



Sacred Defense should not be forgotten **2**



Foes try to disrupt the Arba'een march by stoking unrest in Iraq **3**



Iran earn first win at 2019 FIVB World Cup **15**



Ibrahim Çelikkol, Hesam Manzur join cast for "Drunk on Love" **16**

Assassination plot against General Soleimani foiled



See page 3

220 water, electricity projects to be inaugurated by March 2020

TEHRAN — Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian said on Thursday that 220 major water and electricity projects will be inaugurated in the country by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 19, 2020), Mehr news agency reported. Speaking on the final day of the 15th Iran International Water and Wastewater Exhibition (Watex 2019), Ardakanian said in the second half of the current year, every week a new project is planned to be inaugurated. "Given the significant role of the projects in this field in the development of the country, we hope that the outcomes of the 15th exhibition would effectively be used in the country's water and electricity projects," he said.

Ardakanian further mentioned Iran's deal with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), saying that this deal would be a major breakthrough for the country's trade as it would allow exports on zero tariffs for 70 products while 503 other items would enjoy lowered duties. **→4**

Regional problems cannot be solved militarily: Larijani

TEHRAN — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani has said that problems in the region cannot be solved through war. "I think all the regional countries have acknowledged that problems cannot be solved militarily. Military ways just spread division," ISNA quoted him as saying in an interview with Al Jazeera published on October 1.

He noted that the leaders of the regional countries have become aware that problems can be settled through dialogue. **■ "Iranian-Saudi dialogue could solve many regional problems"** Larijani also said that Iran is open to starting a dialogue with Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region. **→2**

Ayatollah Sistani urges Iraqis to avoid violence amid unrest

TEHRAN — Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the top Shia cleric of Iraq, has urged security forces and protesters to avoid violence, expressing sorrow over some sporadic unrest that has led to several casualties. "It is sorrowful there have been so many deaths, casualties and destruction" from clashes between anti-government protesters and security forces in recent days,

Ayatollah Sistani said in a letter Friday. In the letter read out by his representative Ahmed al-Safi during a sermon in the holy city of Karbala, the top cleric urged all parties to avoid violence. He also criticized officials and political sides for failing to answer the demands of the people to fight corruption, urging them to heed the demands of the protesters "before it's too late". **→13**

Russia says Iran, unlike the U.S, is in Syria at request of Damascus

By staff and agency
Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said that Iran is in Syria at the request of Damascus, unlike the United States. "Iran is in Syria at the request of Damascus, unlike the United States. When ISIS' main elements in Syria are defeated, questions will arise about the purpose of the continued U.S. presence on Syrian soil. There is a strong sense that Washington's mission is to prevent the restoration of Syria's territorial integrity, in direct violation of Security Council Resolution 2254," he said in an interview with Asharq Al-Awsat published on Thursday. Iran has repeatedly said that it has advisory presence in Syria upon the request of Damascus.

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, reiterated Iran's long-held position in March, saying Iran's presence in

"There is a strong sense that Washington's mission is to prevent the restoration of Syria's territorial integrity, in direct violation of Security Council Resolution 2254."

Syria is upon a request by Damascus to provide the country with advisory help against militants. "We will stay in Syria as long as the Syrian government wants us to stay," the security chief added. The Syrian government has described the presence of Iranian military advisors in the conflict-plagued Arab country as "legitimate and lawful." "Syria reiterates that the Iranian presence is legitimate because it came at the request of the Syrian government and contributed to Syria's efforts in the fight against terrorism sponsored by some participants in the summit," Press TV quoted an unnamed source at the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates in May.

How Imran Khan made history at UNGA

By Syeda Shabana Gul
ISLAMABAD — During the 74th session of the UN General Assembly recently, Pakistani premier Imran Khan undoubtedly stole the limelight with his thunderous speech. Khan focused primarily on four critical challenges facing his country, which also are a cause of alarm for the region and the world at large. The issues include climate change, money laundering, Islamophobia and the simmering issue of Kashmir. Talking about climate change, Khan said it is a global issue today but the Asian countries tend to be more vulnerable to challenges associated with it. About money laundering, Khan asserted that the developing countries are becoming increasingly poorer day by day because their money is

being stacked in black accounts and offshore companies owned by the developed countries. He expressed disappointment over lack of seriousness on these issues. The other two issues figured prominently in Khan's thought-provoking speech. Pointing toward the problem of Islamophobia, the cricketer-turned-politician said it is dividing the humanity. He said Islamic veil (hijab) is being depicted as some dangerous weapon and Islamic terrorism is being associated with the peaceful religion of Islam. Khan strongly denounced the term 'radical Islamization' used at international forums against Islam. He asserted that this phenomenon originated in the aftermath of cataclysmic 9/11 events and emphasized that there was no place for rad-

icalism in Islam and that it promoted equality, human rights and justice. He urged the Muslim world to tackle this menace collectively. The main highlight of Khan's speech was the issue of Kashmir, which raised a few eyebrows as well. He launched a scathing attack at Narendra Modi led government in New Delhi for holding 8 million people in Kashmir hostage for the past two months and called on the United Nations to intervene and resolve the longstanding issue of Kashmir, which is the main bone of contention between India and Pakistan. On August 5 this year, India abrogated Article 370 and Article 35A in Kashmir, the legislations that gave the disputed territory a special status, and thereby attempted to annex it with the union of India, against the aspirations of the people of Kashmir. **→7**



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Marking the memory of Commander Hamedani

At a ceremony held at Tehran's Andish Hall, the attendees, including Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, commemorated the memory of an IRGC commander, Hossein Hamedani, who was martyred in Syria while on a mission to provide advisory help to forces battling terrorists, including Daesh, also called ISIS. The ceremony marked the fourth anniversary of the commander's martyrdom.

ARTICLE
Afshin Majlesi
Tehran Times journalist

Words versus deeds: Are White House sanctions on Iranians economic terrorism?

Tehran accuses Washington of launching an economic terrorism against Iranian people, a claim that the U.S. denies. On the one hand, the Trump administration officials say that food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies are officially exempt from sanctions. On the other, Iran says that Washington's "economic terrorism" has targeted the ordinary people, including patients and children. It is, however, not very hard to verify counterclaims by going beyond the words and take a peek into the deeds. Decades-long tensions between the two started to heighten once again last year when Donald Trump walked out of a 2015 landmark agreement, under which the Islamic Republic agreed to curb its nuclear program in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions. However, the U.S. reimposed sanctions, targeting oil, banking and transportation sectors of Iran that had been lifted under the agreement and introduced new ones, arguing the curbs did not go far enough and it wants to compel Iran back to the negotiating table. In response to the U.S. policy of "maximum pressure", Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said "we acted in good faith" and that Tehran won't negotiate with Washington unless it shows "respect" for its commitments under the nuclear deal, internationally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or JCPOA. The U.S. measures are seemingly intended to target everything from oil sales to shipping and financial activities but the problem is that they have deterred foreign banks from doing any business with Iran. Fearing U.S. penalty, banks even refuse to transfer money for import of food and medicine by Iran. **→3**

ARTICLE
Maryam Khormaei
Mehr News Agency journalist

The world in the shadow of regional hegemony: How does China beat the U.S.?

Celebrating the 70th anniversary of the founding of China is an opportunity for Donald Trump to learn that more than a slogan is needed to revive a country's greatness. Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the military event called "the mother of all parades" on Tuesday, October 1. It was the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, and is a powerful representation of the president's desire to revive the country's glory in global leadership. At the military parade, for the first time China showcased new types of missiles and unmanned platforms. The unmanned technologies included a large unmanned underwater vehicle, along with a high-speed unmanned aircraft believed to be capable of supersonic flight. However, Trump, obsessed with such ceremonies, is busy fighting with domestic adversary, with the hope to get rid of the Ukraine scandal. While the Democrats do not allow Trump to repeat the slogan of "make America great again", Xi, with the help of military authority and political unity of the state, is showing everybody that he is eager to revive China's glory and shape the future of the world. Just a week ago, Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi said that the country is seeking a strategic role to represent an international order, emphasizing national interests and preventing foreign influence. Wang also pointed to the historic milestone in strategic collaboration with Russia, which is not a good news for Americans who see the alliance of Washington and international partners as a means to compete with China. **■ China and the world in the new era** Two days ago, on the eve of the great parade, the State Council Information Office of China released a detailed report titled "China and the world in the new era" to describe the major approaches of the country's foreign policy. **→13**

Leader says Sacred Defense must not be forgotten

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has said that the sacrifices made during the Sacred Defense against the invading army of Saddam Hussein in the 1980s must not be forgotten or denied.



The Leader made the remarks during a meeting with organizers of a congress on 6,200 martyrs of Markazi Province on Monday, September 30.

The statements of the Leader in meeting with organizers of the congress was published in Arak, the capital of Markazi province, on Thursday, October 3.

Describing martyrdom as a blessing of God, Ayatollah Khamenei said people can learn a lot from the biography of martyrs.

Iran can only trust an independent Europe, MP says

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hassan Norouzi, a spokesman with the Majlis Legal and Judicial Committee, has said that the European countries should prove their independence in order to gain Iran's trust.

In an interview with ISNA published on Friday, he said that Iran has fulfilled its obligations under the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, but the Europeans have failed to meet their commitments.

"Europe should fulfil its commitments and separate its path from the United States," he suggested.

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

So far, the European signatories to the deal have not been able to guarantee Iran's benefits from the deal.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on September 25 that the European countries have either been unable or shown no will to save the JCPOA.

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

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

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. pulled out of the JCPOA, Tehran began reducing its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals.

In follow-up to that deadline, on July 7 Iran announced that it has started enriching uranium to a higher purity than the 3.67% as the Europeans missed the 60-day deadline to devise a concrete mechanism to protect the country from the U.S. sanctions.

In a letter to European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini on September 5, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also announced that as a third step Iran stops implementing all commitments related to nuclear research and development (R&D).

France, Germany and the United Kingdom established INSTEX, a special-purpose vehicle, in January 2019 to facilitate non-dollar trade with Iran in a bid to bypass the U.S. sanctions.

So far, INSTEX has not become operational despite intense efforts on all sides.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on September 28 that it depends on the Europeans that INSTEX becomes operational.

"Destiny of INSTEX depends on the Europeans to reach a conclusion that they cannot wait for the United States' permission for everything," he said.

U.S. failed in anti-Iran pressure policy, found itself stuck: analyst

(PRESS TV) — An analyst says the U.S. has failed in the "maximum pressure" campaign that it has unleashed against Iran after abandoning the 2015 multinational nuclear deal, adding that Washington is "now stuck" vis-à-vis Tehran because it cannot choose to further escalate the situation for the fear of catastrophic consequences.

"It is clear ... that the maximum pressure campaign has failed, it has not brought Iran to its knees; it is not going to bring Iran to its knees. Iran has powerful friends — Russia and China — and they are going to make sure that Iran is not brought to its knees," George Szamuely, senior research fellow at Global Policy Institute, told Press TV's The Debate program on Thursday.

"So the U.S. is now stuck. It cannot really escalate to get to an actual, some kind of a military confrontation because that would be just a complete catastrophe ... and it would bring [U.S. President Donald] Trump's reign to an end," he added.

The comments came after Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei said Iran is determined to reduce more of its commitments under the nuclear deal in response to the U.S.'s exit until the Islamic Republic achieves the desired results.

Tehran chose to take those counter-measures after the European signatories to the deal — France, Britain and Germany — failed to fulfill their legal commitments to Iran under the deal by standing up to Washington's pressure and offsetting its bans.

Szamuely further noted Tehran is probably giving up on the Europeans because if they were serious about keeping the JCPOA, then they would have taken practical steps aimed at guaranteeing Iran's oil revenues.

Meanwhile, Richard Millet, the other panelist on the program opined that Trump would like to have a deal with Iran, stressing that if Iran came to the table and negotiated a proper agreement, then the Iranian people wouldn't have to suffer from the sanctions.

"We see him [Trump] go around the world trying to have deals, try to talk. He seems to be a talker ... and he would like to do a deal," he said.

He also noted the problem with the nuclear deal which was signed with then-U.S. President Barack Obama was that it was going to come to an end eventually and Iran was then going to be able to pursue nuclear weapons.

Therefore, he said, Trump is taking a "hard stand" to ensure such a thing does not happen.

IRGC chief says Iran has become invincible

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Hossein Salami, commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), said late on Thursday that the Islamic Republic has become "invincible" by promoting its deterrence power.

The top general made the remarks on the sidelines of a ceremony marking the memory of 6200 martyrs of the central province of Markazi.

When asked why the foes no longer talk of military option against Iran, Salami answered, "Because we have become powerful, because we have been invincible and, at the same time our enemies have been weakened and their options have become really weak," Tasnim reported.

Speaking to reporters in the central province of Markazi late on Thursday, Major General Salami replied to a question as to why military option against Iran is no more on the table, saying,

The general added, "It is evident that the enemy no longer has the capability; once it wanted to act and force us to react, but today, the enemy is not even capable of reacting to our capabilities and this reality is seen today on the battlefields."

He also pointed to Iran's progress in defense industry, saying, "The (military)



achievements are at a level that we do not announce them to the media but (generally speaking,) we are progressing on a daily basis in all areas, including missiles, drones, radars, air defense (gears), vessels, torpedoes, anti-armor missiles, and guided cannons..."

On August 22, the day marking National

Defense Industry, the Iranian military displayed a domestically built long-range, surface-to-air missile air defense system.

The mobile air defense system, called Bavar-373, is considered as a competitor to the Russian S-300 missile system.

"With this long-range air defense system, we can detect ... targets or planes at more than

IAEA chief contender: Nuclear deal can be saved by goodwill not sanctions

"Iran hasn't got much for keeping its part of the deal"

By staff and agencies

Marta Ziakova, who is running for the post of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) chief, has said that the 2015 nuclear deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, can be saved by goodwill not sanctions.

"The remaining parties, so-called E3+2 countries including China, France, Germany, Russia and the United Kingdom, that are still committed to the deal should find a way to help Iran in this difficult situation (to show) that deals should be honored," Reuters quoted her as saying in an interview published on Thursday.

"Iran hasn't got much for keeping its part of the deal so far but it has to return to the full implementation of its commitments under the deal," she added.

Tension has risen between Tehran and Washington since last year when U.S. President Donald Trump quit the nuclear pact and imposed sanctions on the Islamic Republic that were lifted under the agreement.

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 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.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali

Khamenei said on Wednesday that Iran will continue to reduce commitments under 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.

■ 'Iran taking step in right direction'

Also, acting head of the IAEA Cornel Feruta said on Friday that Iran had taken "a step in the right direction" toward dealing with questions on its nuclear program.

According to AFP, Feruta there had in the past few weeks been "engagement" from Iran on questions relating to its nuclear safeguards declarations to the agency.

He added that "engagement doesn't mean that the issues are completely addressed but it's a step in the right direction."

Regional problems cannot be solved militarily: Larijani

1 → "An Iranian-Saudi dialogue could solve many of the region's security and political problems," he said.

Larijani also said that Saudi Arabia does not need to rely or depend on its main ally, the United States.

"Riyadh can submit its proposals to be discussed at the Iranian-Saudi dialogue table without pre-conditions from our side," he said.

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

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

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

"Everybody is open to dialogue," he said. "Iran says [it is] willing to negotiate if sanctions are lifted; the U.S. [also] asks for dialogue ... neither does Saudi Arabia close the door for dialogue," Abdul Hadi added. "There are many countries, and Iraq is one of them, that can offer a solution or a place for a solution to be found."

His comments came as Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said in an interview with CBS's 60 Minutes program aired on Sunday that he preferred a peaceful resolution with Iran, describing it as "much better than the military" option.

Saudi Arabia does not need to rely or depend on the United States, top Iranian lawmaker notes.

Statement: Atomic Energy Organization ready to implement Leader's order to scale down nuclear deal undertakings

TEHRAN (FNA) — The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) in a statement on Wednesday underlined its preparedness to scale down the country's nuclear deal undertakings, based on the Leader's guidelines, until desired results are yielded.

Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei made decisive remarks on scaling down nuclear commitments which is shouldered by the AEOI until desirable achievements are made.

The statement read that with special attention to the decisive views of Supreme Leader in the field of peaceful nuclear activities and in coordination with the esteemed president and head of the Supreme National Security Council, the AEOI will continue extensive scientific and strategic activities and attain new capabilities in the hardware and software fields within the framework of national regulations and Safeguards commitments until desirable outcomes are achieved.

Reducing nuclear commitments based



on the clauses predicted in the JCPOA to strike balance in the country's commitments against its benefits from the deal is a legal issue and is not a case of violation, it added.

The Iranian officials have on several occasions announced that if the other parties abide by their commitment under the deal, Iran will also return to its full implementation, the statement said.

As international officials and experts were surprised by Iran's valuable nuclear achievements, including production of 20

percent, they will also be astonished by new accomplishments of Iranian experts in the field of peaceful nuclear technology, it concluded.

Ayatollah Khamenei underlined on Wednesday that the U.S. had gained nothing by adopting the policy of maximum pressure against Iran, and ensured that the country would seriously continue reduction of its nuclear deal undertakings.

"The U.S. policy of maximum pressure has failed. The Americans presumed that they can force Iran to make concessions and bring it to its knees by focusing on maximum pressure, especially in area of economy, but they have troubled themselves," Ayatollah Khamenei said, addressing the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) commanders in Tehran.

He praised the Iranian government's efforts to present an oil-free budget plan, and said, "It is a great achievement and we should use this opportunity (sanctions) to cut dependence on oil sale revenues."

300 km (190 miles), lock it at about 250 km, and destroy it at 200 km," Defense Minister Amir Hatami said at the time.

Iran has developed a large domestic arms industry in the face of international sanctions and embargoes that have barred it from importing many weapons.

On June 20 the IRGC shot down a U.S. military surveillance drone in the Persian Gulf with a domestically made surface-to-air missile. It was downed after it entered the Iranian airspace.

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a senior military advisor to the Leader of the Islamic Revolution who commanded the IRGC from 1997 to 2007, said on July 25 that "today Islamic Iran has turned into the greatest regional power."

Also in remarks on September 29, Rahim Safavi said if the United States resorts to a military adventure against the Islamic Republic, Iran's response will go beyond its territory and spread to the Mediterranean, Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

"The Islamic Republic has turned into regional power in West Asia and is invincible, and if the Americans think of a plot the Iranian nation will respond to them from the Mediterranean, Red Sea and the Indian Ocean."



■ 'Trump has had no foreign policy achievement'

Larijani also said that U.S. President Donald Trump has had no achievement in foreign policy because of his extreme actions.

He advised Washington to "correct its path and be wise".

Oil minister: No enemy in Persian Gulf region

Zanganeh called on regional countries to view Iran as their friend

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh has said the enemy of Persian Gulf countries is not one of the region's countries but it comes from outside the region, pointing to the United States.

"In my opinion, there is basically no enemy in this region. The enemy is outside the region," Zanganeh told reporters on Thursday night, Press TV reported.

He also called on regional countries to view Iran as their friend, expressing Tehran's readiness to cooperate with its neighbors to secure the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz. "Iran is a friend of everyone," Zanganeh added.

"We are prepared to join hands with other countries in the region and protect the security of Persian Gulf and Strait of Hormuz together," he said.

"This must be carried out by ourselves (littoral states of Persian Gulf)," he added.

The comments came after President Hassan Rouhani said lasting security and peace in the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz could be established only through cooperation among regional countries.



During a speech at the 74th UN General Assembly on September 25, Rouhani said, "Based upon the historic responsibility of

my country in maintaining security, peace, stability and progress in the Persian Gulf region and Strait of Hormuz, I would like to

invite all the countries directly affected by the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz to the 'Coalition for Hope', meaning Hormuz Peace Endeavor."

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

In a tweet last week, 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".

Iran, Azerbaijan to expand peaceful military co-op in Caspian Sea

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi and Azeri Navy Commander Admiral Zaur Gumbetov voiced their respective countries' willingness to maintain the peaceful nature of the Caspian Sea, and vowed to further increase military cooperation for this cause.

During the meeting with Admiral Gumbetov on Thursday, Rear Admiral Khanzadi said that Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to develop and boost its ties with Republic of Azerbaijan in relevant fields.

The Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Azerbaijan have historical, cultural and lingual commonalities in a way that nations and governments of the two countries have established amicable relations with each other for many years, he said, adding, "moreover, the two countries share two land and sea borders."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Khanzadi pointed to the strengthened and amicable relations between the two countries especially after the glorious victory of the Islamic Revolution and added, "Iran has gained salient achievements and progresses in various sectors after the Islamic Revolution in the fields of technology, science, defense, etc."

For his part, Gumbetov pointed to the friendly and ami-



cable ties between naval forces of the two countries of Iran and Azerbaijan and added, "Cooperation of neighboring countries will prevent piracy. We are duty bound to maintain security of the Caspian Sea."

He went on to say that Azerbaijan Navy Force has expressed its readiness to participate in Depth Diving Competitions hosted by Iranian Navy.

On Tuesday, Gumbetov underscored his country's willingness to develop relations and cooperation with Iran in training and operational fields.

"God willing, we hope to have further and more effective contacts with the Iranian Navy at the operational and training levels in the future," Gumbetov said in a meeting with Commander of the Iranian Navy's First Zone Rear Admiral Mohammadi in Bandar Abbas.

He underlined constructive and highly good interactions with the Iranian Navy in the Caspian Sea, and said if there were a waterway to link Azerbaijan to the Iranian waters in the Persian Gulf, it would certainly send several warships to visit the region.

Rear Admiral Mohammadi, for his part, said that the cruel sanctions against Iran's military sector have helped the country attain self-sufficiency in building different destroyers, missile-launching warships and Qadir-class and Fateh-class submarines.

In relevant remarks in July, Azeri Defense Minister Lieutenant General Zakir Hasanov described his country's military cooperation with Iran as successful, and said Baku is willing to have broader cooperation with Tehran.

Iran foils assassination plot against General Soleimani



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Head of the Intelligence Organization of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says Iran has foiled an assassination plot against Major General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC Quds Force.

The Islamic Republic foiled an assassination attempt against General Soleimani, which had been orchestrated by spy services of Israel and certain Arab countries with the aim of creating a sectarian war in Iran, Hossein Ta'eb said, Mehr reported on Thursday.

The assassination plot had been decided "a few years ago", he added.

According to Ta'eb, the enemies planned to carry out the assassination in Iran's southeastern regions during Fatimiyya — the days when Shia Muslims mourn the martyrdom of Fatimah al-Zahra, daughter of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) — and Muharram, when Shias hold mourning ceremonies in commemoration of Imam Hussein (PBUH).

He added that the enemies, frustrated by their failure to upset security in Iran, hatched an extensive plot to target Major General Soleimani in his home province of Kerman.

They sought to buy a property near a mosque built by Soleimani's father in the city of Kerman, dig a tunnel underneath the site and rig it with "350 to 500 kilograms of explosives", he Ta'eb stated.

The team planned to "blow up the entire place" as soon as Soleimani entered the mosque for mourning ceremony.

Ta'eb said the suspects "went to a neighboring country" and "large sums of money were spent to train and prepare them" to carry out the attack.

General Soleimani heads the IRGC's elite Quds Force, which runs foreign operations, and is regarded as the mastermind of Iran's military strategy in the region.

In March, Soleimani received Iran's highest military award, the "Order of Zulfaqr", making him the first Iranian commander to receive the medal after the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

The top general is widely known as one of the most influential military commanders in the world.

The Washington-based magazine Foreign Policy put General Soleimani at the top of its 2019 list of Global Thinkers in the defense and security field in January.

In November 2017, Soleimani, who had been at frontline positions in battles against Daesh (ISIL) in Iraq and Syria, declared the end of Daesh.

In his declaration, the commander said Daesh was a dangerous fitna (source of discord) which was "dipped in the poison of Zionism" against the Muslim Ummah in order to create conflicts in the Muslim world.

In this fitna, he said, Daesh committed horrendous crimes, including beheading children, skinning men alive before their families, enslaving innocent girls and women and raping them, burning people alive and killing hundreds of young people en masse.

Foes try to disrupt the Arba'een march by stoking unrest in Iraq: ayatollah



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The arrogant countries do not want the Arba'een march to take place, says Ayatollah Mohammad Emami Kashani, a Tehran Friday prayer leader.

