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## Ruhollah Zam, head of anti-Iranian Telegram channel, arrested by IRGC

**TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced on Monday that Ruhollah Zam, the operator of the anti-Islamic Republic Telegram channel Seday-e Mardom (formerly known as Amad News), has been arrested during a complex intelligence operation.

In a statement, the IRGC said Zam's arrest shows that the enemies' intelligence services have been defeated by the power

of the IRGC's intelligence organization, ISNA reported.

Zam launched Amad News in 2015. The channel frequently posted fake news stories and called for violence with the aim of overthrowing the Islamic Republic of Iran.

During the protest rallies in December 2018, he urged the people to take arms against the government. **→3**

## Expediency Council sets aside Palermo bill

**TEHRAN** — Iran's Expediency Council has set aside studies to approve the Palermo bill, Gholamreza Mesbahi-Moghadam has said.

“Palermo and CFT will help the United States to identify the ways we circumvent the sanctions. We will not tighten sanctions by our own hands,” Mesbahi-Moghadam, a council member, told ISNA in an interview published on Monday.

He added, “We are managing the country through circumventing the sanctions. Approval of these two bills is not wise.”

He also said, “The Guardian Council has found faults with this bill and from this council's point of view, these two bills have not become legal. The Expediency Council has not studied them. So, they are not approved.” **→2**

## Kais Saied elected Tunisia president with slogan of support for Palestine

**TEHRAN** — In a contest that reflected Tunisia's shifting post-revolution political landscape, Kais Saied scooped more than 70% of the vote, according to two exit polls, more than 40 points ahead of Nabil Karoui.

Karoui conceded defeat, issuing a statement of congratulations to his opponent. “I would like to congratulate you on your election to the presidency,” he said.

Saied thanked the country's young

people “for turning a new page” and vowed to try to build “a new Tunisia”. About 90% of 18- to 25-year-olds voted for Saied, according to estimates by the Sigma polling institute, compared with 49.2% of voters over 60.

Thousands of people took to the streets of the capital, Tunis, to celebrate Saied's victory, honking horns and singing the national anthem. “Kais Saied, voice of the people,” a crowd chanted. **→13**

## Syrian troops enter three towns after deal with Kurds

**TEHRAN** — Syrian army troops have entered the towns of Tabqah, Ain Issa and Tel Tamer in northeastern Syria after Damascus reached an agreement with Kurds in the region to deploy troops in the area, state media report.

The deployment to Tabqah near Raqqah on Monday restores the state's foothold in an area that is home to a major hydroelectric dam.

The state television, in broadcasts from Ain Issa, showed residents welcoming the entry of the army troops.

Tel Tamer is 35 km southeast of Ras al-Ain which is currently under the control of Turkish troops. It is on a strategically important highway, the M4, that runs east to west. Turkish forces said they had seized the highway on Sunday.

Syrian Kurds on Sunday struck a deal with the government in Damascus on the deployment of Syrian army forces near the northern border after U.S. troops pulled out of the region ahead of a Turkish incursion.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said U.S. warplanes had targeted a column of Syrian troops in the city of Raqqah in an apparent attempt to hinder their deployment to the north.

The U.S. military also tried to hinder the dispatch of Syrian and Russian forces near Manbij, the London-based war monitoring group said.

Kurdish authorities said the deal “paves the way to liberate the rest of the Syrian cities occupied by the Turkish army such as Afrin” in northwest.

Ankara says the operation is meant to purge YPG militants, the backbone of the U.S.-backed SDF militant group, which Turkey views as terrorists linked to local militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Residents of the northern city of Qamishli on Sunday celebrated the announcement that the Syrian troop deployment.

People were seen on motorcycles and standing on vehicles, dancing and waving Syrian flags in the streets of Qamishli, AFP news agency reported.

Crowds of people also gathered in the streets of Hasakeh to celebrate the planned deployment of government troops. They waved national flags and blared horns to celebrate the army build-up. **→13**

## U.S. reportedly leaves 5 ‘high value’ Daesh prisoners behind in Syria

**TEHRAN** — The United States forces have reportedly left five “high value” prisoners behind in Syria amid Turkey's offensive against the war-ravaged country.

The New York Times report on Sunday came after hundreds of ISIL allies escaped from a low-security detention camp amid Turkey's invasion into northern Syria.

There are reportedly about 11,000 prisoners in Syria, 2,000 of whom are from 50 other nations that have not taken them back.

U.S. Congressional Democrats have been urging President Donald Trump to reverse his decision to pull back troops from northern Syria, Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) said on Sunday.

“We will be putting on the floor of the Senate

and the House ... a joint resolution that urges the president to undo his decision to do everything he can to protect the Kurds, to do everything that we must do to prevent ISIS terrorists from escaping, and make sure that Turkey respects existing agreements related to Syria and with the United States,” Schumer said. “I'm going to work so hard to pass this resolution, this joint resolution, this bipartisan resolution to try and get the president to undo what he has done.”

Trump has been under pressure from his allies and opponents over his decision to allow Turkish forces attack U.S.-backed Kurds in northern Syria.

Meanwhile, Syrian army troops have entered the towns of Tabqah, Ain Issa and Tel Tamer in northeastern Syria after Damascus reached an agreement with Kurds in the region to deploy

troops in the area, state media report.

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## Leader visits Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi in hospital

**TEHRAN** — Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei visited Grand Ayatollah Naser Makarem Shirazi at a hospital in Tehran on Monday.

During the visit, the Leader highlighted Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi's important role in Qom seminaries and wished him a full and speedy recovery, Fars reported.

Earlier, the office of Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi announced that the cleric had been hospitalized for some health conditions, adding that his general health is good. **→3**



### PERSPECTIVE

**Hanif Ghaffari**  
Head of the Tehran Times  
Politics Desk

## Iran is taking the next nuclear step

The three countries, Britain, Germany and France, on the one hand, stress the need to maintain a nuclear deal with Iran and, on the other hand, continue to do little to safeguard Iran's interests! This paradoxical attitude and behavior of European officials means that they are being led by the White House. Undoubtedly, in such circumstances the Islamic Republic of Iran is taking its fourth and next nuclear step.

Undoubtedly, the Islamic Republic of Iran will never forget the betrayals of the three European countries (Britain, Germany and France) during the Trump presidency!

Donald Trump stepped at the White House in 2017. Theresa May, the British Prime Minister, was the first European official to travel to Washington to meet with the new president of the United States. During this visit, Trump informed Theresa May mind of his decision on “changing the nuclear deal”. He emphasized that if the nuclear deal is not reviewed and redefined, the United States will no more remain as a part of it. It was during this visit and among American senators that Theresa May called the JCPOA a “controversial deal” for the first time since 2015. In this way, and indirectly, May announced her company with the United States for changing the JCPOA.

Afterwards, it was time for the French President, Emmanuel Macron to take part in the joint game of London and Washington. In July 2017, Macron assured Trump that he would do its best to include Iran's missile capability in the context of the nuclear deal, and thus limit the regional power of Iran.

But Macron never imagined that he had practically turned to Trump's piece in his confrontation with Iran. In September, 2017, and during the United Nations General Assembly meeting in New York, British and French officials were urged by the United States to attract Germany's positive stance to participate in the “West's joint effort to change the JCPOA.” **→13**



### ARTICLE

**Abdollah Shahbazi**  
Political analyst

## Iran has foiled hostile plan in the region

Thirteen years ago, the situation in the region was highly disappointing. There were predictions about fragmentation in the region by enormous developments, from which Iran would not survive. Iran was definitely supposed to be at the heart of the disturbance. The chaos started with the Syrian civil war in March 2011.

Everyone knows that it was only Iran that resisted and prevented the fall of Bashar al-Assad. Therefore, Iran stopped Syria's breakup. If Syria had collapsed, the same event would have happened to Iraq and then Iran. No one could stop the major collapse in the region.

When Iranian resistance succeeded, after the foiling of a Western powers' joint plot to attack Syria in September 2013, Russia joined the resistance movement as an active member in September 2015. Actually, it was Iran that maintained and led the resistance and then Russia backed it. Preserving Syria's territorial integrity and the Assad administration were not a job carried out by Russia and followed up by Iran. It was vice versa.

In 2010 and 2011, Iran's atmosphere was extremely bipolar due to events that followed the 2009 protests. For this reason, a great number of political figures inside the country strongly opposed Iran's intervention in Syrian affairs. There were a controversial situation on Facebook. I was defending Iran's regional role and also was observing disagreements regarding this matter.

At that time, it was hard to imagine this great victory and result. The achievement of the resistance is a development that I called the “end of Western powers' hegemony and the emergence of a new Middle East”. This new Middle East will be totally different from the one we have witnessed over the last century.

The end of Western powers' hegemony does not mean that there will be no more financial-political conspiracies in the Middle East. But at least we will not see events like official military attacks on Afghanistan or Iraq by the U.S. and its allies in the near future. **→13**



## Iranian MPs condemn Turkish military attack on northern Syria

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian MPs issued a statement on Monday condemning Turkey's military attack on northeastern Syria.

"We, the representatives of Iran's parliament, support the oppressed Syrian Kurds and expect the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which supports the oppressed, to announce its support for the oppressed Syrian Kurds in various ways," read the statement.

The statement also said, "Speaker of the parliament [Ali Larijani] will cancel his trip to Turkey in protest to the military attack."

The MPs also condemned the international bodies' silence over the attack.

Turkey launched military operation against Syrian Kurdish fighters, known as the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), on Wednesday.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry issued a statement on Thursday urging Turkey to immediately stop offensive against northeastern Syria and withdraw its forces from the region.

The statement said, "As it has been announced earlier, the Islamic Republic of Iran considers the current regional situation a consequence of extra-regional interferences, especially by the United States."

The ministry said Iran, by capitalizing on its regional influence, has solutions to problems haunting the region. "Based on its view on solving problems within its regional capacities, Iran is ready to play a role."

The crisis can just be settled through peaceful solutions and respect for Syria's territorial integrity and national sovereignty, the statement added.

President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that security at Syria-Turkey borders can just be provided by the Syrian Army.

"We have announced that security at the north of Syria and south of Turkey can just be provided by the Syrian Army and we should make the grounds for the Syrian Army's presence in this region... and the Kurds in this region, which is their own country, should be beside the Syrian Army," he said at a cabinet session.

## MP says there are promising signs in reviving Tehran-Riyadh ties

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Deputy Chairman of Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Kamal Dehghani Firouzabadi has said that there are promising signs in revitalizing ties between Tehran and Riyadh.

In an article published by IRNA on Monday, he said it seems that future of relations has become more promising.

"We can point three signs in this respect. First is negotiations on Hajj [in August] which were held without impediment and reached to maximum results. The second is direct talks between Iranian and Saudi oil ministers [in October] during which the officials called each other 'friend' despite tension in past years...Third, and most important one, is Saudi Arabia's call for mediation," he wrote.

