Russian Federation morphed into the “Russia threat.” With the rise of China in recent years, the “China threat” theory took hold in Washington. The “Islam threat” emerged as well and then focused on the “Iran threat.”

Does American paranoia know no bounds?

The newest buzzword in Washington is that China presents an “existential”

threat. Hysteria in Washington seems to have reached new heights. Of course, it is arguable that the new “China existential threat” theory is just a rehash of the racist 19th century “Yellow Peril” hysteria in the US.

The existential threat posed by China to many in Washington is said to be civilizational, as a Trump administration official recently pronounced arrogantly. The old Cold War formula of the West versus the Communist East has taken a new meaning now by merging anti-Communist political ideology with overt racism.

Who are the hawks?

The present-day political landscape in Washington on the hawkish side is a mélange of old Cold Warriors plus neoconservatives. The Cold Warriors are simply next generation products of the 1950s military-industrial complex.

The neoconservatives are a policy network established at the end of WWII originally as Cold War Truman Democrats. They supported the new state of Israel and opposed the Soviet Union and New

China. Thus, Cold War Zionists for short.

Because former US President Jimmy Carter wanted to promote peace in the Middle East, many neoconservatives moved to the Republican Party of Ronald Reagan. They, and their successors, remain in the Republican Party and now surround Donald Trump.

Neoconservatives are also influential in the US Congress among Republicans but also among the hawkish Democrats. Neoconservatives are influential in a number of think tanks which in turn produce policy papers for Congressmen and Senators. Congressional staffers convert these policy papers into speeches and for their members and legislation. Congressional staffers, generally in their 20s and with no specialization and expertise, are easily influenced by hawkish think tanks. The members themselves are influenced by prominent academic, government, and military anti-China hawks who testify in various hearings before Congress.

While over 100 experts recently signed

rapid military development. Today, China has already become one of the three nuclear triad powers. Thus, it is impossible for China to be carved up by other countries today, and other big powers are unlikely to use military force to make China yield.

However, China will only use its military for strategic deterrence and defence of national security. The “tanks” and “missiles” that Western media hyped will not be a threat to any other country or region in the world. On the contrary, China has shouldered the responsibility as a major power to maintain peace and stability worldwide and to oppose global and regional hegemony. This has made China’s military strength an important guarantee of world peace and stability.

Military muscle is not a bad thing. The key is how to use such muscle. After seven decades, it is time for China to show some muscle to the world. China’s strength is a reliable guarantee of national unity and world peace. It is also a solid foundation to act against any force that tries to sabotage regional peace and development. China has always pursued a defensive national defense policy, and the 70 years of peaceful rise is China’s greatest contribution to the development of mankind.

The photograph also galvanized African-American civil rights activists. W.E.B. Du Bois declared the crater image to be “the most illuminating I’ve ever seen,” and considered displaying it on his classroom wall “to impress upon the students what wars and especially wars of conquest really means.”

Nothing even approaching that level of intellectual outrage exists now, as the American Empire spreads its tentacles the world over. Few public intellectuals – to the extent that endangered species even exists these days – even notice the extent of their nation’s ongoing war crimes in the Greater Middle East. Take Afghanistan, for example, the only war longer than the American debacle in the Philippines. After 18 indecisive and bloody years of combat, the US military and its Afghan allies now kill more civilians annually than the vicious Taliban. That ought to be cause for pause, reflection, concern. Only it isn’t, not in Washington, not even in most universities. We’re a long way from Du Bois posting the Bud Dajo picture on his classroom wall.

Men carry the coffin of one of the victims after a drone strike that killed 30 pine nut farmers in Nangarhar province, Afghanistan, 19 September 2019

Not that there haven’t been plenty of shocking photos of the civilian victims of US bombing these past weeks. Over the course of just several days in late September, the military (“accidentally,” it claimed) struck two weddings, and a group of thirty innocent pine nut farmers. Total civilian deaths approached 100, with many of the victims (in the weddings) women and children. Their crimes, apparently: gathering while Afghan! That’s right, in militarized Afghanistan, merely forming sizable groups – for ceremonies, funerals, farming – appears, to drone operators and bomber pilots, apparently criminal and threatening.

Far too often, war more routinely than Americans are apt to remember, US aircraft have subsequently slaughtered civilians – thereby bolstering Taliban narratives and recruitment, and sowing distrust of the U.S.-backed Kabul regime. Nevertheless, you’d never know it back here in the safety of the homeland. These war crimes hardly crack mainstream media and the macabre photo evidence barely raises an American eyebrow. That’s apathy manifested as tragedy.

So consider this modest piece of mine, this brief history lesson and connection to contemporary US empire, a plea of sorts to the teachers of America. Want to be a true patriot, a forceful educator, and decent human being? Well, do your students a favor: post the photos of recent US military airstrikes upon civilians in Afghanistan – the war crimes of the 21st century – on your classroom walls. Du Bois, and Twain, would be proud...and that’s hardly bad intellectual company to keep...

a letter calling for a balanced China policy. Congress and the White House seem unmoved. There are few moderate voices on China in the Congress. The vocal bipartisan support for the riotous opposition and secessionists in Hong Kong underscores this reality. China hawks of all feathers are shrieking these days in the corridors of power in Washington.

It is not going to be easy for Washington to repair relations with Beijing. Realistically, the trade and tech war and escalation of military activity against China precludes any early stabilization of relations. This is particularly true in the run up to the 2020 election when China bashing is a favorite of American politicians.

Fortunately, China’s leadership is calmly and methodically trying to manage relations with a volatile, erratic, and bullying America. China’s patience is no doubt not limited nor is the patience of US allies and friends around the world.The US must introspect on its relative decline in a multipolar world. Washington urgently needs a new China policy that is constructive.

One year after Khashoggi's brutal murder: business as usual?

By Medea Benjamin

Heinous. Savage. Ghastly. It's hard to find the words to describe the act of luring journalist Jamal Khashoggi into a Saudi consulate in Istanbul, suffocating him, chopping him up and dissolving his bones. Yet a year later, governments and businesspeople around the world are eager to forgive and forget — or already have.

So far, not a single Saudi official has been found guilty or punished for this crime. The Saudi government has put 11 officials on trial but these trials, which began in January and drag on behind closed doors, are a mockery of justice. The government is prosecuting lower-level officials but not the top guns who are truly responsible. The defendants have not been named but it is known that Saud al-Qahtani, a former top aide to Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman (MbS) and the alleged mastermind of the murder, is not a defendant and the government refuses to say where he is.

And what about the crown prince himself? In a September 29 PBS interview, MbS accepted responsibility for the killing because it happened "under his watch" — but he denied having prior knowledge. The CIA, however, concluded in November that the prince, who maintains tight control in the kingdom, likely ordered the killing. A report by United Nations Special Rapporteur Agnes Callamard said there was "credible evidence" linking him to the murder and cover up of what she said was undoubtedly a "state killing." Still, the trials continue even though they do nothing to indict the person who gave the orders.

When Khashoggi was murdered, the outrage had a major effect on US congressional support for the Saudis, manifested by growing opposition to the US support for the catastrophic Saudi war in Yemen. Several key Republicans turned against MbS, not in response to the humanitarian crisis in Yemen but in response to the public outcry against Khashoggi's horrific murder. A broad-based coalition of peace, human rights and humanitarian groups was able to convince a majority in both the House and the Senate to cut off support for the Saudi war in Yemen, a necessary step to hold MbS accountable for his complete disregard for human life. Even some of the most hawkish Republicans stepped up in response. Lindsey Graham, for example, called MbS a "wrecking ball" and voted to end support for the war, explaining in a statement, "I changed my mind because I'm pissed. The way the administration had handled [Khashoggi's murder] is just not acceptable." The bills were vetoed by President Trump but Congress is still trying to force the President's hand by including an amendment in the must-pass military funding bill (NDAA).

On the heels of Khashoggi's death, businesses, embarrassed by their Saudi connections, started pulling out of deals. Dozens of companies and notables, from the New York Times to Uber CEO to the head of the World Bank, decided to skip the major annual Saudi Future Investment Initiative, also known as Davos in the Desert. Talent agent Endeavor returned a \$400 million investment from Saudi Arabia. Several think tanks, including the Brookings Institution and the Middle East Institute, announced that they would no longer accept Saudi funding. In the past year, five PR firms — Glover Park Group, BGR Group, Harbour Group, CGCN Group and Gibson, Dunn & Crutche — have severed ties with the kingdom. At the behest of groups including the Human Rights Foundation, singer Nicki Minaj canceled



her performance in Saudi Arabia, citing concerns about the treatment of women, the LGBTQ community and freedom of expression. Freedom Forward was successful in getting the New York Public Library to cancel its "Youth Forum" with MbS's charity, the Misk Foundation.

Still, the Saudis have been investing huge sums of money in companies and notables to "rebrand" the Kingdom, prompting CODEPINK to launch a full-blown Boycott Saudi campaign in January. The campaign includes urging entertainers not to perform, asking Vice Media to stop producing promotional/propaganda videos for the Saudis, encouraging Lush Cosmetics to close their Saudi stores, and pushing the G20 nations to reconsider their decision to hold their 2020 meeting in Saudi Arabia. The campaign's long list of targets shows just how much money Saudi invests in whitewashing its crimes and how overreaching its influence is.

While human rights groups work to hold the private sector accountable, the biggest obstacle to holding Saudi accountable is the Trump administration continued support. Trump has focused on Saudi Arabia's key role as a purchaser of US weapons and an ally against Iran. In the wake of the September 14 attacks on the kingdom's oil infrastructure, Trump announced the deployment of 200 troops and Patriot missiles to Saudi Arabia to bolster its defenses against Iran. It is also Trump who vetoed legislation to end military assistance for the Saudi war on Yemen on three different occasions and went so far as to declare a state of emergency to sell \$8 billion in weapons to the Saudis while bypassing Congressional disapproval.

Trump has not only stood by MbS but pushed for his rehabilitation on the world stage. With the "Davos in the Desert" Future Investment Initiative taking place against this year, on October 29-31, Jared Kushner is expected to lead a robust US delegation. Big banks and investment firms,

including Goldman Sachs, BlackRock, CitiGroup, are once again lining up to attend. It seems the money to be made in the anticipated initial public offering of the world's wealthiest company, the Saudi oil company Aramco — valued at between \$1.5 trillion and \$2 trillion — is just too enticing.

Khashoggi himself was critical of the international community's unwillingness to take substantive steps to hold the Saudi regime accountable. In a column about the need for freedom of speech in the Arab world, he remarked that the repression by Arab governments "no longer carry the consequence of a backlash from the international community. Instead, these actions may trigger condemnation quickly followed by silence." The sad irony is that in response to his own murder, governments and private interests are proving his point.

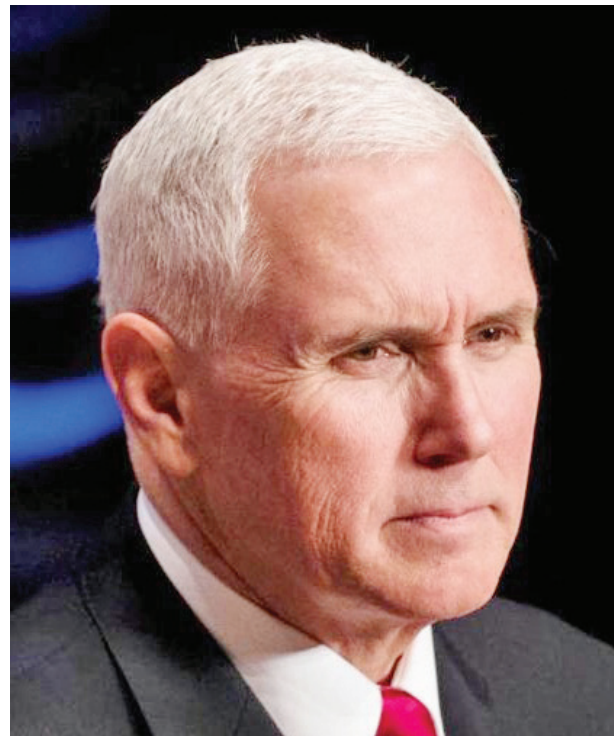
One year later, their silence has allowed MbS to tighten his grip on power and increase repression against political rivals and women activists. It has given the green light for governments around the world to sell weapons to the Saudis to destroy Yemen. It allows businesses to rake in billions in petrodollar investments and foreign entertainers to provide a veneer of normalcy and modernity to the kingdom. Far from being held accountable for Khashoggi's murder, MbS is thriving — thanks to his rehabilitation by an international community that cares more about money than it does human rights.

In times like this, it's difficult not to ask oneself: Who is more evil — the maniacal Saudi crown prince responsible for Khashoggi's murder and the murder of tens of thousands of Yemenis, or the mendacious world leaders and businesspeople who continue to embrace what should be a pariah state?

If Donald Trump exits the presidency, Mike Pence would pursue a hawkish foreign policy

By Jacob Heilbrunn

It remains improbable but less unlikely than a week ago: Mike Pence could become president. Now that an impeachment inquiry has been launched by congressional Democrats, Donald Trump is not proving his own best advocate. Instead of assembling a war room, he is relying on himself, retweeting messages about starting a civil war in America and suggesting that his antagonist, House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, should be arrested for treason. It savors more of panic than a coherent strategy.



Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell already allowed a unanimous consent request for the whistleblower documents to proceed. Today, McConnell piled Pelion on Ossa, announcing that if the House votes to impeach Trump, he would have no choice but to take it up. Meanwhile, former national security adviser John Bolton directly targeted Trump in a speech today at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, mocking Trump's belief that some kind of agreement with North Korea is possible: "They want a piece of something that we should not be prepared to give them." He also complained, "Within the Republican Party, there has always been a residual component. It pains me to say this, but I would say the strength of that component has been rising."

So it's not too soon to ask what a Pence presidency would actually look like. In contrast to Gerald Ford, who represented continuity with Richard M. Nixon's policies, a President Pence would likely break sharply with the America First program. Pence's entire record, particularly in the realm of foreign policy, is of a hawk. A Pence administration would represent a resurrection of the neoconservative wing of the GOP. Pence would be inclined to pursue an even harder line against Iran, North Korea and China, while dumping overboard as useless ballast Trump's protectionist trade policies.

Even a cursory look at Pence's beliefs makes it clear that while he has rhetorically embraced Trump, his convictions remain unchanged. Writing in the Hill, Hady Amr and Steve Feldstein perceptively observed in 2017, "There is a high probability that Pence would explicitly embed religious morals in U.S. foreign policy and push an activist social conservative agenda." A crusade for democracy and human rights might well be central to a Pence presidency.

But perhaps the most revealing Pence statement came at West Point this past May. In contrast to Trump, who has preached that America should not function as an international policeman, Pence has counseled a very different strategy. At West Point, for example, he stated:

If Mike Pence becomes president the Neocons will stage a comeback

Jacob Heilbrunn

NATIONALINTEREST—"It is a virtual certainty that you will fight on a battlefield for America at some point in your life. You will lead soldiers in combat. It will happen. Some of you will join the fight against radical Islamic terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq. Some of you will join the fight on the Korean Peninsula and in the Indo-Pacific, where North Korea continues to threaten the peace, and an increasingly militarized China challenges our presence in the region. Some of you will join the fight in Europe, where an aggressive Russia seeks to redraw international boundaries by force. And some of you may even be called upon to serve in this hemisphere.

And when that day comes, I know you will move to the sound of the guns and do your duty, and you will fight, and you will win. The American people expect nothing less.