"Arba'een is an event that has gained the attention of the world but the arrogance (a term used by Iranian officials to refer to the U.S. and its allies) does not want this to happen," Emami Kashani said on Friday, addressing worshippers.

He added that with God's grace, people will "attend the Arba'een march with more security inshallah."

The remarks came while the ongoing protests in Iraq have turned violent.

The unrest comes as millions of pilgrims are preparing to travel to the Iraqi holy cities of Najaf and Karbala to attend the Arba'een march, which marks the fortieth day after the martyrdom anniversary of their third Imam, Hussein ibn Ali (AS).

According to Press TV, demonstrations erupted on Tuesday over unemployment and poor public services, with some protesters arguing that they deserve a better life since they are living in a country with some of the world's largest energy resources.

Emami Kashani said the enemies try to disrupt the Arba'een march because it gathers millions of Muslims from across the world and "this they cannot tolerate."

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the top Shia cleric of Iraq, has urged security forces and protesters to avoid violence, expressing sorrow over some sporadic

unrest that has led to several casualties.

"It is sorrowful there have been so many deaths, casualties and destruction" from clashes between anti-government protesters and security forces in recent days, Ayatollah Sistani said in a letter Friday.

In the letter read out by his representative Ahmed al-Safi during a sermon in the holy city of Karbala, the top cleric urged all parties to avoid violence.

He also criticized officials and political sides for failing to answer the demands of the people to fight corruption, urging them to heed the demands of the protesters "before it's too late".

"Lawmakers hold the biggest responsibility for what is happening," Ayatollah Sistani was quoted as saying.

Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi on Thursday expressed regret that the ongoing protests have become violent, saying he is ready to meet with representatives of the protesters to discuss their demands.

Speaking on Thursday night, the Iraqi prime minister said certain elements have been able to derail the protests from their peaceful path.

He said there was no "magic solution" to issues such as graft, unemployment and corruption but he would begin passing a law for basic income to be meted out to poor families.

During the televised address, Abdul-Mahdi also asked the parliament, where his coalition is in majority, to give him support so that he can reshuffle his cabinet to address people's demands.

Tehran rejects French call for release of 'Iranian national'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said on Friday that France's call for release of a detained Iranian scholar was an interference in Iran's internal affairs and would not help resolve the issue.

France's Foreign Ministry on Thursday demanded Iran release dual national Fariba Adelkhah, a senior research fellow at Sciences Po University in Paris, who was arrested earlier this year.

"It is vital and urgent for the Iranian authorities to be transparent in this case as well as for all cases of foreign nationals arrested in Iran," French Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Agnes von der Muhll told reporters in a daily online briefing, Reuters reported.

She said France has repeatedly demanded consolatory access to Adelkhah and her release from prison, but Iranian officials rejected the request based on her Iranian nationality, and only allowed her family to meet her a few times.

Mousavi said France's interference in the case was irrelevant and added that "this will not only fail to help resolve the issue, but rather make the legal process more complicated," according to IRNA.

Iran does not recognize dual nationality, and therefore, "Mrs. Adelkhah is an Iranian national and enjoys all the citizenship rights of Iranian nationals," he said.

Adelkhah, 60-year-old anthropologist and researcher at Sciences Po's Center for International Studies (CERI) in Paris, was reportedly arrested in June on charge of espionage.

Envoy hails Britain's compensation to Iran's Bank Mellat

TEHRAN (MNA) — Iranian ambassador to London, Hamid Baeidinejad, has hailed the British government's compensation to Iran's Bank Mellat as an achievement for Iran.

In messages on his Twitter account on Friday, Hamid Baeidinejad announced that Bank Mellat has been compensated by the UK government.



He added the British government's action was based on a ruling by a UK court four months ago.

The Iranian diplomat added that the UK Supreme Court ruled four months ago that the sanctions by the UK Treasury against Bank Mellat were illegal.

Bank Mellat has confirmed it had received the compensation from the UK Treasury.

Britain used a third country to avoid U.S. sanctions as it paid an Iranian bank a settlement in a £1.25 billion damages case, The Times has reported.

Bank Mellat, in which the Iranian government owns a 17 per cent stake, sued the UK government over sanctions imposed in 2009 that prevented it from doing business with the UK's financial sector.

The Supreme Court ruled that the sanctions were illegal and a five-week hearing of the bank's claim for damages covering its loss of business had been scheduled for June.

Bank Mellat had sought £3.2 billion but this fell to £1.25 billion with interest, according to The Times.

Words versus deeds: Are White House sanctions on Iranians economic terrorism?

1 → "Children and ill people cannot get basic medicine," President Hassan Rouhani said earlier in September when he was attending the annual United Nations General Assembly in New York, where his foreign minister Zarif once again denounced U.S. sanctions as an attempt to deny ordinary Iranians access to food and medicine, and said the move was "a sign of U.S. desperation."

Back in July, the U.S. Department of State released a video addressed to the people of Iran. In the video, Trump administration official Brian Hook claims that it is a "myth" that sanctions target Iran's access to medicine.

However, according to the Lancet, (one of the world's oldest, most prestigious, and best known general medical journals), chemotherapy drugs such as asparaginase, the leukemia treatment mercaptopurine, and even the basic pain killer paracetamol have run out of stock, threatening the treatment of thousands of children, Foreign Policy reported.

The latest news say that over 20 ships carrying around one million tons of grain are stuck outside Iranian ports as U.S. sanctions create payment problems and hamper the country's efforts to import vital commodities, sources directly involved in the trade said, Reuters reported on Wednesday.

"There are no restrictions on humanitarian business, but you can't get paid for it," one European source said. "You can be waiting for months to get a payment."

Another source said, "There is nervousness among traders about making more sales to Iran before the backlog (of ships) is cleared." "Some small banks that we used to work with have informed us that they will no longer do business with us," a source told Reuters, declining to name the banks.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimated last month that Iran's total cereal stocks in 2019 would total 5.1 million tons, falling to 4.8 million tons in 2020, versus 9.9 million tons in 2016.

Trade sources told Reuters in December that Bunge [an American agribusiness and food company] and rival U.S. group Cargill [CARGIL.LUL] as well as other suppliers had halted new food supply deals to Iran due to payment issues. Based on such evidence, it is not hard to conclude why Iran names U.S. economic sanctions as unconcealed examples of economic terrorism.

STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	326118.6
IFX	4272.19

Sources: tse.ir, ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,020 rials
GBP	51,675 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$58.22/b
WTI	\$52.68/b
OPEC Basket	\$58.72/b
Gold	\$1,509.75/oz
Silver	\$817.59/oz
Platinum	\$881.40/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

New gloomy outlook for German economy

A group of leading research institutions have joined the German government and others in providing a bleak vision for the future of German economic growth. It expected German GDP to rise by only 0.5% this year and 1.1% in 2020. Economic institutes expect growth to rise to 1.4% in 2021. Their expectations were weaker than their spring forecast that the economy, the largest in Europe, will grow by 0.8% this year and 1.8% in 2020.

As per menafn.com, over the past year, GDP increased by 1.5%. The economy contracted slightly in the second quarter and is widely believed to contract further in the just-ended third quarter, putting it into a technical recession.

The think tanks cited political uncertainty such as trade tensions, the risk of a no-deal Brexit, low global demand for investment goods such as factory machines that Germany specializes in exporting and 'structural changes in the important auto industry.

"In the current situation, there is no strong indication of a deep economic crisis," said Klaus Michelsen of the Berlin-based DIW Research Institute. There is no need for some kind of comprehensive stimulus package developed a decade ago during the 2008-2009 global financial crisis. But he warned that the government would be wrong to stick to its policy of keeping the budget balanced for that. "Alleviating the crisis exacerbates problems," he said.

The unorderedly Brexit would likely cut 0.4 percentage points from Germany's economic growth rate in 2020 and 0.3 points in 2021, but the outlook could improve if future EU relations with Britain are coordinated quickly, Michelsen said.

German employment is expected to grow by 380,000 this year. Only 120,000 and 160,000 new jobs are expected in the next two years. The unemployment rate was expected to rise to 5.1 percent next year from 5 percent this year. Thereafter, the rate is expected to decline to 4.9 percent in 2021.

In contrast, German inflation is expected to rise to 1.5 percent next year from 1.4 percent this year. In 2021, inflation is expected to rise to 1.6 percent. The country's budget surplus is expected to be enormous this year, reaching around 50 billion Euros, but is expected to reach 4 billion Euros by 2021.

Various financial measures such as additional pension benefits, child benefit increases and income tax relief, not least of which is the partial cancellation of additional solidarity costs, can be expected to help reduce fiscal surpluses.

South Africa debt-to-GDP could reach 95% by 2024, IIF says

South Africa's public debt could rise as high as 95% of gross domestic product by 2024 if the government doesn't restructure the state-run utility Eskom and implement a workable growth plan, the Institute of International Finance (IIF) said in report.

According to iol.co.za, the report, released late on Wednesday, echoes a warning on Tuesday by the central bank about government debt, which has doubled from less than 30% of GDP before the 2008 global financial crisis to nearly 60%.

The 95% estimate is the worst of four outlooks the IIF report laid out. But even its baseline case shows debt rising to 70 percent of GDP, according to the IIF, a trade group of financial institutions that tracks market conditions worldwide.

"South Africa's debt sustainability is increasingly in question," the IIF said in its report.

The South African economy expanded 0.8% in 2018, and in February the National Treasury said it expected 1.5% growth in 2019. But it has since warned it might have to lower that forecast, especially after it granted Eskom a 59 billion-rand, two-year bailout package.

The IIF said a proposed plan to shift Eskom's debt to the government would add 6 percentage points to South Africa's sovereign debt.

The "key for an improvement of the situation is the implementation of the national growth plan and Eskom restructuring blueprint," it said. "Investors and rating agencies will follow the October and February budget announcements closely."

Finance Minister Tito Mboweni is set to deliver his medium-term budget on Oct. 30. He is expected to give details of President Cyril Ramaphosa's plan to split Eskom into three units, generation, transmission and distribution.

Labor unions that backed Ramaphosa's presidential campaign, as well as factions inside the ruling African National Congress, oppose the plan, raising fears that it may not materialize.

Moody's, the last of the top three ratings firms to still rank Pretoria's debt at investment grade, said in September it was unlikely to cut the rating to junk anytime soon, but that the delay over reforming Eskom was a major risk.

Investors, however, seem to expect a downgrade soon.

An S&P Capital IQ model, based on credit default swap prices, shows that markets have begun to price in a downgrade. Since September, the cost of five-year swaps (rose 20 basis points to 200 bps on Wednesday, a two-month high, according to data from IHS Markit.

220 water, electricity projects to be inaugurated by March 2020

1 → 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.

Back in August, Ardakanian had announced that major energy projects worth 320 trillion rials (about \$7.62 billion) would be inaugurated by the end of the current Iranian calendar year.

Speaking in the opening ceremony of a dam project in East Azarbaijan province, the official said that the ministry will also commence 23

new projects worth 360 trillion rials (nearly \$8.6 billion) during the current year.

The 15th Iran International Water and Wastewater Exhibition (Watex 2019) kicked off on September 30 at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds and wrapped up on Thursday.

Alongside 247 Iranian companies, 13 exhibitors from Italy, Turkey, Germany, Hungary, China, and Taiwan are showcasing their latest products and services during the four-day event.



Recent achievements in different fields of water and wastewater industry including pipes and fittings, filtration and desalination equipment, valves, automation and instrumentation systems, measuring systems and laboratory equipment for water and wastewater, as well as industrial

equipment are being showcased in this year's event.

Watex is Iran's biggest annual industrial and commercial event in the water and wastewater industry which hosts a large number of domestic and foreign companies every year.

No ship carrying grain is held up outside ports, Iran says

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** – Iran has denied recent reports suggesting that ships carrying food and grain cargoes have been stuck outside major ports in southern Iran because of payment problems due to U.S. sanctions, Press TV reported.

A senior government official in the southern Iranian province of Khuzestan confirmed on Thursday that ships carrying basic goods were waiting for discharge outside Imam Khomeini Port, Iran's main port for goods, but he insisted they had been stuck because of increased import activity at the port.

The comments came after the Reuters news agency claimed in a report that at least 20 dry bulk ships carrying around one million tons of grains were waiting outside Imam Khomeini Port for unloading. It said other vessels had waited for weeks for their cargoes to be processed in the port and in Bandar Abbas, another major cargo port on the Persian Gulf.

However, the government source ruled out payment issues and said that the ships remained anchored mainly because there



have been changes to Iran's import policies as the country seeks to increase inventories of basic goods and foods to cope with the sanctions.

"Assume that storage capacity in this port has been nearly three million tons but currently around six million tons of basic goods have entered this port," the official told Tasnim news agency, adding, "It is obvious that some ships should wait for discharge."

Iranian authorities said in August that imports for basic goods and foodstuffs have significantly increased this year amid efforts to offset the impacts of the American sanctions.

TEDPIX rises 4% in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), has risen 11,708 points, or four percent, to 326,117 during the five working days of the past Iranian calendar week (Saturday to Wednesday) which was the second week of the seventh Iranian calendar month of Mehr, IRNA reported.

The index had risen 20,243 points, or seven percent, to 314,409 during the first week of Mehr.

In a TV program on September 29, Amir Hamooni, the managing director of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) exchange market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), announced that 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).

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.

The ills of financial globalization

By Arvind Subramanian, Dani Rodrik

After holding off for decades, China has finally embraced financial globalization, announcing recently that it would eliminate capital controls to allow unfettered short-term foreign inflows (so-called hot money). By contrast, after decades of boom-bust cycles, Argentina is facing another macroeconomic crisis, and has finally imposed capital controls to prevent a catastrophic decline in its currency.

Both of these episodes reveal the intellectual hold that financial globalization still has on policymakers, despite its history of failure. Why, after all, would China abandon capital controls now, and what took Argentina so long to adopt such obviously necessary measures?

The Chinese economic miracle has many sources. In addition to its turn to the markets, China has benefited from exports and foreign investment, internal migration and the Maoist legacy of a public education and health system.

It is also the civilizational heir to a strong, effective state with an enlightened, albeit ruthless, leadership. Its people collectively crave stability. But an important factor in China's rise was the decision not to open the economy to capital flows.

Consider the following counterfactual history. In the late 1990s, when China's economic miracle was becoming evident, it could easily have succumbed to the prevailing orthodoxy on financial globalization.

Had it done so, the likely outcome would have been a surge in foreign capital chasing high Chinese returns, rapid appreciation of the yuan, slower export growth, and lost dynamism. China's export machine would not have become the juggernaut that it is, and its economy may well have suffered through much more volatility as a result of the fickleness of foreign capital. In fact, Argentina — with its periodic macroeconomic volatility and recurring financial crises — offers a perfect illustration of these downsides.

■ **The financial crisis**

Nearly every major emerging market financial crisis of

the past few decades has been preceded or accompanied by surges in capital inflows. That was true of Latin America in the 1980s, India in 1991, Mexico in 1994, and East Asia and Russia in the late 1990s. It was also true of Brazil, Turkey and Argentina in the early 2000s; the Baltics, Iceland, Greece and Spain in the late 2000s and early 2010s; and the "fragile five" emerging market economies (Brazil, India, Indonesia, South Africa and Turkey) in 2013. And it is true of Argentina today.

To be sure, capital flows have often reflected deeper policy problems or imbalances within a given emerging market. But they are also usually the necessary transmission mechanism for crises, and thus have magnified the eventual costs to those economies.

Although most tenets of the neoliberal consensus — privatization, deregulation, trade integration, immigration, fiscal discipline, and the primacy of growth over distribution — are now being challenged or outright rejected, financial globalization remains a glaring exception.

The preponderance of evidence suggests that financial globalization — especially unrestricted hot money — aggravates macroeconomic instability, creates the conditions for financial crises, and dampens long-term growth by making the tradable sector less competitive.

Few economists would list financial globalization as an essential prerequisite for sustained long-term development or macroeconomic stability. And arguments made in its favor presume that every country has already met highly demanding regulatory requirements. Most have not — and probably cannot — except over the long run.

Although the International Monetary Fund has begun to make some allowance for restrictions on capital flows, albeit only as a temporary last resort for weathering cyclical surges, the dogma of financial globalization remains intact.

One reason, perhaps, is that development economics has not shed its resource-savings fundamentalism, which attributed underdevelopment to a lack of domestic savings.

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.

Iran, Turkey stress expansion of trade ties

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Economy Minister Farhad Dejpasand says Tehran and Ankara are eager for enhancing trade interaction to achieve a target of \$30 billion annual trade exchange, Shada reported.

In a meeting with Turkish Deputy Minister of Customs and Trade Riza Tuna Turagay in Tehran on Wednesday, Dejpasand underlined the great history of close ties between the two countries and their officials' great determination to expand bilateral relations, calling for the promotion of cooperation between the two neighbors.

Pointing to the target of \$30 billion annual trade set by Iran and Turkey, the Iranian minister said the level of bilateral trade exchange is expected to rise in light of mutual efforts.

"The cooperation between the customs of Iran and Turkey must be much closer and stronger than the current level," Dejpasand added.

For his part, Tuna Turagay reaffirmed

the Turkish government's determination to continue trade cooperation with Iran, and called for the modernization of transportation routes between the two countries and for updating the customs equipment in order to accelerate the pace of mutual trade.

During the 27th meeting of Iran-Turkey Joint Economic Committee, which was held in Ankara in mid-September, the two sides investigated different ways of reaching the targeted \$30-billion bilateral trade and reiterated that reaching this figure is possible despite the pressures of the U.S. sanctions.

During the meeting, the Iranian president's chief of staff, Mahmoud Vaezi, who is the Iranian chairman of the committee, mentioned expediting the process of implementing bilateral agreements on trade and economic issues as the most prioritized objective of the joint committee and said Iran has no limitation for expanding and deepening cooperation with Turkey.

(Source: Project Syndicate)

Iran urges unity, co-op among GECF members

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh on Thursday called for more unity and closer cooperation among the members of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF), Shana reported.

Addressing the 21st ministerial meeting of GECF in Moscow's Metropol Hotel, Zanganeh urged gas-exporting countries to unite and further cooperate in a bid to better tackle challenges that the global gas market is facing.

"The first idea to create an OPEC-like organization for producers and exporters of natural gas was raised in a meeting in Tehran in 2001," Zanganeh said, stressing that there have been many advances since establishment of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum.

He further stated that the main task of the GECF countries is balancing the energy market and a sustainable supply of gas to the consumers, adding besides this task, attention to environmental issues and facing challenges



in the field of the gas market is also necessary.

The official said defending the national interests of the member states and resisting the pressures imposed by some world powers was an inevitable necessity.

"Ensuring energy security and the free flow of oil and gas should be in line with the interests of all countries," he added.

The organization's member states are growing and its fifth annual summit is set to be held in Guinea Ecuatorial later this year.

The Gas Exporting Countries Forum is an international governmental organization which provides the framework for exchanging experience and information among member countries.

Iran, Algeria, Bolivia, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Russia, Trinidad and Tobago, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela are the permanent members of GECF and Azerbaijan, Iraq, Kazakhstan, the Netherlands, Norway, Oman and Peru have the status of observer members.

75,000 agricultural wells to be electrified across Iran

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iran Fuel Conservation Company (IFCC) and the country's Power Generation and Distribution Company (known as TAVANIR) signed a deal worth \$1.2 billion for replacing diesel water pumps in 75,000 agricultural wells with electric ones, Shana reported.

Speaking in the signing ceremony on Thursday, Deputy Oil Minister for planning Houshang Falahatian said that the ministry plans to electrify 20,000 agricultural wells every year during the next four years.

According to the official, complete implementation of this project is going to save at least 750 million liters of fuel oil every year.

Based on a directive by the country's economic council, a total of \$1.65 billion has been allocated for electrifying

100,000 agricultural wells across the country, which when fully implemented, will remove at least one billion liters of fossil oil from the consumption cycle.

According to data released by the Iranian Water Resources Management Company, there are currently about 220,000 agricultural wells across the country, half of which are planned to be electrified based on the economic council directive.

Iranian Energy Ministry is also following a national smart metering program (known as FAHAM) for equipping the country's agricultural wells with smart electricity meters.

Back in May, Mohammad-Ali Validad, the deputy director of FAHAM announced that the number of wells equipped with smart meters has reached 56,000 across the country.

In March 2009 implementation of FAHAM was placed on the agenda of Iranian government and Energy Ministry.



Supply surge and easing China growth kill LNG's seasonal swings in general energy



Liquefied natural gas (LNG) won't enjoy its customary winter boost in Asia this year, and the seasonal swings in prices may well be a thing of the past as new supply and a steadier China demand profile dampen volatility.

As stated by reuters.com, the forward curve for LNG futures isn't quite as flat as a pancake, but it certainly suggests that the northern winter price spike seen in seven of the last eight northern winters will be absent this year.

Chicago Mercantile Exchange contracts based on the Asian benchmark spot price, the Japan/Korea Marker compiled by S&P Global Platts, show a winter price peak of \$7.02 per million British thermal units (mmBtu) for February cargoes, as of the close of trade on Wednesday.

This compares to \$5.71 per mmBtu for the front-month November contract, \$6.45 for December, and \$6.98 for January.

After the February peak implied by the futures, prices moderate again, with the March contract at \$6.70 per mmBtu, April at \$6.12 and May at \$5.99.

■ The modest uptick

The modest uptick in expected prices for the northern winter stands in contrast to prior years, when Asian spot prices LNG-AS have surged during the colder period.

For example, in the winter of 2017/18, the spot price more than doubled from a low of \$5.40 per mmBtu in June 2017 to a peak of \$11.50 in January 2018.

However, the increasing supply from new LNG trains in Australia and the United States started to alter that dynamic in 2018/19, with the spot price peaking in June that year amid summer power demand, with only a minor lift ahead of winter and a seasonal peak in November.

The last of eight new LNG projects built over the past decade in Australia has started, making it the world's top exporter, overtaking Qatar.

The United States has also been ramping up output, with three new plants starting this year and several expected to start operations later this year or early in 2020.

The other major factor has been both a slowing and a smoothing of growth in LNG in China, which in 2018 overtook South Korea as the second-biggest importer of the super-chilled fuel, behind Japan.

China imported 42.9 million tons of LNG in the first nine months of the year, according to vessel-tracking and port data compiled by Refinitiv.

Assuming this pace is maintained for the rest of the year, China will import a total of about 57.2 million tons for 2019.

This would actually be a modest 6.3% gain on the 53.8 million tons imported for the whole of 2018, although there is a possibility that imports of the fuel increase in the last quarter to meet winter demand.

■ China's LNG demand

However, even with a strong fourth quarter, it seems China's LNG demand growth will be considerably lower in 2019 than it was in 2017, when it jumped 48% on the year, and in 2018, when it increased by 41%.

However, it is worth noting that LNG imports were exceptionally strong in the November to January period in 2018/19, setting three consecutive monthly records.

The question for the LNG market is whether China is likely to once again experience a surge in demand in the winter months, or whether the relatively stable monthly volumes of imports since the January peak will continue over the coming winter. Certainly, it appears that Beijing's campaign for better air quality will continue this winter, and further coal-to-natural gas switching in residential heating and industry is likely.

But it also appears China is managing its natural gas supply and demand better, with new storage available to smooth out seasonality, as well as increased domestic output.

This increases the risk there will not be a seasonal lift in the demand in China, meaning that spot prices are likely to struggle to reach even the modest gains implied by the CME forward curve.

Markets fear oil price collapse: Should OPEC cut more production?

By Tsvetana Paraskova

It's been nearly three years since the world's top oil exporter and OPEC's de facto leader Saudi Arabia forged an alliance with Russia to start managing oil supply with the hope of rebalancing the market and ensuring, in their words, market stability, in other words — higher oil prices.

While they have managed to put a floor under oil prices, the allies in the OPEC+ deal have failed to materially move prices higher. With fears of demand faltering, the leaders of the pact—Saudi Arabia and Russia — face a tough test ahead. Should they deepen the cuts and lose additional market share, (mostly) to U.S. oil? Or should they just stay put and wait for the storm to pass, jawboning the market about 'stability' in the meantime?