However, he said that there are still some "worries" and "concerns". "Undoubtedly, certain regional players, with the Israeli regime at the head of them, will never tolerate de-escalation. Even the United States can tale the same position as Israel, because continuation of tension in the Middle East will be a profitable market for Washington to sell weapons," he opined.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan visited Tehran on Sunday as a mediator to reduce tension between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

He met with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani.

Khan is scheduled to visit Saudi Arabia on Tuesday.

On Saturday, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said Tehran is ready for talk with Saudi Arabia with or without a mediator.

During a joint press conference with Khan, Rouhani indirectly referred to Saudi Arabia by saying that Iran will give positive response to "good intention".

"Iran welcomes good intention and efforts by the Pakistani prime minister to settle tension in the region to restore peace and stability to the region," he said.

During a separate meeting with Khan, Ayatollah Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, said that ending war in Yemen will have positive effects on the Middle East region.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran presented a four-point plan to end war in Yemen a long time ago and if this war ends in a right way, it can have positive effects on the region," the Leader said.

He described peace and security in West Asia as very "sensitive" and "important" and expressed regret over certain regional countries' "destructive" role in supporting terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria and causing war and bloodshed in Yemen.

The Leader added, "We have no motivation for animosity with these countries, but they are influenced by the United States and act against the Islamic Republic of Iran in line with the United States' will."

Elsewhere in his talks with Prime Minister Khan, Ayatollah Khamenei said Iran has never initiated a war "but if anyone starts a war against Iran will undoubtedly regret."

The Pakistani prime minister visited Iran as the tension in the region is getting more complicated. On Friday morning, an Iranian oil tanker was struck by two missiles in the Red Sea, 60 miles away from Saudi coastlines.

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

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said in an interview with CBS's 60 Minutes program aired on September 29 that he preferred a peaceful resolution with Iran, describing it as "much better than the military" option.

## Expediency Council sets aside Palermo bill

**1 →** The Financial Action Task Force announced in June that Iran had until October to complete reforms that would bring it into line with global norms or face consequences.

One of the actions Iran is required to take to appease the FATF is joining the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC), which is also called the Palermo Convention, a 2000 United Nations-sponsored multilateral treaty against transnational organized crime.

The other action is to ratify the CFT, the convention combatting financing of terrorism.

On October 7, 2018, the Majlis (parliament) voted in favor of the CFT. However, the oversight Guardian Council rejected the bill by finding 22 faults with it.

# Russia: Revocating nuclear deal to fuel regional tensions

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Valentina Ivanovna Matviyenko, the chairwoman of Russia's Federation Council, said on Monday that a destruction of the 2015 nuclear deal will intensify security tensions in the region.

Matviyenko made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani on the margins of the 141st Assembly of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Belgrade, Serbia.

Tensions mounted between Tehran and Washington when President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran in May 2018 and re-imposed harsh sanctions against the Islamic Republic in defiance of global criticism.

Matviyenko said, "There is no reason to withdraw from the nuclear deal, because Iran has fulfilled the entire obligations under the deal well. Tehran's measures have also been verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency's experts who are in Iran on verification mission."

"Destruction of the JCPOA will intensify tensions in the region. Russia firmly opposes killing of the nuclear deal with Iran," she said, according to the Persian website of Sputnik.

Matviyenko further said Russian Presi-



dent Vladimir Putin, in his phone calls, has invited the U.S. president and the European leaders to help maintain nuclear deal with Iran and solve the differences via dialogue.

On May 8, 2019, exactly one year after the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal, Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) decided to reduce Tehran's nuclear commitments based on the paragraph 36 of

the JCPOA and set a deadline for Europeans to remedy breaches.

President Hassan Rouhani has said the government was moving on the right path by reducing its nuclear commitments, stressing that Tehran could not be patient while the other parties failed to stick to their commitments.

The JCPOA was signed between Iran and

six world states — namely the U.S., Germany, France, Britain, Russia and China — in 2015. However, Washington's exit from the deal in May 2018 has put the future of the historic deal in limbo.

Tehran remained fully compliant with the JCPOA even one year after the U.S. pulled out of the deal, waiting for the co-signatories to fulfill their end of the bargain by offsetting the impacts of Washington's bans on the Iranian economy. As the European parties failed to do so, Tehran moved in May to retaliate against Washington's exit and began to partially suspending its JCPOA commitments in 60-day stages under paragraph 36 of the deal.

Paragraph 36 has provided a mechanism to resolve disputes and allows one side, under certain circumstances, to stop complying with the deal if the other side is out of compliance.

Iran has so far rowed back on its nuclear commitments in three stages.

The Islamic Republic has already increased its enriched uranium stockpile beyond the 300-kilogram cap set by the agreement, began enriching uranium to purity rates beyond the limit of 3.67 percent, and also removed ban on its nuclear research and development.

## Abe advisor to visit Tehran

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's advisor plans to visit Tehran.

ISNA reported on Monday that Abe's advisor will most probably be in Tehran on Wednesday.

The visit is in line with Japan's efforts to de-escalate tension between Iran and the United States.

President Hassan Rouhani met with Abe in New York in September on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

On August 30, Abe said that he plans to do everything he can to ease tension in the Middle East region.

"Peace and stability in the Middle East directly links to Japan's national interest," Reuters quoted Abe as saying in a news conference at the end of a three-day international conference on African development.

"I would like to work tenaciously, and play the best possible role to ease tensions in the Middle East," he said.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Abe met in Yokohama, near Tokyo, on August 28.

According to Reuters, Zarif said that Iran is not seeking to increase tension but every country should be able to enjoy its rights under international law.

"As our president has said, we are not at all seeking heightened tensions," Zarif said, speaking through a translator.

He said, "We believe every country should be able to enjoy its rights under international law."

According to The Mainichi, Zarif said, "Iran welcomes the Japanese government's role (in trying) to ease tensions in the Middle East."

## Rouhani says separating budget from oil requires 'precise surgery' Turkish move against Syria 'unacceptable', president notes

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that separating budget from oil revenues requires a "precise surgery".

"Budget and oil are twins and separating them requires a precise surgery which is difficult at the beginning," he said during a press conference.

He noted that the government is making planning to reduce reliance on oil revenues in the next Iranian calendar year's budget, which starts on March 21, 2020.

The president also said that Iran has become more powerful politically and internationally.

"Today, we can firmly announce that plots of the United States, the global hegemony, Zionism and regional reactionary countries to harm the system have ended. All of them have confessed that we have passed the crisis through resistance and vigilance," he stated.

The president said in this "great psychological, economic and political war all resisted and broke the back of the crisis."

He noted that the world praises the Iranians' resistance against pressures.

Rouhani said economic indicators suggest that the country's economy is moving toward stability.

Elsewhere, Rouhani said, "I am ready to attend any

meeting that guarantees the nation's interests and I am proud to be sacrificed for my people."

He said that Iran is ready to hold talks within the 5+1 group whenever the sanctions are removed.

■ **'U.S. committed great mistake by quitting JCPOA'**

Rouhani also said the Trump administration committed a great mistake by abandoning the nuclear deal, official known as the JCPOA.

On May 8, 2018, Donald Trump officially quit the nuclear deal and ordered sanctions against Iran. His administration not only returned sanctions lifted under the JCPOA it added news ones.

In April, the United States ordered a total ban on Iran's oil export, a move intended to strangle the Iranian economy.

Trump himself has acknowledged "economic war" on Iran in line with his administration's "maximum pressure" policy.

■ **'Iran's ties with UAE is improving'**

Rouhani also said that Iran has always sought to have good relations with its neighbors, noting

Iran has no problem to hold talks with Saudi Arabia.

"In order to solve regional issues, especially relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the issue of Yemen is important. If a ceasefire is reached and the war ends, a

knot is relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia will be untied," the president remarked.

He added that Iran's relations with the United Arab Emirates is improving.

The president said Iran has two clear messages for the world: Iran is seeking peace in the region and it is ready for negotiations.

Rouhani also said that Iran does not approve of Turkey's military attack on northern Syria, which started on Wednesday.

"Turkey has concerns about north of Syria and we accept them. We accept a country's security concerns. Turkey is our friend. However, we do not accept the method it has chosen. This is not a good method. There exists better methods," he stated.

■ **'Any country which attacked Iran's oil tanker must wait for consequences'**

Rouhani also pointed to attack on Iran's oil tanker on Friday, saying any country which carried out the attack must wait for its consequences.

"All countries should know that causing insecurity in the region does not mean putting pressure against the Islamic Republic of Iran and means pressure against the international security and economy," he said.

## Iran expresses sympathy with Japan over deadly typhoon

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has issued a message expressing sympathy with the Japanese government and people over destructive typhoon which

has left at least 42 people dead.

Typhoon Hagibis tore through Tokyo and large swaths of Japan's main island of Honshu on Saturday.

Public broadcaster NHK reported on

Monday that 198 people were injured in the storm. Reportedly 15 are also missing.

According to the Washington Post, the government advised nearly 8 million people to evacuate. Many ignored the advice and

stayed home, but others headed to shelters. NHK said some died while trying to make their way to shelters.

Around 200,000 homes were without power on Sunday, Japanese media reported.

## Embassy: British experts in Iran to upgrade Arak reactor

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — A team of British experts arrived in Iran on Monday to begin work to upgrade the Arak heavy water nuclear reactor, the British embassy in Tehran said.

Iran removed the core of the Arak facility and filled part of it with cement as part of a 2015 deal that gave the country relief from sanctions in return for curbs on its nuclear program. France 24 reported.

Located southwest of Tehran, the reactor is to be modernized with the help of foreign experts under the deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"A team of British nuclear experts led by UK Chief Scientific Adviser Professor Robin Grimes arrived in Tehran today to take forward the next stages of the modernization of the Arak reactor, alongside a team of Chinese experts," said the British embassy.

"The experts will hold talks with the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) on international technical assistance to the reactor construction," it said in a statement.

The British experts would remain in Iran for three days, the embassy told AFP.



"This visit forms part of our commitment to ensuring that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) provides benefits for both Iran and the wider international community," said the statement.

"That is why we are upholding our obligations to cooperate with Iran to modernize the Arak reactor, helping Iran

to develop a modern and up to date civil nuclear program.

"Our work with Iran on the Arak project has made important progress in the past year," it said.

Tensions have been escalating between Iran and the United States since May last year when President Donald Trump pulled out of the nuclear accord and began re-imposing sanctions.

The remaining partners in the deal with Iran include Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia.

The European parties have repeatedly said they are committed to saving the accord, but their efforts have so far borne little fruit.

Tehran has already hit back three times with countermeasures in response to the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear deal.