So, wherever you're called, I urge you to take what you learned here and put it into practice. Put your armor on, so that when — not if — that day comes, you'll be able to stand your ground."

This is Lindsey Grahamism on steroids. Essentially, Pence is saying that war won't be a choice; it's inevitable. In his telling, the entire world is a Wild West in which the American sheriff has to stride into town, protect the locals, establish order, and set up shop permanently.

It's a vision of the world that's attractive to the likes of Bolton and other Republicans. It also adds one more incentive for Senate Republicans, many of whom are hawks, to contemplate jettisoning Trump. Does a restoration of the old order loom large?

Support for impeaching Trump hits new high

TERAN — As Politico reported, support for impeaching President Donald Trump is growing. A batch of recent polling confirms the Democratic impeachment push is gaining steam — including a new POLITICO/Morning Consult survey that shows for the first time that more voters support than oppose proceedings to remove Trump from office. The uptick is primarily among Democrats, as Republican voters surveyed continue to have Trump's back.

In the POLITICO/Morning Consult poll, 46 percent of voters said Congress should begin impeachment proceedings vs. 43 percent who said they should not. Eleven percent had no opinion. That support represented a 3-point bump from last week, when voters were evenly split.

The new POLITICO/Morning Consult poll comes as at least a half-dozen other media outlets have released surveys showing support for impeachment rising. The polls suggest that Democrats are gaining support for the impeachment inquiry as the Ukraine scandal unspools. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had resisted escalating the House's investigations of Trump because of the political risks, but the latest surveys suggest the party is unlikely to bleed support from Democratic voters over the decision to challenge Trump head-on.

Still, the move isn't without risk. The percentage of voters who disapprove of Trump's job performance in the latest poll, 56 percent, still exceeds the 46 percent who think Congress should begin impeachment proceedings to remove him, or the 51 percent who say they support the current impeachment inquiry — a step short of actual impeachment proceedings. Those findings indicate that there is a slice of moderate voters who disapprove of Trump but think Democrats are going too far.

And when the polls ask specifically about removing Trump from office, voters are sharply divided or tilt against it. In a Monmouth University poll released Tuesday, 49 percent of voters called the impeachment inquiry a "good idea," while 43 percent said it was a "bad idea." But only 44 percent said Trump should be forced out of office, fewer than the 52 percent who said he shouldn't.

While the 44 percent who think Trump should be booted from the White House is a



new high for the Monmouth poll, pollster Patrick Murray noted that it's within the margin of error of the previous high. "Yes, support for impeachment has increased over the last week, but it's not significantly higher than where it has been at other points in Trump's presidency," Murray said. "At least not yet." POLITICO and Morning Consult have been tracking voters' support for starting impeachment proceedings to remove Trump since early 2018. Until last week, the previous high-water mark was 42 percent, in August 2018. But that was eclipsed by the 43 percent figure last week, and then again by the 46 percent measure in the new poll.

Voters are becoming even more divided along partisan lines on impeachment. The POLITICO/Morning Consult poll shows eight-in-10 Democrats support starting impeachment proceedings, while only 11 percent oppose that. Among Republicans, only 9 percent support impeachment proceedings, compared to 85 percent who oppose. Independents are split: 43 percent support beginning impeachment proceedings, while 39 percent are in opposition.

Among the 41 percent of all voters who approve of the job Trump is doing as president, only 5 percent say Congress should begin impeachment proceedings against him, while 88 percent say Congress should not.

But not all of the 56 percent of voters who disapprove of Trump's job performance in

the new poll are on board with impeachment. Just under eight-in-10 of those who disapprove of Trump, 78 percent, say Congress should begin impeachment proceedings, while 11 percent say Congress should not and 12 percent are undecided.

Of those who think Congress should begin impeachment proceedings, 58 percent say it's because Trump committed an impeachable offense, such as treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors. By comparison, 38 percent of pro-impeachment voters say Trump "has proven he is unfit to serve and should be removed," even if he hasn't committed an impeachable offense.

Poll: 40 percent of Republicans say Trump 'probably' mentioned Biden on Ukraine call Also The Hill reported that, just 4 in 10 Republicans say they think President Trump discussed an investigation into Democratic presidential rival Joe Biden during a phone call with Ukraine's president, despite Trump acknowledging having done so, according to a new Monmouth University poll.

The survey, which was released Tuesday, found that 40 percent of Republican respondents said Trump "probably did" raise the idea of an investigation into Biden and Biden's son over unsubstantiated allegations of corruption during a July 25 conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Meanwhile, 29 percent of Republicans said Trump "probably did not" mention an

investigation into Biden.

That compares to 85 percent of Democrats and 61 percent of independents who said Trump likely raised the issue of an investigation into Biden during the call. In total, 62 percent of respondents said Trump likely raised the issue with the Ukrainian leader.

The Monmouth poll was conducted from Sept. 23 to Sept. 29, as the Ukraine story continued to unfold, with multiple reports emerging about Trump's interactions with the Ukrainian leader.

Trump on Sept. 22 acknowledged discussing Biden on the phone call, while a White House memo released three days later showed Trump pressing Zelensky to "look into" the Democratic candidate while repeatedly encouraging the Ukrainian leader to work with his personal attorney Rudy Giuliani as well as Attorney General William Barr.

"At the very least, it is clear from the readout that Trump discussed investigating Biden during the call. Even though this information was released by the White House itself, more than one quarter of Republicans still say Trump probably didn't make any mention of it. This seems to be another example of partisan tribalism at work in public opinion," said Patrick Murray, director of the independent Monmouth University Polling Institute.

The margin of error for the poll is 2.9 percentage points. Trump's interactions with Zelensky have embroiled his administration in controversy and prompted a formal impeachment inquiry in the House. Amid the scrutiny, Trump has repeatedly defended his conversations with Zelensky, describing their July phone call as "perfect" and claiming that a whistleblower complaint filed over the call is "fraudulent."

"As I learn more and more each day, I am coming to the conclusion that what is taking place is not an impeachment, it is a COUP," Trump asserted in a tweet Tuesday night. A majority of Americans said they oppose Trump's effort to ask a foreign government to investigate a political rival, according to the Monmouth poll.

Sixty-three percent of respondents in the poll said it was not appropriate for a U.S. president to make such a request. Just 21 percent said it was appropriate.

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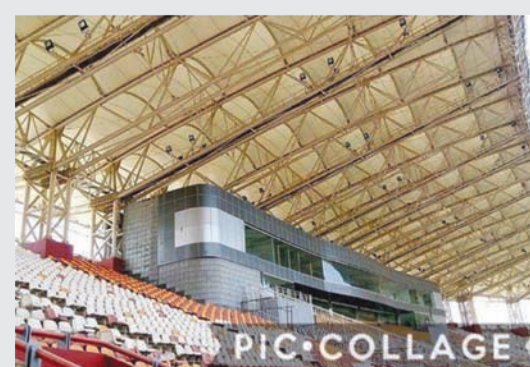
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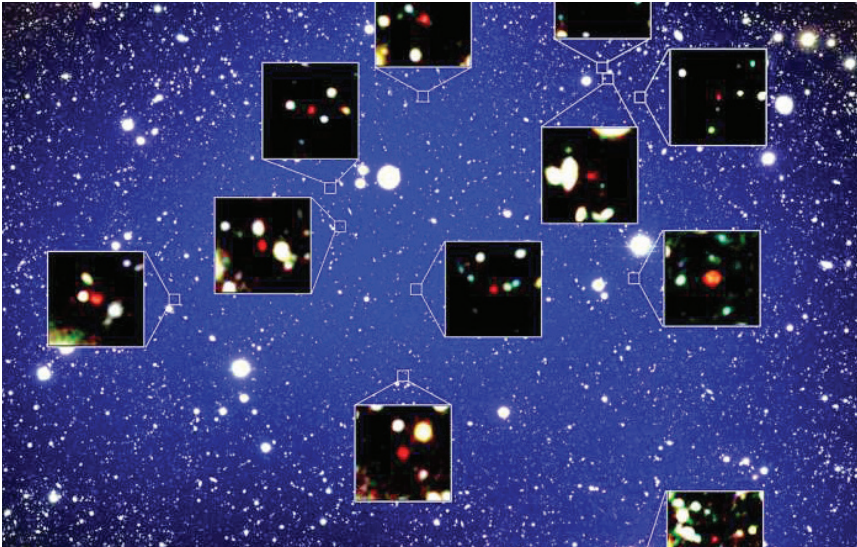


Oldest galaxy protocluster forms ‘queen’s court’

Using the Subaru, Keck, and Gemini Telescopes, an international team of astronomers has discovered a collection of 12 galaxies which existed about 13.0 billion years ago. This is the earliest protocluster ever found. One of the 12 galaxies is a giant object, known as Himiko, which was discovered a decade ago by the Subaru Telescope and named for a mythological queen in ancient Japan. This discovery suggests that large structures such as protoclusters already existed when the Universe was only about 800 million years old, 6 percent of its present age.

In the present Universe, galaxy clusters can contain hundreds of members, but how these clusters form is a big question in astronomy. To understand the formation of clusters, astronomers search for possible progenitors in the ancient Universe. A protocluster is a dense system of dozens of galaxies in the early Universe, growing into a cluster.

Yuichi Harikane, a JSPS fellow at the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan who led the team of astronomers explains, "A protocluster is a rare and special system with an extremely high density, and not easy



to find. To overcome this problem, we used the wide field of view of the Subaru Telescope to map a large area of the sky and look for protoclusters."

In the map of the Universe made by the Subaru Telescope, the team discovered a protocluster candidate, z660D, where galaxies are 15 times more concentrated than

normal for that era. The team then conducted follow-up spectroscopic observations using the W.M. Keck Observatory and Gemini North telescope, and confirmed 12 galaxies which existed 13.0 billion years ago, making it the earliest protocluster known to date.

Interestingly, one of the 12 galaxies in z660D was a giant object with a huge body of gas, known as Himiko, which was found previously by the Subaru Telescope in 2009. "It is reasonable to find a protocluster near a massive object, such as Himiko. However, we're surprised to see that Himiko was located not in the center of the protocluster, but on the edge 500 million light-years away from the center," said Masami Ouchi, a team member at the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan and the University of Tokyo, who discovered Himiko in 2009. Ironically, the mythological queen Himiko is also said to have lived cloistered away from her people. Ouchi continues, "It is still not understood why Himiko is not located in the center. These results will be a key for understanding the relationship between clusters and massive galaxies."

(Source: Science Daily)

The face of the average science Nobel Prize winner

By Yuen Yiu

We are less than a week away from the first announcement for this year's Nobel Prizes. In the past 10 years we have celebrated physicists who discovered graphene, the Higgs boson and gravitational waves, recognized doctors and physiologists who helped develop in vitro fertilization and fought malaria, and chemists who solved the mystery of DNA repair and developed molecular machines.

The Nobel Prizes are considered by many to be the most prestigious awards in science. We have written about how luck and politics, and even the Nobel Committee's specific policies, can play a role in determining the winner.

An article published by the BBC in 2012 analyzed various statistics about past winners of all six prizes and determined that the most likely Nobel Prize winner would be a 61-year-old American man from Harvard University who is married, doesn't wear glasses and shaves regularly.

Here we have combined 199, 201, and 165 faces of past Nobel laureates in physiology or medicine, physics, and chemistry respectively, to reveal what an average science winner looks like.

You may have seen similar articles that showed the average faces of women from around the world, or CEOs of Fortune



500 companies or soccer players at the 2018 World Cup. These faces were generated by algorithms that detect facial features in photos and then adjust the photos so that the faces can be overlaid on top of each other. For our experiment, we used a free online webapp.

It is perhaps no surprise that all three of our average faces look male, middle-aged and white, since those are arguably the top three visible features shared by the laureates.

For the science awards, the average age for a Nobel Prize winner is 58 and over 95% of laureates are male. For the physics prize, there have been more male laureates named

John (8), Robert (6), James (5), William (5), Charles (5), Max (4) or George (4), than there have been female laureates (3). More than 80% of all Nobel Prizes have gone to just six countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Russia or the former Soviet Union, and Sweden, home to the prize and its namesake Alfred Nobel.

The U.S. by itself has produced more Nobel laureates than any other country. Excluding the prizes in peace, economics and literature, there have been more than 280 Nobel-winning scientists hailing from the United States. The demographics of U.S. Nobel laureates mirror the group as a whole - only 10 have been female, and none were of African American descent.

In science, African American women, with their intersectional identity as both women and people of color, are even more underrepresented than either group. According to an article published in Physics Today earlier this year, there had been fewer than 100 physics doctorates ever awarded to African American women.

When this year's prizes are announced starting Oct. 7, the world will be introduced to another set of accomplished scientists. Whether those faces will look much like the average or add more diversity to the ranks of Nobel winners remains to be seen.

For scientists, failure can pay dividends down the road



By Brooks Hays

The value of failure, and learning from failure, is regularly preached by parents, coaches and mentors, but it is rarely studied.

Researchers at Northwestern University decided to take a closer look at the relationship between professional failure and success for young scientists. Their data analysis showed failure can have long-term benefits for career scientists.

When asked why he decided to study the topic, Dashun Wang, corresponding author and an associate professor of management and organizations at Northwestern's Kellogg School of Management, told UPI: "Partly because I fail often in what I do in a daily basis."

Science is difficult, and getting a scientific paper published in a reputable, peer-reviewed journal is even harder. But the latest research, published this week in the journal Nature Communications, suggests those who fail but try again benefit from persevering.

Wang and his colleagues analyzed publication histories of scientists who early in their careers applied for R01 grants from the National Institutes of Health between 1990 and 2005. The researchers divided the principle investigators into two groups: near-misses, individuals who just missed receiving funding, or near-wins, individuals who narrowly succeeded in getting funding for their research.

Wang and his colleagues, Northwestern researchers Yang Wang and Benjamin Jones, next looked at the number of papers scientists from the two groups published in the following decade, as well as how

successful those papers were. The scientists measured success by the number of times the paper was cited in other studies.

The data showed scientists from the near-miss group published 6 percent more hit papers than scientists from the near-win group.

Researchers made sure to account for the "weed-out" factor, whereby early-career failure forces the weakest members of the near-miss group to retire early, leaving only the most-determined scientists.

"The study design ensures both groups are similar in both observable and unobservable ways," Wang said. "In other words, they have the same amount of grit or perseverance."

"The conservative removal procedure is meant to rule out the effect," Wang said. "We artificially removed weak performers from the narrow-win group so that they have the same attrition rate as the near-miss group, but have an artificial boost in their performance."

Despite the artificial boost in performance, the near-miss group still outperformed the near-win group in the long-run.

The findings don't deny the reality of scientific funding and publication success — that more often than not, the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. "In some ways, our study also confirms the rich get richer dynamics, which is consistent with prior studies," Wang said. "For example, narrow wins got more funding than near misses in the next ten years. But what we're also showing here is that failure can also be beneficial — for those who stayed in, they outperformed narrow-wins."

MIT scientists build bomb test to ensure nuclear disarmament compliance



Engineers at MIT have developed a new nuclear warhead verification test using neutron beams. The new technology could help weapons inspectors do their job.

Currently, parties to nuclear disarmament treaties don't actually destroy warheads. Nations don't want regulators to be privy to nuclear engineering secrets.

Instead of destroying warheads, Russia and the United States disarm nuclear missile and bomb deliver systems. To demonstrate their compliance with the START Treaty, for example, the U.S. military sawed the wings off B-52 bombers and piled them in the desert for Russia to see.