On top of these questions, the leaders of the OPEC+ coalition are now facing another force on the oil market—increased unpredictability in geopolitics, as the attacks on vital Saudi oil infrastructure that knocked 5 percent of global oil supply offline for a few weeks showed.

Despite the ongoing production cuts from the OPEC+ alliance, and despite the worst disruption of oil supply in history, oil prices not only haven't moved significantly higher, they are now even lower than they were on the day just before the attacks. On September 13, Brent Crude prices closed at \$60.22 a barrel. On October 2, Brent Crude closed at \$57.75 per barrel, after the Saudis were busy reassuring the market over the past weeks that the affected capacity has been restored and not a single oil shipment to customers would be skipped.

■ Weighing on oil prices

Sure, the Saudi reassurances have played a significant role in weighing on oil prices after they had spiked the most on record on the day after the attacks.

But lingering concerns about flagging global oil demand growth and weakening economies returned with a vengeance on the market and sent oil prices lower than they were just before the attacks.

Oil prices had just had their worst quarter this year, the worst three-month performance since Q4 2018 when prices crashed by 40 percent after the U.S. granted six-month waivers to the eight largest Iranian oil buyers.

In Q3, concerns about demand trumped geopolitics and the fact that U.S. sanctions on Iran and Venezuela further tightened and cut off some more oil supply to the market, in addition to the cuts by the OPEC+ group.

And one question started to weave its way to the top of analysts' minds: are those cuts enough?

"I think they will want to plow ahead of keeping OPEC+ cuts in place and will start using concerns about the global economy and trade war to stay the course," Joe McMonigle, Senior Energy Advisor with Hedgeye Risk Management, told Bloomberg.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) and many other organizations and analysts, including OPEC, have trimmed their oil demand growth estimates several times this year already, on the back of signs of slowing economic growth in the world, also due to the U.S.-China trade spat.

■ Oil demand growth

If the pace of global economy deteriorates



further, the IEA could revise down again its oil demand growth expectations for this year and next, its executive director Fatih Birol said last week.

Russia's Energy Minister Alexander Novak also sees global oil demand growth slowing this year on the back of the trade disputes, and expects that growth could be just 1 million barrels per day. Yet, expectations are that as early as in 2020, demand growth will accelerate to 1.4 million bpd, Novak hopes.

Russia and Saudi Arabia need to continue their cooperation, including in stabilizing the oil market, Novak said during a meeting with Saudi Energy Minister Abdulaziz bin Salman on the sidelines of the Russian Energy Week Forum in Moscow on Wednesday.

The Russian minister, however, warned that black swans — extreme and highly unpredictable events with severe impacts — are 'flying around' the oil market, making forecasting even more difficult.

At the energy forum this week, Russia's

President Vladimir Putin also commented on the OPEC+ alliance and said that "Russia remains a responsible party to the OPEC+ deal. We are convinced that cooperation will continue to develop."

At a meeting with OPEC Secretary-General Mohammad Barkindo, at which Novak was also present, Putin said that the "recent attack on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia certainly triggered a hike in oil prices, but I was sure that everything would return to today's indicators because there are no serious grounds for fundamental market fluctuations. They do not exist partly owing to our common efforts to stabilize the world market."

But with slowing oil demand growth and economies, Saudi Arabia and Russia may have to not only continue cooperation, but also make it more flexible to mitigate a potentially devastating effect of a 'black swan' event on the oil market.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Clean sources to generate almost half of the global energy by 2050

Renewable energy sources will account for 49 percent of the world's electricity generation by 2050, compared with 28 percent in 2018, a study reported on Thursday.

As per plenglish.com, the EIA, an entity attached to the Department of Energy, highlighted in a report that solar energy will represent the largest increase by 2050.

According to the United States Energy Information Administration (EIA), last year 96 percent of clean energy on the planet came from hydroelectric, wind and solar technologies.

The key factors in the generation of solar energy will be the availability of resources, public policies and the continuous fall in technology costs, EIA said.

In its study, the entity analyzed eight countries and the same number of regions in different latitudes.

It stressed that China will continue to lead in that sector due to its growing demand for electricity, government strategies and competitive technology costs.

Solar power generation will also grow steadily in India, the most developed European nations and in the United States, he said.

The agency said that hydroelectricity, the most important renewable source in 2018, will also continue to increase, but at a much lower rate.

Hydropower is a mature technology, established in the nineteenth century, so many of the best sites for use are already in operation, recalls the EIA.

Oil edge up but still set for big weekly loss on demand worries

Oil prices rose on Friday but were still on track for a second consecutive weekly loss after sliding on fears that slower global economic growth would hurt energy demand.

As per reuters.com, Benchmark Brent crude LCOc1 rose 36 cents, or 0.6%, to \$58.07 a barrel by 0839 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures CLc1 rose 30 cents, or 0.6%, to \$52.75.

But Brent was down 6.2% on the week while U.S. crude was 5.6%, lower, on the biggest weekly losses since July.

"Both are on track for hefty weekly losses and it will take a brave man to bet against the bearish tide," Stephen Brennock of oil broker PVM said.

"As things stand, demand and supply-side developments are anything but supportive and there can be no happy ending for those of a bullish disposition," he added.

Weak U.S. services sector and jobs growth data on Thursday added to worries about global oil demand and exacerbated fears that a protracted U.S.-China trade war could push the global economy into a recession.

Investors are awaiting U.S. non-farm payrolls data due out on Friday to determine the next move.

"Given that U.S. growth is largely supported by a buoyant consumer whose confidence is built on a strong job market, this release will be critical in shaping expectations around future Fed policy which will have spillover effects on oil markets," said Harry Tchilinguirian, global oil strategist at BNP Paribas.

U.S. job growth likely picked up in September, with wages increasing solidly, which could assuage financial market concerns that the slowing economy was teetering on the brink of a recession.

Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, said on Thursday the world's top crude oil exporter had fully restored oil output on its facilities.



Renewables deliver 47% of total generation in Germany so far in 2019

Renewable energy in the European industrial power house of Germany has delivered 47 percent of the country's total electricity generation so far in 2019, with wind and solar alone combining for more than one third of total generation, and renewables outstripping fossil fuels for seven months in a row.

According to reneweconomy.com.au, this year has seen a significant change in Germany's electricity mix after years of relatively slow progress that was partially caused by a re-assessment of nuclear after the Fukushima disaster and the decision to close some reactors.

This first graph, sourced from the renowned Fraunhofer Institute for Solar Energy Systems, and via researcher Bruno Burger, shows the share of generation for the first nine months of 2019.

Wind emerges as the biggest single source of electricity for the year to date, followed by brown coal and then nuclear, with solar just head of gas and black coal and biomass. The "variable" sources of wind and solar accounted for 34 percent of total generation over the nine months.

This next graph highlights the fact that for an as yet unbroken sequence of seven consecutive months from March, renewable energy has exceeded fossil fuel output on a monthly basis.

Indeed, coal generation has slumped dramatically this year, by more than 20 percent. Most of that has come from black coal, but the share of brown coal is also falling significantly hit by a European carbon price that finally has some bite as well as the growing influence of renewables.

Germany has vowed to exit all coal generation by 2038 at the latest, and is being urged to so earlier. Negotiations are currently being held with the existing coal generators about compensation. So, while the Australian government considers offering incentives for coal generators to stay on line, the German government is considering incentives for them to shut down.

Germany has a target of reaching 65 percent renewable energy generation by 2030, a task that should be readily achievable given the recent increase in renewables share, despite the relatively slow pace of recent additions.

The latest jump in renewables share is the biggest since 2003, when the country sourced just 8.5 percent of its electricity generation from renewable.

Yemen Mourns Its Civilians Again

TEHRAN (FNA) — Fifteen members of a family, including seven children, were killed Tuesday in air strikes carried out by the US-backed and Saudi-led coalition in Qatabah, Southern Yemen.

They were buried on Wednesday in their village of Al-Fakhir, on the edge of the town ringed by mountains, as their loved ones voiced shock and anger. Qatabah, on the edge of Al-Daleh province, has seen fierce fighting between Saudi-backed pro-government forces and the Houthi Ansarullah forces. According to the United Nations, the town is witnessing non-stop and daily clashes.

The new tragedy came after President Donald Trump vetoed a bill by Congress to end US support for the dirty war on Yemen, especially to put ground forces into a conflict environment, where both civilians and service members can die.

This is not the first time that the US Army has helped the Saudi-led coalition to bomb a town and kill its innocent civilians. For years, the United States has been taking military action against the country on the pretext of fighting Al-Qaeda, predominantly through drone strikes and airstrikes. Long before Trump decided to join the Saudis in the conflict, the Obama administration was busy killing civilians there.

The Bureau of Investigative Journalism puts Obama's killings at ten times the number of Bush administration drone assassinations. According to the bureau, the Obama death toll included thousands of civilians at wedding parties, funerals, and more mundane activities.

The fifteen civilian victims, including women and children, re in fact part of a higher civilian death toll in Yemen, based on Yemeni news reports. Most of the killing result from fighting on the ground, where Saudi-backed forces launch an offensive against the resistance forces, who toppled the puppet government before the war in 2015.

With President Trump now joining the circle of war-criminals-in-chief, there will be no trial in The Hague. This is yet another opportunity to hold a murderous president to account for killing civilians and acts of official assassination that are patently illegal under International Law. Even the UN has said in a new report that the US is complicit in Saudi war crimes in Yemen.

That the raid "worked" is perhaps the greatest myth of all. It was a botched raid, no more than a tactical pause in an ongoing proxy warfare. It is silly to argue that the botched raid will ever set off a political firestorm back in the US. No one is going to criticize the process that the Trump administration has used to approve the criminal escalation of the conflict. Nothing is politically toxic about America's involvement in the Saudi-led war on Yemen. America owns the war and the escalation - and the consequences. The Americans had all the answers during the Obama administration.

Even at the United Nations one (except for a few members) is going to question the illegality of escalation and the daily killing of civilians, much less take a very different path against the United States and Saudi Arabia. It marks such an incredible betrayal of the international community and the awesome responsibility that they must shoulder, especially in the UN Charter sphere.

This is an accurate recounting of the real situation in Yemen - destroy them and don't help them, also destabilize and spread extremists to everywhere. Far from bringing "freedom and democracy" to that country, the US-backed and Saudi-led conflict has sowed chaos and death. It is a recipe for targeting civilian objects and costing people their lives - without thinking about regional security or diplomatic and political consequences, things that the Americans and the Saudis never think about.

In light of the Tuesday massacre and his Muslim travel ban, however, it is evident that President Trump wants to play a significant role in the instability of Yemen. That says why both the UN and the people of Yemen hold his administration in contempt. Instead of delegitimizing these sentiments as "They hate us for our freedoms" or "They can't fix their own problems," perhaps he should pay more attention to the conditions these people live in and the US government's role in the instability of their country.

Corporate media not only fails to acknowledge this, but also does not rationally examine the criminality of the US-backed and Saudi-led war. It is easy to forget, and important to remember, that few in Washington are willing to accept such realities.

Snowden Under Attack by U.S. Government Once Again

By David Nelson

Whistleblower and American hero Edward Snowden is being sued by the Department of Justice over the release of his new book, Permanent Record. The DOJ claims that the contents of the book violate a non-disclosure agreement Snowden allegedly signed when he worked as an NSA contractor and that the government is therefore due all of the proceeds from the sale of the book. Snowden famously revealed in June 2013 that the U.S. government was conducting a mass-surveillance program, indiscriminately collecting phone records, internet search history and metadata from all Americans without a warrant, spying on various allied nations and international corporations, planning cyber attacks against foreign countries like China and hacking into their military systems, and even tapping the phones of various world leaders, including German chancellor Angela Merkel, among various other violations of the privacy and civil liberties of Americans and others around the world. For exposing the vast and widespread criminal activity of the U.S. government and in particular, the NSA, Snowden became one of fewer than 100 people in history to be charged under the Espionage Act of 1917, legislation originally created to go after enemy spies during World War I, and he has lived in exile in an unknown location in Russia ever since.

In this excerpt from the DOJ's lawsuit against Snowden, the government argues the illegality of the book on the grounds that Snowden did not first seek the approval of the NSA or CIA before publishing. In other words, the agencies responsible for violating the law and basic constitutional rights of all Americans so egregiously that a formerly loyal government worker was willing to give up all his freedoms in order to inform the American people must first be asked nicely before you're allowed to say anything more about their own criminal behavior. As Snowden states in his tweet thread regarding the lawsuit, "It is hard to think of a greater stamp of authenticity than the US government filing a lawsuit claiming your book is so truthful that it was literally against the law to write."

■ Establishment Cover Up and Response to Snowden Leaks

Just three months prior to the Snowden revelations of 2013, then Director of National Intelligence James Clapper testified before congress, saying that the U.S. does not "wittingly" collect bulk data from American citizens, a statement proven indisputably false by the documents Snowden leaked. For his blatant act of perjury and oversight of a highly illegal spying apparatus that violated the privacy and 4th Amendment rights of all Americans, Clapper's feet would of course be held to the fire, right? As we've learned from the recent Russiagate fiasco, even the most trivial of falsehoods when told to the government can get you into a world of trouble, see Michael Flynn, Roger Stone, George Papadopoulos, etc. Instead, Clapper simply trotted out a token apology, saying, "my response was clearly erroneous—for which I apologize," before going on to serve out the remainder of President Obama's term as Director of National Intelligence with not so much as a slap on the wrist and was subsequently hired by CNN as a national security analyst. Meanwhile, the network continues its struggle to discern why the American people no longer trust it and its fellow corporate media outlets.

In fact, Clapper aside, the Snowden leaks resulted in not one bit of noticeable accountability or self-reflection from the U.S. government or the mainstream corporate press whatsoever, as the majority of the focus centered around the persecution of Snowden for revealing classified information, with almost none on the individuals and agencies responsible for committing the crimes that Snowden revealed. Snowden remains in exile and in danger of being prosecuted to the highest degree if found and extradited, while the NSA continues to conduct mass surveillance of the American people in violation of the 4th Amendment, and our basic privacies from Big Brother in Washington continue to diminish in the name of protecting national security.

Rather than making any effort to rein in the exorbitant powers of the state to conduct illegal spying in response to the Snowden revelations, the government has instead attempted to further normalize the idea of mass surveillance by passing legislation like the Freedom Act in 2015, es-



entially a modified version of the PATRIOT Act of 2001, which gave the state a vast array of powers to conduct warrantless surveillance. Now, the government is coming after Snowden once again for his memoir, perpetuating the Orwellian idea that those who display the immoral actions of criminals to their victims are in fact the true criminals, while the immoral actors themselves are really the victims for having their secrets exposed.

■ The Dangers of Mass Surveillance

So the government indiscriminately spies on its own citizens, but what's the big deal? After all, they're just doing it to keep us safe, right? Even if you assume the best of intentions from our watchful overlords, this willingness to cede so much power to the federal government is naive to say the least. The primary danger is that if the government ever decides in the future that they want to come after you for any reason, they now have the ability to construct a narrative about you through your online and cellular activity. The more data they have, the more easily they can manipulate that data to create a story that portrays you as a criminal. Even if you're not doing anything that most people would consider to be wrong, the standard for what the government considers criminal often has more to do with what it perceives as being harmful to its own interests rather than some objective standard of immorality, as we have seen through the Snowden case itself that. This means that anyone expressing dissent or opposition to the state in any way is at risk of being considered adversarial to the state's interests, and therefore an enemy of the state that may need to be dealt with. The state being able to closely monitor those who express such dissent through its mass surveillance program is extremely detrimental to free speech in this country because people fear the consequences of dissenting and will self-censor, knowing the potential ramifications of speaking out against the state.

"If you've got nothing to hide, you've got nothing to fear," some will still contend. This argument neglects the fact that there is a major difference between what most people would consider something "to hide" and what the state considers criminal. If I had a plant in my house that the government considers illegal, it's likely not something I would feel the need to hide, except for my knowledge that if a government official saw it, I could be arrested. As a result, I may hide something from the state, not because I'm doing anything wrong or immoral, but simply because I want to protect myself from government goons arresting me and locking me in a cage for something they have arbitrarily deemed illegal. The "If you've got nothing to hide, you've got nothing to fear" line of argument is only valid if you assume that all government laws are handed down by God as irrefutable moral truths.

Additionally, the notion that people should have no objection to having anything in their life exposed to federal bureaucrats and agents unless it's something they could be arrested for is preposterous and does not hold up to any other normal human standard of privacy. Would you feel comfortable knowing someone snooped through your house every day while you were at work or had a secret camera to watch you in the shower? After all, they didn't actually take anything or physically hurt you and you aren't doing or hiding anything illegal, so if you had nothing to hide, you should have nothing to fear. There is a basic level of privacy that we as humans value by nature. The reason we have non-see-through walls to our homes or have passwords on our phones or computers is not solely to protect our security, but also because we value keeping certain things secret and that is in no way an indication that we are hiding something nefarious. As Snowden put it, "Arguing that you don't care about the right to privacy because you have nothing to hide is no different than saying you don't care about free speech because you have nothing to say."

■ Terrorism

But we need mass surveillance to keep us safe from terrorists, proponents of the government's boundless spying apparatus like Clapper or former NSA and CIA director Michael Hayden will say. If our guardian angels in Washington don't know that you called your mom last Tuesday to check up on how her old dog Biscuit is doing, then we might have another 9/11. The idea that mass data collection is in any way necessary or beneficial to the goal of protecting national security is the predominant myth espoused by surveillance state propagandists.

As James Bamford lays out in detail in A Pretext for

War, it was the overabundance of communication data collected by the NSA that played a major role in making it so difficult for them to find the actual information that could have helped prevent the 9/11 attacks. Everything the U.S. government could have possibly needed to prevent those planes from flying into the twin towers was there, from the names of key al-Qaeda members to the locations of important al-Qaeda meetings around the world to the immigration of many of the future hijackers into the United States and their activities in the months leading up to the attack. Yet, they were unable to put the pieces together, in large part because there was so much noise surrounding the truly important details. Imagine trying to put together a 100 piece jigsaw puzzle with 1,000,000 extra fake puzzle pieces mixed in with the 100 real ones.

There is a major difference between targeted surveillance, where you have probable cause to investigate a particular person or line of communication, acquire a warrant, and surveil the relevant activities that could help you prevent a crime, and mass surveillance, where you simply collect everything from everybody, hoping that casting a wide enough net will provide valuable intelligence. What Snowden revealed was that the U.S. government has been pursuing the latter strategy of mass surveillance, a method that not only violates the basic privacy rights of American citizens, but proved highly ineffective leading up to 9/11 and has shown little if any evidence of being beneficial to national security and the prevention of terrorism.

■ Consequences of the Leaks

In addition to the absurdity of the claim that absorbing communication data from all Americans is somehow crucial to protecting our freedoms, there has never been legitimate proof that Snowden's leaks caused any real harm to the nation's security or to anyone other than those who were responsible for committing the crimes that Snowden revealed, whose ability to operate in secret was somewhat impaired. Snowden did not reveal specific details regarding individual spies or methods of operation that a foreign adversary could take advantage of and use to put Americans at risk, but instead revealed broad overviews of ways in which the U.S. government was abusing its power. In fact, Snowden left all final decisions regarding which documents to declassify to journalists like Glenn Greenwald whom he trusted to be responsible and take proper precautions, rather than simply dumping them all to the public, giving them to an organization like Wikileaks that could potentially release them all indiscriminately, or giving them to a foreign adversary like Russia or China. According to Greenwald, Snowden even instructed him to give the government the opportunity to plead its case as to why any given document was too sensitive and should not be released before he did so.

Meanwhile, people like Clapper are guilty of violating the privacy of every American citizen and making a mockery of the 4th Amendment and the foundational American principles behind it, that all Americans should be free from unwarranted search and seizure and are not to be treated as criminals or terrorist threats who must be constantly monitored despite no evidence whatsoever of any wrongdoing. However, Clapper is a member of the ruling class and his actions, although harmful to the entire nation, do not explicitly harm the state itself, but to the contrary, empower the state by expanding its reach and control over its subjects. And what do you know, the state decided it was Snowden who must be punished to the fullest extent of the law and continues to pursue retribution against him to this day, while Clapper's crimes were swept under the rug and barely acknowledged as he continued to loyally serve the ever-expanding secret surveillance state.

The ongoing Snowden persecution reveals a very basic problem with a system that grants such massive and unconditional powers to the central government and, in particular, unelected federal agencies like the NSA and CIA, to conduct policy in secret in the name of national defense. If it is up to the state itself to decide what behavior is criminal and what consequences should be imposed on those it considers to be criminal, then we have no reason to be surprised when the state imposes extreme punishment on those who commit acts that in any way harm the state's interests, while absolving itself and its own loyal members of any responsibility for their actions, regardless of how much damage they do to their own citizens.

Second Announcement



N.I.S.O.C

NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO. : 01-31-9280071

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOREIGN PURCHASING DEPARTMENT

Bldg. No. 104, Material Procurement Management Complex

Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran

Tel. No.: 061 341 23455 Fax No.: 061 3445 7437

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Increasing American citizens' desire for impeachment of the President Trump in the political swamp!

The President of the United States of America is in a bad situation. He is now witnessing a growing desire of American citizens to impeach and even oust him. This is the worst possible situation for Trump. Here's a look at the latest news and analysis in the United States:

Trump's impeachment polling is historically unprecedented. As CNN reported, The poll numbers are in on impeachment, and it's not good news for President Donald Trump. A clear plurality of Americans approve of the House's impeachment inquiry into Trump, and they are split on whether they want to impeach and remove him from office. Americans are more eager to impeach Trump now than they were at similar points in the impeachment sagas of Bill Clinton and Richard Nixon. Impeachment actions usually start off as being unpopular with the American public. After the House voted to start an impeachment inquiry of Clinton in October 1998, a CBS News/New York Times poll found that 45% approved and 53% disapproved. But with Trump, those numbers are reversed. In an average of polls taken since House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced a formal inquiry last week, 51% support an impeachment inquiry. A minority, 44%, are against it.

When it comes to impeaching and removing Trump from office, the difference is even more dramatic. An average of polls taken since early last week shows that 46% support impeaching and removing Trump from office. That's about equal with the 45% who are against such an action.

Back in October 1998, the vast majority of Americans were against impeaching and removing Clinton from office. In a CNN poll from then, only 31% favored impeaching and removing. The vast majority, 63%, were against it. This -32 point gap for impeaching and removing Clinton stands in contrast to the +1 gap for impeaching and removing Trump.

At no point during the impeachment proceedings against Clinton did anywhere close to a plurality of Americans want Clinton impeached and removed from office. Right now, you could argue that we're already at that point with Trump.

This, of course, is one of the key differences with the politics of impeachment now and 21 years ago. There is a belief that the impeachment inquiry hurt Republicans in the 1998 midterm elections. That may be true, but this polling suggests the situation with Clinton and Trump are very different.

More amazingly, more Americans are in favor of impeaching Trump now than they were at a similar time during the House's investigation of Nixon in 1973 and 1974. The House Judiciary Committee voted to start an impeachment inquiry of Nixon in late October 1973. This was following the infamous Saturday Night Massacre, in which Nixon ordered his attorney general to fire an independent prosecutor looking into the Watergate scandal. A Gallup poll taken in the immediate aftermath found that just 38% felt that Nixon should be impeached and compelled to leave the presidency. The majority, 53%, said that he shouldn't. Even after two dramatic events, the public was apprehensive about impeaching and removing Nixon.

Now, you could make the argument that the fairer comparison for Trump to Nixon is after the entire House formally voted to start the impeachment inquiry in February 1974. A Harris poll taken a few weeks later put support impeaching and removing Nixon at 43% and opposition at 41%. That gap is about equal to the gap we see today and only came months after the inquiry had really already begun.

But even if you consider this later date, the 46% in favor of impeaching and removing Trump now is greater than the 43% who favored it during a similar point in the Nixon impeachment process. It wasn't until right before Nixon resigned that close to a majority wanted him out. Some of the support for impeaching Trump and the impeachment inquiry against him may be because of polarization and dislike for the President. Trump's strongly disapprove rating has consistently been around 50%, and most of the people who disapprove of Trump are for some sort of impeachment action.