On July 1, Iran said it had increased its stockpile of enriched uranium to beyond a 300-kilogram maximum set by the deal, and a week later, it announced it had exceeded a 3.67-percent cap on the purity of its uranium stocks.

In its latest move it fired up advanced centrifuges to boost its enriched uranium stockpiles on September 7.



# Even U.S. allies admit region would be more secure without U.S., says Shamkhani

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Ali Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), says Washington's moves in the region have even prompted its regional allies to confess that the Middle East would be a more secure place without the presence of the U.S.

"It seems that America's ruling body has concluded that the world's power equation and political geometry, especially in its heart the Middle East, has changed and the United States cannot have a claim of absolute supremacy over international affairs anymore," Shamkhani said in a note, Mehr reported on Monday.

He maintained the U.S. has realized it has only two options: either paying a great cost to try to show that it is a superpower or recognizing the realities of the world and freeing itself from the hefty costs of such an empty show-off.

Shamkhani referred to Washington's failures in the region, including the disintegration of the Middle East, the deal of the century, regime change in Iran,



Saudi policing of the region, the Yemen war, the Afghan peace and the Syrian crisis, saying all these failures attest to the decline of the U.S. power.

The remarks came after U.S. President Donald withdrew American forces from Syria.

On Saturday, Trump said that it was

time to stop U.S. soldiers' participation in an "endless war."

"I don't think our soldiers should be there for the next 50 years guarding a border between Turkey and Syria when we can't guard our own borders at home," he told a crowd of evangelicals.

Following the U.S. withdrawal, Turkey launched its military campaign against Syria which Ankara says is meant to purge the Syrian region of YPG militants. Turkey views YPG militants as terrorists linked to local autonomy-seeking militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The YPG, which itself is the military wing of the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD), constitutes the backbone of the SDF, an anti-Damascus alliance of predominantly Kurdish militants.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday that Ankara will not stop its military operation against Kurdish militants in northeastern Syria "no matter what anyone says."

## Intelligence minister: Two terror groups disbanded in southeastern Iran

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Intelligence Minister Seyed Mahmoud Alavi announced on Monday that two terrorist groups who intended to do sabotage acts on the route of Arbaeen pilgrims have been disbanded in the southwestern province of Khuzestan.

Underscored his ministry's upper hand in detecting and countering any terrorist plot amid the Arbaeen march, Alavi said, "Two terrorist groups that had planned to conduct terrorist operation during the Arbaeen time were identified and their members were arrested."

He further said that a sum of 50 fire guns were seized from the terrorist groups.

The intelligence minister, who paid a visit to the Shlamchah border crossing in Khuzestan province on Monday to monitor movements of pilgrims to Iraq, traveled to Chazabeh, another passageway of pilgrims.

Secretary of the Security and Law Enforcement Committee of the Arbaeen Central Headquarters recently said more than two million Iranian pilgrims have crossed the border into Iraq to attend the Arbaeen ritual.



"The number of pilgrims who have crossed land and air borders has crossed the two-million mark, and the figure is expected to cross 2.2 million by midnight," Hossein Sajedinia said on Thursday, Mehr reported.

Sajedinia said border crossings were overcrowded but people were crossing through the gates smoothly.

He also asked Iranian pilgrims to use all three available border crossings to prevent overcrowding at the Khosravi border checkpoint, which is a popular exit point for Iranians leaving the country.

The Arbaeen march, which is the largest religious gathering in the world, comes 40 days after Ashura, the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (PBUH), the second Imam of Shia Muslims and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

This year, Arbaeen falls on Saturday, October 19.

Each year, a huge crowd of people flock to Karbala, where the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS) is located, to perform mourning rituals.

By Thursday more than 3 million people had registered to participate in the Arbaeen march.

This year, visa requirement was removed for the pilgrims as a "positive step" toward paving the way for Iranian pilgrims visiting the neighboring country.

## Salami: Iran defeating enemy by relying on God



**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Hossein Salami said on Monday that the Islamic Republic is defeating the enemy by relying on God.

"Now, we are defeating the enemy and we move forward," Tasnim quoted Salami as saying.

The major general added that the developments on the ground have happened easily and will continue.

"We regard God as the world's ruler, not America," he said, highlighting the importance of relying on God to progress.

The remarks came amid increased tensions between Iran and the U.S. after the Islamic Republic shot down an advanced U.S. spy drone over its territorial waters in June.

The IRGC said on June 20 that a U.S. spy drone that violated the Iranian territorial airspace in the early hours of the day was shot down by the IRGC Aerospace Force's air defense unit near the Kooh-e-Mobarak region in the southern province of Hormozgan.

The intruding drone was reportedly shot by homegrown air defense missile system "Khordad-3rd".

Tensions between the U.S. and Iran escalated further after Yemeni armed forces conducted a large-scale operation against Saudi Arabia's Aramco oil installations

last month, in response to the Saudi-led war on their country.

The Yemeni Houthis Ansarullah movement immediately took responsibility for the attacks, but U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo swiftly accused Iran of being behind the assault, without providing any evidence. Tehran categorically rejected the allegations.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia claimed that the strikes on its oil infrastructure came from the "north" and were "unquestionably" sponsored by Iran, adding that the Houthis were not responsible for the assault despite claiming it.

Shortly after the Saudi announcement, the spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces, however, reiterated it was behind the attack, stressing that the Houthis have new drones, powered by "normal and jet engines" that can reach targets deep in Saudi Arabia.

"Our forces have reached a high level of efficiency and ability. They can manufacture various types of unmanned aerial vehicles in record time. The Second Deterrent Balance Operation, which targeted Saudi oil installations, is a perfect example of the capabilities of our forces in terms of planning and implementation," Brigadier General Yahya Saree said during a press conference in the capital Sana'a.

## MP says Turkey should immediately end Syria incursion



**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — An Iranian parliamentarian on Monday condemned Turkish military aggression on Syria, saying it is necessary that Ankara withdraw its forces from the northern part of the war-hit country as soon as possible.

"The Turkish troops' attack on Syria is a blatant aggression. Turkey must put an immediate end to the incursion of Syria," Mohammad Esmail Saeidi, Far reported.

Respecting the countries' territorial integrity is respected internationally, he said, adding, "So no one is allowed to ignore other nations' territorial integrity under pretext of providing its own security."

"According to latest estimates, a sum of 150,000 people have been displaced since the launch of Turkish attack on northern Syria which has pushed the displaced people into trouble," regretted Saeidi, who represents Tabriz in the parliament.

"Turkey must learn lesson from Saudis' fate in their aggression on Yemen and try not to repeat Riyadh's mistake," the MP warned.

In relevant remarks, Tehran's provisional Friday prayers leader Ayatollah Seyed Ahmad Khatami said that Turkish troops' operation in northern Syria was nothing but aggression against an independent country and condemned the move.

Addressing a large number of worshippers in Tehran, Ayatollah Khatami termed the Turkish army's heavy attack on the northern part of Syria as a blatant aggression against an independent country, calling on Ankara not to repeat a mistake done by Riyadh which is now in a Washington-made trap in Yemen.

"Iran's stance is an advising position which is meant immediate halt (of the Operation Peace Spring) and withdrawal of forces from the Syrian soil."

"I have an advice to the Turkish government. Saudi Arabia as a servant of the U.S. accepted Washington's order and now it has fallen in a swamp made by Washington. The Saudis wanted to put an end to the Yemen issue in one week, but now (nearly) after five years, these are Yemeni combatants that have gained upper hand, therefor, Turkey should be very careful in order not to fall in a similar trap made by the U.S.," the Friday prayers leader remarked.

Turkey launched an offensive on the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) on Wednesday. This happened despite warnings by Iran, Russia, Egypt, and the European Union. The Syrian Kurdish fighters commonly referred to as the SDF, were instrumental in defeating Daesh.

**1 →** According to his website, Ayatollah Makarem Shirazi was born in the year 1924 in the city of Shiraz into a religious family who were well known for their great level of spirituality and noble ethical traits.

The eminent scholar finished his elementary school studies in Shiraz and due to his eagerness to learn, his powerful memorizing capabilities and other great talents, he was regarded as one of the extraordinary

students from amongst his fellow classmates and because of this, was able to complete two years of studies in one year.

The conditions that existed in Iran in those days obligated this young man - who possessed such a talent and great aptitude to choose the path of university studies to increase his knowledge and attain the higher (material) levels of secular studies.

However through the hand of fate and the blessings of the Maintainer of the Universe and his own internal desires, this young man developed an attraction to becoming better acquainted and delve deep into the genuine teachings of Islam, especially since after the spring of 1937 (just after he finished his primary school), the Islamic seminaries went through a major transformation and had taken on a completely new form.

## Ruhollah Zam, head of anti-Iranian Telegram channel, arrested by IRGC

**1 →** In its statement, the IRGC said it lured Zam into Iran using "clever, multidimensional and innovative tricks", which even deceived foreign intelligence agencies.

It said Zam was supported by those intelligence services to foment a psychological war on Iran in order to create divisions inside the country, especially targeting the younger generations.



The statement also pointed out that Zam's activities were intended to form the bedrock of violent and terrorist acts in Iran.

The IRGC also said the French intelligence service was behind Zam's activities, which were also backed by the U.S. and Zionist regime's spy services.

Back in December 2017, Telegram blocked Amad News for encouraging people to violence after a request by Iranian Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi.

"A Telegram channel is urging people to incite insecurity and use home-made bombs and arms. Isn't it time to stop promoting violence?" said Azari Jahromi in his Twitter account, mentioning the Telegram founder Pavel Durov.

Durov, in return, tweeted, "Calls for violence are prohibited by the Telegram rules. If confirmed, we'll have to block such a channel, regardless of its size and political affiliation."

The tweet was followed by the closure of Amad News channel, which had over 1.3 million followers at the time.

However, Zam resumed his activities by launching a new channel called Seday-e Mardom, which is translated as "voice of the people".

In its latest post on Monday, Seday-e Mardom reported the arrest of Ruhollah Zam by the Guards. The post was attached to a promotional footage of the IRGC Intelligence Organization and followed by the flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which suggested that the channel is now under the control of the IRGC.

## Iranian oil tanker's distress call for help in Red Sea went unnoticed: PMO

**POLITICAL** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) has announced in a statement posted on its official website that none of the regional maritime bodies responded to calls for help by the Iranian oil tanker Sabiti when it came under missile attack off the Saudi coast in the Red Sea on Friday morning.

"No regional maritime administration responded to calls for assistance by MT Sabiti, and the PMO considers this in contrast and violation of international customary requirements, as well as humanitarian principles," the organization stated.



The PMO said it is releasing this statement to clarify the ambiguities surrounding the terrorist attack on Sabiti and also disprove claims of intention to assist the vessel at the time of distress.