As a result, stockpiles of idle nuclear weapons remain vulnerable to attack, theft or accidental detonation.

"There's a real need to preempt these kinds of dangerous scenarios and go after these stockpiles," Areg Danagoulian, an MIT nuclear scientist, told MIT News. "And that really means a verified dismantlement of the weapons themselves."

Danagoulian and his colleagues, building off of earlier computer simulations, developed and tested a new method for establishing basic facts about warheads slated for dismantlement.

The method utilizes a neutron beam. For their test, researchers sent the beam horizontally through a warhead proxy. After passing through the target, the beam passes through a lithium filter, which works to scramble the information embedded in the altered beam. Finally, the beam is sent to a glass detector, which captures the data recorded by the beam.

The data can be analyzed to confirm the beam passed through an actual warhead.

For the test, scientists used molybdenum and tungsten for their warhead proxy. The two metals are similar to plutonium.

The test can identify the specific isotope of the target element, which could allow inspectors to confirm the identity of a warhead before it's disassembled.

"At the low energy range, the neutrons' interactions are extremely isotope-specific," Danagoulian said. "So you do a measurement where you have an isotopic tag, a signal which itself embeds information about the isotopes and the geometry. But you do an additional step which physically encrypts it."

At the same time, the physical data scrambling built into the test method allows specific details about the makeup of the weapon — engineering secrets — to remain undetected.

"You could, in principle, do it with computers, but computers are unreliable," Danagoulian said. "They can be hacked, while the laws of physics are immutable."

The test could also help inspectors compare the makeup of one nuclear warhead to others, allowing them to confirm that a stockpile of warheads for disarmament are all authentic weapons — not one real weapon and a bunch of counterfeits.

Scientists previously demonstrated the method's potential using computer models, but performing a physical test could help pave the way for the adoption of the test method by world governments.

"Simulations capture the physics, but they don't capture system instabilities," Danagoulian said. "Experiments capture the whole world."

(Source: UPI)

Galaxy found to float in a tranquil sea of halo gas

Using one cosmic mystery to probe another, astronomers have analyzed the signal from a fast radio burst, an enigmatic blast of cosmic radio waves lasting less than a millisecond, to characterize the diffuse gas in the halo of a massive galaxy.

A vast halo of low-density gas extends far beyond the luminous part of a galaxy where the stars are concentrated. Although this hot, diffuse gas makes up more of a galaxy's mass than stars do, it is nearly impossible to see. In November 2018, astronomers detected a fast radio burst that passed through the halo of a massive galaxy on its way toward Earth, allowing them for the first time to get clues to the nature of the halo gas from an elusive radio signal.

"The signal from the fast radio burst exposed the nature of the magnetic field around the galaxy and the structure of the halo gas. The study proves a new and transformative technique for exploring the nature of galaxy halos," said J. Xavier Prochaska, professor of astronomy and astrophysics at UC Santa Cruz and lead author of a paper on the new findings published online September 26 in Science.

Astronomers still don't know what produces fast radio bursts, and only recently have they been able to trace some of these very short, very bright radio signals back to the galaxies in which they originated. The November 2018 burst (named FRB 181112) was detected and localized by the instrument that pioneered this technique, CSIRO's Australian Square Kilometre Array Pathfinder (ASKAP) radio telescope. Follow-up observations with other telescopes identified not only its host galaxy but also a bright galaxy in front of it.

"When we overlaid the radio and optical images, we could see straight away that the fast radio burst pierced the halo of this coincident foreground galaxy and, for the first time, we had a direct way of investigating this otherwise invisible matter surrounding this galaxy," said coauthor Cherie Day at Swinburne University of Technology, Australia.

A galactic halo contains both dark matter and ordinary ("baryonic") matter, which is expected to be mostly hot ionized gas. While the luminous part of a massive galaxy might be around 30,000 light-years across, its roughly spherical halo is ten times larger. Halo gas fuels star formation as it falls in toward the center of the galaxy, while other processes (such as supernova explosions) can eject material out of the star-forming regions and into the galactic halo. One reason astronomers want to study the halo gas is to better understand these ejection processes, which can shut down star formation.

"The halo gas is a fossil record of these ejection processes, so our observations can inform theories about how matter is ejected and how magnetic fields are threaded through galaxies," Prochaska said.

Contrary to expectations, the results of the new study indicate a very low density and a feeble magnetic field in the halo of this intervening galaxy.

"This galaxy's halo is surprisingly tranquil," Prochaska said. "The radio signal was largely unperturbed by the galaxy, which is in stark contrast to what previous models predict would have happened to the burst."

The signal of FRB 181112 consisted of several pulses, each lasting less than 40 microseconds (ten thousand times shorter than the blink of an eye). The short duration of the pulses puts an upper limit on the density of the halo gas, because passage through a denser medium would lengthen the radio signals. The researchers calculated that the density of the halo gas must be less than a tenth of an atom per cubic centimeter (equivalent to several hundred atoms in a volume the size of a child's balloon).

"Like the shimmering air on a hot summer's day, the tenuous atmosphere in this massive galaxy should warp the signal of the fast radio burst. Instead we received a pulse so pristine and sharp that there is no signature of this gas at all," said coauthor Jean-Pierre Macquart, an astronomer at the International Center for Radio Astronomy Research at Curtin University, Australia.

(Source: Science Daily)

NASA's InSight mission tunes in to the strange sounds of Mars

Mars is full of subtle sounds and thanks to NASA's InSight mission, we're finally able to hear them.

The stationary probe's seismometer, the Seismic Experiment for Interior Structure, is sensitive enough to pick up the most gentle of vibrations.

The seismometer has been listening out for earthquakes on Mars. Seismic activity can paint a picture of the interior of a planet and how it was formed, which is one of InSight's main objectives for Mars.

InSight landed on Mars in November 2018 and placed the seismometer on the Martian surface in February. But the Red Planet didn't produce any sounds until April.

And even then, something strange happened. It's a seismic signal that was recorded April 6, and by all indications, the InSight team believes this sound is a quake from within the planet rather than something on the surface. But the signal was at a high frequency and nothing like it has been produced since.

InSight has detected more than 100 events since April and the researchers estimate 21 of them could be quakes.

NASA shared some recordings of rumblings captured in May and July. Both occurred below the human range of hearing, but were processed so we could hear them. The May quake had a magnitude of 3.7 and the July quake reached 3.3.

Mars doesn't have tectonic plates, which are the cause of quakes on Earth. Martian quakes are caused by cooling and contraction, which create stress fractures on the crust.

Mars has a cratered surface, which allows quakes to persist for about a minute. On Earth, quakes last for seconds at a time. The researchers have been learning to filter out other sounds that the sensitive seismometer picks up.

In December, InSight picked up the sound of wind on Mars. "It's been exciting, especially in the beginning, hearing the first vibrations from the lander," said Constantinos Charalambous, an InSight science team member at Imperial College London. "You're imagining what's really happening on Mars as InSight sits on the open landscape."

When the InSight arm moves, friction can be heard in the seismometer, producing intriguing sounds.

Wind picks up during the day, so it's easier for the researchers to listen out for quakes at night.

But nightfall comes with its own unique sounds. The InSight researchers call them "dinks and donks" - the expansion and contraction of parts inside the seismometer, possibly due to heat loss.

(Source: CNN)

Arbaeen

Imam Khomeini Intl. Airport to operate extra flights for Arbaeen

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Imam Khomeini International Airport is scheduled to operate extra flights to cater for religious pilgrimage of Arbaeen, which falls on October 19 this year.

Arbaeen flights from IKIA to Najaf and Baghdad will be operated from October 9 to November 2 and 509 extra flights have received flight permits until September 29, announced the deputy director of Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC) for airport operations.

Hassan Khoshkhoo predicted that the number of passengers coming to Imam Khomeini International Airport in the next few days for Arbaeen ceremonies will be much higher than previous years and this year all flights will be operating through terminal 1 and Salam terminal at IKAC.

He said the airport has made all the required preparations for the arrival of the pilgrims, IKAC News reported.

Arbaeen pilgrimage, aka Arbaeen trek, is a characteristic spiritual exercise in which hundreds of thousands of Iranians along with other nationals participate. The long treks will be destined to Karbala, where Imam Hussain (AS), the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is laid to rest.

The event marks an end to the 40-day mourning period following martyrdom of the Imam and his loyal companions at the Battle of Karbala on Muharram 10 in the year 61 AH (680 CE).

Police recovers historical relics from antique dealer in Tehran

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Iranian authorities have confiscated tens of objects which are estimated to date from the 1st and 2nd millennium BC from an antique dealer in downtown Tehran.

On Saturday, the police was informed of illegal activity of a man in trading antiquities along the Manouchehri St. in downtown Tehran.

"During an inspection of his shop, 50 coins, 16 mace heads, [an] axe head, small animal skulls, a sculpture of a dragon head, some flower pots, eight bracelets, antique candle holders and ... were discovered and seized," ISNA reported on Tuesday.



According to official cultural heritage experts, [some of] the recovered objects, which are made from bronze, date back to the 1st and 2nd millennium BC.

The experts say that the relics were probably unearthed in western Lorestan province, the report added.

Lorestan was inhabited by Iranian Indo-European peoples, including the Medes, in c. 1000 BC. Cimmerians and Scythians intermittently ruled the region from about 700 to 625 BC. Of ancient highlight of the region are the 'Luristan Bronzes' that comprise small cast objects decorated with bronze sculptures from the Early Iron Age, found in large numbers in Lorestan and Kermanshah provinces in western Iran.

Under the Achaemenid king Cyrus the Great, Lorestan was incorporated into the growing Achaemenid Empire in about 540 BC and successively was part of the Seleucid, Parthian, and Sassanid dynasties.

ROUND THE GLOBE

Archaeological monuments zone of Xochicalco

Xochicalco is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a fortified political, religious and commercial center from the troubled period of 650–900 that followed the break-up of the great Mesoamerican states such as Teotihuacan, Monte Alban, Palenque and Tikal.



The decline of the political and economic primacy of Teotihuacan in the 7th and 8th centuries CE marked the end of the Mesoamerican Classic Period and the beginning of an age of some two centuries that saw the fall of other large Classic capitals, such as Monte Alban, Palenque, La Quemada, and Tikal, which had dominated large territories.

The result was a reduction of urban populations or even complete abandonment. There was considerable movement of peoples and new relationships were established between different regions such as the Central Highlands, the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, Yucatan, Chiapas, and Guatemala.

This period, from ca. 650 to 900 CE, is known as the Epiclassic Period. New expansionist societies developed and their survival depended upon their success in controlling scarce resources, development of specialized productions, and dominance of commercial routes.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran 2nd among world's fastest growing tourist destinations

1 → In the ranking, Iran is followed by Egypt which its foreign arrivals were up 36 percent, Uganda with 31.9 percent, Nepal with 24 percent, Slovenia with 23 percent, Vietnam with 19.9 percent, Georgia with 16.9 percent, and South Korea with 15.1 percent.

Iran welcomed some four million foreign nationals during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21 – August 22), which shows 30 percent hike, compared with the same period last year, according to official data compiled by the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts.

The Islamic Republic attracted 7.8 million foreign travelers during the last Iranian year, which shows 50 percent growth year on year, the ministry announced earlier in September.

The 2019 Travel Risk Map, which shows the risk level around the world, puts Iran among countries with "insignificant risk", a category where the UK, Denmark, Switzerland, Norway, and Finland are placed in.

The country boasts hundreds of historical sites such as bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bath-houses, madrasas, mausoleums, churches, towers, and mansions, of which 22 being inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list

Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country aims to increase the number of tourist arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.



Tourists visit the UNESCO-registered Imam Square (originally named as Naqsh-e Jahan Square) in Isfahan, central Iran, April 12, 2018.

Remnants of centuries-old structure found in northwest Iran



HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Archaeologists have recently unearthed a vast centuries-old structure during excavation in Rab'-e Rashidi, a 14th-century educational complex in East Azarbaijan province, northwest Iran. "Remnants of a vast structure, measuring some 3,600 square meters, have been found in six archaeological trenches in Rab'-e Rashidi, where an excavation and restoration project is underway," senior Iranian archaeologist Bahram Ajorlou said on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

"The newly discovered structure is estimated to date from the 8th century AH (1299 CE – 1397 CE) to 10th century AH (1495 CE – 1591 CE) and it also bear fragments of tilework, which date back to the 8th century AH," he explained.

The archaeologists have also discovered three stages of wall architecture, an evidence of industrial activities. They have acquired some data from archaeobotanical researches, Ajorlou concluded.

The third round of excavation and restoration work is carried out by a panel of international cultural heritage experts, archaeologists and restorers from Iran, the German

Archaeological Institute, the Otto-Friedrich University in Bamberg, and the Louvre Museum in Paris.

The Cultural Heritage and Tourism Research Center in collaboration with Tabriz Islamic Art University completed the first phase of the international project to lay the groundwork for a UNESCO recognition.

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

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

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

Iran is considering possible inscription of the site on the UNESCO World Heritage list by 2025.

Sotheby's to put arts of the Islamic world on auction

HERITAGE **TEHRAN** — Sotheby's, a British-founded American multinational corporation headquartered in New York City, has announced highlights of arts from the Islamic world, which will go under hammer in its upcoming auction.

The objects include masterpieces of calligraphy, painting, ceramics, metalwork, jewelry and furniture, spanning several continents and centuries – with the earliest pieces stretching back to the seventh century, Benedict Carter, Sotheby's Islamic art specialist and head of sale has said, Art Daily reported on Wednesday.

"Viewed together, it [the selection of objects] is an undeniable testament to the sophisticated, inventive and diverse output of the Islamic world. Alongside our biannual sale, we are also thrilled to be presenting a stand-alone single-owner auction of just under a hundred manuscripts put together by a distinguished collector with an expert eye and eclectic taste.

Amongst the highlights are a large holy Qur'an leaf in



A large Qur'an leaf in gold Kufic script on blue vellum, Near East, North Africa or Southern Spain, 9th-10th century CE (est. £400,000-600,000). (Courtesy Sotheby's)

gold Kufic script on blue vellum, Near East, North Africa or Southern Spain, 9th-10th century AD (est. £400,000-600,000); an elegant Safavid brass celestial globe and frame, 17th-century Persia (est. £80,000-120,000); a diamond, ruby and emerald-set gold Manga Malai necklace, India, 19th century (est. £40,000-60,000); and a gem-set gold and enameled sarpech, India, Benares, circa 1850 (est. £60,000-80,000).

Sotheby's has been uniting collectors with world-class works of art since 1744. Sotheby's became the first international auction house when it expanded from London to New York (1955), the first to conduct sales in Hong Kong (1973), India (1992) and France (2001), and the first international fine art auction house in China (2012). Today, Sotheby's presents auctions in ten different salesrooms, including New York, London, Hong Kong and Paris, and Sotheby's Bid Now program allows visitors to view all auctions live online and place bids from anywhere in the world.

The live auction begins on October 23; 04:30 PM +0330.

Egypt gets back looted gold coffin displayed in New York

CAIRO (Reuters) - Egypt exhibited on Tuesday the golden coffin of an ancient Egyptian priest that was returned by New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art following the discovery that it had been looted and illegally sold.

The finely decorated coffin is inscribed with the name Nedjemankh, a priest of the ram-headed god Heryshef of Herakleopolis, and dates to the first century B.C.

The coffin had been buried in Egypt for 2,000 years before it was stolen from the country's Minya region in the aftermath of the 2011 uprising that toppled veteran leader Hosni Mubarak.