Polarization, however, is probably not the root cause of the polling we're seeing on a possible Trump impeachment. Politics were polarized during Barack Obama's administration, and not many wanted him impeached and removed. Only 33% of Americans wanted Obama impeached and removed in a July 2014 CNN poll. Most, 65%, didn't feel that way.

That split came even though Obama was about as a popular (42% approval rating) as Trump is today. The bottom line: Americans think Trump did something wrong that, at a minimum, deserves to be looked into for possible impeachment. He is in historically unprecedented waters. The impeachment numbers he's facing now are really not good for him, given where we are in the process.

Donald Trump loves polls. At virtually every campaign stop during his 2016 campaign Trump would champion some poll or another that showed him in first place -- crushing all competitors. "So many great polls like Reuters - big leads everywhere," he tweeted in November 2015. "New Hampshire really special! We will win big and MAKE AMERICA GREAT AGAIN!"

In each episode of his weekly YouTube show, Chris Cillizza will delve a little deeper into the surreal world of politics. Click to subscribe! The problem for Trump is that while his love for polls hasn't waned, the number of polls that carry any sort of good news for him have. Which forces Trump to look far and wide for any scrap of alleged data that shows people a) love him b) hate Democrats or c) love him and hate Democrats.



Which brings me to this: Twice in the last week Trump has tweeted "polls" from Breitbart News.

The first "poll" -- tweeted by Trump on Monday -- asked "Do you stand with President Trump?" A whopping 97.83% said they did! Just 2.17% said they did not.

The second, which Trump tweeted Thursday, asked whether House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff (D-California) should "resign and be investigated." A whopping 98.4% said yes while 1.6% said no! Pretty overwhelming results, right?! Man, Trump is killing it! Take that, lamestream media! Except that these Breitbart News "polls" aren't polls at all. In fact, there are several obvious problems with them.

1) Breitbart is a conservative website. A quick glance at the headlines on the site as of Thursday afternoon turned up headlines like "11 FACTS THAT HAVE ALREADY UNRAVELED THE UKRAINE HOAX" and "FACT CHECK: PELOSI SEZ SCHIFF DIDN'T FAKE TRUMP DIALOGUE IN CONGRESS (HE DID)"

2) The questions are, uh, a little bit -- how to say this -- leading. Think of it like this. If I ask, "Do you, like all good Americans, love apple pie, I am likely to get a different response than if I simply ask "Do you like apple pie?" The first question will, almost certainly, elicit a much more pro-apple pie response, right? So how you word the questions matters. And the wording by Breitbart News isn't super objective.

CNN's Chris Cillizza cuts through the political spin and tells you what you need to know. By subscribing to The Point newsletter, you agree to our privacy policy.

3) You can vote in this online "poll" as many times as you want. Which is fine! But it means it's not a poll. Because, see, actual polls have a methodology that is aimed at producing a representative sample of the electorate. And people who come to Breitbart News and vote several times for Schiff to resign and be investigated aren't representative of much other than being people who frequent the Breitbart News website. It's like if I offered a poll on my personal website asking, "Do you think Chris Cillizza is great?" And then I sent it only to people I am related to and asked them to vote -- a lot. Not exactly a representative sample. Trump, of course, doesn't care about explaining or disclosing any of these things. He sees a number that is good for him. He tweets it. He gets the feedback he wants from his echo chamber. Case closed. He's not going to stop. But his persistence -- and cavalier attitude toward, you know, facts -- don't make these shams anything close to real polls.

Also Usatoday reported that Americans by a 45%-38% plurality now support a vote by the House of Representatives to impeach President Donald Trump, a USA TODAY/Ipsos Poll finds, as allegations continue to swirl around an embattled White House. By a similar margin, 44%-35%, those surveyed say the Senate, which would then be charged with holding a trial of the president, should convict Trump and remove him from office.

The survey of 1,006 adults, taken Tuesday and Wednesday, underscores the perilous situation the president finds himself in as House committees subpoena documents and prepare to hear testimony into accusations that he pressured the leader of Ukraine to investigate a political rival, then tried to hide the account of their phone conversation. Trump, who has released a rough transcript of his July 25 call with the president of Ukraine, says the conversation was "perfect" and that there was no wrongdoing. On Tuesday, he lashed out during a White House news conference, referring to the inquiry as a "hoax."

Americans have long been wary of impeachment. A USA TODAY/Suffolk University Poll taken in June -- months before the formal impeachment inquiry was launched last week -- found opponents outweighing supporters by nearly 2 to 1, 61%-32%. But several national surveys have shown attitudes significantly shifting in the past 10 days, since the

latest allegations emerged about Ukraine and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced the impeachment inquiry. "Our latest USA TODAY/Ipsos poll shows that public support for impeachment continues to build with a plurality -- 45% -- saying the U.S. House should vote to impeach," said Cliff Young, president of Ipsos Public Affairs. "Most importantly, an overwhelming majority of Americans say that a president is subject to laws like any citizen. Public opinion might be tolerant, but there are limits."

I don't care: Trump dismisses GOP concern over protecting whistleblower

Even among Republicans, however, 30% say the president asking Ukraine to look into the behavior of former vice president Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, would be an abuse of power. And 80% of Republicans -- a higher number than among Democrats or independents -- say the president is subject to all laws, just like any other citizen.

One more warning sign for Trump: Nearly two-thirds of Republicans say there isn't enough reliable information to decide whether he should be impeached. That leaves open the possibility that dramatic disclosures and persuasive evidence could convince some in Trump's own party that impeachment is warranted. Democrats are more likely to say they already know enough; just 15% say there isn't enough evidence so far. The survey includes some cautionary notes as well for Biden, the Democratic front-runner for the presidential nomination to challenge Trump next year. By 2 to 1, 42%-21%, those polled say there are valid reasons to look at the behavior of Joe and Hunter Biden in Ukraine. Even 1 in 4 Democrats say an investigation would be legitimate; two-thirds of Republicans agree. Joe Biden was the Obama administration's point person on Ukraine; his son pursued lucrative business arrangements there. There has been no evidence of wrongdoing by either Biden, though Trump on Wednesday accused them both of being corrupt.

While often not illegal, the perception of self-dealing and conflicts of interest have long fueled voter distrust of government and its leaders. Critics have charged that Trump's children and his business empire have used his position for financial gain. In the poll, views were mixed about the whistleblower who originally reported concerns about Trump's phone call with the Ukrainian president. Seventy-one percent of Democrats call that person "a patriot"; just 10% call him or her "a traitor," a label Trump has used. The president hasn't yet convinced a majority of members of his own party that the description fits, though. Among Republicans, 36% call the whistleblower "a traitor," but 21% say he or she is a patriot. The largest number, 43%, say they don't know.

A majority of Americans are knowledgeable about some of the particulars of the impeachment process: 56% know that impeachment begins in the House; 55% know that an impeachment vote in itself doesn't remove a president from office; 62% know that a two-thirds majority in the Senate would be needed to do that. However, most Americans don't realize that would be an unprecedented step. Fifty-one percent say American presidents have been removed from office by impeachment in the past. While two presidents have been impeached by the House, neither Andrew Johnson nor Bill Clinton was convicted by the Senate. A third president, Richard Nixon, resigned in the face of near-certain impeachment and conviction. Few Americans, just 3%, predict that Trump will voluntarily resign before the end of his first term; 15% expect him to be removed through impeachment. One-third of those surveyed, 33%, say he will remain serve out his first term as president. Another 29% predict that he will not only do that but also win a second term. The online poll has a credibility interval of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

The world in the shadow of regional hegemons: How does China beat the U.S.?

➡ What is most emphasized in this document is the focus on China's development without being a threat to others.

The economic growth of China has also been defined as an opportunity for the whole world, and it has been claimed that it will not seek supremacy over others.

In the released document by the Chinese State Council Information Office, imitating Western countries' development is rejected.

What is remarkable in the detailed document is Beijing's emphasis on peaceful development of China without seeking hegemony, expansionism or spread influence.

The document referred to China as "the most important stability factor and the power source of global economy". A country that its development is a model for developing countries.

In the document, China has stated its desired model in international relations as a new model based on mutual respect, equality, justice, and bilateral cooperation.

These are positive points that the audience will learn from newly released document. More delicate and thoughtful look on the form of words will lead us to a different direction that makes it possible to predict the confrontation of China and the U.S., as another claimant of global order.

Differences with Washington and partners

In a part of the document, China introduces itself as the world's largest "developing" country, while less than two weeks ago, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison named China as a "developed" country and claimed that the rules of World Trade Organization need to be changed to accommodate China's new position as a developed economy.

According to the WTO, referring to China as a new developed economy points to a fundamental difference with Beijing's self-called position as a developing economy - a position that benefits from exclusive privileges such as longer deadlines to fulfill agreed promises.

On April 7, 2018, Trump wrote in a Twitter message that China is a "great economic power" but has received "enormous benefits and privileges" especially from the U.S.

In another part of "China and the world in the new era" document, the entry of the country into the WTO on 2001 is considered as a starting point for greater engagement in international economy and commercial cooperation. The U.S. president assailed Beijing in a speech on September 24 at the UN General Assembly. He said, "The World Trade Organization needs drastic change. The second-largest economy in the world should not be permitted to declare itself a 'developing country' in order to game the system at others' expense." He added, "But as far as America is concerned, those days are over. To confront these unfair practices, I placed massive tariffs on more than \$500 billion worth of Chinese-made goods."

We can read in another part of the document that say China seeks fair development, and as the largest developing country in the world, helps small countries passing this stage without any political consideration. U.S. officials claim it is China's method that makes you indebted, then plunders your national resources. They also claim that the idea of "one belt and road" by China has lots of consequences, and is in line with the country's interests. Americans say that the plan does not provide countries with proper loans or international aid, but rather they make a loan based on free market rules with high interest rate. Borrower countries have to work with Chinese companies and use their equipment and workforce to build their ports and railways.

The collapse of American hegemony in the shadow of peace

In the document, China uses sarcasm in case of the U.S. without mentioning its name, and calls into question its supremacy over the universal order. At other part of the report, China brags that it has never launched a war in the past 70 years, and has not even occupied an inch of a single country. Meanwhile, the U.S. has destroyed countries from Vietnam to Afghanistan over these years.

At the same time, Beijing assured that it is not seeking to be hegemon, and these accusations fuel the fear from China. So, how Beijing will end the U.S. control over the world?

Maybe the answer should be sought in the speech of Xi on June 15, 2019. On the sidelines of the fifth Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, the Chinese president called for a regional security structure with Asian features to achieve common security.

In this regard, Xi asked Asian countries and their partners to form a common, comprehensive and sustainable security view point, and pursue a regional security structure with Asian features to reach collective security.

The comment by Xi, which is limited to Asia, reveals the prospect of Chinese solution for challenging the U.S.

Xi's remarks is the realization of the prediction of the founder of the constructivism theory Nicholas Onuf. He once said, "I do not believe that we are currently in a modern universal order". The modern order emphasized by the U.S. is just a rhetoric. I believe "regional orders" will emerge instead of universal order. The dominance of the influence of these regional orders will be at various "hegemonic" levels. But some of these levels will be more influenced or less by possible universal hegemonic order. Thus, the relative power of the U.S. in military and economic terms is reducing. This remarkable decrease of the power will negatively affect the notion of the country's position in the world.

It should not be imagined that the U.S. cannot compete with China, and as it is clearly affirmed in "China and the world in new era" document, Beijing is facing some challenges that Washington will properly take advantage of them. Population aging, slow economic growth, Hong Kong's protests, and Taiwan separatism are some of these challenges. Washington and London's support for protests in Hong Kong, and U.S. insistence on providing Taiwan with arms indicate the U.S. is determined to undermine the Chinese unity by challenging the fundamental principle of a "united China".

How Imran Khan made history at UNGA

➡ The move was strongly resisted by the people and political leaders in Kashmir, cutting across the ideological lines. Many global leaders also denounced the move to alter the disputed nature of the territory.

To foil protests, Indian government deployed additional troops to Kashmir and laid a military siege a week prior to the announcement. All communication channels were shut down and people were forced to stay indoors. Over the past two months of siege, thousands of young boys have been detained and political leaders have been put under house arrest.

Khan warned the UN and the international community of unwanted repercussions if the siege was not immediately lifted and the basic human rights were not restored. He said the brutalities in Kashmir could breed more terrorism and result in more Pulwama like incidents and added that the arrogance and supreme Aryan legacy was blinding India's leadership to foresee the results.

Despite being involved in the persecution of Kashmiri Muslims, Khan said India was trying to make a case against Pakistan to blacklist it on the pretense of radical Islamization. The reaction of 1.3 billion Muslims on Kashmir issue,

he asserted, was not because of Islamic radicalization but the direct result of injustice and silence of international community.

Khan said if India starts a conventional war with a state seven times smaller than itself, for Pakistan it will become a "the fight for survival". He said if the war breaks out between two nuclear states, it won't remain confined to the borders but will spill to other parts of the region.

"You are the one who guaranteed the people of Kashmir the right of self-determination, it is time to take action," Khan asserted, adding that India must start with lifting this inhuman curfew

which has been in place now for two months. He also called for the release of youth who have been detained.

Khan's speech was not only timely but also historic. An eloquent speaker, he managed to draw the attention of the world towards some of the most pressing issues facing the world today. More importantly, he gave voice to the voiceless people of Kashmir.

It begs a question here: Will the world body appease the country of 1.3 billion people or stand for justice and humanity? The answer is anybody's guess.

Writer is a Pakistani student and researcher, presently based in Tehran.

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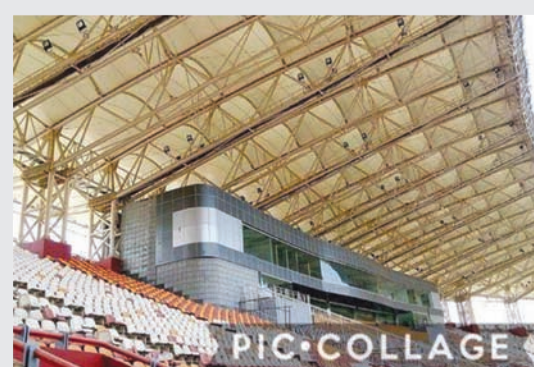
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Scientists map Andromeda’s history of eating nearby galaxies

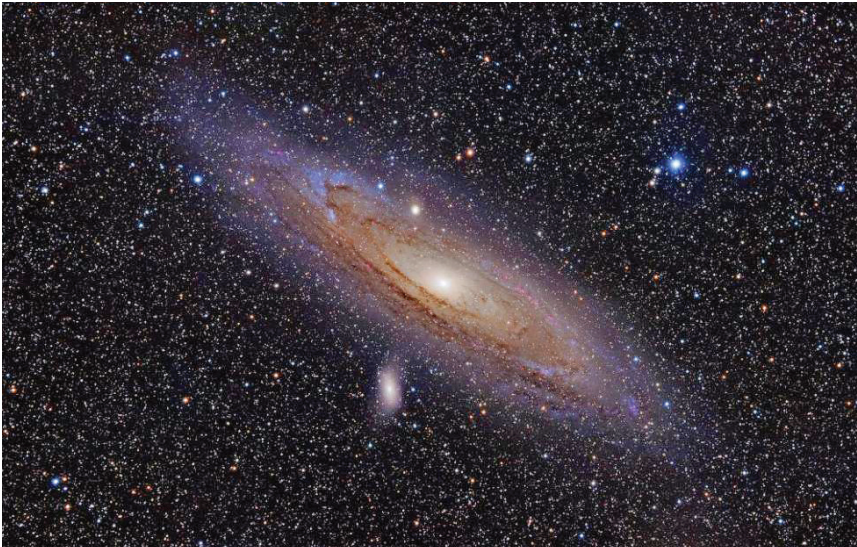
Galaxies grow by consuming other galaxies. They’re cannibalistic. But according to a new study, the Milky Way’s closest large neighbor, the Andromeda Galaxy, has a particularly voracious appetite.

Scientists knew Andromeda had swallowed up several smaller galaxies, but the latest survey offered new details about the galaxy’s history -- a history of violence that data suggests stretches back at least 10 billion years.

And according to the new research, published this week in the journal *Nature*, the Milky Way could be Andromeda’s next meal.

“The Milky Way is on a collision course with Andromeda in about four billion years. So knowing what kind of a monster our galaxy is up against is useful in finding out the Milky Way’s ultimate fate,” Douglass Mackey, professor at Australia National University’s Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics, said in a news release. “Andromeda has a much bigger and more complex stellar halo than the Milky Way, which indicates that it has cannibalized many more galaxies, possibly larger ones.”

To trace Andromeda’s dietary history, scientists analyzed the dense groups of stars, or globular clusters, that orbit the massive galaxy.



“By tracing the faint remains of these smaller galaxies with embedded star clusters, we’ve been able to recreate the way Andromeda drew them in and ultimately enveloped them at the different times,” Mackey said.

According to the latest research, Andromeda’s clusters suggest the galaxy’s history is defined by two bouts of binge eating. But

mysteriously, the meals arrived from two different directions.

“This is very weird and suggests that the extragalactic meals are fed from what’s known as the ‘cosmic web’ of matter that threads the universe,” said Geraint Lewis, professor at the University of Sydney’s School of Physics. Scientists determined the feedings also

occurred on the “plane of satellites,” the plane on which the majority of the dwarf galaxies orbiting Andromeda lie. Previous studies showed such planes are fragile and likely to be destroyed by Andromeda’s gravity within a few billion years.

“This deepens the mystery as the plane must be young, but it appears to be aligned with ancient feeding of dwarf galaxies. Maybe this is because of the cosmic web, but really, this is only speculation,” Lewis said. “We’re going to have to think quite hard to unravel what this is telling us.”

Lewis and Mackey call their work cosmic archaeology. According to the researchers, by unraveling Andromeda’s history, they can gain new insights into how large galaxies grow and evolve -- insights that can help cosmologists better understand the Milky Way’s past, present and future.

“One of our main motivations in studying astronomy is to understand our place in the Universe. A way of learning about our galaxy is to study others that are similar to it, and try to understand how these systems formed and evolved,” Mackey said. “Sometimes this can actually be easier than looking at the Milky Way, because we live inside it and that can make certain types of observations quite difficult.” (Source: UPI)

Fish-hunting “iron dragon” soared over Australia in age of dinosaurs

A winged beast dubbed the “iron dragon” soared above Australia during the age of dinosaurs, hunting fish in rivers and lakes, according to scientists who found that continent’s most complete fossil representing the flying reptiles called pterosaurs.

Paleontologists on Thursday said fossils of the pterosaur, named *Ferrodraco lentoni*, were unearthed in the Australian state of Queensland. The creature, which lived about 96 million years ago during the Cretaceous Period, boasted a 13-foot (4-meter) wingspan, a bony crest at the tip of its upper and lower jaws and spike-shaped teeth perfect for a diet of fish.

Ferrodraco means “iron dragon,” an apt name, according to the researchers.

“The ‘iron dragon’ seemed fitting, given that this animal would have been one of the top predators of the skies during the Cretaceous. Moreover, without the preservation of the bones in ironstone, it’s unlikely that we would have recovered this fossil material in the first place,” said paleontologist Adele Pentland of the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Natural History Museum, a PhD candidate at



Swinburne University of Technology.

Pterosaurs, the biggest of which had a 35-foot (10.7-meter) wingspan, lived worldwide alongside the dinosaurs during the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous Periods. Both were extinct after an asteroid struck Earth 66 million years ago.

“Pterosaurs are quite rare in the fossil record, and are often incomplete, as their bones are hollow and the cortical bone is quite thin,” said Pentland, lead author of the research

published in the journal *Scientific Reports*.

Until now, most of Australia’s pterosaur remains have been isolated and fragmentary fossils. For *Ferrodraco*, the researchers discovered a partial skull, five cervical vertebrae, elements from both wings and 40 isolated teeth and tooth fragments. While it amounted to roughly 10% of its skeleton, it was enough to reveal a lot about the animal.

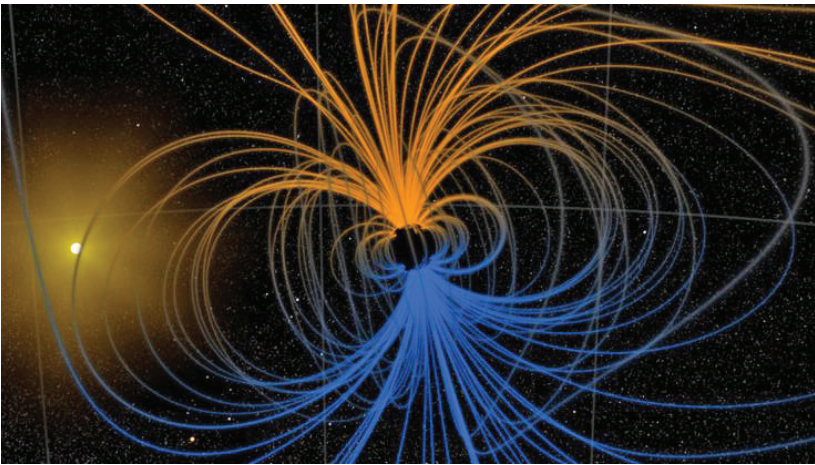
“This pterosaur gives us a better understanding of the pterosaurs that lived in Australia during the mid-Cretaceous,” Pentland said.

Ferrodraco apparently lived in a forested environment around lake and river systems alongside the meat-eating dinosaur *Australovenator* and long-necked four-legged plant-eaters *Savannasaurus* and *Diamantinasaurus*, as well as crocodile relatives and other animals.

Pentland said based on an analysis of the fossil it was more closely related to pterosaurs from England than from South America even though dinosaurs and other land vertebrates at the time in Australia generally demonstrated close ties to South American lineages.

(Source: Reuters)

Earth’s magnetic poles could flip more frequently than we previously thought



Half a billion years ago, when trilobites ruled and dry land was a barren wasteland, Earth was having a terrible time making a decision. North and south had switched places nearly 80 times in just a few million years, making it one of the most geomagnetically turbulent moments in history.

Geologists from the Russian Academy of Science and the Institut de Physique du Globe de Paris in France measured the orientations of tiny magnetized particles in rock samples from northeastern Siberia.

The source was a set of crumbling cliffs overlooking the Khorbusuonka River — a legacy of a time 500 million years ago when the region’s landscape was covered in water.

As tiny particles of magnetite and hematite drifted in the waters, they aligned with the planet’s magnetic field. Once locked in place among the sediment, they became a permanent record of the compass points at that time.

Of particular interest to the team were the layers of grit that corresponded with a stage of the Cambrian called the Drumian. Based on the results of their previous study, the researchers estimated around half a dozen polarity reversals took place every million years or so during this particular stage of history.

But the data wasn’t as comprehensive as they’d liked, so in 2016 they returned for another look. From 437 new samples, the geologists identified a total of 78 shifts in polarity over a 3 million year period.

This suggests an astonishing maximum frequency of 26 reversals per million years. Even if they’re being conservative with their sums and only counting consecutive samples showing polarity swaps, the rate is still around 15 reversals.

For some reason, this intense period of magnetic musical chairs dropped off in the later part of the Cambrian to just 1.5 flips per million years. Such a stark difference in frequency suggests that whatever is causing these reversals deep inside our planet’s churning guts, it’s not a subtle process. In fact, two very different modes in Earth’s field-generating dynamo could be at work.

We’ve understood for some time that the flip-flopping of Earth’s magnetic field has varied in frequency. Over the past 20 million years, for example, the poles have switched places roughly every few hundred thousand years or so. The last big swap was about 780,000 years ago.

There have been blocks of tens of millions of years where not a lot of change can be detected. Referred to as superchrons, they are probably driven by a drop in the flow of heat between the core and mantle.