Following is text of the statement posted on the PMO website:

1) On 11 October 2019, MT Sabiti was on her way toward the Mediterranean Sea through the Red Sea (some 60 miles off the coast of Saudi Arabia and Jeddah Port) when she suffered a terrorist attack, most probably by two missiles, at 01:30 and 01:50 GMT. As a result, two of her tanks were damaged, spilling crude oil into the sea, and the ship was listed to the starboard side.

2) From 05:11 to 07:20 GMT, the vessel released 16 distress alerts through three different means, on MF, HF, SAT-C, and VHF channels. As no response were received from regional maritime rescue coordination centers (MRCCs), the vessel proceeded to correspond through email to MRCCs in Jeddah Port, Egypt and Sudan at 08:20, announcing that the vessel had been struck and damaged, probably by two missiles. Moreover, the ship was listed to the starboard side, spilling crude oil into the sea, and thus requested immediate assistance. At 05:50 GMT, furthermore, the Iranian MRCC Bandar Abbas announced the situation to MRCC Jeddah through telephone, yet the latter did not confirm the receipt of the distress alerts, considered the issue to be an exaggeration by the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC), and promised to investigate and respond subsequently.

3) At 07:30 GMT, MRCC Jeddah still maintained their oblivion of the situation.

4) At 10:00 GMT, two helicopters flew from a naval vessel in the vicinity towards the distressed tanker, made two rounds and returned to their base vessel.

5) In the meantime, the distressed tanker and MRCC Bandar Abbas announced the situation to MRCC Jeddah, through different channels and in accordance with international regulations. However, despite the emphasis by international maritime requirements and the dire need of the tanker for assistance to regain her stability, no relevant measures were taken in the region. The PMO as the competent maritime administration of the Islamic Republic of Iran considers this to be in contrast and violation to international custom and standards, as well as humanitarian principles.



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	319871.5
IFX	4057.98

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,345 rials
GBP	52,977 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$59.33/b
WTI	\$53.50/b
OPEC Basket	\$58.71/b
Gold	\$1,494.00/oz
Silver	\$817.63/oz
Platinum	\$900.35/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Annual garden, greenhouse products anticipated to rise 17% by Mar. 2020

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Production of garden and greenhouse products in Iran is anticipated to increase 17 percent in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020) from that of the previous year, deputy agriculture minister announced.



In an interview conducted by ILNA, Mohammad-Ali Tahmasbi also said that the ministry’s anticipation for production of these products has been realized during the first half of the current year and in case of no unexpected condition such as sudden change of weather the anticipated figure will come true for the second half as well.

The official put the expected output of the mentioned products for this year at 23.737 million tons and said the figure has been 20.454 million tons in the past year.

EU’s largest economy, Germany is now its ‘major underperformer’: Credit Suisse

EU’s largest economy, Germany is now its ‘major underperformer’ – Credit Suisse London-based economists at the investment banking company Credit Suisse have named Germany a “major underperformer” of the European block of countries, citing a significant decrease in the nation’s GDP and purchasing power.

According to shelbybusinessjournal.com, the ongoing trade slump remains challenging for the German economy. Once the major outperformer of the euro-area economy, (Germany)) is now the major underperformer, its huge trade imbalance a huge burden”, the experts stated, as by Fox Business.

This valuation was issued after Credit Suisse economists reviewed the latest economic indicators. For instance, they note that the German economy grew at mere 0.4 percent year-over-year from April through June, its weakest indicators in over six years. They also noted the country’s economy showed a 0.1 percent quarter-over-quarter decrease, which signified Germany was Europe’s only major economy to shrink in the past several months.

However, according to Credit Suisse economists, German hardships would not affect other European states as Germany has a “huge current account surplus” – around \$276 billion. It is the largest account surplus globally, formed by large export volumes and lower imports due to small domestic demand.

Credit Suisse also expects the European Central Bank to help ease the situation in case other economies in the region start struggling, for instance, by further lowering rates.

■ **Long-term refinancing operations**  
“Resumption of asset purchases and new long-term refinancing operations (by ECB) should be supportive of domestic demand outside Germany,” the economists noted. They cited the situation in Italy as an example.

“For example, that shift in policy (...) led to a huge fall in Italian government bond yields. That more than reversed the financial tightening of last year that contributed materially to Italy’s slowdown,” the economists explained.

As a remedy to the current sluggishness in the German economy, Credit Suisse offered two measures: an end to the trade war between the U.S. and China or an introduction of a German fiscal stimulus, although the latter is unlikely, as Germany is too keen on sustaining a balanced budget.

Also, the latest move by the World Trade Organization (WTO) could further shatter Germany’s economy. Earlier this week, WTO ruled that Washington may impose economic sanctions on EU states after it became known that U.S. plane-manufacturer Boeing had lost some \$7.5 billion a year due to subsidies handed out by European governments to its arch-competitor, Europe’s own Airbus.

Chabahar Port’s capacity quadruples in less than 2 years: PMO head

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The head of Iran’s Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) announced that through inaugurating the first phase of Chabahar Port’s development plan, the port’s capacity has increased four times in less than two years, IRIB reported on Monday.

Making the remarks during a specialized meeting on development of Chabahar, Mohammad Rastad said the port’s capacity has increased to 8 million tons from 2 million tons through the first phase and it is expected to rise to 33 million tons through the second phase, which is currently 30 percent complete.

The official further highlighted that Chabahar can berth the vessels with the capacity of up to 100,000 tons.

As previously announced by the head of Ports and Maritime Department of Sistan-Baluchestan Province (where the port lies), exports of commodities from Iran’s southeastern port of Chabahar has risen 100 percent during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-Septemeber 22) compared to the first half of the past year.

Behrouz Aqaei also said that transit of



Afghan commodities via Chabahar Port has doubled during the first six months of this year.

In terms of transport and shipping situation in this port after the U.S.’s reimposition

of sanctions against Iran, the official said, “The U.S. has exempted Chabahar Port from sanctions. U.S. sanctions waiver in this port has decreased insurance cost of vessels to

a great extent in a way that most shipping lines are interested in shipping their goods via this port.”

Cement, minerals and construction stones are main export products in this southern province which are exported to various countries through this port, he added.

Located at southeastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman, Chabahar is the home for Iran’s only oceanic port.

Due to its strategic geographical positioning, Chabahar port holds a great significance for Iran both politically and economically.

After years of negotiation, Iran has awarded the development project of this port to India, and the South Asian country committed \$500 million to build two new berths in this port.

However, after the U.S. reimposed sanctions on Iran in November, the future of many Iranian projects including Chabahar port was shadowed by the consequences of the sanctions.

But following several rounds of negotiations and discussions with New Delhi, the U.S. administration finally exempted the Chabahar project from the sanctions.

TPO offers roadmap for improving non-oil exports

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** – Head of Iran’s Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) said a roadmap has been prepared for promoting the country’s non-oil exports to 15 neighboring countries, Tasnim news agency reported on Monday.

“Considering the country’s current economic situation and re-imposition of the U.S. sanctions, we need a new roadmap that fits in with the new market regulation; so a roadmap for promoting non-oil exports should be formed in line with the market regulation roadmap and this will happen within the next month,” Hamid Zadboum told the state TV on Sunday evening.

The official stated that the government should reduce export bans and restrictions and uses tolls and tariffs instead, to regulate the domestic market.

According to Zadboum, lack of long-term planning for promotion of exports has resulted in a situation in which export development does not take place.

“Our government backs importers more rather than supporting exporters, today we would have large export companies in the country if the government supported the exporters as much as the importers,” he said.

In late August, Iran’s Deputy Industry Minister Hossein Modares Khiabani said the



government has it on the agenda to increase the value of exports to Iran’s 15 neighbors up to \$50 billion.

“Our goal is to be able to meet five percent of our neighboring countries’ needs, which would amount to more than \$50 billion a year considering the total imports of all the 15 countries which is at least \$1 trillion annually,” Modares Khiabani said.

“Necessary planning and investigations have been made for achieving this target,” he added.

The official expressed hope that the mentioned goal would be realized before the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (which starts in March 2021), saying that the Institute for Trade Studies and Research and also Trade Promotion Organization are currently developing detailed plans to achieve this goal.

‘Budget allocated for development projects to rise 53% next year’

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** – Head of Iran’s Planning and Budget Organization (PBO) said 430 trillion rials (about \$10.2 billion) is going to be allocated for development projects in the next year’s budget plan, up 53 percent from the figure for the current year.

“We intend to invest as much as we can in development sector in the next [Iranian calendar] year (starts on March 19, 2020), so we have increased the budget for this sector by 53 percent to achieve significant growth,” Mohammad Baqer Nobakht said on the sidelines of the 12th meeting of the budget headquarters on Monday.

Last week, Nobakht had announced that the government is going to allocate all revenues from oil sales to the development projects following structural reforms in the next Iranian calendar year’s budget bill.

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

“This does not mean a rise in tax income; but by setting new tax bases and eliminating unnecessary exemptions at



a time of economic warfare, more tax revenues will be provided,” he explained.

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

According to the official, this year, PBO has decided to send the information about the state-owned companies’ budget to the Majlis (Iranian parliament) a month earlier so that the parliament would have enough time to review it.

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

Singapore Central Bank eases policy as economy avoids recession

Singapore eased monetary policy for the first time since 2016, seeking to shore up growth as the trade-reliant economy narrowly missed falling into recession.

As stated by freemalaysiatoday.com, the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), which uses the exchange rate as its main policy tool, reduced “slightly the rate of appreciation” of the currency band, while keeping unchanged the width and the level at which it is centered.

“MAS will continue to closely monitor economic developments and is prepared to recalibrate monetary policy should prospects for inflation and growth weaken significantly,” the central bank said.

In a separate report, data showed gross domestic product rebounded from a contraction in the second quarter, gaining an annualized 0.6% in the third quarter from the previous three months.

That was lower than the 1.2% median estimate in a Bloomberg survey of economists.

Compared with a year ago, GDP rose 0.1%, unchanged from the second quarter.

“GDP numbers, despite skirting a technical recession, do not make for an upbeat read,” said Vishnu Varathan, head of economics and strategy in Singapore.

The “manufacturing recession continues. The outlook is at best hazy, if not gloomy.”

The Singapore dollar gained after the decision, rising 0.1% to



S\$1.3719 against the U.S. currency as of 8.38am in Singapore.

■ The monetary policy decision

The monetary policy decision was predicted by 14 of the 22 economists surveyed by Bloomberg, with the remainder projecting a more aggressive move to a zero slope.

The MAS held policy in April after tightening twice last year. Singapore’s growth is expected to pick up gradually next year, “although this projection is subject to considerable uncertainty in the external environment,” the MAS said.