Officials say it was smuggled through several countries by an international trafficking ring before being sold to an unwitting Metropolitan Museum two years ago for \$4 million.

It went on display there for six months before judicial

officials presented evidence that its ownership history documents were forgeries.

"The U.S. side was cooperative and carried out an investigation and proved that the piece ... was taken out of Egypt illegally and that its original location is the Arab Republic of Egypt," Egyptian Antiquities Minister Khaled El-Enany told a news conference in Cairo.

The wooden coffin is not large, but its gold casing carries fine hieroglyphic inscriptions and is embedded with black crystal, ivory and lapis lazuli, said Mostafa Waziri, secretary general of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities.

It is due to go on public display in due course at Cairo's National Museum of Egyptian Civilization.

Egypt has recovered several hundred artifacts annually in recent years as it tries to bring back items it says were smuggled or illegally sold.



The Gold Coffin of Nedjemankh surrounded by members of media during a news conference to announce its return from the U.S. and display at the National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC) in Cairo, Egypt October 1, 2019. REUTERS/Amr Abdallah Dalsh

UK couple's Ibiza Airbnb rental didn't exist as listed

Ian and Denise Feltham, a couple from the UK, made vacation plans based on an Airbnb listing for a property that apparently didn't exist.

The Felthams' trip to the Spanish island Ibiza included superluxurious accommodations for £9,610 (about \$11,800) for two weeks in a VIP penthouse, complete with a Turkish bath, hot tub and marble-decked terrace.

The dog-friendly listing -- the Felthams were traveling with their two Yorkshire terriers -- seems to have been based on a real apartment. Sort of.

Photos of the Airbnb listing, removed following The Sunday Times story detailing the botched holiday, were apparently compiled

from various condos for rent or sale on the Las Boas complex's website, according to a man reached by CNN Travel at Las Boas.

The Las Boas staff member called the Airbnb listing a "fake," saying no such property even exists among the 40 units we saw on Las Boas' website. The man was reached at the telephone number listed on the complex's website but declined to give his name or say anything more about the matter.

Ian Feltham has confirmed to CNN that photos on Las Boas' website match photos posted with the Airbnb listing he and his wife booked.

Maria Cala, who owns a Las Boas unit and is co-founder of The Suites, a residential

rental website that lists some Las Boas units, expressed confusion at the Felthams' rental property, explaining that the Turkish bath promised with the so-called "VIP" penthouse is for the entire complex -- not one unit.

She also said that while "there are some nice penthouses in the building with direct access by lift," there are no private lifts, another amenity the Ibiza property listing had promised the Felthams.

Cala said that some owners do rent out their places on Airbnb, and according to coverage in The Sun, Airbnb is investigating the listing.

The Sun published the following statement from Airbnb: "Our handling of this issue fell

below our usual high standards and we have reached out to the guest to apologize and refund them in full. We have suspended the listing while we investigate and are continuing to work with the guest to make things right."

Airbnb did not immediately respond to CNN's requests for comment via phone and email.

Ian Feltham, who CNN Travel first reached through LinkedIn's messaging system, expressed extreme dissatisfaction with Airbnb's handling of the debacle, which had the Felthams scrambling to find a dog-friendly hotel when they discovered that their booking literally did not exist.

(Source: MSN)

Arba'een preparation: Towards global justice

INTERNATIONAL
d e s k

TEHRAN — In the name of Allah who states "Shall We treat those who believe and work deeds of righteousness the same as those who do mischief on earth? Shall we treat those who guard against evil, the same as those who turn aside from the right?" Q38:28

May the everlasting peace and blessings of Allah be upon His noble servant, our master Muhammad (S) and his exceptional progeny.

Undoubtedly, most important thing that draws the attention of the world at this time is the forthcoming 40th day mourning of Imam Husain (AS), at Karbala - Iraq, where millions faithful annually converge at the largest gathering on earth. Beside hospitable reception and utmost healthcare provision put in place for the pilgrims, security is jointly ensured. Also, significant role is played by the religious authorities, government, scholars, non-governmental organizations and individuals in the symbolic journey in search of reward of Allah in the services.

The event, observed across the world including Nigeria where millions symbolically trekked to Husainiyyatu Baqiyyatul-lah, Zaria, where the revered leader of the Islamic Movement would deliver speech before its destruction in 2015. This is in line with narration of Imam Ja'far (AS) that equated visit to their rightful followers to that of A'immah, for those faithful incapable of the distant journey. In contrast to the unscientific and narrow-minded thought that Ashura was a bygone historic tragedy, it is an everlasting warfare between right and wrong, truth and false and of course justice and oppression. This was the lesson maintained by the late Imam Khomeini in his popular expression, every day is Ashura and every place is Karbala! Looking at the increasing attention focused on the oppressed progeny of the noble prophet (S), the way some people try to misguide the Ummah on baseless allegations is not only surprising but very disheartening.

■ Love of the prophet's progeny

The love of the progeny of the noble prophet is mandatory on the Ummah. Allah stated "... no reward do I ask of you for this except the love of those near of kin..." Q42:23. It is good to stress the fact that the companions of the prophet were the first generation of Muslims obliged to love, respect and pay allegiance to them. So they were in no way equal to them. With higher degrees, the progeny were elevated above the companions. It is pertinent to stress the fact that love of the Ahlul-bait cannot be merged with that of their enemies. In fact, the unfortunate Ashura tragedy is directly



linked with the episode of Saqeefa. The prophet (S) said "Husain is from me and I am from Husain, O Allah do love he who loves Husain". As he set out on the path of his grandfather for a reform, the Imam described the mission "I have not risen up, but to safeguard the religion of my grandfather, the Prophet!" But for the great sacrifice of the Imam and his followers, Islam would have been a thing of history! The most illogical, unscientific and paradoxical expressions are those equating the two conflicting parties together! It is completely impossible to claim the love of Imam Ali and that of Mu'awiya or Imam Husain and Yazid, son of the leader of unjust group!

■ Denouncing oppression

Certainly, the murder and mutilation of Imam Husain was the worst atrocity in human history. However, some people try shelter-skelter to exonerate the culprits from their deliberate atrocity. It is in line with baseless claims they created the widely circulated political joker accusing the Shi'ah of abusing the companions of the prophets. Evidently, the Shi'ah are known world over as the vanguards of the noble messenger and Islam entirely. Those against Shi'ah equate Imam Ali with Mu'awiya, and some even exonerate Yazid from his devilish action. They attack the way Shi'ah mourn the Karbala tragedy and speak against them in the name of keeping off from the acts of predecessors. There is no wisdom in such assertion because Allah has given us the holy Qur'an as a yardstick to differentiate right and wrong and justice and oppression. Allah has prohibited oppression upon Himself, condemned it among His servants and strongly warned against it. Then why should

we remain silent against oppression? Why can't we speak against oppressors and mischief-makers? "Is then the men who believe no better than the men who are rebellious and wicked? Not equal are they". Q32:18

Certainly, we were taught to do right, enjoined to avoid injustice and speak against it "And do not incline to those who are unjust, lest the fire touch you, and you have no guardians besides Allah, then you shall not be helped" Q11:113. Islam is generally opposed to oppression even against animals. That is why the Shi'ah are always against it from whichever angle it comes. Allah states "Shall We then treat the people of Faith like the people of sin? What is the matter with you? How judge ye? Q68:35-36

■ Support for justice

Our denouncement of oppression expresses our quest for justice at the same time. "You are the best community raised for the good of mankind. You enjoin what is good and forbid what is wrong, and you believe in Allah" Q3:110. The love of Ahlul-bait condemns oppression and promotes justice. This was the philosophy behind the first trek to Karbala by Jabir ibn Abd-Allah al-Ansari, a renowned companion of the Holy Prophet on the 40th day of Imam's martyrdom where he coincidentally met the surviving members of the prophet's family under Imam Ali Zain al-Abideen and his audacious Aunt Sayyida Zainab! Unavoidably, one must sympathize with either of the two parties. And regardless of all inclinations, people with a common sense of humanity cannot but side with the oppressed. Edward Granville Browne, the English orientalist, said "is there any heart not to bleed and grieve when told about

Karbala? Even non-Muslims cannot deny the chastity of the soul manifested in this war under the banner of Islam. On his part, the India's political and spiritual leader, Mahatma Gandhi said "I have carefully read the biography of Imam Husain and have contemplated the events of Karbala. I am sure Indians must follow his ideas on the path to victory!"

Then, with whom is your sympathy? There is no cause to be confused on the unambiguous position of the two parties. Right from the occurrence of the incidence, some supported the oppressors and others were misled to equate them with the oppressed, which is an obvious form of oppression. Punishing the criminals and rewarding the good doers is the tradition of Allah. This is what all verses of the noble Qur'an and sayings of the noble messenger attest. Therefore, one must clearly analyze the two parties and take a right stand so that he or she may not be raised with oppressors and enemies of the blessed prophetic family on the Last day. Al-Tabarani related from Ibn Abbas that "no one shall be able to move from his place of reckoning on the day of Judgment until he has stated four things: how he spent his life and wealth, where he got his wealth from? And shall also be asked about the love of the Ahlul-bait.

■ In response to call of the imam

The popular wording of the Imam was "Indeed I went out claiming reform for the Ummah (nation of my grandfather - Allah's prophet). I want order all that Islam has ordained and prohibit atrocious behaviors". But for the great sacrifice, Islam would have been long forgotten! Generally speaking, the commemoration reminds the faithful on the need for an unflinching stand in the fight against oppression for the establishment of justice on earth. Obviously, this can bring about change in the society as Ashura was the catalyst for the success of Islamic revolution in Iran. Allah states "... verily, never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change it themselves with their own souls ..." Q13:11

As the world commemorates the 40th day mourning of the oppressed Imam, it must embrace the path of justice and righteousness and reject oppression and exploitation of the weak as did the courageous Imam. May the peak of Allah be upon Husain, Aliyu son of Husain, children of Husain, companions of Husain, and His endless curse on their murderers to the Day of reckoning.

Using the august medium, I reiterate the need for international community to join hands in support of justice and unconditional release of Sheikh Ibraheem el-Zakzaky (H) and his disciples.

Deciphering the extremism narrative

By Mohammad-Mahmoud Ould Mohamedou

AlJazeera — When on October 27, 2018, anti-Semite Robert Bowers opened fire on the Tree of Life synagogue in the US city of Pittsburgh, killing 11 people, CNN and BBC called it a "mass shooting", while the Huffington Post described it as "slaughter".

When Islamophobe Darren Osborne drove a van into a crowd near the Finsbury Park Mosque in London on June 19, 2017, re-enacting a terrorist modus operandi seen earlier in London, Berlin and Nice, the same news outlets also refrained from using the term terrorism for several hours, initially depicting the attack as a "collision". The same semantic tip-toeing was at play when, later that summer, white supremacist James Alex Fields Jr drove a car into a crowd peacefully protesting a neo-Nazi rally in Charlottesville, Virginia.

In a familiar pattern cemented over the past few years, Western mainstream media have conspicuously shied away from using the term "terrorist" in attacks when the perpetrator was not a Muslim. Yet, in similar cases, the same media - and media commentators in general - did not hesitate in resorting to the "t-word" when attackers were Muslims, in fact, they did so automatically.



Rober Bowers killed 11 worshippers at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018.

It is hardly a surprise that what we can by now call a double standard on calling a criminal act terrorism has materialised. The international system is rife with such power asymmetries and one would be naive to expect discrimination not to find its way even in security issues that affect us all. The new racism does travel that way. Today, it is able to reinvent itself as per the security zeitgeist. Ensclosed in the very phraseology that moves forward the securitisation narrative, racism has successfully coloured what terrorism is widely (mis)understood to be today.

Above and beyond the division it sows, this representation has now become conceptually and practically untenable. The notion of terrorism is in a state of conceptual deformation whereby the elasticity it has been given since the 9/11 attacks allows it to serve almost exclusively the purpose of identifying threats against Western states and societies coming primarily from faceless Muslim attackers.

To be certain, terrorism suffered by other regions is reported regularly and portrayed equally as an ill of our times to be dealt with urgently. For, in effect, according to the Global Terrorism Index released annually by the Institute of Economics and Peace (IEP), the first casualties of terrorism this year, last year and the year before were Iraqis, Afghans, Nigerians, Syrians, Pakistanis, Somalis, Indians and Yemenis. Yet the core representation of terrorism in the Western media and policy spheres is centrally and invariably the menace it represents to the West.

In such a context, where ethos stealthily becomes pathos, variations on the terrorism terminology were introduced in the early 2010s, when initiatives started proliferating on combating violent extremism (CVE) and preventing violent extremism (PVE).

On their face, these approaches, notably the "preventing" one, seek to de-militarise counterterrorism and "humanise" the fight against terrorism by tackling upstream its so-called "root causes". In practice, however, such perspectives have hardly strayed from the fundamental tenets of the post-9/11 discourse and in practice are overwhelmingly concerned not with extremism or radicalisation generically - say, of the far-right type in the US or the anti-immigration one in Germany - but principally with its Islamist, if not Islamic, incarnations.

In inviting law enforcement officers, social service workers, school teachers and indeed an ever-expanding circle of authorities to report individuals who might be susceptible to radicalisation or extremism - however problematically defined - such official programmes have more often than not resulted in the stigmatisation and alienation of specific communities, such as African-Americans and Arab-Americans in the United States and Muslims in the United Kingdom and France.

Evidently, ethnocentric and a sleight of hand, such disciplining of the radicalised/violent extremists travels paradigmatically as these actors are seen as being held by their cultural or religious predicaments; trapped, they have to reconcile so as to exit their near-natural violence and backwardness, or so goes the de-radicalisation narrative.

If such weaponisation of social work, martialisation of education and nurturing of a Big Brother mentality have been dangerously eating away at the fabric of social ties in the North and at democracy itself, things are not much better in the South. Bandwagoning on the fighting-terrorism mantra, many a neo-authoritarian southern leader, such as Egypt's Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, Syria's Bashar al-Assad or Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman have been able to repackage their repressive and dispossessive policies as part of the struggle against extremism.

Power cloaks itself in the irresistible, urgent and unquestionable language of terrorism, radicalisation and extremism. Elusive and ever imprecise scientifically, a fluid terminology - underwritten by a deterministic focus on religion - has come to dominate the discourse about the use of political violence, whether in conflicts around the world or in rising discontent at the heart of the Western metropolises.

The problematic larger setting of this call-and-response is, however, the absence of a culturally-consistent and politically-dispassionate intelligent framework to understand the question of contemporary extremism in its fullness and its postmodern permutations.

Nigerians to celebrate 59th anniversary of independence

By Abdullahi Junaidu

NIGERIA — Remember it's going to relegation always in terms of education, security, health sector, infrastructure and other social amenities,

It is among the first class countries in terms of poverty, bad leadership, human right violation, injustice, corruption and bribery.

The title given to the country as an independent is fake, actually it is the western powers that rule and control the country through their proxy servers led by the so called President.

Our natural and mineral resources are looted and transported to west, our bad leaders loot our treasury and keep in the banks of these western countries.

Nigerians are suffering from life's hardship; hunger and poverty cause by these filthy leaders.

3 square meal is difficult for more than 70% of Nigerians while family of these leaders are there studying and making luxury life at foreign with public funds

If you could remember in 2017 one of the President family in person of Yusuf had an accident when he was driving a motorbike of 50million dollar worth, while some of the Nigerians are there dying due to lack and insufficient medical facilities.