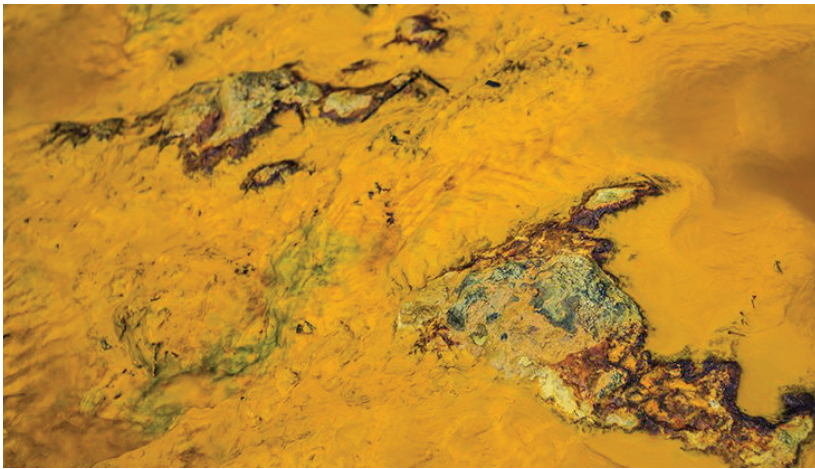
At the other extreme, there are earlier signs of intense flipping deep in the geological record. During the Ediacaran Period around 550 million years ago, the magnetic field went a little nuts, reversing 24 times every million years.

What’s more, some researchers think these rapid swaps could have even been behind an ecological catastrophe called the Kotlinian Crisis, a major extinction event that marks the end of that geological period.

Identifying clues surrounding the frequency and periodicity of these events over vast time scales could help us not only better explain why the magnetic field can change so dramatically, it could help us to better predict future flips.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Controversial paper suggests we could just ‘infect’ Mars with life



What do you imagine the first settlers on Mars will look like? Maybe they’ll be the best and brightest our world has to offer: people from countries around the world with multiple degrees and decades of training in astrophysics.

Or maybe the first Earthlings on Mars will be a bunch of microbes.

A paper published last month in the journal *FEMS Microbiology Ecology* argues that the “primary colonists” of the Red Planet should be “microorganisms” - the bacteria, viruses, and fungi that support many of life’s processes here on Earth.

Jose Lopez, a professor at Nova Southeastern University and one of the authors of the paper, proposes an approach to planetary colonization that begins with a plan on studying microbes that could support life in extraterrestrial environments.

“Life as we know it cannot exist without beneficial microorganisms,” he said in a press release. “To survive on a barren (and as far as all voyages to date tell us) sterile planets, we will have to take beneficial microbes with us.”

Let’s be clear: the idea presented in the paper jettisons the strict no-contamination guidelines that NASA and all space programs have closely adhered to for decades - policies that exist for good reason.

When it comes to equipment being sent off to space, typically everything is carefully sterilized and protected from germs and contaminants, just like a hospital prepping its scalpels for surgery, because we can’t afford to corrupt the untouched environments we’re trying to learn from.

But Lopez and colleagues argue that

introducing helpful microbes could actually kick start the process of terraforming Mars and sustaining life on the harsh Red Planet.

“Microbial introduction should not be considered accidental but inevitable,” reads the paper. “We hypothesize the near impossibility of exploring new planets without carrying and/or delivering any microbial travelers.”

On Earth, microorganisms are critical to many of the processes that sustain life, such as decomposition and digestion - and even Earth’s climate. The paper argues that the best microbes for the job might be extremophiles - organisms that are hypertolerant of the most extreme environments, and even thrive in them, like tardigrades.

Mars enthusiasts ready to pack their bags and move to “Planet B” shouldn’t hold their breath, though.

There’s still much research to be done before we begin lobbing germs at the Red Planet. Biology could go haywire on Mars, where organisms would be exposed to excessive radiation, and human colonists would likely evolve at alarming rates to cope with the harsh environment.

Much of the paper is arguing for a change in attitude toward microbes in space, viewing them as beneficial versus dangerous. But researchers still don’t know which microbes would help rather than hurt efforts to terraform Mars.

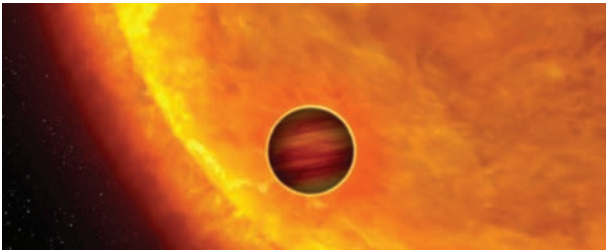
The paper argues that everyone from Elon Musk to Jeff Bezos to NASA needs to make a “provocative paradigm shift” in our policies for space colonization.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Astronomers detect a ‘hot Jupiter’ with a staggering 18-hour-short orbit

We have a new record. Perhaps 1,060 light-years away, a gas giant called NGTS-10b is whipping around its star so closely, it completes an entire orbit in just 18.4 hours.

That’s nearly as close as the planet can get to the host star without being ripped apart by gravitational forces. But it will get closer.



Astronomers have estimated that the exoplanet is spiralling in towards the star, and will cross that ripping-apart point - called the Roche limit - in just 38 million years. It’s utterly doomed.

The finding makes this solar system an incredible laboratory for studying tidal interactions between a star and a perilously close giant exoplanet. A paper describing the exoplanet - which belongs to the ‘hot Jupiter’ type - has been published on pre-print resource arXiv.

Hot Jupiters are fascinating exoplanets. As the name suggests, they are gas giants like Jupiter; unlike Jupiter, however, they orbit very closely to their host stars, with orbital periods of less than 10 days. This is what makes them “hot”.

According to current models of planet formation, technically hot Jupiters shouldn’t exist. A gas giant can’t form that close to their star, because the gravity, radiation, and intense stellar winds ought to keep the gas from clumping together.

However, they do exist; of the over 4,000 confirmed exoplanets discovered to date, up to 337 could be hot Jupiters. It’s thought that they form farther out in their planetary systems, then migrate inwards towards the star.

We may not know much about their mysterious births, but hot Jupiters that are particularly close to their stars can tell us a lot about star-planet tidal interactions. Hence, they are among the most studied exoplanets in the galaxy.

Until this latest breakthrough discovery, only six of these enigmatic gas giants had ever been detected with an orbital period of less than one day - WASP-18b (22.6 hours), WASP-19b (18.9 hours), WASP-43b (19.5 hours), WASP-103b (22.2 hours), HATS-18b (20.1 hours) and KELT-16b (23.3 hours).

NGTS-10b, discovered using the ground-based Next-Generation Transit Survey in Paranal, Chile, marks the seventh of these ultra-close hot Jupiters, and it has the shortest orbital period of them all.

Between 21 September 2015 and 14 May 2016, a single telescope observed the star now known as NGTS-10 over 237 nights. The survey wasn’t officially operational yet, but it captured 220,918 10-second exposures of the star during this commissioning phase.

It seemed like a relatively unremarkable main sequence star - around 10 billion years old K-type orange star, just under 70 percent of the Sun’s size and mass.

But a closer look at those images revealed that the star was dimming slightly every 18.4 hours. So an international team of astronomers led by James McCormac of the University of Warwick set to work, using that data and additional observations to characterize the exoplanet responsible for the dimming.

They determined that NGTS-10b is just over 1.2 times the size of Jupiter, and just over 2.1 times its mass. And it’s orbiting the star at 1.46 times the Roche radius - meaning it’s right on the verge (in cosmic time) of tidal devastation.

At such proximity to the star, even though it’s not yet close enough to pull NGTS-10b apart, the exoplanet will be flattened at the poles as the star’s gravity pulls it out of shape, an oblate spheroid rather than a nice, plump round sphere.

The team was careful to rule out a binary companion of the host star as a cause of the dimming. So, we are as sure as we can be that the exoplanet exists. The problem is that the light from the neighboring stars has made it somewhat difficult to calculate an accurate distance to NGTS-10.

The 1,060 light-year distance was calculated based on Gaia data, the most accurate three-dimensional map of the Milky Way galaxy to date, but there’s still a margin for error. If the distance is incorrect, that may mean some of the size and mass data is slightly incorrect, too.

That issue can be resolved by studying the next release of Gaia data, due to drop in batches in 2020 and 2021.

Meanwhile, continued observations of the system could reveal the exoplanet’s orbital decay. The team predicts that the orbit will shorten by 7 seconds over the next 10 years. If astronomers can obtain precise enough measurements of the system, they may be able to see it happening.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

The mysteries of the Moon’s largest crater

Most space rocks that hurtle towards Earth burn up in the atmosphere. The Moon’s lack of atmosphere means it does not have the same protection, and consequently its surface is peppered with craters. The oldest and largest crater — a massive 2,000km across and 13km deep — sits at the far side of the Moon. Known as the South Pole Aitken basin, this crater fascinates scientists because it may help reveal what’s inside the Moon.

Data from NASA’s Grail mission in 2011 mapped the Moon’s gravitational field and showed that the South Pole Aitken basin exerted a strong pull. Scientists speculate that this might be due to a large chunk of nickel and iron embedded beneath the crater — perhaps the remnants of the asteroid that created it. Or it could be an anomalously dense region in the Moon’s interior.

Now data from the Chinese Chang’e 4 rover — which rolled across the crater in January 2019 — appears to rule out the asteroid remnant theory. Early results indicate that the crater surface is dominated by a common moon crust mineral called plagioclase, while minerals expected in the Moon’s interior are rare, suggesting that the impact that created the crater did not pierce the Moon’s crust.

(Source: The Guardian)

Iran enjoys all tourist attraction features, Italian envoy says

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Iran possesses all the features **d e s k** of attracting foreign tourists as the country enjoys unique natural diversity and numerous historical sites, Giuseppe Perrone, the Italian ambassador to Tehran has said.



Rome’s ambassador to Tehran Giuseppe Perrone in an undated photo

“Italian tourists are fond of Iran because it has a natural diversity that is appealing to them. Italians are also fond of Iran’s unique antiquities,” Perrone told IRNA in an interview published on Thursday.

Architecture in Iran has a long history that is spectacular for Italian tourists. Pocket-friendly prices in Iran can be another reason for traveling to the country, the official stated.

Referring to the distorted image of Iran being portrayed by some certain countries, he said that foreign tourists must visit Iran themselves, to witness with their own eyes what others are saying about Iran and Iranians is wrong.

“While in Iran, one can enjoy the attractiveness and hospitality of Iranians.”

Asked how Iran could do away with this misunderstanding and change it, the ambassador responded, “Tourism advertising encourages foreigners to travel to Iran... Foreign travelers should themselves come to Iran to feel the country and conclude their pre-assumptions differs with [the real] Iran.”

Elsewhere in his remarks Perrone said that the history of cultural relations between Iran and Italy is in fact the cultural history of the East and West.

For more than 20 centuries Iran and Italy have been the embodiment of Eastern and Western civilizations and such a long history of relationships and many historical, religious and cultural commonalities between the two nations has helped Iran and Italy better understanding each other today, he explained.

■ Where does the wrong perception come from?
Many visitors to Iran conclude that Western media often portrays Iran negatively, saying there is a widespread misunderstanding about the true nature and safety of the country, which is tainted by the reputation of some of its more politically unstable neighbors.

Skift Inc., a New York City headquartered media company that provides news, research, and marketing services for the travel industry, in a July article noticed a hint of a “perception problem” deemed to be fueled by the Trump administration’s rhetoric toward Iran.

Official answers to the query comes from the U.S. State Department, which has had a travel advisory against Iran since 1979, citing “the risk of kidnapping, arrest and detention of U.S. citizens.”

“It is a country that is often portrayed as unwelcoming, but the reality is quite the opposite,” said Jenny Gray, the global product and operations manager of the Australia-based Intrepid Travel.

“Iranians are warm, friendly and eager to show off their country to foreigners. The feedback from our travelers is a testament to this.”

Iran hosts some of the world’s oldest cultural monuments including bazaars, museums, mosques, bridges, bathhouses, madrasas, gardens, rich natural, rural landscapes as well as 22 UNESCO World Heritage sites.

 **ROUND THE GLOBE**

Rock Art of Alta

The Rock Art of Alta is situated in the northernmost part of Norway, far north of the Arctic Circle at the head of the Alta Fjord. A UNESCO World Heritage, the property contains thousands of rock carvings and paintings located at 45 sites in five different areas at the head of the Alta Fjord.

More rock art made by hunter-gatherers is found in Alta than anywhere else in northern Europe. The development of carvings in Alta through thousands of years can be related to the post-glacial land upheaval.



The oldest carvings are found at the highest points of the landscape. In Alta the changing landscape of prehistoric times is evident, and the position of the carvings also provides a key to understanding the chronology of rock art in the circumpolar region.

The Rock Art shows communication between the world of the living and the worlds of the spirits, and gives insight into the cosmology of prehistoric hunters and gatherers.

There is an exceptionally high number of human figures and compelling portrayals of prehistoric social life, dancing, processions, and rituals.

Moreover, the property provides a unique testimony to the interaction of hunter-gatherers with the landscape. The panels show hunting, fishing and boat journeys, and are thought to represent micro-landscapes.

(Source: UNESCO)

‘Tehran Week’ tourism programs announced

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Tehran Municipality has **d e s k** announced its various tourism programs to mark Tehran Week, which comes to end on October 10.

The municipality is scheduled to hold some cultural programs [and tours] to commemorate the Tehran Week and in order to offer a fresh look to the identity of the metropolis, Gholamhossein Mohammadi, an official with the municipality said on Friday, Khabaronline reported.

In this regard, days of the week are named as Friday, October 4, “Surfing in Tehran”; Saturday, “Religious Rituals from Rey to Shemiran”; Sunday, “The Day of Tehran”; Monday, “Tehran’s Nature and History”; Tuesday, “Walking Trails and Pathways”; Wednesday, “Art and Architecture and Urban Development”; and Thursday, October 10, “The Greater Tehran, The Greater Iran”, the official explained.

Mohammadi added that amongst the most significant programs devised by the municipality are: a [religious] tour from Rey to Shemiran; a family mountain trekking; inauguration of a tourism train in the heart of Tehran; free visits to Tehran museums; visiting Tehran carpets at the Carpet Museum of Iran; various tours to historical core of Tehran; an storytelling festival, a photo contest, as well as some photo and painting exhibits.

Tehran is home to a rich, matchless patchwork of Iranian history and architecture such as Golestan Palace, Grand Bazaar, Treasury of National Jewels, National Museum of Iran, Glass & Ceramic Museum, Masoudieh Palace, Sarkis Cathedral, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Carpet Museum of Iran, just to name a few.

Home to the holy shrines of Imam Khomeini and Shah Abdol Azim, Rey welcomes many travelers and pilgrims a day. Fire Temple of Rey, Tughrul Tower, Cheshmeh-Ali, Naghareh-Khaneh Tower, Rashkan Castle and traditional bazaar of Rey are among historical attractions of the ancient city.



Photo depicts domes and minarets of the holy shrine of Shah Abdol Azim in Rey, southern Tehran.

Rey was one of the capital cities of the Parthian empire (3rd century BC–3rd century CE) and it was captured by the Muslim Arabs in 641 CE. During the reign of the Muslim caliph al-Mahdi in the 8th century, the city grew in importance until it was rivaled in western Asia only by Damascus and Baghdad.

Rey continued to be an important city and was briefly

a capital under the rule of the Seljuqs, but in the 12th century it was weakened by the fierce quarrels of rival religious sects. In 1220 the city was almost entirely destroyed by the Mongols, and its inhabitants were massacred. Most of the survivors of the massacre moved to nearby Tehran, and the deserted remnants of Rey soon fell into complete ruin.

How much does it cost to visit Iran as world’s 1st pocket-friendly destination

TOURISM **TEHRAN** — Earlier in **d e s k** September the World Economic Forum (WEF) ranked Iran first in the world as a pocket-friendly destination.

To answer the question of how much costs traveling in Iran, it should be taken into account that it depends on your schedule, budget, and unstable exchange rates during your travel in the country. Here you can find a brief report of what the major travel costs are in Iran at the time of publishing this article “9/22/2019”, Mehr reported.

■ Iran visa fee
Depending on the country of your citizenship, you may need to apply for a Tourist Visa before your trip to Iran through an Iranian embassy, or get a visa on arrival at one of international airports. Visa fee generally costs 40-230 euros, but it varies for different countries. Please check out IranRoute’s visa application form page to know about your visa fee and how to apply for Iranian visa.

■ Iran travel health insurance
How to choose a travel and health insurance to travel in Iran? This is one of major questions for a lot of tourists which made a decision for visiting Iran. We recommend that tourists get insurance from a reliable company in their home country before traveling to Iran. Otherwise, travelers to Iran can make sure they get this service by the Iran Insurance Corporation for 15 € per person. This insurance supports costs up to 100.000 Euros; tourists costs will be covered based on the kind of loss incurred on them. This insurance can be purchase via online service of Iran travel and health insurance on Iran-Route or in the International Imam Khomeini Airport in Tehran, upon arrival.

■ Costs of inner city transportation
Bus: Depends on the city of your journey but the minimum price is 1000 toman.
Taxi: Depends on the distance of your journey but the minimum price is 1000 toman.
Metro: Depends on the city of your journey but the minimum price is 1000 toman.
■ Costs of intercity transportation
The major cities in Iran have one airport, train station and at least two bus stations located in different parts of the city. Bus transportation is the most common means



of traveling across Iran due to its low price and high availability. So, it would be a perfect choice for the foreign tourists who are after cheap means of transportation and have many spots on their itinerary. It is possible to buy bus tickets in Iran directly at bus terminals (in Rials only) or via IranRoute’s Bus Ticket Online Service (in Euro only).

Here are the prices of one way traveling for one person in Iran:
VIP Bus: 30,000 – 120,000 toman (depending on the date of travel, and the company providing the service)

Train: 40,000 – 150,000 toman (depending on the date of travel and type of the provided service)

Airplane: 200,000 – 100,000 toman (depending on the date of travel and the airline)

Taxi: 300,000 – 700,000 toman (depending on the distance & date of your journey)

■ Costs of accommodation
Tourists in Iran can choose to stay in hostels, hotels (from one star to five stars in some cities), traditional hotels, apartment hotels, ecolodges, campings and traditional guest houses. In addition to this, many Iranians are members of couch-surfing and open the doors of their houses for tourists but couch-surfing isn’t illegal and it’s forbidden by government in Iran. Travel insurances do not cover your stay in such residences.

Generally speaking, It’s easy to find the

best value budget hotels in the main cities of Iran like Tehran, Isfahan, Shiraz and Yazd. The cost of most accommodations in Iran is affordable for one-night stay in hotels or hostels. Here, you can find a quote of budget accommodations in Iran: Eco-lodges: From € 10; hostels: From € 7; Guest houses: From € 7; boutique hotels: from € 45; 2-star hotels: from € 12; 3-star hotels: from € 25; 4-star hotels: from € 40; 5-star hotels: from € 55

■ Costs of food & drink
Iran is a country with more than 1000 types of food offering a wide range of cuisine from Middle Eastern to Mediterranean types. However, you can find international cuisine in every region in Iran. You won’t stay hungry in Iran as street food, mid-range and luxurious restaurants are in every corner. If you try staple food in restaurants, it costs €3-6 depending on the city and restaurant. You can try street food even for less than €1 and typical fast food for €2-4. A complete meal including a starter, main course, dessert, and drink costs about €15-20.

■ Costs of entrance fees
Iran is all about sightseeing and tourist attractions. If you’d like to see more history and culture, the entrance fee for historical sites and museums is about € 2-3.

■ Costs of tours and things to do
Iran is a country of ancient history, various ethnic groups, fascinating islands, high

mountains and engaging museums. To take the most out of your visit to Iran, you may need to book tours, unique experiences and things to do. You can experience an ancient heroic sport for minimum €6 or book a full board two-week tour for €1600.

■ Costs of personal tour guide
Personal tour guides take visitors around for 30 to 100 dollars a day.

■ Iranian currency information for tourists
The official currency of Iran is the Iranian rial (IR). However, people use toman for their everyday trade. Bank notes and coins are crypt in rial. Every toman is 10 rials, so every 1000 toman is 10,000 rials. You should be careful whether the price has been announced to you in rials or toman; if it’s rials, you should take out the last zero and read the number. This is to say, if your shopping or restaurant bill totals 100,000 toman, you must pay ten notes showing 100,000 rials (remember the last zero must be taken out!).

■ Simple sample: Remove the last zero
Step 1: 10000 Rials
Step 2: 1000|0 >> Remove
Step 3: 1000 Toman

Iran has recently 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.

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

Each U.S. dollar is 42,000 rials at the official rate while is traded at around 120,000 rials on the unofficial market.

Influencers face criticism for Saudi Arabia travel ads

The kingdom has invited popular internet personalities to visit, all expenses paid, in an effort to rehabilitate its global image.

A handful of popular Instagram influencers are facing backlash online after taking part in a sponsored ad campaign for Saudi Arabia.

The kingdom’s tourism board and a program called Gateway KSA have given supervised trips to popular travel bloggers as the country prepares to expand its visa program. Saudi Arabia announced on Friday that it would open its doors to tourists from 49 countries, in an effort to diversify the economy and decrease the country’s reliance on oil.

In the days following the announcement, travel influencers began posting pictures from Riyadh and photogenic landmarks including a cliff top known as the Edge of the World, praising the country’s beauty and expressing gratitude for the opportunity to visit. The influencer Lana Rose, who lives in Dubai, told her 1.6 million followers that visiting Saudi Arabia felt like Disney’s “Aladdin” come to life. Many of the posts included the hashtag #ad and tagged the account @visitsaudi.

Some of the influencers’ more media-literate followers were troubled by their unbridled positivity, particularly given the Saudi role in the murder of the journalist Jamal Khashoggi. “Have you checked how many beheadings have

happened in 2019 in Saudi?” one follower commented on a photo posted by the influencer Mick Salas. (In a single day in April, the kingdom executed 37 people, at least 33 of whom were part of the country’s Shiite minority.)

In response to an Instagram photo that the travel influencer @Lyss (following: 1.8 million) posted, one user commented: “Yeah, let’s just forget about the discrimination against women, the lack of a few basic human rights, and the corruption. As long as they have beautiful tourist attractions, it doesn’t really matter, right?”

Several influencers involved in the sponsored ad campaign scrambled to delete comments and block criticism from their pages. Chris Schalkx, a hospitality marketer,

One user commented: “Yeah, let’s just forget about the discrimination against women, the lack of a few basic human rights, and the corruption. As long as they have beautiful tourist attractions, it doesn’t really matter, right?”

said via Instagram DM that he left a comment on a photo posted by @TaraMilkTea (1.3 million followers), about the activist Loujain al-Hathloul, who has been detained for more than 500 days after campaigning for Saudi women’s right to drive.

“She’s allegedly being tortured,” Mr. Schalkx said. @TaraMilkTea’s response, he said, was that tourists should keep “an open mind” about the countries they visit. “When I replied people are in jail today standing up for basic human rights, and a journalist was killed just last year, she blocked me,” he said. Others said on Twitter that she had blocked them too.

Some travel bloggers also spoke out against the campaign, referring to the country’s widespread censorship of outspoken citizens.

Dianelle Rivers-Mitchell, a travel influencer and the founder of Black Girls Travel Too, said that influencers should learn about the places they’re asked to visit before promoting them for a free trip. “I’ve sat at boardroom tables with tourism boards who have offered to provide me with the red carpet treatment just to promote their destination,” she said. “I’ve walked away from several tourism boards because of the way they treat their citizens within that country. It’s not worth it.”

(Source: The New York Times)

Why does Western MSM doggedly insists on branding Yemen's Ansarullah "Iran-backed"?

By Alireza Hashemi

TEHRAN — During the past five years, the western audience has been repeatedly told by the western mainstream media that those fighting Saudi Arabia in Yemen are Iran's puppets fighting to take the helm in the country.

The latest wave of such reports came following the September 14 strikes into Aramco facilities in Saudi Arabia, when a mountain of commentary emerged blaming Iran as the main culprit.

This is while Yemen's Ansarullah had claimed responsibility for the attack, and no compelling evidence were suggested confirming Iran had anything to do with the attack.

Both Tehran and Ansarullah have denied claims of Iranian weapons deliveries to Yeman, a country awash in weapons.

A senior Iranian general recently told China's Phoenix TV Iran "provides advisory and intellectual assistance" to the popular forces in Yemen. This support is within the framework of the Iranian Constitution, which says the country is obliged to assist the oppressed around the globe.