GDP growth will likely be around the midpoint of 0-1% forecast range in 2019. The output gap has turned “slightly negative” and expected to persist into 2020. Core inflation is

expected to come in at the lower end of the 1-2% range in 2019 and average 0.5-1.5% in 2020.

All-items CPI is projected to be around 0.5% this year and average 0.5-1.5% in 2020.

“We think the MAS’ core inflation forecast for 2020 suggests the door for further easing is open, if needed,” said Divya Devesh, head of Southeast and South Asia currency research at Standard Chartered Plc in Singapore.

The MAS guides the local dollar against a basket of its counterparts and adjusts the pace of its appreciation or depreciation by changing the slope, width and center of a currency band.

It doesn’t disclose details of the basket, or the band or the pace of appreciation or depreciation.

Central bankers globally are taking a more dovish stance as U.S.-China tensions weigh on growth and as manufacturing weakness threatens to spill over into services sectors.

In Singapore, authorities have taken a gradual approach as they monitor risks and keep a close watch on labor-market indicators that so far have stayed resilient.

“You’re still going to be skating on relatively thin ice” through year-end and into 2020, Selena Ling, head of treasury research and strategy at Oversea-Chinese Banking Corp in Singapore, said on Bloomberg Television.

“In this current trade environment, there’s very, very little that monetary policy easing in itself can do to change the overall story.”

By Ha Nguyen

Vietnam has just topped a list of economic performers in Southeast Asia, a list that Standard Chartered Bank calls the “rising stars” of global trade based on improvements the countries have made and their future potential.

The bank’s new Trade20 Index looks at 20 countries with promise around the world, and Vietnam ranks No. 6 on the index. However among the list’s countries in Southeast Asia, Vietnam is No. 1, moving past the likes of Indonesia and Thailand.

The factors in Vietnam’s favor, according to the bank, include improved infrastructure, diverse trade with many countries and products especially amid the China-U.S. trade war, and political stability. The single-party term of the Communist Party since 1975 is the longest in Southeast Asia, after the People’s Action Party in power in Singapore since 1959.

“Vietnam’s economic openness and inte-

gration is paying off,” Nirukt Sapru, who is the chief executive officer for Vietnam, Southeast Asia, and South Asia at Standard Chartered Bank, said last week. The “country has now become the fastest-growing economy in the region, a clear indicator of the benefits the country is reaping from an open economy.”

Good news in the country is in contrast to the region and the rest of the world. Vietnam’s economic growth of close to 7 percent a year is about twice the rate of growth of the worldwide economy. And neighbors in Southeast Asia are dealing with a variety of worries.

■ **Improvements to infrastructure**  
Improvements to infrastructure in Vietnam, like Ho Chi Minh City’s roads and bridges, helped move it up the trade rankings.

Improvements to infrastructure in Vietnam, like Ho Chi Minh City’s roads and bridges, helped move it up the trade rankings.

Workers in Malaysia worry their labor unions are losing power, while the government

has increased its budget deficit as it expects to receive less in tax revenues in the near future, in part because of business slowing down from the China-U.S. trade war. The related slowdown is decreasing Philippine exports, including the important export of rice, which is experiencing decreasing prices.

In Singapore the OCBC Bank forecast third quarter economic growth at 0.3 percent annualized, slightly higher than the 0.1 percent of the second quarter.

“This means that the Singapore economy will likely escape a technical recession,” Selena Ling, head of treasury research and strategy at OCBC Bank, said. She added, however, the “biggest risk remains the fragility of the external environment and the prospect of anemic global growth amid the myriad of uncertainties pertaining to U.S.-China tensions beyond trade, Brexit, China’s slowdown, and geopolitical hotspots in Hong Kong, etc., which could continue to weigh on business

and consumer confidence.”

Those risks matter to Vietnam, too, however. The slowdown from the trade war could hurt Vietnam, as could a downgrade to its sovereign debt rating, which is currently under review. Moody’s Analytics chief Asia Pacific economist Steve Cochrane and economist Steven Shields note some other risk factors to consider in the country. These include an aging population, a labor shortage, lower levels of productivity and expertise compared with Chinese rivals, and geopolitical tensions.

The tensions have created uncertainty over Vietnam’s oil exploration with Exxon in the South China Sea, where the country has territorial disputes with China and other countries.

“There remains lingering distrust between the two countries and rising anti-China sentiments in Vietnam due to recent tensions over the South China Sea disputes,” Cochrane and Shields wrote in a joint analysis.

(Source: voanews.com)



# “Oil for development” budget, challenges and opportunities

By Ebrahim Fallahi

**TEHRAN** – Iran has recently announced that its next fiscal year's budget is going to be set with less reliance on oil revenues.

Last week, Head of the Country's Budget and Planning Organization (BPO) Mohammad Baqer Nobakht said “In the next year's budget – it starts on March 19, 2020 – oil revenues will be only spent for development projects and acquisition of capital asset, and not even one rial is going to go to government expenditures and other areas.”

At first glance, the idea is very appealing and it seems if the government manages to pull it off, it will be a significant step for Iran in its movement toward an oil-independent economy. However, it seems that cutting oil revenues from the budget and allocating them only to a specific part of the country's expenditures is not going to be an easy task.

Although, BPO has already suggested various substitute sources of revenue to replace those of oil, but some experts believe that the offered alternatives are not practical in short-term.

So, how successful will the government be in executing this plan? What are the challenges in the way of this program? What are the chances for it to become fully practical next year?

To answer such questions and to have a clearer idea of the notion, let's take a more detailed look into this [so called] ambitious program.

## ■ The history of “oil for development”

It is not the first time that such a program is being offered in Iran. Removing oil revenues from the budget and allocating it to development projects goes way back in Iran's modern history.

In 1927, Iranian government at the time, decided to go through with a plan for removing oil revenues from the budget, so a bill was approved based on which oil incomes were merely allocated to the country's development projects.

This law was executed until the year 1939 in which the plan was once again overruled due to what was claimed to be “financial



difficulties”.

Since then up until recently, Iran has been heavily reliant on its oil revenues for managing the country's expenses. However, in the past few years, and in the face of the U.S. sanctions, the issue of oil being used as a political weapon, made the Iranian authorities to, once again, think about reducing the country's reliance on oil revenues.

In the past few years, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei has repeatedly emphasized the need for reducing reliance on oil and has tasked the government to find ways to move toward an oil-independent economy.

Now that Iran has once again decided to try the “oil for development” plan, the question is, what can be changed in a program that was aborted 80 years ago to make it more compatible with the country's current economic needs and conditions.

## ■ The substitute sources of income

Shortly after BPO announced its decision for cutting the oil revenues from the next year's budget, the Head of the organization Mohammad-Baqer Nobakht listed three alternative sources of income to offset oil

revenues in the budget planning.

According to the official, elimination of hidden energy subsidies, using government assets to generate revenue and increasing tax incomes would be the main sources of revenues to compensate for the cut oil incomes.

In theory, the mentioned replacements for oil revenues, not only can generate significant amount of incomes, but they could, in fact, be huge contributors to the stability of the country's economy in the long run.

For instance, considering the energy subsidies, it is obvious that allocating huge amounts of energy and fuel subsidies is not a good strategy to follow.

In 2018, Iran ranked first among the world's top countries in terms of the amount of subsidies which is allocated to energy consumption with \$69 billion of subsidies allocated for various types of energy consumption including oil, natural gas and electricity.

Based on data from International Energy Agency (IEA), the total amount of allocated subsidies in Iran, equals 15 percent of the country's total GDP.

The budget that is allocated for subsidies

every year could be spent in a variety of more purposeful, more fruitful areas. The country's industry should compete in order to grow, people must learn to use more wisely and to protect the environment.

However, practically speaking, all the above mentioned alternatives are in fact long term programs which take time to become fully operational. A huge step like eliminating hidden subsidiaries cannot be taken over a one or event two-year period.

## ■ The development aspect

One big aspect of the government's current decision is the “development” part of the equation.

A big chunk of the country's revenues is going to be spent on this part and so the government is obliged to make sure to choose such “development” projects very wisely.

Deciding to allocate a huge part of the country's income on a specific sector, makes it more prone to corruption, and therefore, a plan which is aimed to help the country's economy could become a deteriorating factor in itself if not wisely executed.

The question here is, “Is the government going to spend oil money on all the projects which are labeled as ‘development’ even if they lack the technical, economic and environmental justification?”

So, the government needs to screen development projects meticulously and eliminate the less vital ones and then plan according to the remaining truly-important projects.

## ■ Final thoughts

Even if the “oil-free” budget is a notion which seems a little ambitious at the moment, and even if there are great challenges in the way of its realization, but the decision itself is a huge step toward a better future for Iran's economy. Although, realizing this plan seems fairly impossible in the short-term, it surely can be realized with proper planning and consideration in the long term.

Sooner or later Iran has to cut off the ties of reliance on oil incomes and start moving toward a vibrant, dynamic and oil-free economy; a journey of which the first step has been already taken.

## Iran's renewable electricity generation capacity doubled

**E N E R G Y d e s k** **TEHRAN** —The capacity of generating electricity from renewable resources has reached 841 megawatts (MW) in Iran, nearly double the figure for the last year's same period, IRNA reported, quoting an energy official.

Speaking in the opening ceremony of Iran's 4th Renewable Energy Conference on Monday, Homayoun Haeri the deputy minister of energy for electricity affairs, said “The country's renewable electricity generation capacity will rise to 1000 MW by the end of the current [Iranian calendar] year (March 19, 2020).”

He noted that Iran has good sources of

renewable energy in addition to its huge fossil energy resources, adding that currently, 60,000 MW of wind energy potential has been identified across the country.

Haeri further stressed the growing role of renewable power plants in the country's energy basket, saying “the country's renewable power plants provided over 500 MW of electricity to the country's power network during the peak consumption period in summer.”

Renewables, including hydropower, account for just six percent of energy generation, versus natural gas' 90 percent share.

Overall, in the next five years, Iran is aiming for a 5,000 MW increase in renewable capacity to meet growing domestic demand and expand its presence in the regional electricity market.

According to Iran's Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (known as SATBA) the number of small scale solar power plants across the country which are used by households or small industries is being increased noticeably as Iranian households and small industries have embraced the new technology with open arms and investors also seem eager for more contribution in this area.



Back in February, Head of SATBA Seyed Mohammad Sadeqzadeh announced that Iran also plans to add electricity generated from renewable sources to the export basket.

## Oil falls due to caution over first phase of U.S.-China trade deal

Oil prices fell on Monday as scant details about the first phase of a trade deal between the United States and China undercut optimism over a U.S.-Sino thaw that had helped lift crude markets by 2% at the end of last week.

As stated by reuters.com, Brent crude LCOc1 fell 46 cents to \$60.05 a barrel by 0840 GMT, while U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude CLc1 lost 40 cents at \$54.30 a barrel. Both were down 0.7%.