It is in this Nigeria that it's coward soldiers massacred over 1000+ of its innocent citizens while arm bandit and kidnappers are there playing their role with no serious measure from the Gov't side.

It is in this Nigeria that its leaders violate court orders, Sheikh Zakzaky and Sambo Dasuki's case is an example, while not less than 2 competent courts ordered their release but the Gov't refuse to comply.

Today this Gov't led by incompetent, dullard, moron, monster, clueless, bloodthirsty and tyrant President Buhari is the worst and most corrupt Government in the history of Nigeria.

At this day, Nigeria has no single achievement to celebrate rather than killing thousands of its citizens.

In the history of Nigeria, Buhari gov't is the worst



in terms of human right violation, insecurity and contempt of court order.

Nigeria will go nowhere if these people that are in power now continue to lead the country, and most important, the system that ruled the country supposed to be change.

God bless good people.

BBC censured for painting Tory ministers "Brexit champions"

INTERNATIONAL
d e s k

TEHRAN—The British-run BBC has become target of new wave of criticism - this time over a news story branding three Tory MPs as "Brexit champions".

Inside a story published on Sunday, the agency refers to cabinet ministers Michael Gove, Jacob Rees-Mogg and Steve Barclay as "champions" in both the headline and in social media posts.

While the story does mention the protests outside the Manchester Central complex, it was the way it showed the three Brexiteers that readers objected to.

With more than 1,400 responses on Twitter alone, Remain users of Twitter were quick to object the article.

The story was shared by the Brexit secretary as part of propaganda posted to the #CPC19 conference hashtag, as well as pro-Brexit pages including "Get Britain Out", the London-based website New European reported.

It follows the corporation provoking a furious backlash for reprimanding Breakfast presenter Naga Munchetty after she called out racism from US president Donald Trump.

"Champions? And you lot claim to be unbiased," said Gary Gallachan.

"Champions' — have they won anything?" tweeted



Catio Miles.

"Why isn't the word 'champions' in quotes?" asked Freddie Johnson.

"Three Brexit champions. Wow. Not a quotation mark in sight. Pravda-esque," said @pickle1805.

"When did Conservative Home start writing your headlines?" pondered Twitter user Deb W.

"Imagine this headline. Labour conference: Three so-

cialist champions hammer home Corbyn's message," said Mike Hind.

Liz Webster wrote back: "These men you call 'champions' lied and broke the law in an attempt to stymie parliament and enforce dictatorship."

But the BBC's editor of political programmes, Rob Burley, responded to criticism and defended the story.

He tweeted: "Brief note on headlines on BBC website. 1) Don't shout at me about them as I don't work on the BBC website 2) quotation marks mean that somebody else said the words, they aren't the views of the BBC 3) bearing in mind it's worth reading the actual story before commenting."

The journalist behind the story also gave her own take on the criticism on her Twitter feed.

She said: "Championing something doesn't make it right or mean someone is winning. It means they are pushing for something. And whatever side you are on, it cannot be denied this is what these three powerful people are doing."

Caption: (left to right) Brexit secretary Stephen Barclay, Leader of the House of Commons Jacob Rees-Mogg and Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove on stage at the Conservative Party Conference.

Guardian Council ratifies bill on child citizenship

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The Guardian Council ratified a bill amending the law on conferring citizenship on children born to an Iranian mother and a foreign father, Abbas Ali Kadkhodaei, Guardian Council spokesman told ISNA news agency on Wednesday.



The Guardian Council of the Constitution is an appointed and constitutionally mandated 12-member council that wields considerable power and influence.

To become a law, any bill passed by the Majlis must be reviewed and approved by the Guardian Council. The Guardian Council holds veto power over all legislation approved by the Majlis.

According to article one of the bill, children of Iranian women and non-Iranian men who were born before or after the law, can be an Iranian citizen in case the Iranian mother requested if they have no security problem before the age of 18.

These children, after reaching the age of 18, can apply for Iranian citizenship if not requested by the mother, then will be granted Iranian citizenship in case of no security problem.

Jashn-e Atefaha held in 60,000 schools nationwide

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Jashn-e Atefaha, literally meaning the festival of kindnesses, aiming to collect contributions in kind or in cash for underprivileged students, was held on Wednesday at nearly 60,000 schools across the country.



The event has been held for 23 years by Imam Khomeini Relief Foundation.

The first phase of the event is held in mosques a week before the beginning of the new school year (September 23), and the second phase of the event is held at schools a week later, when students can grant their donations to those students in need.

The event spreads altruistic culture and promotes the Islamic tradition for helping others, through which many financially-struggling students are provided with the opportunity to continue education, deputy education minister Alireza Kazemi explained.

Pointing out that students every year grant their contributions which surpasses 150 billion rials (around \$3.5 million), he said that the student organization also has collected over 640 billion rials (about \$15.2 million) in cash and in kind over the past five years, of which 420 billion rials (nearly \$16.5 million) have been financial assistance.

He went on to say that donations will be provided to financially-struggling students under the supervision of the school board, and representatives from the student organization and Relief Foundation, with due regard to the dignity of poor families.

Last year (March 2018-March 2019), benefactors in Tehran donated some 18 billion rials (nearly \$400,000) through the charity event.

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Court helps victims of environmental disasters

(November 26, 2001)

The rights of victims of environmental disasters have been recognized by the UN Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague. The Court has signed an agreement with the Cousteau environmental society as a basis for settling international disputes between organizations and individuals. This report from Geraldine Coughlan:

It's the first time a court will **give legitimacy** to environmental disputes between individuals and organizations in an international context. Until now there's been no **global forum** for the victims of environmental disasters **to seek damages**, such as those in Romania and Hungary who suffered as a result of the cyanide spill from an Australian mining company last year.

Others have had to wait more than a decade for their claims **to be handled**, like the relatives of the thousands in Bhopal, India, who died from the chemical spill at the US company Union Carbide plant in 1984.

The Court of Arbitration's new rules, adopted in June, will speed up the legal procedure for resolving **cross border disputes** over environmental issues. But in signing the agreement with the Cousteau Society the court has a more **noble** objective, that of **sustainable development**.

With the Cousteau Society's wind ship, Alcyone, **at its disposal** the Court will have the expertise to establish a legal basis, not only to settle international disputes but to preserve the environment for future generations.

■ **Words**
give legitimacy to: to accept or approve of something officially
forum: a place or event where people can discuss ideas
to seek damages: to try to get money through a court if someone has harmed you
to be handled: to be dealt with (in this case by the court)
cross border disputes: disagreements that take place in more than one country
noble: honest, brave or unselfish
sustainable development: growth (in the economy or in business) which does not damage the environment
at its disposal: for it to use as it wishes

(Source: BBC)

Over 5 million health ambassadors trained in Iran

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — Over 5 million health ambassadors have been trained and educated in the country to help eliminate diseases or reduce the burden of illnesses on the society, head of education and promotion affairs at the Ministry of Health has announced.

It is planned to promote equitable health-care provision in the community by enhancing the quality of education and developing health ambassadors' participation in health care system, Shahram Rafiei-Far stated.

A study on the non-communicable disease and its risk factors conducted in the Iranian calendar year of 1395 (March 2016- March 2017), shows that 11.9 percent of the population suffer from diabetes, 27.9 percent have high triglycerides and the prevalence of hypertension in Iran is 26.4 percent that is caused by high salt intake.

Some 10.4 percent of Iranians consume high amount of salt, which will increase hypertension, and myocardial infarction, he said, adding, by reducing salt intake to less than 5 grams a day, the risk of stroke can be reduced to one third in society.

Also, the results of the survey showed that 56.3 percent of the people are physically inactive, while 22.7 percent are suffering obesity, he noted.

To promote health, each adult should eat at least 2 servings of fruits and 3 servings of vegetables each day, however, only 17.2 percent of the population consumes fruits properly and the rate of vegetable intake is 42.1 percent, he explained.

He went on to say that fast food consumption and the risk of overweight and obesity is among various dietary factors, as out-of-home eating patterns have been more common in the past few years; some



12.7 percent of the people are consuming fast food.

He also added that unfortunately, 10 percent of Iranians smoke (0.9 percent of women and 20 percent of men).

■ National Self-Care Program

A large part of all these lifestyle-related risk factors and diseases can be prevented and controlled by self-care, which is a personal and social right and responsibility, he highlighted.

Self-care includes acquired, conscious and purposeful actions that people do at home, at work, and in the community to take care of their health, family and community, meet their physical, mental and social needs, prevent illnesses or accidents as well as managing chronic illnesses, and

protecting their health after an acute illness or hospital discharge, he also explained.

"On the other hand, health literacy rate in Iran, according to a study conducted 5 years ago, showed that one out of two Iranians has limited health literacy.

Consequences of poor literacy may include self-care skills, less use of prevention services, poor health choices, delayed diagnosis, less understanding of medical conditions, less adherence to medical guidelines, increased risk of hospitalization, poorer physical and mental health, increased risk of death and higher health care costs, he added.

To promote public health literacy and improve health culture, the National Self-Care Program was prepared by education

How worried should we be about microplastics?

If you enjoy a spot of food, like to breathe air and partake in the occasional drink of water (tap or bottled), then you're almost certainly an unwitting consumer of microplastics.

People who use triangular nylon tea bags are the latest group to be shocked at their exposure to plastics. According to one study, they could be getting about 11bn or so particles of plastic with their Earl Grey or breakfast tea.

Microplastics have turned up pretty much everywhere that scientists have looked for them – from the bottom of the deepest parts of our oceans to the stomachs of whales, seabirds and in our own poo.

But should we be worried about our plastic diet – either for the sake of our own health or for the health of the environment?

■ What is microplastic?

There's no agreed definition, but researchers have generally referred to pieces of plastic smaller than about 5mm as microplastic. However, the University of New South Wales's Mark Browne, who has been researching plastics since 2004, says it's better to think about plastics relative to the units they're measured in. So microplastics are between one micrometre and 1,000 micrometres wide (there are 1,000 micrometres in one millimetre).

There's also an emerging field of research looking at nanoplastics – pieces too small to see with the naked eye – which are measured in nanometres (there are 1,000 nanometres in one micrometre).

What's important to remember is that the larger pieces of plastic that can entangle wildlife end up in the stomachs of animals and litter our coastlines will in many cases become the microplastics of tomorrow.

■ What is it doing to our health?

"There's an absence of science here," says Browne. "We know that across particle sizes, plastics can cause issues. The critical issue now is what are the concentrations that people and wildlife are being exposed to. We don't need more studies on which products emit plastics. We need studies that expose organisms or models to these doses to see if they cause problems."

Environmental scientist Kevin Thomas, director of the Queensland Alliance for Environmental Health Sciences, is researching the different ways our bodies are being ex-



posed to plastics.

He says there is evidence that nanoparticles, not necessarily derived from plastics, can cause our immune system to respond at a cellular level.

Thomas thinks if there is a potential for plastics to harm us, it will be once they have been reduced to those tiny "nano-sized" pieces that could pass through the wall of the gut.

Unfortunately, he says, those particles are so small they're very hard to measure.

■ So what does his gut tell him about the potential for harm from microplastics?

"It's a very tough question," says Thomas. "Personally, I think there's little risk to our health based on what we know ... but then, who knows what we might find in the future."

"I eat seafood, for example, but I don't use plastic chopping boards at home."

"But I would advocate avoiding plastics and reducing our reliance on them. Releasing plastics into our environment like we are is unacceptable."

Browne says he has sympathy for the public, who just want answers. "My suggestion is that we need to be managing and reducing our exposure to these polymers and plastics. There's enough evidence of harm that we should be doing that."

■ What about the environment?

There are wide-ranging concerns about the impacts of

microplastics on our environment, in particular on our marine wildlife. But as with impacts on humans, it is a challenge for scientists to tease out the impacts of microplastics from all the other things that animals are exposed to.

Lauren Roman, at CSIRO oceans and atmosphere, says that for all animals "the size of the plastic matters".

"If the piece is too big, the animal won't eat it or, in the case of seabirds, they will regurgitate it. If it's very small then it can just pass straight through them."

For larger pieces, Roman says there is some evidence that plastic accumulating in the stomachs of animals can suppress their appetite – known as the "dietary dilution effect" that could have knock-on effects.

Roman says while chemicals associated with the plastics – such as phthalates and brominated flame retardants – have been detected in the tissues of animals, "we don't know yet if they are affecting the health of the animal".

Around the world, researchers are only now beginning to examine the impacts of plastics on the health of animals, after a swathe of studies identified the many species that were interacting with microplastics.

"But we should definitely be concerned," Roman says. "For seabirds, we have these pieces smaller than 5mm getting stuck in the gut and causing death. And all the very big pieces will break up into smaller ones."

"The fact that nothing serious has been found yet suggests to me that we must be looking for small effects and, remember, that we are exposed to lots of things in our lives. Is this something to get our knickers in a knot about? I'm not sure."

■ What should we do?

The experts the Guardian spoke to agreed a wise step here is to reduce our use and exposure to plastics. From an environmental perspective, campaigners say we should be cutting out unnecessary plastic use, including single-use items, and substituting plastics where we can.

But Browne also had words of caution. "If we are going to do that, we should make sure that as we intercept or redesign products we don't cause more problems," he says.

"Remembering that some asbestos was used in clothing – it's a natural fibre but it causes all sorts of serious issues for people."

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

40,000 flood-stricken families received appliance packages

Iran Red Crescent Society (IRCS) volunteer organization provided some 40,000 packages consisting of household appliances to the families affected by flood, head of IRCS volunteer organization Mohammad Nasiri has stated.

Each family receives a package consisting of a refrigerator, oven, TV, blankets and carpets, he added, Mehr reported on Tuesday.

اعطای لوازم خانگی به ۴۰ هزار خانوار سیل‌زده از سوی سازمان داوطلبان

رئیس سازمان داوطلبان هلال احمر از اعطای بسته های لوازم خانگی شامل ۵ قلم اصلی خانوارها به حدود ۴۰ هزار خانواده آسیب دیده در سیل اخیر خبر داد. محمد نصیری رئیس سازمان داوطلبان هلال احمر در گفتگو با خبرنگار درباره جزئیات این بسته‌ها نیز توضیح داد: بسته‌های لوازم خانگی که قرار است میان خانواده‌های سیل زده توزیع شود شامل ۵ قلم از جمله یک تخته فرش، گاز، تلویزیون، یخچال و پتو خواهد بود.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“by-, bye-”

■ **Meaning:** near or past

■ **For example:** I took a pleasant **byroad** which follows the coast.

PHRASAL VERB

Open out

■ **Meaning:** If a road, path, or passage opens out, it becomes wider

■ **For example:** Beyond the forest the path opened out into a track.

IDIOM

Cross someone's path

■ **Explanation:** to meet somebody, usually unexpectedly or by chance

■ **For example:** Ms. Bridgewater was my English teacher but haven't crossed her path since I left school.

N. Korea fires possible submarine-launched ballistic missile

TEHRAN — North Korea fired at least one missile off its east coast on Wednesday, possibly from a submarine, the South Korean military said, a day after announcing it would resume stalled talks over its nuclear programme with the United States.

The National Security Council in Seoul expressed “strong concern” over the launch of what it said may have been a submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM), according to a statement issued by the presidential Blue House.

If confirmed, it would be the first time North Korea has launched an undersea missile in three years.

South Korea’s military said it picked up a missile that flew 450 kilometres (280 miles) and reached an altitude of 910 kilometres (565 miles), and that it was believed to be a “Pukguksong-class” type missile that North Korea launched previously from an underwater test platform in 2016.