Interestingly, the same media outlets that are screaming about Iran almost never point to the full-fledged western military support for Saudi Arabia in a comparable fashion.

It's now public knowledge that most of arms used to bombard Yemen are made in the US, UK and other self-proclaimed champions of human rights.

They also prefer not to highlight the fact that Saudi Arabia itself is widely seen to be a British creation.

Moreover, we never see a similar branding in the MSM narrative on other conflicts, notably in Syria, where Saudi Arabia and the US have been exposed to be funding and training militants fighting to topple the Syrian government.

■ Good guys and bad guys

The western outlets, claimed to be freest and fairest in the world, have for



a long time been favoring Saudi Arabia and its wealthy Arab neighbors in their reporting.

But this pro-Saudi narrative was apparently woven by the western governments and parroted by a wide array of MSM outlets in mid-2010s.

In fact, Saudi Arabia and the US predicated the 2015 invasion of Yemen at least in part on the Iran-Ansarullah connection, arguing that the group is an Iranian proxy destroying democracy in Yemen.

But Ansarullah, of which the Houthis are only a part, are homegrown. They launched a religious revival in northern Yemen in the 1990s, after Saudi-funded preachers started propagating the Saudi brand of Wahhabi Islam in their country.

Besides, they have fought a couple

of wars against Saudi Arabia and the Saudi-backed government of Yemen since the 1980s.

In fact, disputes between Yemen and Saudi Arabia have a quite long history.

The three southern Saudi provinces of Jizan, Asir and Najran were incorporated into the country in 1934, when Ibn Saud, who had founded Saudi Arabia just two years earlier, won a war of aggression against Yemen.

So why are the western governments and media bent on portraying Ansarullah as Iran-backed?

■ Pigeonholing technique

The narrative of "state-controlled" insurgents is a common one for governments to use when facing a movement they cannot overcome.

In the propaganda war, the last thing

Once a rebellion against foreign-backed dictators is pigeon-holed as a proxy controlled by a foreign power, few among the public will listen to what they have to say no matter how factual it may be.

any dictatorship wants is for the public to view the forces fighting them as common people.

So they come up with a story in which the rebellion is actually a villainous conspiracy plotted by a foreign power.

Once a rebellion against foreign-backed dictators is pigeon-holed as a proxy controlled by a foreign power, few among the public will listen to what they have to say no matter how factual it may be.

And this will prevent the movement from raising public awareness of the dictator's crimes and encouraging others to join the movement.

Saudi Arabia and the U.S. are going to rewrite the narrative to fit their agenda, no matter if Ansarullah are legitimate or they have real grievances against Saudi Arabia.

■ Killing two birds

The branding will also help propagate an Iranophobic narrative that has been pushed by the western media since the 1979 revolution.

The western media has in the recent years increasingly lamented Iran's "regional influence" and its desire for world domination.

Key to this narrative is that the villainous regime in Iran is supporting proxy groups in Lebanon, Iraq and Syria to project its power on the whole region.

Iran is also locked in a cold war-like showdown with Saudi Arabia in the Middle East, according to this narrative.

In Yemen, the western media implies Iran is the wicked mastermind behind an insurgency led by the Houthi family, and Saudi Arabia is a savior bent on rescuing democracy in its southern neighbor.

This narrative would allow the western politicians and media to kill two birds with one stone: Damaging legitimacy of Yemen's desperate struggle for independence and survival, and tarnishing Iran's image and bolstering the case for a war against the country.

Pro-Trump cable news outlet sues Rachel Maddow for calling it 'paid Russian propaganda'

By Alex Henderson

ALTERNET - One America News Network (OAN or OANN), the right-wing cable news outlet that's considered more favorable to President Donald Trump than Fox News, is seldom mentioned on MSNBC. But MSNBC's Rachel Maddow recently slammed OAN as "paid Russian propaganda," and OAN has responded with a \$10 million lawsuit against Maddow, Comcast, MSNBC and NBC Universal Media.

On July 22, the Associated Press (AP) reports, Maddow took aim at OAN's Kristian Rouz, who has also been a contributor to the Russian news agency Sputnik News.

"In this case, the most obsequiously pro-Trump right-wing news outlet in America really literally is paid Russian propaganda," Maddow declared. And Maddow said of Rouz, "their on-air U.S. politics reporter is paid by the Russian government to produce propaganda for that government."

In the lawsuit, OAN alleges that Maddow's comments were retaliation for OAN President Charles Herring's criticism of MSNBC and Comcast Cable. Herring had alleged that Comcast refused to carry OAN because it "counters the liberal politics of Comcast's own news

channel, MSNBC."

OAN's lawsuit also stresses that Rouz has been a freelancer for Sputnik rather than a full-time staff employee. And Rouz, in the lawsuit, is quoted as saying, "I have never written propaganda, disinformation or unverified information."

In an official statement, attorney Skip Miller (who represents OAN), said, "One America is wholly owned, operated and financed by the Herring family in San Diego. They are as American as apple pie. They are not paid by Russia and have nothing to do with the Russian government. This is a false and malicious libel, and they're going to answer for it in a court of law."

But attorney Amy Wolf, who represents NBC Universal, stressed in an August 6 letter that everything Maddow said about Rouz was accurate. OAN, Wolf said, "publishes content collected or created by a journalist who is also paid by the Russian government for writing over a thousand articles. Ms. Maddow's recounting of this arrangement is substantially true and therefore, not actionable."

In a September 9 article for the right-wing Washington Examiner, journalist Tom Rogan asserted that OAN's frivolous lawsuit is "highly unlikely to succeed" because



Rachel Maddow

OAN has a "very weak case."

"OAN is wrong for reasons of both fact and law," Rogan explained. "For a start, OAN and Sputnik, a western-focused Kremlin propaganda outlet, do — or recently did — share the same employee: Kristian Rouz. That alone protects MSNBC from the 'actual malice' legal standard that OAN must prove in court: namely, that MSNBC knew their claims were false, or entertained serious doubts to the claims."

Trudeau and BBC stumble on their own liberal credentials

By Simon Rite

RT — Racism is disgusting, deplorable, and indefensible, but with the way the rules of prejudice are changing, it might just be easier to declare yourself a hate-filled bigot and be done with it.

Take poor old Justin Trudeau, Canada's liberal leader who definitely is not a racist, and I know that because he spends every waking moment telling anyone who will listen that he's not.

At least, he's not racist now, but may have been in 2001, which is when he was photographed attending an Arabian Nights theme party wearing racist makeup which we now know as 'brownface,' but back then was apparently known as 'a little bit of fun.'

Well, it turns out he was having quite a lot of fun, because hot on the tail of the 'brownface' controversy were more pictures of the Canadian Prime Minister in 'blackface.' How many times has he done this? Actually he can't remember. Seriously.

This is awkward for any politician, but Trudeau defines himself by being 'woker than woke' so this is all particularly sticky for him. In response, he's resorting to the surge tactics perfected by George W Bush during the Iraq War, although instead of a surge in the number of troops, he is surging his wokeness and blaming 'white privilege' for his indiscretions. I wonder whether it was his 'white privilege' that



(Left to right) Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Naga Munchetty

persuaded him to keep his racist party days quiet while he was asking voters to elect him in 2015?

The real victims here are the liberal voters (literally, they're all victims of something) who had grown comfortable with Trudeau, who offered a virtue-signalling candidate they could put their cross next to in the ballot box, and then go home with a warm, fuzzy feeling inside.

However, a number of polls after the brownface saga suggest Trudeau has actually lost support ahead of next month's general election while the Conservatives are moving ahead.

That's right, there are some liberals who are so angry that their champion



has not been able to live up to the impossible standards they set, that they're switching to the Conservatives. The left really does love to see its leaders hoisted by their own petards.

So, if the likes of Canada's Woke Wonder get tripped up by these rules, then what chance is there for the rest of us? Perhaps the most fun to watch at the moment is the BBC constantly trying, and failing, to disguise its liberal bias.

For example, the British broadcaster found its presenter Naga Munchetty in breach of its editorial guidelines after she expressed anger at Donald Trump telling four ethnic minority congresswomen to 'go back' to their own countries.

Munchetty said on air that she was furious and regarded the US President's comments as "embedded in racism." The BBC decided she had not been impartial enough and gave her a telling off. Only then, 150 ethnic minority broadcasters wrote an angry letter to the corporation saying Munchetty should not be required to be impartial about issues of racism and accused the Beeb of "racially discriminatory treatment" of its presenter.

It's just exhausting, isn't it?

In a nutshell, the BBC, a deeply liberal organisation, tries to cover up its bias by censoring a presenter who criticised what she saw as racism, only to end up accused of racism itself.

While in Canada, Trudeau fights back from claims that he was racist in the past by blaming his whiteness.

These debates show how few people are able to just be comfortable in their own skin without being attacked by their own side, let alone the opposition.

Life is so much easier for Conservatives as outrage culture ravages the liberal left. I point you to British Tory MP Sir Desmond Swayne, who in the wake of the Trudeau scandal has come out of the closet and proudly told the world that he too once blacked up as soul legend James Brown for a fancy dress party and would not be apologising for it any time soon.

I would guess being unapologetic will be a vote winner too.

Humanise the victims, not the white supremacist who killed them

By Khaled Beydoun

ALJAZEERA — I still don't know the name of the terrorist. Nor do I care to know it.

Following the carnage at two Christchurch mosques in New Zealand, that debilitating grip of anger mixed with fear, anxiety coupled with hate, crept in. I rushed, minutes after learning about the massacre, to uncover the motive, glean through the manifesto, and grapple with the vile white supremacy that drove the terrorist.

Then I stopped. I realised, after sifting through the bleak headlines and darker social media posts, that his broader objective was reeling us in. Seducing us into examining his very word, affixing our eyes to his image and video of the massacre, and most lastingly, memorising his name.

This was the bigger mission that followed the massacre. He wanted us spellbound. Lured into humanising every dimension of his being, and every vile sliver of his act, in place of the victims. Their lives, their stories, and most notably, their names.



Forty-nine people were killed and dozens of others suffered serious injuries in the shootings targeting Christchurch mosques during Friday prayers in 2018.

All 49 of them.

Again, I stopped, turned my attention from the terrorist and fully onto the victims.

While the media was fully wed to telling the terrorist's story, highlighting his commitment to inciting "civil war" in America and showcasing his admiration of a motley crew of white supremacists such as Dylann Roof and Anders Breivik, I embraced the Muslim victims. And began a thread to share their stories, celebrate their lives, and say their names.

If we don't tell our stories, the history of mainstream media affirms time and again, nobody will. Muslims are typically newsworthy when villains - not victims. And Islamophobia is perpetuated by portraying Muslims, whether victims or villains, as a faceless, nameless, and monolithic bloc.

By profiling the victims, I simultaneously challenged that damning stereotype, and dodged the booby trap set by the media-hungry terrorist.

I profiled three-year-old Muca Ibrahim, the youngest of the 49 victims, who entered the mosque with his family members only to be shot. The youngest child of Somali refugees who wrongly thought New Zealand offered a safe haven from terrorism.

Not far from young Muca laid Daoud Nabi, the oldest of the victims. The 71-year-old grandfather was the terrorist's first victim to be named publicly. Witnesses said he leapt in front of a barrage of bullets to save another worshipper's life. He survived gunshots and war in his native Afghanistan, but was murdered in a democracy where white supremacy and Islamophobia are ferociously rising.

Nabi was not the lone hero on that fateful day. Shortly after his 20-year-old son Talha was killed, Naeem Rashid rushed towards the terrorist barehanded. Naeem marshalled infinite courage while experiencing immense pain, knowing that this act of faith would be his last. He too was shot, but steered the murderer's gun away from others and saved lives before his final breath.

Another son, Abdullahi Dirie, was killed shortly after praying alongside his father. The precocious four-year-old insisted on attending the mosque with his family. Somali immigrants that sought a better life for their youngest and his four siblings. He ran into the mosque, wide-eyed and wide-smiled. A family member held him tightly to his chest, one final time, as they walked out of the mosque - a sacred place of worship turned into a mass murder scene.

These are only a handful of stories of the victims. The names, the faces, and the short vignettes of longer profiles and aborted lives that too often reduced into statistics. A dehumanised digit, or in this case, two - 49 - that fails to capture the depth of the pain of their loved ones, and more importantly, the depth of the lives that they led.

That depth of attention, a morbid journalistic twist indeed, is usually reserved for the terrorist. And especially, when that terrorist is a white male. We rush to learn about their every word and motive, childhood factoid and ideological inspiration. And the mainstream media makes all of this readily available for us, in turn luring our attention towards the villain and away from the victims.

If white supremacist violence and its broader aim of promoting itself through baiting the media in the wake of mass murder is to be retrenched, we must actively resist sharing, retweeting, and perpetuating the images and ideas. Turning our attention to the victims and celebrating their lives in the midst of grief is the first - and most vital - step.

The media-hungry terrorist responsible for the Christchurch shootings does not deserve our attention. His victims do.

I don't know the terrorist's name. Nor do I care to know it. I, m keen on knowing the names, remembering the stories and celebrating the lives of the victims. All 49.

TripAdvisor ends ticket sales to attractions that breed captive whales and dolphins

TripAdvisor has announced it will not sell tickets to attractions that breed or import captive whales and dolphins used for public display. The travel site has confirmed the move will affect major attractions that include SeaWorld's theme parks.



TripAdvisor and its subsidiary, Viator, will end commercial relationships with facilities that do not have, or are not in the process of developing, alternative environments for captive cetaceans, which includes whales, dolphins and porpoises.

"They would have to have made a public commitment either to cease all breeding and importation of cetaceans for display with immediate effect or to develop alternative models, such as seaside-sanctuary environments, for the population of captive cetaceans already in their care," said James Kay, director of corporate communications for TripAdvisor.

The travel site defines seaside sanctuaries as a body of coastal water, such as a bay or a cove, that houses cetaceans in as close to a natural environment as possible while providing protection and oversight from qualified husbandry and veterinary staff. It adds that these environments must adhere to a strict no-breeding policy, must not train their animals to perform in any shows or performances for public display, and must prohibit all forms of physical interaction between guests and the animals.

"We believe the current generation of whales and dolphins in captivity should be the last," said Dermot Halpin, president of experiences and rentals for TripAdvisor. "Seaside sanctuaries have enormous potential but they need more backing from the tourism industry. As long as facilities with captive whales and dolphins continue to profit from keeping these animals in smaller, cheaper and less-natural living environments, then they don't have enough incentive to adopt serious change."

The new approach applies to commercial and non-profit attractions who must have "made a public commitment to rehouse all captive cetaceans in its care to these environments in an expedient manner". TripAdvisor says those it views as in breach will be removed from sale over the next few months, with the policy in full force by the end of 2019.

Kay confirmed that major attractions, including SeaWorld and Loro Parque would be affected by the change.

"In the case of SeaWorld, it has committed to not breeding orcas, but has not made the same commitment for other cetaceans in its care, and therefore wouldn't be eligible for sale under the new policy. In contrast, the National Aquarium in Baltimore is creating a sanctuary for its dolphins, so that is one example of an attraction that will still be eligible for sale," he said.

Kay confirmed the new policy only affects tickets sales through the site and does not mean attractions will be delisted. TripAdvisor still wants travellers to be able to share their feedback about the attractions, good or bad.

Although TripAdvisor is aiming to put pressure on the industry to end the captivity of future generations of cetaceans, the new policy does not include a ban on ticket sales to attractions with animals already in captivity. After a consultation process with experts, including marine biologists, zoologists and conservationists, TripAdvisor says that for the current population of cetaceans in captivity, "release into the wild is not a realistic option".

(Source: The Guardian)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Russians and Americans open new pipeline

(November 28, 2001)

A major new pipeline linking the oil fields of Central Asia with the Black Sea has been opened by Russian and American energy officials. The pipeline reduces the Russian government's control over Central Asia's oil wealth. This report from Bill Hayton: The Tengiz-Anapa pipeline is the first to directly link Kazakhstan's oil **riches** with the **open sea** and it decisively weakens Moscow's grip on Central Asia's oil reserves. Until now, Kazakh oil was sent along routes controlled by the Russian state-owned company Transneft, which **set quotas** and prices.

Now the Caspian Oil **Consortium** - an alliance of three governments and eight oil companies - will make those decisions **collectively**. Although the Russian state owns the largest share in the consortium - 24% - its influence will **be moderated** by the energy companies whose oil will **actually** be pumped along the pipeline.

The oil reserves around the Caspian Sea are **at least as large as** those of the North Sea, or the United States. The problem has always been how to get it to consumers. At least six routes have been considered and while Russia has been keen to **maintain its** pipeline **monopoly**, the United States **has promoted** routes which, as far as possible, are free from its rivals' control.

Words

riches: a plural noun describing something that may provide large amounts of money

the open sea: here, waters that have access to the world's oceans

set quotas: decide on a limited amount of something (in this case oil)

consortium: a group of people or organizations that have agreed to work together

collectively: together

be moderated: if something is moderated, it becomes less extreme

actually: an adverb which is used to emphasize that something is true

at least as large as: probably larger than

to maintain its monopoly: to keep complete control over something

has promoted: if you promote something, you try to encourage it to succeed

(Source: BBC)

Global heating and the rise of rock falls in Swiss Alps



the mountain.

It was the most deadly rockfall in recent memory, and although the exact cause has not yet been determined scientists say another 3m cubic meters of rock on the Piz Cengalo are so unstable they could fall at any moment.

But Bondo is prepared. An hour's hike from the village, Giovanoli points to a device that measures the water level. Should it swell to a dangerous level, four sirens will warn residents to evacuate and traffic will be barred from entry. A radar and a seismic station have also been installed.

For most of the Alps, however, there are no alarms or movement monitors.

A 10-minute drive from Davos, which hosts the World Economic Forum each year, Marcia Phillips, a scientist at the Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research, gets out of her car and looks at the Flüela Wisshorn. About 300,000 tons of rock fell off the mountain in March.

"It was very lucky that it happened during the night, because it is a very popular route with ski touring, so it could have easily killed several people," she says.

Reports of the rockfall reached the scientists a few hours after the event because it is popular with tourists and close to a road. But most rockfalls happen in remote areas where nobody takes note, and very few can be surveyed and studied. On-site meas-

urements of the unstable Piz Cengalo, for example, would simply be too dangerous. What's certain, Phillips says, is that there have been more reports of rockfalls.

"At the moment we have the impression that a lot more is coming down," she says, "and things have definitely got unstable."

The reasons are complex. The structure of the mountain and the way it eroded over millennia play a role, as does the warming climate. In the past 120 years, temperatures in the Alps have risen by just under 2C – twice the global average.

"Climate change has a direct effect on the ice masses and the retreating glaciers," says Andreas Bauder, a glaciologist at ETH Zurich. Glaciers, he explains, contribute to the stability of the Alps both because they can support rock and because they protect the mountains from precipitation. If water seeps into the mountain, that can lead to erosion – and rockfalls.

Permafrost – rock and soil that is permanently below freezing – is the same. Once it is no longer frozen, water can seep in, working like a wedge in the rock, Phillips says.

"We have glaciers retreating, permafrost thawing, water coming in, so definitely, things are getting unstable," she says. The result are complex chain reactions, so-called hazard chains that can include not only rockfalls but flooding and mudslides.

"If we reach our climate goals, the hope would be that the glaciers will recover," says Bauder. "But even if we reach them, it will take a while for the climate to recover, and the glaciers will respond afterward." Half the Alps' glaciers are already lost due to our past emissions and are expected to have fully melted by 2050.

Often, smaller rockfalls are the first heralds of looming disasters, says Anton Lüthi, a natural disasters specialist working for the canton of Bern. In the past years, he has worked out emergency plans for at-risk areas. "It's a matter of being prepared, and knowing what to do when something happens," he says.

One morning in July, Lüthi inspected a particularly worrisome area at Öschinen Lake, a popular tourist spot which attracts as many as 3,000 people a day in summer. A massive rock protrudes from the mountains around the lake, and two years ago, a paraglider observed a widening gap in the crag. Geologists found it was shifting fast, moving 2cm every day. Now, experts say 15m cubic meters of rock – enough to fill 6,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools – is at risk of crashing down.

Opposite the shifting crag, a surveying instrument scans the mountain's surface every 30 minutes. Experts analyse the data to determine whether movement is increasing, and try to predict when a major rockfall is imminent. So far, more than half a million pounds has been spent on surveying just this rock; across the country, billions have been spent on such responses to the threats posed by climate breakdown.

Emergency plans have been mapped down to the finest details, from the exact wording of messages that will be disseminated to tourists and locals, to the location of the keys for emergency shelters. Even the signs to cordon off hiking trails have already been printed.

In the village at the foot of the mountains, locals are unfazed by the looming danger. "We've been watching smaller chunks fall off for a year now," says Fabienne Kallen, a waitress at the Ermitage hotel, one of the buildings closest to the rock. "I guess if it's something bigger, we'd have to evacuate the hotel," she says. "But we trust in the fire brigade to let us know."

(Source: The Independent)

EU imposes hen welfare standards on egg imports for first time

A trade agreement to import produce into the European Union is set to be conditional upon animal welfare requirements for the first time.

Eggs imported from Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay to member states will only be duty-free if the hens are kept in line with EU standards under the provisional terms of the new EU-Mercosur trade agreement.

Previous EU free trade deals have included aspirational provisions on animal welfare, such as the 2014 EU-Ukraine association agreement, but this is the first time the elimination of tariffs have been conditional upon particular standards being upheld.

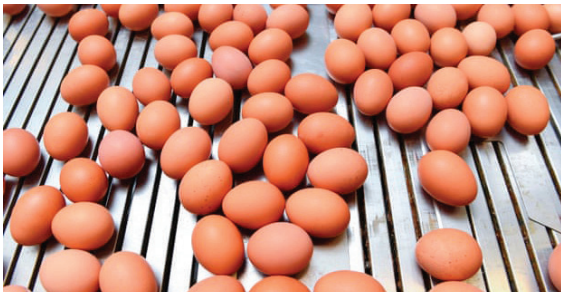
Campaigning organisation Eurogroup for Animals welcomed the condition – which it hailed as "an important turning point in EU trade policy" – but criticised the absence of a similar prerequisite for meat and egg product imports, and called for the approach to be extended.

The RSPCA said the announcement that the agreement would be conditional on meeting EU animal welfare standards established "an important precedent" and was a highly significant move.

"It is the first time animal welfare standards have been incorporated into tariffs in an EU trade agreement, and something the RSPCA has been advocating for 15 years," a spokesperson said.

"We urge the UK to do the same as it leaves the EU, by rolling over this particular trade agreement and including those welfare standard conditions in any future post-Brexit free trade agreements."

The agreement was quietly made public in a meeting of



the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development at the European Parliament last Wednesday, after a leaked document seen by the Guardian suggested the EU had made the demand back in 2016 during the drawn-out negotiations with Mercosur.

"There is a cooperation provision in the agreement on animal welfare issues with the very clear objective to improve the level of animal welfare, particularly in the Mercosur countries, to bring them up to our world leading standards," said John Clarke, director of international affairs at the European Commission's directorate-general for agriculture and rural development.

"For the first time in any trade agreement, we have a condition attached to the export of eggs from Mercosur. They can only be exported at zero-duty if the Mercosur producers meet European standards for laying hens."

Copa-Cogeca, a group that represents European farmers, called for greater work to be done to ensure states with

bilateral trading agreements have reciprocal animal welfare standards.

"This is central for us, as currently animal welfare is not a universally accepted concept amongst our trading partners," a spokesperson said. "Some of our trading partners have committed to align their animal welfare standards with the EU, but all too often they have failed to do so."

Compliance with EU laws adds 16% to the cost price of an egg, according to the European Egg Processors Association. It said the condition would help make eggs from EU producers more competitive with foreign imports.

The British Egg Industry Council said that while the announcement represented "a step forward" it wanted to see the same animal welfare conditions apply to egg products and eggs used as ingredients in food exported to the UK.

European Commission sources downplayed the significance of the trade condition and said it would not have a major impact as shelled egg imports from Mercosur countries were limited.

Both sides are now preparing the final version of the trade agreement, the largest the EU has ever struck in terms of tariff reduction, before it is submitted to EU member states and the EU parliament for approval.