Late on Friday, the United States and China outlined the first stage of a trade deal and suspended this week's scheduled U.S. tariff hikes. But existing tariffs remain in place and officials on both sides said much more work was needed before an accord could be agreed.

The “oil market is taking a cautious stance as to what comes next given that the thorny issues of industrial policy, intellectual property rights, technology transfer among others were not addressed,” BNP Paribas oil strategist Harry Tchilinguirian said.

Brent and WTI rose more than 3% last week, their first weekly increase in three.



A good portion of their gains came after the United States announced on Friday it was deploying more troops to Saudi Arabia, and after an Iranian oil tanker was attacked in the Red Sea.

“While the market waits for potential responses from the Iranians, the continued inability of geopolitics to sustain price gains is a testament to the state of concerns over demand,” JBC analysts said in a note.

There are also worries that further escalation along the Syrian and Turkish border could affect output or exports from Iraq, providing more support for oil prices. Syrian troops entered a northeastern town on Monday.

The Saudi Energy Minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, said oil exporters taking part in a global output deal between OPEC and its allies, a grouping known as OPEC+, were showing serious commitment to the cuts.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said there were no talks underway to change the OPEC+ deal.

The compliance of OPEC+ producers with the supply-reduction agreement was seen at above 200% in September, sources familiar with the matter said on Monday.

China showed strong demand for oil, with its September imports rising 10.8% from a year earlier as refiners ramped up output amid stable profit margins and solid demand for fuel.

## Putin calls for reduction in global oil inventories to ‘reasonable levels’

By Jennifer Gnana

Russian President Vladimir Putin is calling for a reduction in global oil stores to “reasonable levels”, signaling Russia's willingness to work with Saudi Arabia in thwarting efforts aimed at destabilizing oil markets.

Putin headed to the kingdom for a visit on Monday where the two sides are also expected to discuss joint energy investments.

Russia, the biggest sovereign crude producer in the world, would cooperate with Saudi Arabia, OPEC's biggest oil exporter, to “reduce to zero attempts to destabilize the oil market”, he told Al Arabiya TV on Sunday.

Who is in the position to plug a Saudi oil deficit and by how much?

Putin's arrival in the kingdom comes amid a strengthening of ties between the two countries, which lead an alliance of OPEC and non-OPEC states to balance the markets, which had crude prices plunge below \$30 per barrel in the first quarter of 2016.

To tackle the global oversupply, OPEC+ has been cutting back 1.2 million barrels per day of output since 2017. The pact is expected to hold until March next year with Saudi Arabia leading the OPEC members in compliance.

The kingdom's output averaged 9.9 million bpd in the first eight months and 9.8 million bpd in the second quarter of this year, below its supply agreement of 10.3 million bpd under OPEC+ deal, Moody's said last month.

Putin's visit comes at a politically sensitive time for the region, just two days after an Iranian oil tanker crossing Saudi territorial waters in the Red Sea came under attack.

## ■ The global supply

The incident followed a highly volatile month for the oil markets after September 14 attacks on Saudi oil facilities halved the country's output, knocking out 5 percent of global supply.

Brent finished higher last week after Friday's attack on Iranian tanker Sabiti. It surged 2.2 percent to finish at \$60.51 per barrel.

West Texas Intermediate, the benchmark tracking

largely North American crude grades, also rose above 2 percent to finish at \$54.70 per barrel.

“We are considering some good joint projects,” Mr. Putin said. “Our Direct Investment Fund and the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia have jointly established a \$10 billion platform ... \$2b has already been invested.”

Work is underway on other schemes with possible projects likely to be finalized in Saudi Arabia's downstream sector.

“We also consider it possible to operate on the territory of Saudi Arabia,” Putin said. “One of our companies is exploring the possibility of building a petrochemicals facility.”

Sibur Holding, a Russian petrochemicals company, was considering more than \$1b in investments in the kingdom, he said.

The two sides are also looking at “fostering partnerships” in military and defense.

“We have been negotiating for a long time,” Putin said. (Source: thenational.ae)

## Plan for supplying nomadic households with mobile PV systems underway

**E N E R G Y d e s k** **TEHRAN** – Iran's Energy Ministry has started a plan for providing 25,000 nomadic households across the country with portable photovoltaic systems so that they could use electricity during migration.

According to the program's Executive Director Ali Chehel-Amirani, the plan is set to be completed by the Iranian calendar year of 1400 (starts in March 2021), the portal of the Energy Ministry (known as Paven) reported on Monday.

Pointing to the fact that since the 1970s Islamic revolution, every day four villages have been connected to the national power network, the official said, “The number of villages connected to the electricity grid has increased 13 times since the revolution and now exceeds 57,350.”



“During the last six years, 35 trillion rials (about \$834 million) has been spent for development, maintenance and upgrading of rural electricity grid and electricity supply to villages without electricity, 3.5 times more than the figure for six years ago,” Chehel-Amirani added.

He further noted that the country's electricity network has been expanded by 250,000 kilometers to supply electricity to 21.5 million people in rural areas, adding that for the current year, the ministry has planned for spending 15 trillion rials (about \$357 million) for supplying electricity to 400 new villages as well as development, upgrading and maintenance of existing rural electricity networks.

Referring to the fact that nearly 99.7 percent of the country's rural population are currently supplied with electricity, he said “According to the information provided by the International Energy Agency (IEA), this figure is 86 percent in Central and South America, 85 percent in Asia, 78 percent in the Middle East and 36 percent in Africa.”

“Our country is in very good condition in terms of rural electricity supply,” he added.

## UK renewable energy generation tops oil and gas for first time, analysis suggests

UK renewables generated more electricity than fossil fuel power plants over the past three months, in a new first for the country, analysis suggests.

According to energyvoice.com, the months of July, August and September were the first quarterly period in which renewables outpaced fossil fuels since the UK's first public power generating station opened in 1882, climate website Carbon Brief said.

Carbon Brief analysis found that in the third quarter of 2019, the UK's wind farms, solar panels, biomass and hydropower plants generated an estimated total of 29.5 terawatt hours (TWh) of power.

That is higher than the figure for power stations fired by coal, gas and oil, which generated 29.1 terawatt hours, the assessment showed.

It is the latest milestone in the transformation of the UK's power supplies, where just a decade ago some three-quarters of generation was coming from fossil fuels.

In 2010, coal, gas and oil generated more than 10 times as much electricity as renewables.

But since then electricity generation from renewables has more than quadrupled and demand has fallen, squeezing the share of power being generated by fossil fuels, Carbon Brief said.

In the third quarter of 2019, some 40% of UK electricity came from renewables, and on a monthly basis outstripped fossil fuels in both August and September – the first time that has happened in two consecutive months.

And in the first three quarters of 2019, renewables outpaced fossil fuels on 103 of the 273 individual days, more than one-third of the days in the year so far.

The analysis, which is based on UK Business Department figures for the UK and BM Reports that cover the British grid and are adjusted to include Northern Ireland, is the latest to show the transformation of the grid.

## ■ Low-carbon sources

Earlier this year, Government statistics showed more than half of the UK's electricity in 2018 was generated from low-carbon sources, with renewables and nuclear reactors providing 52.6% of power generation.

Analysis by National Grid in June suggested that for the first time since the Industrial Revolution more British electricity was set to come from zero-carbon sources, which includes wind, solar, hydro and nuclear but not biomass, in 2019 than from fossil fuels.

That analysis included the mix of power coming through underwater cables known as interconnectors from other countries, such as France.

Responding to the analysis, RenewableUK's director of strategic communications Luke Clark said the massive growth of renewable power in the UK was “great news not just for the environment but also for consumers”, with the cost of offshore wind projects falling to an all-time low, making on and offshore wind the cheapest largest scale power sources.

The “expansion of clean power is set to accelerate in the years ahead, as our offshore wind capacity will more than treble by 2030, generating more than a third of the UK's electricity.”

The “public wants to see faster action to tackle climate change and meet our net zero emissions target.”

“If government were to back a range of technologies – like onshore wind and marine renewables – in the same way as it is backing offshore wind, consumers and businesses would be able to fully reap the benefits of the transition to a low carbon economy.”



By Saeed Sobani

**TEHRAN** – Biden and Trump continue to fight each other politically. In the meantime, Trump is more afraid of the Ukraine Gate than ever before! The US president knows full well that the hard way is ahead of next year's presidential election. The President of the United States of America never imagined that his phone call with the President of Ukraine would be so troublesome for him! Here's a look at the latest news on Ukraine Gate:

Trump-Ukraine impeachment scandal: timeline of key events

#### ■ As Guardian reported,

Nancy Pelosi, the House of Representatives speaker and the most powerful Democrat in Congress, announced an impeachment inquiry against Donald Trump on 24 September, setting off a fast-moving chain of events. Here are the key players, and here's a timeline of the key moments in the scandal so far:

Hunter Biden, son of Joe Biden (then vice-president of the US under Barack Obama, and instrumental in US-Ukraine policy) joins the board of the scandal-plagued Ukrainian energy company Burisma.

2016

Paul Manafort, chairman of the 2016 Trump presidential campaign, resigns less than four months before the US election, after Ukraine's anti-corruption agency reveals he had been promised millions of dollars for undeclared consulting work for Kremlin-backed Yanukovich.

Manafort is later indicted for failing to register as a foreign agent and numerous financial offenses, and jailed. Trump has since pushed an unsubstantiated theory that the campaign of his 2016 political opponent, Hillary Clinton, played a role in the Ukraine-Manafort revelations.

2019

7 April Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer and former New York mayor, voices unsubstantiated allegations on Fox News that Joe Biden pressed for the dismissal of Viktor Shokin, a top Ukrainian prosecutor, in order to block a corruption investigation into Burisma. (The investigation into Burisma was dormant by the time the US, along with other western powers, called for Shokin to resign.)

22 April Volodymyr Zelenskyy, an actor and comedian with no political experience except for playing the president in a TV series, is elected Ukraine's leader. Trump congratulates him in a phone call.

25 April Joe Biden announces his 2020 presidential campaign.

1 May The New York Times reports that Giuliani has been urging Ukraine to conduct a new investigation into the activities of Joe and Hunter Biden. "Giuliani called Mr Trump excitedly to brief him on his findings," the paper says.

18 July Trump issues instructions to withhold \$392m in military aid from Ukraine, citing concerns over whether the money needed to be spent, according to reports.

25 July Trump and Zelenskyy speak on the phone.

12 August A whistleblower complaint is filed.

13 September Adam Schiff, Democratic congressman and chairman of the House intelligence committee, issues a subpoena for the complaint after Joseph Maguire, the acting director of national intelligence, a Trump appointee, refuses to hand it over.