Japan lodged an immediate protest, saying the missile landed inside Japan’s economic exclusive zone - the first time a North Korean missile has landed that close to Japan since November 2017. The EEZ covers waters as far as 370 kilometres (230 miles) from the coast.

■ ‘Serious threat’

Defence Minister Taro Kono called the launch “a serious threat to Japanese national security” adding that it was an “extremely problematic and dangerous act” for the safety of vessels and aircraft. Kono declined to say whether the projectile was a submarine-launched missile.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said the launch violated UN resolutions that ban North Korea from conducting any launch using ballistic technology.

“We will continue to cooperate with the U.S. and the international community and do the utmost to maintain and protect the safety of the people as we stay on alert,” Abe said.



South Korea’s military said the missile was launched towards the sea from around Wonsan, the site of one of North Korea’s military bases on the east coast.

The United States called on Pyongyang to “refrain from provocations” and remain committed to nuclear negotiations after North Korea fired a ballistic missile off its east coast.

“We call on (North Korea) to refrain from provocations, abide by their obligations under UN Security Council Resolutions, and remain engaged in substantive and sustained negotiations to do their part to ensure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and achieve denuclearisation,” a state department spokeswoman said on Wednesday.

North Korea had been developing SLBM technology before it suspended long-range missile and nuclear tests and began talks with the U.S. that led eventually to the first summit between Kim and Trump in Singapore in June 2018.

The launch is the ninth since U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met at the heavily-guarded Demilitarised Zone between the two Koreas in June, with talks over the North’s nuclear and missile programmes stalled since the second summit between the two men collapsed in February.

It came just a day after Pyongyang announced it had agreed with the U.S. to hold working-level talks on Saturday potentially breaking months of stalemate.

■ ‘Carrot and stick’

Japan’s Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said the missile dropped into Japan’s EEZ at 7:27 am local time (22:27 GMT on Tuesday).

“We are aware of reports of a possible North Korean missile launch. We are continuing to monitor the situation and consulting closely with our allies in the region,” a senior official in the U.S. administration, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told Reuters.

Trump has played down North Korea’s recent series of short-range launches, saying in September the U.S. and North Korea “didn’t have an agreement on short-range missiles” and that many countries test such weapons.

Hours before the launch, North Korea had announced a return to working-level talks. The previous missile launch - on September 10 - also took place after the North had expressed a willingness to talk.

“North Korea has recycled its carrot-and-stick strategy against the U.S. multiple times with great success,” said Lee Sung-yoon, Professor of Korean Studies at The Fletcher School at Tufts University.

In a statement released through state media, Choe Son Hui, North Korea’s first vice minister of foreign affairs, said the two nations will have preliminary contact on Friday before holding working-level talks on Saturday.

She expressed optimism over the outcome of the meeting but did not say where the talks would take place.

“It is my expectation that the working-level negotiations would accelerate the positive development of the DPRK-U.S. relations,” Choe said in the statement, using an abbreviation for North Korea’s formal name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus, who is travelling with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Rome, confirmed talks within the next week.

According to Al Jazeera, Mintaro Oba, a former diplomat in the State Department, told Al Jazeera that while North Korea was “pushing boundaries” with the launches, it was betting that would not jeopardise negotiations.

“The North Korean calculation is that the U.S. is very much invested in these talks and therefore will not put up much of a strong response to these launches,” Oba said.

Bahrain’s Wefaq asks women heads of state to support jailed activists

TEHRAN — Bahrain’s main Shia opposition group, the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, has called on women heads of state to support jailed female political prisoners in the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom, and press the ruling Al Khalifah regime to set them free.

Al-Wefaq, in a series of posts published on its Twitter page on Monday, appealed to a number of leaders, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović and Nepalese President Bidhya Devi Bhandari, to help secure the release of six female detainees.

“We look forward to your responsible attitude that supports Bahraini women, who are subjected to reprisal due to their political views and are arrested for demanding

freedom and democracy,” the opposition group wrote in the separate posts.

The jailed female political prisoners are Zakia al-Barbouri, Medina Ali, Hajar Mansoor Hassan and three sisters Fatima, Amal and Iman Abdullah. They are serving jail terms, ranging from three to five years. They were convicted following trials marred by allegations of torture and duress.

According to Press TV, on May 27, Bahrain’s supreme court of appeal, the Court of Cassation, upheld a five-year prison sentence against Barbouri and stripped her of her citizenship after finding her guilty of trumped-up terrorism-related charges.

On February 6, Bahrain’s Fourth High Criminal Court sentenced Barbouri to five years in prison, and ordered her citizenship to be revoked.



Trump calls impeachment inquiry ‘a coup’

TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump has ramped up his rhetoric on an impeachment inquiry by opposition politicians threatening his presidency, labelling it a “coup” designed to “take away the power of the people”.

Trump’s comments came after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo pressed to prevent or delay five former or current State Department staffers from testifying in the investigation probing accusations that the Republican president abused his office by seeking dirt from Ukraine on a 2020 election rival.

“As I learn more and more each day, I am coming to the conclusion that what is taking place is not an impeachment, it is a COUP,” Trump tweeted late on Tuesday.

It is “intended to take away the Power of the People, their VOTE, their Freedoms, their Second Amendment, Religion, Military, Border Wall, and their God-given rights as a Citizen of The United States of America!” he wrote.

“The Greatest Witch Hunt in the history of our Country!” the 73-year-old leader posted.

Last week, Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives launched an impeachment inquiry that centers around a July 25 phone call that Trump held with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

In the call, Trump asked Zelensky to potentially open an investigation into the Republican president’s political rival, former

vice president Joe Biden.

Trump has been using increasingly strong language to lash out at the Democrats and the inquiry, repeatedly referring to it as “a witch hunt”.

Over the weekend, he tweeted that if he were to be removed from office through a full impeachment process, that could lead to a “civil war,” a remark that drew concern even from the members of his Republican Party.

On Monday, Trump dubbed the whistle-blower whose complaint sparked the impeachment inquiry as “fake,” and questioned if Democrat Adam Schiff, the head of the House Intelligence Committee, should be arrested for treason.

■ Pompeo warned against obstruction

Trump faces the possibility of becoming only the third president ever impeached by the U.S. Congress, which could lead to his going on trial in the Senate.

Meanwhile, Pompeo accused three Democratic House committee heads conducting the impeachment inquiry of “an attempt to intimidate, bully and treat improperly the distinguished professionals of the Department of State”.

But Democrats said the top U.S. diplomat was “stonewalling” the investigation and, according to media reports, scheduled interviews with at least two of the diplomats who had direct involvement in the Ukraine matter, Al Jazeera reported.

Johnson makes final Brexit offer, draws cool EU reaction

TEHRAN — Boris Johnson made a final Brexit offer to the European Union on Wednesday and said that unless the bloc compromised, Britain would leave without a deal at the end of this month.

In what supporters cast as a moment of truth after more than three years of crisis, Johnson stuck to his hard line on Brexit, giving some of the first, albeit vague, details of what he described as “constructive and reasonable proposals”.

With the Oct. 31 Brexit deadline moving closer, Johnson’s aides cast the proposals to be delivered to Brussels as London’s final gambit to try to break the deadlock - principally

over arrangements for the Irish border - and find a path to a smooth departure from the EU.

“We are coming out of the EU on October 31, come what may,” Johnson told party members, after expressing “love” for Europe in a speech which focused mostly on domestic issues such as health, the economy and crime.

“We are tabling what I believe are constructive and reasonable proposals which provide a compromise for both sides,” Johnson said. “Let us be in no doubt that the alternative is no deal.”

The seven-page explanatory note calls for the creation

of an all-island regulatory zone on the island of Ireland covering all goods, thus eliminating checks for trade in goods between Northern Ireland and Ireland.

The regulatory zone would be dependent on the consent of the institutions of Northern Ireland, which would remain fully part of the United Kingdom’s customs territory, the document said.

According to Reuters, many diplomats fear the United Kingdom is heading towards a no-deal or another delay as they say the British proposals are not enough to get an agreement by Oct. 31. Johnson said further delay was “pointless and expensive”.

Baghdad official’s reaction to the Zionist attacks on Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)

➤ A senior Zionist security source acknowledged U.S. coordination with Israel in the attacks and emphasized that Israel is in daily contact with the U.S. The Zionists coordinate with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in political and military issues in Iraq.

In this regard, one of PMF’s leader Adel al-Karawi said that the U.S. is trying to not offer the investigations on the attacks. He also stated that the U.S. ambassador to Baghdad has directly interfered in the matter and does not allow the government to present any result about the investigations.

Iraqi officials believe that the presence of foreign soldiers in Iraq, especially U.S.-led

international coalition after the victory over ISIL and terrorist elements, has no justification. The victory was achieved by Iraqi and PM forces. The U.S. not only played no role in the victory, but always backed ISIL financially and logistically.

By occasional attacks, The Zionist regime has repeatedly sought to examine Iraqi official’s response to foreign attacks on an official organization. If Baghdad does not take a serious step, the ground would be prepared for more extensive attacks.

It should be noted that PMF can easily target the U.S. positions in Iraq, which is a natural response to Israeli attacks. PMF considers its

activities in the framework of the country’s sovereignty and will wait until the government take action. Iraq is not the only country that the Zionist regime has repeatedly encroached its airspace, and attacked its military positions. Earlier, we witnessed the attack of Zionist fighter jets on Syrian army’s positions that was followed by negative reaction of regional countries, especially Russia.

Israeli fighter jets and warships daily encroaches Lebanese airspace and water, and Israeli spy drones are flying in Lebanon. Hezbollah is fully prepared to deal with any possible attacks and spying actions by the Zionist regime against Lebanon. It should be noted

that increasing violation of other countries’ privacy by Israel required a united position of regional countries and international communities, in particular Security Council.

It seems that it is time for Iraqi government to file a complaint against Israel in international communities in addition to formally condemning its attacks on PMF positions. In this case Tel Aviv will not be allowed to invade Iraqi military and official forces, and will not plan to expand its attacks in near future in the shadow of the neglect of Iraqi officials. The Security Council must do its job in this regard and prevent the aggression of an occupier state against other regional countries and Resistance Forces.

Cuban foreign minister: Optimistic on future of U.S. - Cuba relations despite the Blockade

➤ “We’ve increased our ability to transport (oil). The way the world works today makes it impossible for the United States to impede the arrival of oil tankers in Cuba,” Rodriguez said.

The Cuban foreign minister flatly denied that his country was providing any military, security or intelligence help to Venezuela, contradicting President Donald Trump’s Sept. 24 accusation before the U.N. General Assembly that “Maduro is a Cuban puppet protected by Cuban bodyguards.”

“We don’t have a military presence in Venezuela. We don’t participate or assist military, security or intelligence operations,” Rodriguez said. “The relationship between Cuba and Venezuela is a pretext ... they’re attacking the successful (Cuban) political model, which works, which is a successful economic and social model, because it’ has withstood six decades despite the (U.S.) blockade.”

3 Saudi bases, over 150 square kilometers taken in 2nd phase of Najran offensive

➤ The offensive also resulted in the death and injury of at least 200 Saudi-led coalition soldiers.

Saree added that the second phase of the operation was launched on September 3, and that more than 150 square kilometers were purged from the presence of Saudi troopers and Saudi-sponsored Yemeni militiamen loyal to Yemen’s former pro-Saudi president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi. More than 120 armored vehicles were destroyed and seized in the process as well.

He said Yemeni missile defense units carried out six operations in the military campaign, most notably against Najran Regional Airport, while domestically-manufactured Yemeni combat drones struck positions inside Najran on 16 different occasions.

Yemeni air defense units were also able to counter forty attacks by Saudi Apache helicopters, and that Saudi warplanes launched more than 600 raids in retaliation, Saree pointed out.

The spokesman for the Yemeni Armed Forces went on to say that Yemeni soldiers and their allies managed to wrest control over al-Fara’a and al-Sooth areas, and reached the highlands overlooking the city of Najran, located 844 kilometers (524 miles) south of the Saudi capital Riyadh.

Saree said the Yemeni fighters also took a large group of Saudi forces hostage, without elaborating on the exact number.

According to Press TV, Yemeni forces had obtained documents proving that militants from al-Qaeda and Daesh Takfiri terrorist groups were fighting alongside the Saudi-led coalition against Yemeni army troops and their allies.

“Our military operations will not stop once the (Saudi-led) aggression ceases. Our armed forces will continue to implement various stages of Victory from God Almighty Operation till then. Our valiant army has weapons for deterrence, and is capable of repelling attacks,” Saree highlighted.

Senator Sanders hospitalized after experiencing chest pains

TEHRAN — Senator Bernie Sanders has halted campaigning for president after being hospitalized on Tuesday with chest pains that required doctors to insert two stents after finding a blockage in one artery, his campaign said on Wednesday.

“Sen. Sanders is conversing and in good spirits,” senior campaign advisor Jeff Weaver said in a statement. “He will be resting up over the next few days. We are canceling his events and appearances until further notice, and we will continue to provide appropriate updates,” Reuters reported.

Taliban, U.S. envoy in Pakistan to review broken peace talks

TEHRAN — Afghan Taliban officials were in Islamabad on Wednesday to discuss the possibility of reviving talks for a political settlement in Afghanistan, Pakistan’s foreign ministry and the insurgent group said.

The high-profile Taliban delegation arrived as the top U.S. diplomat involved in talks with the militants, Zalmay Khalilzad, also met government officials in Islamabad.

It was not clear if the Taliban would meet Khalilzad, though one senior Pakistani government official said that might happen.

The Taliban delegation led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, one of the group’s founders, was due to discuss “important issues” with Pakistani officials, spokesman Suhail Shaheen said.

The visit, the latest stop on a tour of regional powers including Russia, China and Iran by Taliban officials, comes after efforts by the militants and the United States to reach a deal allowing for the withdrawal of U.S.-led foreign forces broke down last month.

“The visit would provide the opportunity to review the progress made under U.S.-Taliban peace talks so far, and discuss the possibilities of resuming the paused political settlement process in Afghanistan,” Pakistan’s foreign ministry said in a statement. It said a meeting between the insurgents and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was being finalised.

According to Reuters, Khalilzad, U.S. President Donald Trump’s Special Representative for Afghanistan, has been meeting Pakistani officials in Islamabad following discussions between Trump and Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan in the United States.

“These consultations follow discussions held between the United States and Pakistan during the United Nations General Assembly in New York last week,” said a spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad via email.

Bernardo Silva charged over Benjamin Mendy tweet

Manchester City's Bernardo Silva has been charged with misconduct by the Football Association over a controversial social media post comparing teammate Benjamin Mendy with a black cartoon character.

The Portuguese midfielder last month tweeted an image of a young Mendy alongside an image of the character representing the Spanish chocolate peanut brand Conguitos.

He deleted the post but has now been charged.

A statement from the football governing body on Wednesday said "Bernardo Silva has been charged with misconduct" in relation to a social media post on September 22.

The FA statement said it was alleged that the 25-year-old was responsible for an "aggravated breach" of FA rules because the tweet included a reference "whether expressed or implied, to race and/or color and/or ethnic origin."

Silva, who could face a ban, has until October 9 to respond.

On the same day as the tweet that has now resulted in an FA charge, Silva posted: "Can't even joke with a friend these days... You guys..."

Silva last week sent a letter to the Football Association to apologize for any offence caused by the tweet and Mendy has written in support of his friend, saying he had not taken offence at the tweet.

City manager Pep Guardiola has also defended Silva and another of his team-mates, England forward Raheem Sterling, also spoke out in his defense.