From 2012, farmers across the EU were no longer allowed to keep hens in barren battery cages, within which movement is extremely restricted. However, the cages were often replaced with more spacious versions and a large proportion of the EU's 500 million hens remain caged for their entire lives.

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

Iran to hold first national online project Olympiad

The first round of online project Olympiad will be held in Iran in the next Iranian calendar year (starting on March 21), Fatemeh Mohajerani, an official with the Ministry of Education has said.

The project Olympiad will focus on special subjects and is very much like Khwarizmi International Award the only difference is that the Olympiad will be carried out online, IRNA news agency quoted Mohajerani as saying on Sunday.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“cerebro-, cerebr-”

■ **Meaning:** brain

■ **For example:** Passive smoking is considered a major cause of **cerebrovascular** disease, which causes strokes.

PHRASAL VERB

Think something through

■ **Meaning:** to think carefully about the possible results of something

■ **For example:** The policy has not been thought through properly.

IDIOM

Get over something

■ **Explanation:** to begin to feel better after a very upsetting experience

■ **For example:** She never got over the death of her son.

اولین المپیاد مجازی برگزار می شود

فاطمه مهاجرانی رئیس مرکز ملی پرورش استعدادهای درخشان و دانش‌پژوهان جوان گفت: سال آینده اولین المپیاد مجازی با عنوان «المپیاد پروژه ای» برگزار می شود.

فاطمه مهاجرانی روز یکشنبه در گفت و گو با خبرنگار ایرنا اظهار داشت: این المپیاد یک موضوع خاص را به عنوان یک مساله تعریف کرده و به آن می پردازد و در واقع شبیه جشنواره خوارزمی است با این تفاوت که نیازی به حضور افراد نیست بلکه به صورت مجازی برگزار می شود.

Ayatollah Sistani urges Iraqis to avoid violence amid unrest

➔ "Lawmakers hold the biggest responsibility for what is happening," Ayatollah Sistani was quoted as saying.

Iraqi Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi on Thursday expressed regret that the ongoing protests have become violent, saying he is ready to meet with representatives of the protesters to discuss their demands.

Speaking on Thursday night, the Iraqi prime minister said certain elements have been able to derail the protests from their peaceful path.

He said there was no "magic solution" to issues such as graft, unemployment and corruption but he would begin passing a law for basic income to be meted out to poor families.

During the televised address, Abdul-Mahdi also asked the parliament, where his coalition is in majority, to give him support so that he can reshuffle his cabinet to address people's demands.

The unrest comes as millions of pilgrims are preparing to travel to the Iraqi holy cities of Najaf and Karbala to attend Arba'een marking the fortieth day after the martyrdom of their third Imam, Hussein ibn Ali (AS).



On Friday, a senior Iranian cleric said the United States and Israel are stoking unrest in Iraq to disrupt the Arba'een pilgrimage.

"The enemy is now determined against the Islamic nation. America and Zionism ... are targeting Arba'een and Iraq, and causing trouble because it is hard for them to

accept the presence of millions (of pilgrims) in Karbala," Ayatollah Mohammad Emami-Kashani said in a sermon in Tehran.

Iran's Foreign Ministry on Thursday urged all pilgrims from the country to postpone their visit to Iraq until calm is restored.

"Stressing the importance of the great march of Arba'een and the necessity of holding this magnificent congregation, the Foreign Ministry calls on the Iranian faithful ... to postpone their visit to Iraq until calm is restored to the country, and to pay close attention to the warnings of political and security officials," the statement said.

According to Press TV, Iran, it said, is confident the Iraqi government and nation will work with all groups, parties and personalities, especially the top clerics and other religious authorities and political leaders to calm the current tense situation.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is confident that the Iraqi nation and government will not allow the continuation of certain moves that are to the detriment of the Iraqi people and will not let the foreigners take advantage of the situation," the statement added.

UN: 'Alarming' spike of 82 percent in Afghan child casualties

TEHRAN — Worsening security across Afghanistan has led to 14,000 violations against children in the past four years, including nearly 3,500 killed and 9,000 injured, a UN report said.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned "the alarming level" of grave violations committed by all sides in the 18-year war and the fact that children "continue to bear the brunt of the armed conflict".

Of serious concern, he said, was the nearly 12,600 children verified to have been killed or injured in 2015-2018 represented almost one-third of all civilian casualties.

That was "an increase of 82 percent in child casualties compared with the previous four years", he said.

Guterres wrote in his fourth report on children and armed conflict in Afghanistan the rise was traced to "an increase in child casualties

resulting from ground engagements, explosive remnants of war and aerial attacks".

The UN chief said he was "extremely concerned, especially by the number of children killed and injured as a result of aerial operations conducted by government and pro-government forces".

According to the report, child casualties from air strikes "have significantly increased since 2015", reversing the downward trend of the four preceding years.

The UN verified 1,049 child casualties from air strikes in 2015-2018, including 464 youngsters killed. That represented 40 percent of civilian casualties from aerial attacks, the report said.

Guterres said armed groups were responsible for 43 percent of child casualties - 3,450 killed and 9,149 wounded, Al Jazeera reported.

N. Korea, U.S. envoys to resume nuclear talks in Stockholm

TEHRAN — Negotiators from the United States and North Korea are due to resume talks over Pyongyang's nuclear programme this weekend in Stockholm, but it is far from clear if the two sides will find common ground after months of deadlock and increased tensions.

The meeting in Stockholm will be the first formal working-level talks since U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met in June, vowing to restart negotiations that had stalled after their failed summit in February.

Since June, however, U.S. officials have struggled to persuade North Korea to return to the table.

That appeared to change this week when North Korea abruptly announced that it had agreed to hold talks.

The stakes have grown for Trump and Kim, but publicly the two sides have shown no sign of where they might compromise.

On Wednesday, North Korea test-fired a ballistic missile designed for submarine launch, the latest in a series of missile tests that analysts say underscores the need for Washington to move quickly to negotiate at least some limits on Pyongyang's growing arsenal.

Trump continued to downplay the test in remarks to reporters in Washington, noting that the two sides would soon be meeting.

North Korea is under tough sanctions that ban much of its trade, although the United Nations has warned that the country has circumvented many of the sanctions.

U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun is expected to lead the American delegation. Biegun has often struck a more pragmatic note than former national security adviser John Bolton, who pushed Trump to maintain a harder line in Hanoi but was fired last month.

Muallem vows to 'liberate every inch' of Syria from terrorists

TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem says Syria is resolved to rid the entire Arab country of foreign-sponsored Takfiri militants.

In a recent interview with Lebanon-based al-Mayadeen television news network, the top Syrian diplomat said "every inch" of the Syrian territory will be liberated from terrorists very soon.

Al-Muallem said terrorists positioned in the country's northwestern province of Idlib had lost "numerous opportunities for the settlement of crisis" after they failed to honor a ceasefire and continued to target civilian neighborhoods.

His remarks came as Syria's army launched ground operations inside Idlib and adjacent areas which are under the control of foreign-backed terrorists.

Syria has stepped up its bombardment of militant hideouts in the northwest. Idlib, along the border with Turkey, is the last remaining bastion of foreign-backed terrorists.

The so-called National Front for the Liberation of Syria is the main Turkish-backed militant alliance in the Idlib region.

Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a coalition of different terror outfits largely composed of al-Nusra Front, holds a large part of the province.

Muallem said that "despite the Syrian army's agreement to truce in Idlib and efforts exerted in this regard, Ankara has failed to fulfill its obligations."

The Syrian foreign minister also demanded an immediate withdrawal of American and Turkish forces from Syria's northeast.

US troops have long been providing Kurdish YPG militants with arms and training, calling them a key partner in the purported fight against Daesh. Many observers, however, see the support in the context of Washington's plans to carve out a foothold in the Arab country.

Such support has also angered Ankara which views YPG militants as a terrorist organization tied to Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) that has been waging a destructive war inside Turkey for decades.

According to Press TV, Turkey seeks to establish



a 32-kilometer (20-mile) safe zone in northern Syria, and has stressed that it wants the Kurdish militants cleared from the region.

Israel's airstrikes on Syria destabilize situation: Lavrov

TEHRAN — Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has lashed out at the Israeli regime for launching occasional airstrikes on the Syrian territory, noting that such strikes only lead to further escalation of tensions in the region.

Lavrov made the remarks in an interview with Asharq Al-Awsat, which was published on Thursday.

"Regarding arbitrary Israeli airstrikes on the Syrian territory, we have never concealed a negative attitude towards such actions

that further destabilize the situation and could lead to an escalation," Russia's top diplomat said.

The Zionist regime launches airstrikes on the Syrian territory from time to time. Such aggressive moves are usually viewed as attempts to prop up terrorist groups suffering defeats at the hands of Syrian government forces.

Since 2016, the election of US President Donald Trump and his pro-Israeli decisions, including recognition of the "Israeli sover-

eignty" over the occupied Syrian territory of Golan Heights, have seemingly emboldened Tel Aviv to launch new aggression on the Arab country.

Elsewhere in his Thursday remarks, Lavrov commented on the potential of a confrontation between Iran and Israel in Syria, emphasizing that Syria should not become an arena for implementing external agendas.

"Syria should not become a platform for implementing plans or settling scores. The

main task of all concerned forces must be to help restore peace to Syrian territory," he added.

The Russian Foreign Ministry announced in early June that Moscow takes serious issue with Israeli military aggression against Syria.

The ministry said in a statement that Russia was concerned about the aerial attacks launched by the occupying regime against Syria, adding that it believes the assaults could pose a threat to regional stability, Press TV reported.



of missile tests that analysts say underscores the need for Washington to move quickly to negotiate at least some limits on Pyongyang's growing arsenal.

Trump continued to downplay the test in remarks to reporters in Washington, noting that the two sides would soon be meeting.

North Korea is under tough sanctions that ban much of its trade, although the United Nations has warned that the country has circumvented many of the sanctions.

U.S. Special Representative for North Korea Stephen Biegun is expected to lead the American delegation. Biegun has often struck a more pragmatic note than former national security adviser John Bolton, who pushed Trump to maintain a harder line in Hanoi but was fired last month.

Policy analysts said Bolton's departure could help U.S. efforts to revive the talks. But they said it would not make Washington's aim of persuading Pyongyang to give up its nuclear weapons any easier.

The North Korean delegation will be led by its former ambassador to Vietnam, Kim Myong Gil, who stepped in after his predecessor was reportedly removed in a diplomatic shakeup, Al Jazeera reported.

Yemenis rally to express support for recent anti-Saudi operation

TEHRAN — Thousands of Yemenis have taken to the streets of the northern Yemeni city of Sa'ada to express support for the country's recent retaliatory military operation against Saudi-led forces in the border region of Najran.

Yemeni authorities speaking at the rally on Friday called for "national reconciliation" and a further deployment of forces against the Saudi aggression, Yemen's al-Masirah news network reported.

Authorities also warned Riyadh that continued aggression and failure to accept a ceasefire proposed by Yemen would result in more serious strikes from Yemeni forces.

During the rally, demonstrators carried images of Yemeni soldiers who had lost their lives during the operation.

Demonstrators also decried "Washington's policies in the region" and called for Muslim and Arab states to unite against the "oppressors", chanting slogans expressing support for the Palestinian cause.

"[We are] headed to al-Aqsa," they chanted, referring to the al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem al-Quds.

Friday's protests came a week after Yemeni forces, led by the popular Houthi Ansarullah movement, announced the conclusion of a major ground operation against Saudi-led mercenaries dubbed "Victory from God Almighty".

According to Press TV, Yemeni forces killed some 200 Saudi-backed mercenaries and took 2,000 others prisoner in the offensive. The operation marked one of Yemen's most successful military operations repelling the Saudi-led aggression against the country.

It also came after a major drone attack on the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry, which allegedly shut down more than half of the kingdom's crude production.

Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched the war on Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi back to power and crushing the Ansarullah movement.

Resistance by Yemeni forces has however pushed the Saudi war into a stalemate, with Yemeni forces increasingly using sophisticated weaponry in retaliatory attacks against the coalition.

Japan PM seeks meet with N. Korea's Kim despite missile launch

TEHRAN — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said on Friday he was determined to meet North Korea's leader to resolve the issue of Japanese nationals abducted by North Korean agents, maintaining an offer to talk despite the country's missile launches.

North Korea said this week it had successfully test-fired a new submarine-launched ballistic missile from the sea, to contain external threats and bolster self-defense, ahead of fresh nuclear talks with the United States.

"I am determined to meet with Chairman Kim Jong Un face-to-face, with no preconditions, to resolve the all-important abduction issue," Abe said in a policy speech at the beginning of a parliamentary session.

In 2002, North Korea admitted its agents had kidnapped 13 Japanese decades before. Japan says 17 of its citizens were abducted, five of whom were repatriated. North Korea has said eight are dead and another four never entered the country.

Abe has vowed to pursue the issue until all the abductees come home, despite regional tension over the North's nuclear and missile programs.

Staunch U.S. ally Japan and North Korea have been rivals for decades. During periods of tension, North Korea has threatened to rain destruction down on Japan, and North Korea has test-fired missiles into the seas near Japan and even over it.

"The abductees issue is core to Abe's political identity and one of the reasons he's got to the position he has," said Jeff Kingston, director of Asian studies at Temple University's Japan campus.

ut Abe has little leverage over Pyongyang at a time when U.S. President Donald Trump is pursuing further talks with the North Korean leader. The two sides are set to hold fresh nuclear talks on Oct. 5.

"The only role Japan will play is to bankroll whatever deal is struck," said Brad Glosserman, deputy director of the Center for Rule-making Strategies at Tama University in Tokyo, Reuters reported.

Bahraini regime summons Shia clergyman for questioning

TEHRAN — Bahraini officials have summoned a Shia Muslim cleric for interrogation as the ruling Al Khalifah dynasty presses ahead with its heavy-handed crackdown and persecution of members of the religious community in the tiny Persian Gulf kingdom.

The Arabic-language Lualua television network reported on Thursday that Bahraini security forces had ordered Sheikh Abdulmohsen Mulla Atiya al-Jamri to appear for questioning at Hamad Town Police Station. The reason for the summons remains unknown.

Earlier, Bahraini forces had interrogated Sheikh Jamri for his fiery sermons in the run-up to Ashura, which marks the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the third Shia Imam and the grandson of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

Thousands of anti-regime protesters have held demonstrations in Bahrain on an almost daily basis ever since a popular uprising began in the country in mid-February 2011.

They are demanding that the Al Khalifah regime relinquish power and allow a just system representing all Bahrainis to be established. Manama has gone to great lengths to clamp down on any sign of dissent. On March 14, 2011, troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates were deployed to assist Bahrain in its crackdown.

On March 5, 2017, Bahrain's parliament approved the trial of civilians at military tribunals in a measure blasted by human rights campaigners as being tantamount to imposition of an undeclared martial law countrywide.

According to Press Tv, Bahraini monarch King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah ratified the constitutional amendment on April 3, 2017.

Bordeaux suspend 3 youths for teammate attack

Three youth players from the Bordeaux academy have been suspended by the club after they attacked one of their teammates, causing him serious injuries, the club has told ESPN FC.

The incident happened on Sept. 30 at the training ground and the players involved are all 16.

“We are supporting our injured player and will be alongside him through this tough time,” the club said in a statement. “We have reacted immediately to this incident and have suspended three players while we lead our investigation.”

Sources told ESPN FC tensions started two days earlier when the Bordeaux under-17 team lost a match against Nantes.

An altercation happened on the pitch that day followed then by the physical attack. The victim, seriously injured on his thigh, was released from hospital on Thursday and is walking with crutches.

He will not be able to play football for at least two weeks. The three alleged attackers have been interviewed by the club as part of an internal investigation.

They were also placed in custody in Merignac police station on Wednesday to be questioned. They were released following interviews with the police.

(Source: Soccernet)

Pochettino says he hopes to stay with Spurs at least five more years

Tottenham Hotspur coach Mauricio Pochettino dismissed any talk about his future at the club on Friday and said he hoped to spend many more years in North London.

Spurs were hammered 7-2 at home by Bayern Munich in Tuesday’s Champions league clash but Pochettino said the defeat would force him and his players to work harder and recover “their best feeling,” hopefully in Saturday’s Premier League game at Brighton.

“On Monday I was the best and after Tuesday I am the worst,” he told reporters. “That is the reality when you lose and you cannot defend yourself.

“In five-and-a-half years I think in every single press conference we are talking about my future. I hope... I am going to spend five years more here at least.

“Football is a game to enjoy and when you don’t win it is difficult to enjoy but you can’t create a drama,” Pochettino added. “And we are not going to create a drama.”

The Argentine acknowledged Tuesday’s defeat was hard to take but he was not unduly worried about his team’s form, even though they have won only two of their last nine games in all competitions and sit sixth in the league, 10 points behind leaders Liverpool.

“We need to move on and we need to be ready,” Pochettino said. “We need to try to show the best quality and the best performance, the competition doesn’t wait for you.

“You cannot go home and cry and spend three days closed in your room, you need to move on quick, that is the key. You stay all together. You stick with your ideas and be stronger than before.”

(Source: Goal)

Italy’s Marchisio calls time on professional career

Former Juventus midfielder Claudio Marchisio has announced his retirement from professional soccer at the age of 33 after a short spell with Russian side Zenit St Petersburg.

Marchisio ended his stay at Juve last year after spending 25 years at the club where he won seven Serie A titles as well as four Italian Cups. He earned 55 caps for Italy, the last of which was in 2017.

“It’s an important decision but a very difficult one. It was right to reveal it in a very special place. I decided to retire because I realized my body was no longer reacting as the head wanted,” Marchisio told reporters at Juve’s Allianz Stadium.

He joined Zenit on a two-year deal in September last year but cut his spell short earlier this year due to a persistent knee issue after managing only nine appearances for them.

“I spent unforgettable moments on the field... I thank Juventus and the other teams I played with, my teammates, managers and coaches who gave me all of this,” he added.

“Here I lifted my most important trophies. These are the emotions that will always remain within me.”

(Source: Football Italia)

Real deny Courtois anxiety issues

Real Madrid denied on Friday goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois was suffering from anxiety which forced him to be replaced during the midweek draw to Club Brugge, as had been reported by Spanish media.

Newspaper OK Diario alleged Courtois, 27, was substituted at half-time of Tuesday’s 2-2 Champions League draw due to anxiety.

Real said he left the field due to a stomach problem after having conceded two goals in 39 minutes to the Belgian club.

“Our player has never been diagnosed with alleged anxiety and, therefore, that information is absolutely false,” a Real statement said.

“Thibaut Courtois has been diagnosed and treated for acute gastroenteritis with dehydration and electrolyte imbalance, which made it impossible to end last Tuesday’s game against Brugge,” the club added.

Courtois has only managed two cleans sheets in eight appearances this season.

According to the Spanish press, Courtois had to be driven home from the Santiago Bernabeu by his father as he was too unwell to drive himself.

The Belgium international missed training on Thursday and Friday and is likely to sit out Saturday’s La Liga fixture against Granada.

(Source: AFP)

Katarina Johnson-Thompson overcomes heartbreak to win gold

Despite her unquestionable talents and potential, much of Katarina Johnson-Thompson’s career has been defined by heartbreak.

Disappointment at the World Championships in 2015 and the Rio Olympics in 2016 -- in which she was expected to land a podium but came away with nothing -- prompted her to change coach, uprooting her life in Liverpool and moving to France.

More World Championship disappointment was to follow in 2017 as Johnson-Thompson -- nicknamed KJT -- underperformed in the high jump, one of her strongest events, to finish in fifth place overall.

On Thursday, all of those painful memories melted away to make space for a new joyous one, as she was crowned heptathlon world champion in Doha and broke the British record in the process.

“Everyone’s got their journey,” she said after securing gold. “It’s not been very straightforward for me. It’s not been easy for me. I had to move coach. I had to move country, I had to learn a new language and settle in. I tore everything up and started again and it’s worked.

“The last two world championships have been heartbreaking for my mum and I. Mid-heptathlon, I’ve gone back to my hotel and



cried and cried for hours when things have gone badly.

“It was after the high jump in London in 2017 and after the long jump in 2015 in Beijing. Those were the low points of my career. Rio Olympics, as well. I’ve had a lot of bad years. I’m just so happy that I came out in front for a change.”

Johnson-Thompson amassed 6,981 points over the course of the two-day heptathlon

event, beating Jessica Ennis-Hill’s British record which was set when she won gold at London 2012.

In truth, few had expected Johnson-Thompson to get the better of long-time rival Nafi Thiam; coming into Doha, the Belgian was undefeated since the 2016 European Championships.

But the 26-year-old Briton produced four personal bests to blow the competition away

and edge ever closer to her lifelong goal of breaking the 7,000-point mark.

Her eventual margin of victory over silver medalist Thiam was 304 points, the biggest at a World Championships since 1987, though the Belgian appeared to be troubled by an elbow injury during the javelin.

“It doesn’t make sense to me honestly,” Johnson-Thompson told the BBC. “These whole two days, because they’ve been so fast and it’s been at nighttime, have actually felt like a dream with the lights and everything.

“It’s been unbelievable and I can’t believe this is the result. There have just been so many attempts of trying to perform on this stage and I’m just so, so happy. I couldn’t have done it without them [the disappointments].

“The low moments have helped me come back and make the move [to France], try to look within myself. This has been my dream, 7,000 points I’ve spoken about in the past as one of my main career goals.

“She [Thiam] is a phenomenal athlete and she’s set the standard, I witnessed 7,000 points first through her and she’s the one who has made that doable and has made that a requirement in order to win.

“She’s definitely raised the bar and I’m just glad I’ve been able to follow and step up.”

(Source: CNN)

‘We’re not in the 90s now’ - Solskjaer issues Man United warning



Manchester United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer accepts his side are no longer the force they were during the trophy-laden years under former manager Alex Ferguson but has backed the new generation of players to build a brighter future.

United’s away supporters whipped up a lively atmosphere with songs hailing the iconic players of the past as Solskjaer’s side were held to an uninspiring goalless draw against Dutch side AZ Alkmaar in the Europa League on Thursday.

The performance was a far cry from the glory days at Old Trafford when Ferguson guided United to 13 Premier League titles during his 26-year reign.

“We’re not in the 90s now,” Solskjaer told reporters ahead of Sunday’s league trip to Newcastle United. “It’s a different era, a different group that we’re building.

“We know there are going to be ups and downs. I’m ready to see these boys blossom.

“I don’t know what the opponents think of us. I just know sometimes when you walk off games, we’re not doing bad here. Sometimes there’s a gap. I’ve felt that a couple of times, but not very often.”

United have made their worst start to

a league season in 30 years and the result in the Netherlands extended their winless run on the road to 10 games across all competitions.

Like Solskjaer, Newcastle boss Steve Bruce is also facing widespread criticism with his team currently 19th in the table and without a win since August.

“Brucey is going to set up a team to win,” Solskjaer said. “I’m going to set up a team to try to win.

“We’re going there, it’s a great stadium to play at. We’re looking forward to the game. We’ve hopefully got many players fresh for Sunday.”

United midfielder Paul Pogba missed the midweek game for further treatment on his ankle injury, and Solskjaer does not expect him to be ready for the week-end’s trip to St James’ Park.

“It might be time for us to give Paul 10 or 14 days extra to be ready for Liverpool,” Solskjaer said.

Jesse Lingard is also likely to miss out after suffering a hamstring injury against Alkmaar while the game may come too soon for Anthony Martial and Luke Shaw.

(Source: Mirror)

Guardiola urges Man City’s Walker to fight for his England place



Pep Guardiola has challenged Kyle Walker to prove Gareth Southgate wrong after the England manager left him out of his national squad for the second time this season.

The Manchester City full-back has fallen behind Liverpool’s Trent Alexander-Arnold and Kieran Trippier, now at Atletico Madrid, in Southgate’s pecking order ahead of the Euro 2020 qualifiers against the Czech Republic and Bulgaria.

With Manchester United’s Aaron Wan-Bissaka also in contention, it may be that Walker will not add to the 48 caps he has won for his country.

At the same time, the City manager placed further pressure on Walker by spending £60 million (\$74m) in the summer transfer window on young Portuguese defender Joao Cancelo, whom Guardiola believes is now ready to challenge for a regular first-team start.