Days later, reports emerge that Trump asked Zelenskyy during the 25 July phone call to investigate Joe Biden and the candidate's son, Hunter. Trump admits that he did, but denies wrongdoing. He denies that withholding aid had amounted to a quid pro quo. The aid funds were released on 11 September.

Trump, the whistleblower and the comic: key players in the Ukraine scandal

19 September Giuliani is interviewed on CNN and in a heated exchange at first denies that he asked Ukraine to investigate Biden. About 30 seconds later, he reverses himself. "Of course I did," he says.

24 September The House speaker, Nancy Pelosi, announces a formal impeachment inquiry into Trump's actions.

25 September White House releases a partial "transcript" of the 25 July call, hours before Trump's first face-to-face meeting with Zelenskyy at the United Nations. "I don't want to be involved in democratic elections of the USA," Zelenskyy said. "Nobody pushed me."

26 September The whistleblower complaint is released. It alleges the White House tried to cover up the Trump-Ukraine call.

27 September Kurt Volker, Trump's former special envoy to Ukraine, resigns.

4 October The House congressional committees holding impeachment hearings release Whatsapp messages from US diplomats, handed over by Volker, which show a prestigious invitation for Zelenskyy to visit the White House was dependent on him stating publicly that Ukraine would investigate the Bidens and a supposed Ukrainian role in the 2016 US election, a theory advanced in far-right conspiracy circles.

6 October Lawyers for the first whistleblower say they are now representing a second.

8 October The state department prevents Gordon Sondland, US ambassador to the EU and a Trump donor, from testifying to a congressional impeachment hearing. The White House releases a letter refusing to cooperate with the impeachment inquiry, and accusing Democrats of trying to reverse the result of the 2016 election.

■ **Trump claims on Ukraine call may stem from foreign official's year-old**

Also ABC news reported, At least some of the still-unfounded claims referenced by President Donald Trump on his controversial call with Ukraine's president in July echoed a year-old effort by a Ukrainian government official to oust the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, according to government documents reviewed by ABC News, public statements from the president's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, and others, as well as from newly unsealed court documents.

Interested in Impeachment Inquiry?

Add Impeachment Inquiry as an interest to stay up to date on the latest Impeachment Inquiry news, video, and analysis from ABC News.

#### ■ Impeachment Inquiry Add Interest

Giuliani's associates, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, were indicted Thursday on campaign finance-related charges, and the charging documents filed against them

# The endless political war in U.S.



describe the first known steps of a push to remove the career diplomat, Marie Yovanovitch.

According to the indictment, the initial push aimed to "advance their own personal financial interests and the political interests of Ukrainian government officials."

Trump removed Yovanovitch from her post in Ukraine in May, but he brought her up two months later on the July 25 call with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy that is now the subject of a House impeachment inquiry.

On that call, Trump asked Zelenskyy to help Giuliani and Attorney General Bill Barr investigate still-unfounded allegations that former Vice President Joe Biden forced Ukraine to fire its head prosecutor in 2016 to "shut down" an investigation targeting the major Ukrainian gas company Burisma, which employed Biden's son.

Immediately before mentioning Biden, though, Trump raised Yovanovitch, according to a rough transcript of the call released by the White House.

"The former ambassador from the United States, the woman, was bad news and the people she was dealing with in the Ukraine were bad news so I just want to let you know that," Trump told Zelenskyy, saying the Justice Department would "get to the bottom of it."

Rudy Giuliani, Former Mayor of New York City speaks to the Organization of Iranian American Communities during a march outside the United Nations Headquarters in New York on Sept. 24, 2019. more +

The story of how Yovanovitch ended up in the president's crosshairs, however, began in the spring of 2018, when an unidentified Ukrainian government official asked Parnas for "assistance in causing the U.S. government to remove or recall" Yovanovitch, according to the charging documents unsealed Thursday against Parnas and Fruman.

Parnas and Fruman were reportedly working to secure a major deal to ship liquefied gas to Ukraine -- a deal that a U.S. ambassador might be able to influence. And the duo was working with at least one Ukrainian official, according to the charging documents.

By January, nearly seven months after the Ukrainian official sought help from Parnas, Yovanovitch had yet to be removed. Around the same time, Giuliani was drafted into the effort, believing it could help undercut special counsel Robert Mueller's widening investigation into whether members of Trump's presidential campaign were coopted by Russian intelligence services.

"I got information [at the time] that a lot of the explanations for how this whole phony investigation started will be in Ukraine," Giuliani later recalled to Fox News. "And it stems around the ambassador and the embassy being used for political purposes. So I began getting some people that were coming forward and telling me about that. And then all of a sudden, they revealed the story about Burisma and Biden's son."

One of the people Giuliani spoke with was Viktor Shokin, the former prosecutor fired in 2016 at the behest of Biden and other officials around the world who viewed Shokin as deeply corrupt and ineffective. At the time, Biden even threatened to withhold \$1 billion in financial assistance to Ukraine if its government didn't replace Shokin. The International Monetary Fund also threatened to withhold aid if reforms, such as Shokin's removal, weren't made.

In late January, Giuliani, Parnas, Fruman and others gathered in Giuliani's New York office to interview Shokin over the phone. Shokin suggested Biden may have wanted him fired to protect Biden's son, and he told the group that Yovanovitch was "close to Biden," according to notes of the conversation reviewed by ABC News.

Giuliani, Parnas and Fruman also spoke with Shokin's successor, Yuriy Lutsenko, according to the documents reviewed by ABC News. He offered a similar assessment as Shokin, according to the documents. Yet two months later, Yovanovitch still remained as ambassador to Ukraine.

Then, in a March interview with a conservative columnist at The Hill newspaper, Lutsenko offered a new explosive allegation against Yovanovitch: In their first meeting, Lutsenko alleged, the ambassador gave him a "do-not-prosecute list" -- a list of Ukrainians that the Ukrainian government could not investigate.

Lutsenko also said he had opened an investigation into whether Ukrainian officials tried to help Hillary Clinton

win the 2016 presidential election by leaking a series of financial documents linking Trump's then-campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, to corrupt proceeds. Lutsenko has since retracted some of his previous statements, particularly his claims about Biden.

Nevertheless, despite questions about Lutsenko's credibility, Trump posted the reporting to his Twitter account within hours of it being published.

Victoria Toensing, an outspoken Trump ally who has worked with Giuliani and Parnas, also posted the reporting to her Twitter page, writing, "The real collusion began in Ukraine. U.S. Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch."

Five days later, the conservative columnist who published Lutsenko's claims sent an email to Parnas and Toensing, forwarding them a preview of his upcoming report that would allege further political bias at the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine and offer new alleged details on the purported "do-not-prosecute list" that Lutsenko claimed Yovanovitch gave him.

U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch, center, sits during her meeting with Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko in Kyiv, Ukraine, March 6, 2019. more +

The next day, the website Medium published a story by an unknown author named "Tony Sealy," noting The Hill newspaper's previous reporting and disclosing what it claimed was the purported "do-not-prosecute list." But, according to internal emails described to ABC News, officials inside the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine almost immediately recognized it as "a totally manufactured, fake list" and a "classic disinfo play," as one senior official wrote at the time.

"One key sign of it being fake is that most of the names are misspelled in English -- we would never spell most that way," a top diplomat at the embassy, George Kent, wrote. And the embassy could find no evidence that "Tony Sealy" even existed.

"This list appears to be an effort by Lutsenko to inoculate himself for why he did not pursue corrupt [former] associates and political allies," Kent said, adding that Lutsenko wanted "to claim that the U.S. told him not to."

"Complete poppycock," Kent added.

Nevertheless, two weeks later, Giuliani went on Fox News to claim Mueller's "phony investigation" stemmed from Yovanovitch.

Around the same time, Lutsenko indicated in an interview with a Russian-language news outlet that his initial account of Yovanovitch giving him a "do-not-prosecute list" was not accurate.

Then, in early May, The New York Times published a story with the headline: "Biden Faces Conflict of Interest Questions That Are Being Promoted by Trump and Allies."

Trump retweeted it. And six days later, the Trump administration announced that Yovanovitch was being recalled as U.S. ambassador.

Testifying to House investigators behind closed doors on Friday, Yovanovitch insisted she was dismissed as ambassador based on "unfounded and false claims by people with clearly questionable motives," according to prepared remarks obtained by the New York Times. In fact, she reportedly said, a top State Department official told her that Trump had pushed for her removal even though she had "done nothing wrong."

In announcing the charges against Parnas and Fruman on Thursday, the head of the FBI's field office in New York, Bill Sweeney, said, "The American people expect and deserve an election process that has not been corrupted by the influence of foreign interests."

Donald Trump is set to face impeachment for a phone call that came to light last month. The crimes he committed in that call were serious, and merit the ultimate sanction that can be imposed on a sitting president, namely removal from office. And yet even since that conversation took place, in fact this very week, Trump has had another call that included an act that may not meet the constitutional standard of "high crimes and misdemeanors" and for which he will face no such punishment -- but whose consequences will surely be even graver. For they will be measured in life and death.

The first of these two fateful calls was, of course,

with the president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, featuring a request that he dig for dirt on Trump's would-be Democratic opponent, Joe Biden. Even if that demand did not form one half of a clear quid pro quo, in which US military aid and future arms sales to Kyiv would be contingent on compliance -- though the grammar of the phone call very much suggests it did -- it is still an impeachable offence. The soliciting of foreign interference in US elections has been forbidden since the birth of the republic. It was one of the menaces against which the framers of the constitution were most determined to protect their infant nation.

The second call was Sunday's conversation with the president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. This time it was Trump from whom a "favour" was sought. Erdogan urged Trump to remove a small contingent of US troops from along the Turkish-Syrian border, where they had acted as a kind of tripwire, preventing Turkey from attacking its longtime enemy, the Kurds, in northeastern Syria. Trump agreed, and within hours Turkey was unleashing its full might on the Kurds, the same Kurds who'd believed they were brothers in arms with the Americans in their shared war against Islamic State in Syria. Yes, the losses had been lopsided in that struggle. More than 11,000 Kurds had been killed, while US combat deaths in Syria numbered six. But now their US brothers had abandoned them to their fate.

Current US political chatter is much more about Trump's pressure on Ukraine than it is about his betrayal of the Kurds, and you can see why. The latest twist in the Ukraine scandal, featuring Trump's lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, and a couple of characters who ran an outfit called Fraud Guarantee, is compelling: Goodfellas with Russian subtitles. And yet it is the Syria decision that will cost lives, including in ways that may not be instantly obvious.

The most immediate impact will be on those Kurdish forces who, under previous US-Turkish agreements, were only ever lightly armed and who had removed what fortifications they had built along the border. With no air force, no surface-to-air missiles, no armoured personnel carriers, they are massively outnumbered and outgunned by Turkey. Many of them will die. What's more, Erdogan has made no secret of his plan to move vast numbers of Arab refugees who had fled from Syria into Turkey over the border. Ankara will call it "resettlement", and it might look reasonable: repatriating Syrians to Syria. Except these areas are Kurdish. The result, says Carne Ross, the former Foreign Office official whose Independent Diplomat group now advises the Kurds of northeastern Syria, is inevitable: "It's ethnic cleansing."