Mendy and Silva have been teammates since 2016, having spent a year together at Monaco before they both moved to City the following year.

An Instagram video posted by Silva in 2018 has also attracted criticism for alleged racist undertones. In the video, being studied by the FA, Silva asks Mendy, who is dressed in black, why he is not wearing any clothes.

(Source: Mirror)

Cardiff to challenge FIFA's Sala ruling

Cardiff City have decided to appeal against Fifa's ruling that they must pay the first instalment of 6m euros (£5.3m) to Nantes for £15m striker Emiliano Sala.

The Bluebirds will challenge the ruling at the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The Argentine, who was 28, died in a plane crash in January while travelling from France to join his new club.

Cardiff and Nantes have since been in dispute over fee payments. Cardiff have argued they were not liable for any of the full £15m fee because Sala was not officially their player when he died.

The club refused to make interim payments, claiming the deal was not legally binding.

BBC Sport has also learned that the second instalment of the £15m fee agreed for Sala is due to be paid in January 2020.

Nantes argued that having signed with Cardiff, Sala's contract with Nantes was over and that he had become a Cardiff player.

Cardiff recruited Sala while they were in the Premier League and have since been relegated to the Championship.

The Bluebirds believe the transfer was null and void, saying the Premier League had rejected certain clauses requested by Nantes in the original contract and that Sala never had a chance to review or sign the final version, meaning their record signing was not registered as a Premier League player.

The plane carrying Sala and pilot David Ibbotson, 59, crashed in the English Channel on 21 January, two days after the player's transfer was announced.

The footballer's body was recovered from the wreckage, but Ibbotson, from Crowle, North Lincolnshire, has still not been found.

Sala was exposed to high levels of carbon monoxide prior to the crash, a report later revealed.

(Source: BBC)

Premier League appoints David Pemsel as chief executive

The Premier League has appointed David Pemsel as its new chief executive, announcing on Wednesday that he would take up the role "no later than April 2020".



Last November, the league selected Susanna Dinnage for the post but, after accepting, she changed her mind and decided she no longer wanted the job.

The league said Pemsel's appointment had been approved unanimously at a special league shareholders' meeting.

Pemsel is chief executive of the Guardian Media Group.

Bruce Buck, the chairman of the Premier League nominations committee, said: "We are delighted to welcome David to the Premier League. His straightforward style and personal integrity make him an ideal person to lead the business.

"At the Guardian, he has shown strong leadership through a period of change and transformation."

Buck praised Richard Masters for his performance in the role of interim chief executive.

"I am thrilled to have been offered this incredible opportunity," Pemsel said. "The Premier League is the most-watched football league in the world and I am very excited to be a key part of that."

Dinnage withdrew late in 2018 to remain in her role with the Discovery group of TV channels. Her appointment had been hailed as a significant step forward for women in sports administration.

When Pemsel takes over he will become the permanent successor to Richard Scudamore, who first joined the Premier League as chief executive in 1999. He served as executive chairman from June 2014 until his retirement in November 2018.

Scudamore is credited with driving the huge commercial success of the Premier League, particularly in domestic and overseas television rights.

(Source: AFP)

Bayern Munich's Serge Gnabry sprinkles salt after Lewandowski wounds Spurs



just how much Bayern struggled to cope with the intensity of the Premier League side's pressing early on. After Son Heung-min had taken advantage of Tolisso's error to give Spurs an early lead, Bayern drew level thanks to a brilliantly-executed Joshua Kimmich curler but struggled to get control following that.

■ Unity brings improvement

The momentum swung back towards the visitors from Bavaria just after the half-hour mark and it all started thanks to their striker's

industry, rather than his skill. Spurs had been bullying Bayern – until Lewandowski called time and dropped back in to midfield to shoulder Winks off the ball, the diminutive midfielder bouncing off his opponent like a satsuma off a trampoline.

The move soon broke down but the message was clear. "Bayern" shouted the cluster of away fans one side of the corner flag, "Bayern" replied the other. Not the most creative lyrics but a show of unity and strength. The

players in red responded with unity, strength and plenty of creativity.

"The whole team deserves my praise," said coach Niko Kovac after the game. "We played as one but Serge Gnabry's four goals is the icing on the cake. That was definitely his best game."

■ Remember the name

Plenty of those traveling will have been in London six years ago when their side beat Borussia Dortmund in the all-German Champions League final of 2013 at Wembley. Serge Gnabry probably was too, the German winger was still making his way down the road at Arsenal back then. Gnabry would barely have registered in the minds of any of the 60,000 in attendance tonight – English or German – back then but his two-minute brace, rapid and clinical in every sense, put Bayern 4-1 up after 55 minutes. By the end of the night, Gnabry ensured he won't be forgotten in either country any time soon.

First the 24-year-old played a one-two on the halfway line before driving inside, burning Toby Alderweireld for pace, throwing the silkist of feints and lashing home past Lloris before repeating the dose with a similar effort bounced in off the post moments later. Lewandowski had made the incision, Gnabry was on hand to sprinkle the salt.

(Source: Deutsche Welle)

Nike risks being burned by doping scandal



With Nike-backed athletics coach Alberto Salazar subjected to a four-year suspension for doping, the US sportswear giant risks being caught up in the scandal -- its CEO is even quoted in the suspension ruling.

Citing experiments with testosterone, fat-burning amino acid injections and falsified medical documents, the American anti-doping authority USADA published a list of blemishes on the record of the highest-profile track and field coach in the world.

In that document -- prepared by an independent panel for USADA -- was none other than Mark Parker, the CEO of Nike, which has backed Salazar for decades.

Parker was copied on several emails about research done by Salazar and the Nike Oregon Project (NOP), a group created in 2001 by the three-time New York Marathon winner to promote elite long-distance running in the US.

The alleged enhancing program was for athletes competing at 5,000 meters, 10,000m but not for sprint races, according to the agency.

In a 2011 email to Parker, Salazar explains he had given one of the NOP coaches a test injection of a liter of an amino acid and dextrose (glucose) mixture -- a dose clearly above what would be allowed under World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) regulations.

And in another email to Parker two years later, Jeffrey Brown, a doctor who worked

with the NOP, described experiments with testosterone gel.

Parker responded to Brown, "It will be interesting to determine the minimal amount of topical male hormone required to create a positive test."

Nike has not responded to requests for comment by AFP. A spokesman for the brand told the Wall Street Journal, "Mark Parker had no reason to believe that the test was outside any rules as a medical doctor was involved."

These tests were ostensibly carried out in response to Salazar's concern that an athlete might be sabotaged by someone secretly contaminating them with the gel.

"Mark's understanding was that Alberto was attempting to prevent doping of his athletes," the Nike spokesman told the WSJ.

Salazar's best-known athlete is Britain's Mo Farah, who won four gold medals at the 2012 and 2016 Olympics at 5,000m and 10,000m. Farah has never tested positive and said in response to Salazar's ban he had left the NOP in 2017 and that he has "no tolerance for anyone who breaks the rules or crosses the line".

Nike stock fell 1.75 percent Tuesday, minimally more than the overall market movement (-1.28 percent), the day after the company closed the session on the highest price in its history.

(Source: Eurosport)

Courtois primed for another goalkeeping duel after facing Bernabeu boos



Thibaut Courtois bore the brunt of criticism from fans and the media for Real Madrid's surprise 2-2 draw at home to Club Bruges in the Champions League on Tuesday, opening up a debate over whether he should be the club's number one goalkeeper.

The Belgium keeper is yet to endear himself to Real supporters since joining last year and gave one of his shakiest displays against the unfancied Bruges, who took a 2-0 lead at halftime with scrappy strikes from Emmanuel Bonaventure.

Real's famously unforgiving fans made it clear who they blamed for the goals, loudly booing Courtois on two occasions before halftime.

Courtois, 27, was taken off immediately after the break, with coach Zinedine Zidane saying he was feeling ill, and his replacement Alphonse Areola kept Real in the game with a crucial save against Bonaventure which brought loud applause.

Real eventually levelled the game thanks to goals from Sergio Ramos and Casemiro but were still left at the bottom of Group A with one point from two games, the 13-times winners' worst ever start to a Champions League group stage.

The Belgian was heavily scrutinised by the Spanish press, with newspaper AS claiming 'Courtois hits rock bottom'. Daily Marca focused on the booing he was subjected to, saying the keeper 'has a big

problem with the Bernabeu'.

Zidane did his best to protect Courtois after the game.

"I'm not worried at all, we cannot blame Thibaut for the first half because we were all at fault, especially me," he told a news conference.

"If we had continued to play that way we would have lost the game, but luckily the players turned things around."

Courtois, who built his reputation as one of the game's top keepers during a three-year loan spell at local rivals Atletico Madrid, joined Real from Chelsea for a reported 40 million euros (\$43.66 million) last year after a splendid World Cup campaign with Belgium.

He quickly overtook triple Champions League winner Keylor Navas as Real's number one choice but his first campaign coincided with one of the club's worst seasons in memory, which ended without a trophy.

Although Courtois has not made any memorable howlers, he has not yet produced any miraculous, game-changing saves which Navas was renowned for.

Navas' departure for Paris St Germain looked like a signal that Courtois had won the battle for the number one spot, but with the fans turning on him, he now looks set for another duel for the position, this time with Areola.

(Source: Reuters)

ESports a hard sell in grades-obsessed Singapore



■ Education pressure

He is the exception, however, in a country known for a strict education system, a focus on getting good exam results and where a growing number of students go on to university or another form of tertiary education.

The pressure starts as early as primary school, and critics say it has contributed to the growing incidence of mental illness among the young, although the government is seeking to make things easier through steps like reducing exams.

The focus on education and a choice of well-paying jobs in the affluent country mean few are willing to pursue a career in the fledgling eSports scene -- Singapore has only around 15 professional gamers.

"Singapore is very focused on study," said the country's

In a country highly focused on academic achievement, Singaporean Galvin Kang Jian Wen did something almost unthinkable -- he stopped studying as a teenager to spend more time playing computer games.

He defied parental and social disapproval after his high school finals to pursue his dream of becoming an eSports champion, but believes the sacrifice has paid off as he heads with his national team to Southeast Asia's mini-Olympics.

Teenage gamers worldwide are shunning mainstream education in favor of spending hours tapping away on computers and phones, attracted by a booming eSports scene where prizes at major tournaments reach millions of dollars.

But perhaps nowhere is the prospect of swapping textbooks for joysticks more daunting than in Singapore, which tops global education rankings and where striving for academic excellence is deeply ingrained in the national psyche.

Kang -- who is his national side's coach and competes in multiplayer battle game Dota 2 under the moniker "Meracle" -- said his belief in his own playing skills was so great he had the courage to what most would not dare.

"I stopped studying and went to pursue this passion of mine," the 23-year-old told AFP at a Southeast Asian Games boot camp in Singapore, which was organized by the tournament's eSports partner, gaming hardware company Razer.

"Obviously (my parents) were not very happy about my decision because nobody wants their kids to stop studying."

eSports association president Ng Chong Geng, recalling how when he gave a talk at a university, not a single student expressed an interest in becoming a professional player.

"Now more or less everyone graduates with some sort of degree... If you try to be an eSports athlete you have to give up on a lot of other opportunities."

Players also complain the country's system of conscription -- male citizens undergo two years of national service from the age of 18 -- is a hindrance for promising gamers who need time to develop their skills.

■ But after retirement?

Kang is not alone among players heading to the SEA Games, taking place in the Philippines in November and December, in having chosen to focus on gaming rather than study.

"The thing that most changed me was quitting school so I can play for the whole day, play full time," said 17-year-old Thai Dota2 gamer Nuengnara Teeramahanon, who quit school aged 16.

"I just did not want to study any more, I just feel like it's so boring."

However, the lack of qualifications could be a disadvantage for players when they retire, which can come at a young age in eSports. In some games, players can be finished by 23 as their reactions slow.

Players from nine countries will compete in six titles at the SEA Games -- Mobile Legends, Arena of Valor, Dota 2, Starcraft II, Tekken 7, and Hearthstone.

(Source: AFP)

Egypt stun Iran at FIVB World Cup

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran suffered second defeat in a row at the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) Men's World Cup, losing to Egypt 3-1 on Wednesday.

Team Melli defeated the African champions 25-22 in the first set but lost to them 26-24, 25-18 and 26-24 in the following sets.

Porya Yali led Iran with 22 points and Egypt's Ahmed Abdelhay scored 21 points.

"First of all, congratulations to the Egypt team for their victory. For us, this tournament didn't start yet but it will be so difficult for us to finish this tournament in a normal situation. Most of us are not ready for this tournament mentally and physically for a lot of reasons," Iran coach Igor Kolakovic said.

"There's not so much time to change something, because we came here not ready for this long tournament. But I hope the players feel bad after this defeat and change a little bit their energy on the court. In terms of elements, I can't say anything because we don't have time to change anything. Energy is what we need," he added.

Iran had started the campaign with a 3-1 defeat to Russia on Tuesday.

Igor Kolakovic's men will face Canada on Friday.

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.



Iran, Belarus to sign MoU on Sport cooperation



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran's Minister of Sport and Youth Affairs, Masoud Soltanifar, has traveled to Minsk, capital of Belarus, to sign Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on sports cooperation between the two countries.

Soltanifar has been invited by Belarus' Sports and Tourism Minister Sergei

Kovalchuk.

In a meeting, the two sides will ink a MoU to enhance cooperation in the field of sports.

The program of the three-day visit will also include a visit to BATE Borisov club, as the most popular Belarusian club.

Belarus gained independence in 1991 after the former Soviet Union collapsed.

Iranian assistant referee Sokhandan bids farewell



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iranian international assistant referee Reza Sokhandan announced his retirement on Wednesday.

The 46-year-old linesman, the 2016 AFC Assistant Referee of the Year, has been an active FIFA assistant referee since 2003 and has overseen numerous AFC competitions as well as the Olympic Football Tournament

and the FIFA Confederations Cup.

Sokhandan along with Mohammadreza Mansouri and Alireza Faghani made history last year officiating the third-place play-off match of the 2018 World Cup between England and Belgium.

He will officially retire in the match between Esteghlal and Gol Gohar in Iran Professional League, scheduled for Friday.

Iran and Persepolis football great Kashani dies



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Former Iran national football team and Persepolis defender Jafar Kashani died of heart attack at his home Wednesday morning at the age of 76.

Kashani, born in Tehran, started his football career at 1964 in Shahin club after he was scouted by Abbas Ekrami, the founder of the club.

After three years, he joined Persepolis and was a member of the Iranian popular football team for seven years.

Kashani represented Iran national football team from

1968 to 1974 and made 38 appearances for Team Melli.

He won AFC Asian Cup twice with Iran in 1968 and 1972.

Kashani also represented Iran at the 1972 Summer Olympics, where they beat Brazil and lost to Hungary and Denmark and failed to book a place in the next round.

After retiring from football, he was employed by Ministry of Foreign Affairs and worked in embassies in Germany, Syria and the UAE.

Kashani was head of Persepolis's board of director.

Urawa Red 2-0 Guangzhou: Fabricio stunner seals semi-final advantage

Urawa Red Diamonds took control of the second AFC Champions League semi-final on Wednesday with a 2-0 first-leg win over Guangzhou Evergrande.

A stunning first-half strike from Fabricio set the home side on course for a deserved win in Saitama before Takahiro Sekine dou-

bled their advantage 15 minutes from time.

Fabio Cannavaro's Guangzhou mustered only one shot on target throughout the match, although they saw an away goal ruled out for offside after Paulinho stylishly set up Wei Shihao.