But Guardiola, whose side host Wolves on Sunday, believes the 29-year-old Walker is currently exhibiting form good enough to win over Southgate and retain his place with the champions.

“Kyle, it is a big challenge for him to show the manager from England how good he is,” Guardiola said at his pre-match press

conference on Friday.

“Our life in sports is about challenge, about duels, targets, and he has one in front of him in every single game to show how good he is to come back into the team.

“He came as an incredible, outstanding player and still is an outstanding player. Physicality, strong, fast, and we try to help him to be better since we were together.”

“We ask him many times don’t attack from wide but from inside, yeah but as player he can do everything,” said the City manager.

“The opinion of Gareth, I am not here to (question). He made the selection, he had a huge selection of players to select, he decided the last two times and Kyle respects it, I respect it.

To compound Walker’s concerns, Cancelo, after a slow start to his City career following a summer move from Juventus, is now looking capable of supplanting him in Guardiola’s first team.

“With the ball we don’t have doubts, without the ball he (Cancelo) starts to understand what we want and he did it quite well in the games he has played,” said the City boss.

(Source: Independent)

Murray heartened by progress despite quarter-final loss

Andy Murray said that his comeback from career-saving hip surgery was progressing better than expected despite going down fighting in the China Open quarter-finals on Friday.

The 32-year-old Briton lost 6-2, 7-6 (7/3) to top seed Dominic Thiem in Beijing, but said: “I think this (week) was maybe the best in terms of how I played since I came back.

“It was great for me, I played three matches in four days, which is quite a lot.

“Actually I felt better than I expected today, as well,” said the former number one, who had a major operation in January and only returned to singles tennis in August.

Asked by AFP if he was further ahead than he expected to be in his comeback, he replied: “Yeah, maybe.

“I’m getting there, this week is better than last week, I hope next week is better than this week,” the three-time Grand Slam champion said.

“That’s how I have to try to keep going to see where my limit is, I don’t think I’m at that limit now.

“I think I can keep improving. That’s what this week has shown me.”

Murray had the Beijing crowd behind him against the Austrian Thiem, ranked fifth in the world to his opponent’s 503rd.

But Murray lost his first service game,



putting himself under pressure immediately.

At times there were shades of the Murray that topped the world rankings in 2016, but the second set started in the same way as the first, the Briton having his serve broken.

Murray, who says that he now has no pain in his hip and it is a question of building up match fitness, looked down and out as Thiem served for the match.

But he does not know how to quit and a

nervy Thiem surrendered his service game for 5-5. Murray went up 6-5, before Thiem forced the tie break.

He carried that momentum to victory and the 26-year-old Thiem plays Karen Khachanov of Russia in the last four.

Murray will go straight to the Shanghai Masters, where he will face a tougher field, and conceded that he was not yet at the stage of being able to challenge the top players.

“I think I need a few more weeks of kind of playing matches like this, two, three, four matches in a week, trying to play consistently well in all of those matches to say I’m playing top-20 tennis or something like that, he said.

Third seed Stefanos Tsitsipas of Greece will play second seed Alexander Zverev in the other semi-final in an intriguing clash between two rising stars of men’s tennis.

Germany’s Zverev, at 22 a year older than Tsitsipas, has cruised into the last four, yet to drop a set.

■ **Barty battles through**

In the women’s draw, world number one Ashleigh Barty said she produced some of her best tennis this year as she battled into the semi-finals with a gutsy victory over Petra Kvitova.

The Australian came from a set down to win 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 and will play Kiki Bertens of the Netherlands.

“From my opinion, that was one of the highest-quality matches I played all year,” said the 23-year-old Barty, the reigning French Open champion.

“Petra always has a way of bringing out the best in me, she really does.”

Reigning champion Caroline Wozniacki faces Naomi Osaka or Bianca Andreescu in the other women’s semi-final.

(Source: AFP)

Iran U23 football team's future uncertain

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — With three months to go to the 2020 AFC U23 Championship kick-off, Iran U23 football team's future is uncertain.

On Wednesday, a meeting was held in Iran Football Federation to discuss the future of the U23 team at the competition but head coach Farhad Majidi didn't attend the session.

The members of committee called him but there was no answer.

Majidi had previously criticized football federation's policy over inviting players to U23 team, blaming it as one of the reasons for the team's failings in two friendly matches against Uzbekistan.

The ex-Esteghlal forward says he is resentful of anybody's attempts to interfere in his work.

The media reports suggest that Majidi's relation with head of youth committee of Iran Football Federation, Akbar Mohammadi, remains problematic and it's so destructive for the future of the team.

Iran have been handed a tough group in the AFC U23 Championship, where they are drawn in Group C along with defending champions Uzbekistan, China and South Korea.

Majidi was supposed to be there to talk about the team's situation but his absence indicates that the team needs urgent revision.

"I step down from my role as head coach of Iran's U23 football team due to interference in my job. I spent too much time solving the problem and I'd rather stay away from the team in the shameful situation ahead of the important tournament like the AFC U23 Championship. The non-standard ways dictated by technical committee didn't reflect my values," Majidi posted on his Instagram account.

There's absolutely no time to waste and Iran Olympic Committee and football federation should make quick decision on the U23 team since Iran have not been in the Olympics since the 1976 games in Munich.

The 2020 AFC U23 Championship will be held in Thailand from Jan. 8 to 26 and the top three teams of the tournament will qualify for the 2020 Summer Olympics men's football tournament in Japan as the AFC representatives.



IPL: Sepahan remain top of table

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Sepahan football team defeated Zob Ahan in Isfahan derby to stay atop Iran Professional league (IPL) on Friday.

Giorgi Gvlesiani gave the hosts the lead in the 51st minute and Kiros Stanlley made it 2-0 in the 64th minute.

Persepolis suffered a late defeat against Shahr Khodro in Mashhad.

Farshad Faraji scored the winning goal in the dying moments of the match.

Earlier on the day, Esteghlal defeated Gol Gohar Sirjan to register their first victory after six weeks.

Croatian defender Hrvoje Milic put Esteghlal into the lead in the sixth minute but Behnam Barzai cancelled out the goal five minutes later from the spot.

Mehdi Ghaedi was on target four minutes into the second half to give the Blues a home win. Elsewhere, Paykan lost to Naft Masjed

Soleyman 3-2, Nassaji and machine Sazi played out a goalless draw, Shahin Bushehr lost to Foolad 1-0 and Sanat Naft Abadan edged past Saipa 1-0.

Sepahan sit atop with 14 points and Persepolis moved down to seventh place with nine points.

Iran earn first win at 2019 FIVB World Cup



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran came from behind to beat Canada 3-1 (18-25, 25-23, 27-25, 25-19) at Nagano White Ring arena to register their first win at the International Volleyball Federation (FIVB) Men's World Cup on Friday.

Aliasghar Mojarad scored 15 points for Iran, while Sharone Vernon-Evans had 25 points for Canada.

Iran, who had lost to Russia and Egypt in the first two matches, are scheduled to meet Australia on Saturday.

"After two defeats this was a really important victory for us because our confidence was down a little bit. After the first set we started to play with our energy and I'm so happy because some players showed their quality, especially players from the bench

and the young players who are really the future of Iranian volleyball. I hope that we can keep this kind of energy for the next games," Iran coach Igor Kolakovic said at the post-match press conference.

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.

Women's tickets sold out for Iran's match against Cambodia



S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — A total of 3,500 tickets have been sold to the Iranian women for the match between Iran and Cambodia in the 2022 World Cup qualifier in Group C.

Team Melli will host Cambodia on Oct. 10 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium and the Iranian women are allowed to attend the match.

The tickets went on sale through Ping9.ir Thursday night and 3,500 tickets were sold in less than an hour. The photos of the tickets have gone viral on social media by the Iranian women.

Women fans attended the second leg of the 2018 AFC Champions League final between Persepolis and Kashima Antlers last November.

The move to allow women fans to

attend football matches in Iran is in line with FIFA's stand, with President Gianni Infantino having said on Sunday that the world governing body had been assured by Iranian authorities that women will be able to watch an Asian Qualifiers tie in Tehran next month.

At the Azadi Stadium in Tehran, where Iran play most of their matches and are due to host World Cup qualifiers, separate entrances, stands and toilets have been prepared.

While a small number of women have been allowed to attend international matches in recent years, but this time the Iranian football federation and sports ministry announced that the tickets are available for all women fans to purchase.

Irish football club Glentoran have announced the signing of midfielder Navid Nasserri.

The 22-year-old from Manchester spent last season with Gillingham in League One of the Football League.

Glens Head Coach Mick McDermott was aware of Nasserri from his time coaching with Iran.

"I've known about Navid for a while and when he was at Gillingham, we called him into the Iran Under 20 squad," he told the club website.

"I was alerted to the fact that he was looking for a club so we brought him over to train with us for the past couple of weeks to see what he can do.



"He did very well so we've brought him in for the rest of the season. He can play either number ten or cutting in from either side. We've got a lot of matches over the next few weeks with cup games, etc and we want a few more.

"So Navid will get his chance over the course of that period. I think he'll give us something we haven't got so I look forward to him doing well for Glentoran."

Nasserri spent a season with Syrianska in the Swedish Second Division, in which he played 25 first team games, scoring two goals.

(Source: Belfast Times)

FIFA and WHO team up to promote healthy stadiums, fans

GENEVA (Reuters) — Soccer's world governing body FIFA and the World Health Organization (WHO) agreed on Friday to work together to ensure tobacco-free environments at stadiums and to promote healthy lifestyles through football.

The United Nations agency will also provide advice to FIFA regarding healthy diets, food safety, mass gatherings and the risks associated with alcohol.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino and WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus signed the four-year memo of understanding at the WHO's headquarters in Geneva.

Infantino, whose Zurich-based organization is emerging from a major corruption scandal in 2015, said that FIFA and the WHO made "natural partners".

"We finally realized that actually we

have also a social mission in FIFA, a social mission that we have to take seriously, that we have to take on responsibly," Infantino told a joint news conference.

Infantino was asked whether the deal might lead it to review some of its corporate sponsors.

"Of course organizations like co-sponsors of FIFA you mentioned Coca-Cola, McDonalds, they are also as well progressing, making

steps. The world is not perfect," he said.

The WHO campaigns against tobacco, as well as excessive intake of salt and sugar in food to try to stem cardiovascular diseases and an obesity epidemic, especially among children.

"We believe that WHO technical expertise on health, aligned with FIFA's global reach can really help to ensure we can reach people with the information they need to lead an active and healthy life," Tedros said.

Iran into IBSA Blind Football Asian C'ships semis

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran edged past Japan 1-0 on Thursday to book a place at the IBSA Blind Football Asian Championships semi-final.

Behzad Zadaliasghari scored the only goal of the match.



Team Melli will play Group A's second-place team on Saturday. Iran, Rio 2016 silver-medalist, have already defeated Malaysia 4-0 and Oman 10-0 in the competition.

The 2019 IBSA Blind Football Asian Championships in being held in Pattaya, Thailand, from Sept. 30th to Oct. 7th.

The top two teams at the competition will qualify for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

The 2019 Asian Championships are the 8th edition of the event, which took place for the first time in 2005 in Vietnam.

Sardar Azmoun surpasses Daei, Mahdaviaikia in UCL

PLDC — Zenit St. Petersburg forward Sardar Azmoun has beaten his countrymen Ali Daei and Mehdi Mahdaviaikia's goal record in the UEFA Champions League.

Zenit defeated Benfica 3-1 to join Lyon at the top of Group G in the Champions League on Wednesday.

The Iranian striker scored his team's third goal in the second half. This goal helped take his tally to four goals in the competition, while veterans Daei and Mahdaviaikia had scored three goals.

Zenit have the same four points as Lyon, which won 2-0 at Leipzig in the other group match Wednesday. Leipzig stayed on three points and Benfica has zero.

Iran suffer two losses at World Cup 3x3 U23 Women

TASNIM — Iran suffered two losses against Germany and Mongolia at the World Cup 3x3 U23 Women on Thursday.

Team Melli lost to Germany 21-6 and then suffered its second defeat to Mongolia 21-15.

Iran will meet Uganda and Romania in Group C on Saturday. The FIBA 3x3 U23 World Cup is a 3x3 youth international tournament sanctioned by the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) since 2018 for basketball players up to 23 years old.

The first edition was held in Xi'an, China in 2018. The second edition got underway in Lanzhou, China from October 2 to 6.

Teams discover fate at Hazfi Cup Round of 16

TASNIM — Defending champions Persepolis will meet Sanat Naft in Iran's Hazfi Cup Round of 16.

Esteghlal will also face First Division team Fajr Sepasi in Tehran. The competition will be held on October 16 and 17.

■ **Hazfi Cup Draw:**

- Persepolis – Sanat Naft
- Esteghlal – Fajr Sepasi
- Sepahan – Paykan
- Zob Ahan – Mes Kerman
- Shahin Bushehr – Saipa
- Padideh – Naft Masjed Soleyman
- Shahrardi Mahshahr – Eteghlal Mahshahr
- Navad Urmia – Tractor

The 2019–20 Hazfi Cup is the 33rd season of the Iranian football knockout competition and the final match will be held in Shiraz.

Esteghlal are the most-decorated team in the competition, winning the title seven times.

Renard rings changes in Saudi squad

Head coach Hervé Renard has made several changes to the Saudi Arabia national squad that will be taking on Singapore and Palestine in the Asian Qualifiers for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023.

The 51-year-old coach dropped five players who started the opening match of the Qualifiers against Yemen, opting not to call Abdullah Al Mayouf, Hamdan Al Shamrani, Omar Hawsawi, Khaled Al Sumairi and Salem Al Dawsari.

Hawsawi announced his retirement from international football on his twitter account just hours before the national team list was confirmed by the Frenchman.

"I will always look to my career with the national team as a source of pride and appreciation," said Hawsawi, who took part in two AFC Asian Cup Finals in addition to the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia.

"Today, I write the last line of this career with the first national team," he added. Al Dawsari, on the other hand, will miss days of action as his club Al Hilal SFC announced he suffered a thigh injury in the first leg of the 2019 AFC Champions League semi-final against Qatar's Al Sadd on Tuesday.

Saudi Arabia shared a 2-2 draw with Yemen in their opening Group D match of the Qualifiers and they will host Singapore in Buraidah on October 10 before traveling to Al Ram to play Palestine five days later.

(Source: Saudi Arabian Football Federation)

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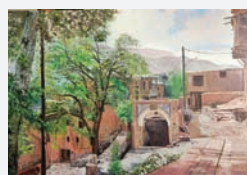
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When God abases a creature, He deprives him
of art and knowledge.

Imam Ali (AS)

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES



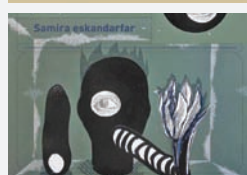
Painting
■ An exhibition of paintings by Arash Mehrfah is underway at Negar Gallery. The exhibit named "The Green Desert" will run until October 10 at the gallery located at 33 Delaram Alley, Roshanai St. in the Qeitarieh neighborhood.



■ Homa Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Masud Aslani. The exhibit titled "Continuing the Path of Poets" runs until October 15 at the gallery located at No. 8, Forth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



■ Paintings by Sahar Lellahi are on display in an exhibition at Golestan Gallery. The exhibit will be running until October 9 at the gallery that can be found at 34 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.



■ A collection of paintings by Samira Eskandarfar is currently on view in an exhibition at Tarrahan Azad Gallery. The exhibit entitled "Alcohol Room" will run until October 15 at the gallery located at 5 Salmas Square, off Fatemi St.



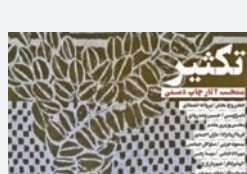
■ Rahman Ahmadi-Maleki is showcasing his latest paintings in an exhibition at Idea Gallery. The exhibit named "Love Galaxy" will be running until October 9 at the gallery, which can be found at 26, 18th St. off Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.



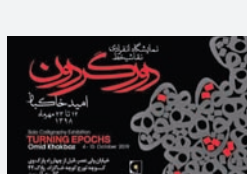
■ A group of artists including Fatemeh Ebrahimi, Nazanin Zadmehr, Saber Taheri, Mohammad Jalili, Fatemeh Bozorgi and Rayeh Sajadian is displaying their paintings in an exhibition at Vista Gallery. Entitled "Scattered", the exhibition will be running until October 15 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.



■ An exhibition of paintings by Kheirollah Asghari is underway at Haft Samar Gallery. The exhibit titled "You Are Fantastic, Oh Tree" runs until October 9 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fifth Alley, Kuh-e Nur St., Motahhari Ave.



Print
■ Artibition Gallery is hosting an exhibition of prints by a group of artists including Nasser Oveissi, Parvaneh Etemadi, Baran Ahmadi, Nazila Moqadam, Shadi Saeidi, Masud Jazani and Shiva Sarlak. The exhibit entitled "Increasing" runs until October 13 at the gallery located at Qandi Alley, Sasanipur St., Golestan St., off Shariati Ave.



Calligraphic painting
■ An exhibition of calligraphic paintings by Omid Khakbaz is underway at Atbin Gallery. The exhibit named "Turning Epochs" will continue until October 15 at the gallery located at 42 Khakzad Alley, Vali-e Asr Ave. near the Parkway Intersection.



■ Shalman Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of calligraphic paintings by Qodrat Nasser. The exhibit entitled "Tellar" will run until October 9 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.



Multimedia
■ Paintings and sets of installation by Fattaneh Mohammadi is currently underway in an exhibition at Shamis Gallery. The exhibit named "Woman in Contemporary World" runs until October 10 at the gallery located at 8 Daniali St., Andarzu Blvd. in the Farmanieh neighborhood.

Ibrahim Çelikkol, Hesam Manzur join cast for "Drunk on Love"

A R T TEHRAN
d e s k Turkish actor Ibrahim Çelikkol and Iranian actor Hesam Manzur have joined the cast for "Drunk on Love", Iranian director Hassan Fat'hi's controversial project on the Persian poet and mystic Rumi, a public relations team of the movie has announced.

Çelikkol is most famous for his roles in the TV series "Black and White Love" and "Intersection", and Manzur is mostly renowned for his roles in the popular Iranian serials "Dear Brother" and "The Lady of the Edifice".

It was announced earlier that Iranian actors Parsa Piruzfar and Shahab Hosseini would star as Rumi and his mentor, Shams-i Tabrizi, in the movie, which will be shot entirely in the Turkish town of Konya, the home to the mausoleum of Rumi who is the composer of the classical Persian literature masterpiece Masnavi-ye Manavi.

The screenplay is being written by Fat'hi himself and his fellow Iranian writer Farhad Tohidi in consultation with Mohammad-Ali Movahhed, a top Iranian expert on Rumi.

However, Shia clerics Ayatollah Nasser Makarem Shirazi and Ayatollah Hossein Nuri Hamedani viewed the movie as a promotion for Sufism and banned it.



This combination photo shows Iranian actor Hesam Manzur (L) and Turkish actor Ibrahim Çelikkol.

Danish delegation visits Film Museum of Iran



Danish delegation visits the Film Museum of Iran in Tehran.

A R T TEHRAN
d e s k Danish cultural delegation paid a visit to the Film Museum of Iran in Tehran on Tuesday.

The delegation headed by Professor Blomqvist of the University of Copenhagen was accompanied by Iranian MP Jalil Rahimi, the museum announced in a press release published on Tuesday.

The group was impressed by visiting the historical items from Iranian cinema on displaying in different sections of the museum, including the halls and courtyard.

Blomqvist expressed pleasure in getting to know a major museum in the world and praised the officials of the museum for displaying the great number of invaluable objects.

"The media such as films are part of the history and culture of a nation and can help visitors find a new perspective about the country," the professor said.

The professor also added that the historical film equipment on view at the museum reveals great points about the culture of Iran.

The museum is housed in a beautiful Qajar-era mansion surrounded by a pleasant garden in the northern part of the capital Tehran.

It is home to rare cinema equipment, as well as photos and posters from Iran's century-old movie industry.

The awards and memorabilia of great masters, filmmakers and actors of Iranian cinema are also on display at the museum.

Tehran center to review Persian translations of "The House of Bernarda Alba"

CULTURE TEHRAN
d e s k A number of Iranian literati will come together in a session at the House of Writers in Tehran today to review two different Persian translations of Spanish dramatist Federico Garcia Lorca's play "The House of Bernarda Alba".

The play tells the story of an elderly woman, Bernarda, whose husband has just died, and she asks her five daughters to go through an eight-year mourning period according to her family's tradition.

Translations by prominent Iranian poet Ahmad Shamlu

and veteran translator Najaf Daryabandari, published by Cheshmeh and Karnameh publications respectively, will be reviewed during the session.

Translator Alireza Khanjan is scheduled to deliver a speech at the meeting, which will begin at 4 pm.

"The House of Bernarda Alba" has frequently been performed by Iranian troupes. Ali Rafiei directed performances of the play based on Shamlu's translation at Vahdat Hall in Tehran in December 2018 and January 2019.

Iranian artists attend Don Quixote exhibit in Frankfurt



Shahram Karimi's mixed-media video installation "Look" is on display at the Artist/Don Quixote international exhibition project in Frankfurt.

A R T TEHRAN
d e s k Four Iranian artists are presenting their latest works at the Artist/Don Quixote international exhibition project in Frankfurt.

The project is curated by the Frankfurt-based Iranian artist, Ahmad Rafi, who has invited the artists to share their personal approach and interpretation of the figure of Don Quixote, the organizers have announced.

"Don Quixote" is a Spanish novel by Miguel de Cervantes. The 1605 novel tells the story of a middle-aged Spanish man, Don Quixote. Obsessed with the chivalrous ideals touted in books he has read, he decides to take up his lance and sword to defend the helpless, undo wrongs and bring

justice to the world.

The Iranian artists are Shahram Karimi, who is attending the exhibit with his mixed-media video installation, Mehdi Naderi with a documentary, and Amir Mobeid with an art performance. Choreographer Mohsen Hosseini will also give a performance at the exhibition.

In the Artist/Don Quixote international exhibition, the international performance artists transform the knight and heroism of one of the most famous anti-heroes of world literature into performances lasting several hours.

The project began in Aschaffenburg on July 20 and next moved to Frankfurt on September 20 and will be running until October 20.



Front covers of the Persian translations of Spanish dramatist Federico Garcia Lorca's play "The House of Bernarda Alba" by Ahmad Shamlu and Najaf Daryabandari.

Security stepped up as "Joker" opens in U.S. movie theaters

NEW YORK/LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Police in major U.S. cities were on alert on Thursday as "Joker" opened in movie theaters after weeks of publicity surrounding its disturbing portrait of a bullied loner raised fears it might spark violence.

"Joker," an origin story about Batman's comic-book arch nemesis, stars Joaquin Phoenix in what movie reviewers have called a brilliant but terrifying performance as a mentally unhinged outcast who unwittingly finds fame through an act of violence.

The DC Comics villain is associated with a 2012 mass shooting at a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, a suburb of Denver, during a screening of a different Batman film, "The Dark Knight Rises." Families of some of the victims expressed concern about the new film, and it will not be shown in the Aurora multiplex.

Officers wearing helmets and armed with assault rifles stood outside a screening of "Joker" at the New



Los Angeles Police Department officers are seen outside the TCL Chinese Theatre as the film "Joker" premieres in Hollywood, California, U.S. October 3, 2019. (Reuters/Eric Thayer)

York Film Festival on Wednesday night, where audiences had their bags searched and K9 officers were on duty, video footage showed.

Police in New York, Los Angeles and Chicago said in statements that, while they knew of no specific threats, they were deploying additional officers or closely monitoring movie theaters where the "Joker" is playing.

Hollywood website Deadline cited an unidentified New York law enforcement official as saying that plainclothes officers would be stationed inside some movie theaters in the city. The NYPD could not confirm the report.

Charles Kiwacz, 31, described the Aurora shooting as "an isolated incident."

"I don't think there's any fear at all. I think it's the exact opposite - people wanting to go out and show that this movie can be just that, just a movie," the podcast host and producer said as he bought a ticket for "Joker" near New York's Times Square.