Fabricio's thunderous finish from 25

yards out gave Urawa a first-half lead that they could have added to before the break had Ewerton and Sekine been more clinical.

An ambitious but wayward effort from Anderson Talisca summed up the efforts of the Chinese Super League leaders and they were 2-0 down when Sekine buried

a fine finish into the bottom-left corner after Huang Bowen failed to clear a corner.

Wei's potentially key away goal was chalked off for offside, leaving Guangzhou with a sizeable task in the second leg in three weeks.

(Source: Yahoo News)

Tokyo 2020: International ticket sales starts

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC), together with its Global Authorised Ticket Reseller CoSport, have announced that international ticket and package sales for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games will begin at CoSport.com on Wednesday 2 October at 15:00 CEST.

The sale comes hot off the heels of IPC's 30th anniversary and with less than one year until the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, a Games set to be the biggest and best yet with many predicting that sporting performances will reach new levels.

The Opening Ceremony on 25 August 2020 at the stunning and newly built Olympic Stadium will kick off 12 days of world-class competition which will feature 540 medal events, captivating the world through the Closing Ceremony on 6 September 2020.

About 4,400 athletes from more than 160 countries will compete in 22 sports, from the new editions of taekwondo and badminton, to legacy Para sports such as athletics, swimming and powerlifting, where robotic 'power suits' designed by Worldwide Paralympic Partner Panasonic will be used for the first time to assist Paralympic staff in removing barbells up to three-times their body weight.

These new developments are befitting of the Games'



first return to Tokyo since 1964 and the IPC's 30th anniversary, both of which have made history and

shaped the future.

Since the inaugural Paralympic Games in 1960 just before Tokyo 1964, the Games and Paralympic Movement have continued to grow, helping chart the 1989 founding of the IPC and its work toward a more inclusive world through Para sport.

There has already been unprecedented demand for Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games tickets with Japan holding an online lottery last month for its residents wishing to purchase Paralympic tickets, registering 1.35 million unique visits in less than three weeks. The results of that lottery, which will be announced later this month, are expected to show greater demand for tickets than London 2012.

Wednesday 2 October represents the first opportunity for international spectators to join and buy tickets directly through CoSport, a process also expected to register high numbers amid global demand for Tokyo 2020.

The Paralympic and Olympic Experience Experts, CoSport has spent decades bringing fans to the Paralympic and Olympic Games, preparing since 2015 in Tokyo, with a range of tickets and inclusive accommodation packages, for sale at CoSport.com.

(Source: Paralympic)

Persepolis midfielder Nourollahi extends contract

TASNIM — Persepolis football team midfielder Ahmad Nourollahi has extended his contract at the club until 2021.

Nourollahi had been linked with a move to European clubs but opted to stay at Persepolis.



On Tuesday, he extended his contract for two more years.

The 26-year-old defensive midfielder has been a key player in Persepolis, helping the Reds win the Iran Professional League in the last three seasons.

Iran coach Marc Wilmots called up Nourollahi for the match against Hong Kong at the 2022 World Cup qualifier, where Team Melli defeated its East Asian rival 2-0 at Hong Kong Stadium.

Two Iranians join AIBA's Commissions

IRNA — Two Iranians have been appointed as members of International Boxing Association's (AIBA) commissions.

Head of Iran's Boxing Federation Hossein Thori has been appointed to join youth commission.

Azadeh Moghaddas has been also appointed as a member of the women's commission. She is the head of international relations of Iran's Boxing Federation.

All the commission members eligible until next AIBA Congress with Elections scheduled in 2022.

Lucescu: Al Hilal deserved big win

Head coach Razvan Lucescu believes Al Hilal SFC thoroughly deserved their resounding 4-1 win over Qatar's Al Sadd SC in the first leg of the 2019 AFC Champions League semi-finals on Tuesday.

Al Hilal found themselves behind after 15 minutes when Bafétimbi Gomis scored an own goal, but the French forward subsequently netted a goal in each half to help his side record a comfortable victory against an Al Sadd outfit who had Abdulkarim Hassan sent off in the first half.

While Lucescu admitted that Al Hilal struggled in the opening moments of the match, the Romanian tactician was left delighted by the nature of his side's comeback.

"Our start to the match was not good and we found it very difficult," said Lucescu at the post-match press conference.

"Al Sadd took the lead and they defended well while not giving us a chance to build our attacks.

"We didn't play at all well in the first 20 minutes, but we managed to make a good comeback and finished the first half with a lead after scoring two goals.

"We took advantage of playing with a man more on the pitch after Abdulkarim Hassan's red card. That is something which helped us register this big victory.

"The players showed great mental strength to achieve such a positive result and we successfully managed to achieve our target," he concluded.

Gomis' two goals took his season tally to nine, moving him level with Al Wahda's Leonardo at the top of the scorers' list in the competition.

With Al Hilal hosting the return leg in Riyadh on October 22, the Frenchman will be looking to add to his tally and take the two-time AFC Champions League runners-up to the final against either Guangzhou Evergrande or Urawa Red Diamonds.

(Source: the-afc)

Argentina fail with Messi appeal to CONMEBOL

The Argentine Football Association has failed with their appeal to CONMEBOL regarding Lionel Messi's three-month ban following last summer's Copa America.

Messi was banned for three months from international matches and fined \$50,000 in August after accusing South America's governing body for football of "corruption".

The Barcelona forward criticised the officiating and members of CONMEBOL following Argentina's semifinal loss to Brazil and after the third-place match against Chile but he later apologised.

Messi, 32, avoided the Copa America medal ceremony in protest and later said Argentina "shouldn't take part in this corruption."

Asked if he feared being suspended for his comments, he said: "The truth needed to be told."

Argentina sought to get Messi's ban reduced but failed. The ruling means he cannot return to international play until Nov. 3 and will therefore miss his country's friendlies against Germany and Ecuador.

Argentina face Germany on Oct. 9 and then Ecuador on Oct. 13.

(Source: Soccernet)

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GUIDE TO
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Healthiness is the evidence of a pure and unenvious interior.

Imam Ali (AS)

Iran to host Intl. Moving Film Festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Arvand Free Zone in the southwestern Iranian province of Khuzestan will be hosting the 12th edition of the International Moving Film Festival, an annual mobile film event dedicated to independent filmmakers.



A poster for the 12th International Moving Film Festival.

Over 100 films from different countries, including the U.S., Poland, Canada, Turkey, Ecuador, Algeria, Italy, Malaysia and Iran, will compete in the festival, which will be held from November 8 to 15.

“Elephantbird” by Masud Soheili, “Papital” by Narges Zakeri, “We” by Fatemeh Fadaei and “The Summer of the Swans” by Maryam Samadi are among the Iranian films competing in the festival.

Iranian filmmaker Mahmudreza Sani is the director of the festival, which is organized by Spain-based International Moving Film School (IMOFIS).

The previous editions of the festival were held in Cuba, Spain, Iraq, Sudan, Malaysia, Colombia, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Peru, Tunisia and Morocco.

Popular Italian movie “Perfect Strangers” adapted for Tehran stage

A R T **TEHRAN** — An adaptation of Italian filmmaker Paolo Genovese’s popular 2016 film “Perfect Strangers” will go on stage at Tehran’s Hafez Hall on October 16.

Director Davud Bani-Ardalan has renamed the play “The Dark Side of the Moon” for its performance in Iran.

“Perfect Strangers” is about a couple, Eva and Rocco, who invite their best friends Cosimo and Bianca, Lele and Carlotta, and Peppe to dinner.

During the party they decide to play a dangerous game. They place their cellphones on the table and agree to make all texts and calls public in an attempt to prove that they have nothing to hide.

The film has been remade in many countries, including Spain, Mexico, South Korea, France, Hungary, Greece, China, Russia and Poland.

In July, it was included in the Guinness World Records as it became the most remade movie in cinema history, with a total of 18 versions of the film.

Tehran museum to screen children’s classics of Iranian cinema

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Film Museum of Iran will be screening a lineup of children’s classics of Iranian cinema during a special program next week.

The program has been arranged in collaboration with the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) to observe Children’s National Week, which will begin on Saturday.

Six movies produced by the IIDCYA will go on screen for six days until October 11.

The lineup includes “The Water Urn” (1992) by Ebrahim Foruzesh, “The Runner” (1984) and “Harmonica” (1974) by Amir Naderi, and “Redemption” (1971) by Nasser Taqvai.

Also included are Bahram Beizai’s films “Uncle Moustache” (1970) and “The Passengers” (1991).

No need for translation when art speaks: Iranian artist Mehdi Qadyanlu

I → “Some of my foreign friends are really eager to come and visit Iran but due to the problems they might have in traveling to the U.S. later, they are hesitant,” he said.

One of his recent projects was a 186-square-meter painting on the wall of the main atrium of the World Economic Forum’s Conference Centre in Davos, Switzerland in January 2019.

Entitled “Finding Hope”, the painting depicts a girl in a red dress, who is holding a big, red balloon.

“I wanted to show hope and unsteadiness at the same time. I also wanted to use an element that can deliver the same message for people with different cultural backgrounds and languages, so I used a balloon, my favorite motif,” Qadyanlu stated.

“I have always liked the murals I created across the city. People don’t have to pay money or travel long distances to see them, and these paintings become a part of their daily lives. On the other hand, plans to draw paintings on the city walls convince artists to exit their studios and to interact with people in society with their art,” he said.

Qadyanlu also announced his plans to organize an exhibition in London in October 2020, and to work on a big project as well, in which he will create a mural for the Atlanta airport in the U.S. in the near future.



Iranian artist Mehdi Qadyanlu works on a mural at the main atrium of the World Economic Forum’s Conference Centre in Davos, Switzerland.

Finnish Film Foundation keen on collaboration with Iran’s private sector

A R T **TEHRAN** — Finnish Film Foundation CEO Lasse Saarinen has said that his country is interested in collaborating with the private sector in Iran on joint film projects.

He made the remarks during a visit to the Film Producers Guild of Iran in Tehran on Tuesday, the association announced on Wednesday.

Saarinen, at the head of a Finnish cinema delegation, is in Iran to attend the Finnish Film Week now underway in the three Iranian cities of Tehran, Isfahan and Mashhad.

He said that the activities of the Finnish Film Foundation are quite similar to those of Iran’s Farabi Cinema Foundation.

He added that the foundation annually receives a sum of about €25 million from the government every year, about €20 million of which are spent on film productions and the rest on protecting international projects.

Director of the Film Producers Guild of Iran Seyyed Zia Hashemi for his part said that joint film productions can help promote cinema in the two countries, while they also can make the people of the two countries familiar with each other.

Jaana Puskala, head of the International Department of the foundation, said that Finnish cinema has actively participated in international festivals such as Berlin and Toronto, and also that foreign companies from France and Germany are mostly after films produced in Finland.

She added that the ground is ready in Finland for a close partnership with Iranian cinema.

Finnish Ambassador Keijo Norvanto was also attending the meeting.

A lineup of 16 short and feature movies from Finnish filmmakers are being screened during the program in Iran, which runs until October 4.

Shostakovich’s Eighth Symphony reviewed at Tehran center

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Eighth Symphony by Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (1906-1975), the Russian musician who is regarded as one of the major composers of the 20th century, was discussed during a session at the Maktabe Tehran Art and Cultural Institute on Tuesday.

Composed in summer 1943, the Symphony No. 8 was first performed on November 4 of that year by the USSR Symphony Orchestra under Yevgeny Mravinsky, to whom the work is dedicated. The symphony, which was named the Stalingrad Symphony by the USSR, is regarded as his most tragic work.

“Shostakovich’s works are close to our cultural root in the East,” maestro Nader Mashayekhi, the former conductor of the Tehran Symphony Orchestra, said at the session.

“His works are not atonal, and Iranian listeners have this atmosphere at the root of their music listening,” he noted.

“It’s difficult to analyze this fact, but Eastern listeners have had great empathy with the ambiance of Shostakovich’s works,” he added.

Mashayekhi also said, “The ambiance of Shostakovich’s works is also new for the audience in the world, and due to this fact, we can view Shostakovich against composers such as [Arnold] Schoenberg.”



Russian composer Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich.

Busbee, songwriter behind country and pop hits, dead at 43

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Grammy-nominated songwriter-producer busbee, who co-wrote Maren Morris’ breakout hit “My Church” and also crafted songs for Keith Urban, Lady Antebellum, Pink, Shakira and Florida Georgia Line, has died. He was 43.

Warner Records confirmed his death in a statement released Sunday but offered no details on the cause of death. His real name was Michael James Ryan.

In a statement, Warner Records’ co-chairman and CEO Aaron Bay-Schuck and co-chairman and COO Tom Corson called busbee “one of the best and brightest creative minds in music. Busbee’s kindness and legacy will never be forgotten and our hearts and prayers go out to his family at this very difficult time.”

Several singers mourned his death on social media. Blake Shelton said he and Gwen Stefani both considered busbee a friend, writing on Twitter that there was “too much pain and unfairness period.” Shakira tweeted that “an uncanny talent and unique soul has departed.” Adam Lambert tweeted that busbee was “brilliant and warm, with palpable joy for his craft.”

He was a co-producer on Morris’ debut album on Columbia called “Hero,” which was nominated for best country album. At the 2017 Grammys, “My Church” won best country solo performance. The song was also



This Feb. 12, 2017 file photo shows songwriter and producer Busbee at the 59th annual Grammy Awards in Los Angeles. (Photo by Jordan Strauss/Invision/AP, File)

nominated for best country song, a nomination Morris shared with busbee.

He also produced Carly Pearce’s debut album on Big Machine called “Every Little Thing.” He also helped write top country hits like Keith Urban and Carrie Underwood’s “The Fighter,” Florida Georgia Line’s multiplatinum hit “H.O.L.Y.” and Pink’s “Try.”

Matt Damon turned down “Avatar” lead role and \$250+ million payout

NEW YORK (Fox News) — Matt Damon is one of the most in-demand actors in Hollywood but even he has regrets over the roles that weren’t.

The Academy Award-winning star, 48, revealed that he turned down the lead role of Jake Sully in James Cameron’s 2009 megahit film “Avatar” and regrets not being able to work with the groundbreaking director.

Not only did he pass up a unique work experience, but he also gave up a potentially massive payday -- something in the nine-figure range.

“Jim Cameron offered me ‘Avatar,’” Damon told British GQ, an international monthly men’s magazine based in New York.

“And when he offered it to me, he goes: ‘Now, listen. I don’t need anybody. I don’t need a name for this, a named actor. If you don’t take this, I’m gonna find an unknown actor and give it to him, because the movie doesn’t really need you,’” he continued. “But if you take the part, I’ll give you 10 percent” of the film’s profits.

“I told John Krasinski this story when we were writing ‘Promised Land.’... He goes: ‘If you had done that movie, nothing in your life would be different. Nothing in your life would be different at all. Except that, right now, we would be having this conversation in space,’” Damon explained. “So, yeah. I’ve left more money on the table than any actor actually.”

GQ did the math. Damon would have been a quarter of a billion dollars



richer, since “Avatar” went on make \$2.79 billion at the box office. It was the top-grossing movie of all time until “Avengers: Endgame” dethroned it this summer.

Damon recalled that shooting “Avatar” would have conflicted with his “Bourne” series, and he “couldn’t do it.”

“Cameron said to me in the course of that conversation, ‘Well, you know, I’ve only made six movies.’ I didn’t realize that. He works so infrequently, but his movies, you know all of them. So it feels like he’s made more than he has,” Damon said.