The deserted Tal Arqam base after the withdrawal of US forces, Ras al-Ein, north Syria, 7 October 2019.

Those of us far away can have a more selfish anxiety, too. One of the tasks that had fallen to the Kurds was the imprisoning of former Isis fighters, preventing them returning to combat. Now the Kurds' limited resources will be too stretched; they can't both defend themselves from the Turks and act as jailers for a group of Isis fighters, their families and followers that together number 70,000. This is why, says Ross, "Isis prisoners are jubilant -- jubilant -- at the Turkish invasion," seeing it as the harbinger of their liberation.

When asked if all these Isis men might now escape and pose a threat elsewhere, Trump's response was telling. "Well, they're going to be escaping to Europe. That's where they want to go." Meaning if, thanks to me, Isis terrorists are now free to shoot people in Paris or blow up buses in London, that's not my problem. In other words, you can make a good case that the Erdogan call will have a more lethal impact than the Zelenskyy one, even if it is the latter for which Trump will be held to account. But the two conversations have much in common.

First, they both reveal the readiness of this president to act alone and against all advice, ignoring his military top brass, national security team and Congress. On Ukraine, his own appointees and Republican allies on Capitol Hill were clear that aid to Kyiv was in the US strategic interest. No matter. Trump was ready to withhold \$400m in aid if that's what it took to coerce Zelenskyy into helping his re-election campaign. Similarly, even Trump's most ardent cheerleaders agreed that the Kurds were allies whose loyalty should be rewarded and that a green light to a Turkish invasion would be unforgivable treachery. No matter, he did it anyway. In both Ukraine and Syria, Trump was ready to jettison long-established US policy to serve his own interests -- keeping everyone else in the dark until it was too late.

In Ukraine, his personal motive is clear enough. In Turkey, less so -- though it is not irrelevant that there are two "major, major" Trump Towers in Istanbul, giving Trump what he himself once called "a little conflict of interest" when it comes to that country. We have surely seen enough by now to know that when Trump hears a request from an authoritarian leader, especially one who could have business leverage over him, he likes to say yes.

The flipside is his casual disregard for America's allies. Ukraine is loyal, but was threatened with being starved of cash unless it agreed to act as Trump's covert opposition research unit. The Kurds have fought valiantly, but Trump brushed them off, saying bizarrely that "they didn't help us with Normandy". He approaches all alliances as mere transactions, tweeting that: "The Kurds fought with us, but were paid massive amounts of money and equipment to do so." As one observer put it, for Trump the Kurds weren't allies -- they were subcontractors. And note the contempt for Europe in both cases. His call with Zelenskyy was full of disdain for the EU; now we know he doesn't mind Isis terrorists murdering and maiming -- so long as they only murder and maim Europeans.

There's a last connection, too. For who benefits from a Ukraine deprived of cash and military equipment? Why, it's the same person who benefits from a US pullback from Syria: Trump's old friend, Vladimir Putin.

Trump's conduct in these two very different situations -- a deliberate political strategy in Ukraine, an apparent whim in Syria -- has one common result, namely the further destruction of America's reputation in the eyes of its allies. It shows that Donald Trump is not just corroding vital democratic norms and conventions in the US. He is also endangering human lives far away from America's shores. It is not just the US that needs to see him removed from office and soon -- it is the whole world.



# Repercussions of Riyadh's definite defeat in Yemen invasion

By Ali Hassan Heidari

**IFP** — Saudi Arabia along with its allies, including the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, Jordan, Sudan, Egypt and Morocco, began an all-out aerial campaign against Yemen called "Decisive Storm" in 2015. But it has brought nothing but a definite failure for the Saudi regime.

The Saudi-led attacks have left more than 10,000 people dead and hundreds of thousands homeless. Humanitarian organizations estimate that over 16 million Yemenis, which accounts for 61 percent of the country's population, are in dire need of humanitarian aid.

Background of Saudi Aggression against Yemen

Yemen is home to a whole variety of ethnic and religious groups. It has a population of over 23 million people 87% of which is comprised of Arab tribes falling into two categories: Zaydi Shiites and Sunnis. Zaydi Shiites ruled Yemen for centuries and stayed in power until the 1960s. However, a coup was staged against their rule with the help of the Saudi government, resulting in the formation of a Republic government. Consequently, under the newly formed government, the Houthi movement was practically sidelined and lost its leverage.

The historical experience on the Saudi government's political behaviour in the region is a testament to the fact that this hereditary government has always wanted nearby countries to be ruled by governments that lack a democratic nature and lean toward the Al Saud dynasty and are submissive to Riyadh. Hence, when Houthis also known as Ansarullah took power in Sana'a following the ouster of the Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime in 2012, the Saudi government, which has always sought to steer clear of democratic rules, regarded the emergence of a democratic government as a major threat to the hereditary Al Saud monarchical rule.

Therefore, Riyadh mobilized its material and spiritual resources in an all-out attempt to topple the fledgling government in Yemen led by the powerful Ansarullah movement. Accordingly, Riyadh formed an Arab coalition in keeping with the West's strategy in the region and engineered a military campaign against Yemen. Then, Saudi Arabia launched its all-out aggression on both hard and soft dimensions against Yemeni infrastructure and people. In order to justify its attacks, Saudi Arabia promoted the allegations that Ansarullah (Houthi) troops are backed by Iran and that the stabilization of their position means the spread of Iran's influence



and presence in the region and in an Arab country, which would serve as a major threat for the future of the region. So, as Saudi Arabia suggested, world powers, especially Arab states, have a duty to prevent the formation of the Shiite Crescent.

Nevertheless, four years on, all Saudi and Western potential and actual capacities have proven inefficient against the democratic government of Yemen and have lost their effect on the ground and the balance of power has fully changed in favour of the Yemeni government. Yemeni forces have made tremendous progress in the military, missile and air combat domains and have been able to strike targets deep within the Saudi territory.

The balance of power has been disrupted in the battlefield, so much so that the Saudis have no more justification, whatsoever, for playing a blame game and levelling accusations against Yemen's allies in aerial and ground combat (especially after attacks by Yemeni drones against Saudi Aramco oil facilities and the heavy defeat inflicted on Saudi forces in a recent operation).

These wide-ranging failures against Yemeni troops has averted the possibility of playing a blame game, and Yemeni people will no longer buy into this ploy and the Saudi will have no choice but to accept their inefficiency in managing the war and tolerate its repercussions. This defeat has resulted in political and military consequences for the Saudis and their allies, which are briefly described below.

the collapse of the Arab coalition compris-

ing eight Arab countries led by Saudi Arabia The Iranian Leader's historical prediction that this coalition will suffer defeat coming true Saudi Arabia's failure to achieve its set goals (restoring ousted Yemeni President Abd Rabbu Mansur Hadi to power, breaking the Ansarullah movement apart and capturing Sana'a)

Revolutionaries gaining power in Yemen (Given the historical background of the Saudi aggression against Yemen and A drop in Saudi Arabia's political legitimacy and military credibility in the region and the undermining of the Saudi leader's status in the Arab world and making Riyadh permanently unable to make a consensus in the region and creating a new trend in the region in the future.

Influencing the equations of power in Saudi Arabia's political system as well as political and security equations in the region in light of turning the resistance front into an efficient hub in the management of crises and its turning into reliable power in forming regional domestic equations with the cooperation of regional countries without the presence of foreign powers.

Proving the inefficiency of US allies in implementing the United States' schemes and scenarios in the region and trying to respectably withdraw from the US coalition against Yemen's democratic government.

8. the defeat of the coalition in the clash of strategies in running the region. The US and its regional allies led by the Saudi government also suffered a historical defeat in the war of strategies and, in the war of

will, it was the willpower of Yemeni popular mobilization that won over the political and military mobilization of major Arab and Western powers.

a decline in Saudi Arabia's regional power and influence; this defeat showed that Riyadh is no longer able to maintain its strategic role in the region and to serve as a country capable of preserving the balance among regional powers because it is no capable of doing so.

The last point is that Yemen's democratic government is edging closer to determining victory and has passed through the process of the political stability of its government after five years of defending the nation's independence and democracy in its fight against regional and global hegemony led by the US and the monarchical and hereditary Saudi rule. On the other hand, masterminds behind the war on Yemen have conceded defeat, which means they have admitted to their strategic failure against Yemen's fledgling and young government.

This means the start of a real step toward ending a five-year war against poor and defenseless, but strong people, who achieved their goal by relying on the resistance front's model of dealing with aggressors. Before facing the new condition, which will destroy their remaining political and military credibility in the court of the public opinion, they should concede defeat and announce an end to their aggression against Yemen. This will be in their interest.

However, it does not mean they will not be accountable to the public opinion as well as international legal organizations and circles. They should be answerable for their aggression against the democratic government of Yemen and tens of thousands of women and children and civilians in Yemen.

The UN is also duty-bound to send envoys to Yemen to introduce the Saudi government as the one that initiated the Yemen conflict, like what the world body did with regards to the war imposed in the 1980s on Iran by an international coalition led by former Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein and introduced Saddam Hussein as the initiator of the war. The UN should make Riyadh compensate for the damage it has inflicted on Yemen and for the blood of innocent Yemeni people.

## Richard Murphy: Bolton fired for Persisting in Iran regime change advice to Trump

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Renowned American diplomat and former Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy says President Donald Trump sacked his national security advisor John Bolton since he was preoccupied by regime change plans against Tehran and persistently advised the president to escalate tensions with Iran.

Speaking to FNA, the veteran American diplomat said Bolton "consistently pushed for aggressive answers to Iran's positions and supported regime change in Tehran, ... and Trump grew tired of his advice".

Richard William Murphy (born July 29, 1929) is an American diplomat. He was the United States ambassador to Mauritania from 1971 to 1974, to Syria from 1974 to 78, to the Philippines from 1978 to 1981, and to Saudi Arabia from 1981 to 1983. He served as the United States Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs from 1983 to 1989.

Below is the full text of FNA's interview with Richard Murphy.

■ What is your assessment of John Bolton's dismissal? Will the military faction become a minority as a result of his removal from the post of the National Security Advisor?

A: John Bolton is known for bluntness and persistency in making his policy proposals. He has consistently pushed for aggressive answers to Iran's positions and supported regime change in Tehran. The simplest answer as to why Bolton was dismissed is that President Trump disagreed with him and grew tired of his advice.

■ How would Bolton's dismissal affect the US foreign policy toward Iran?

A: Last week's attack on Saudi oil facilities in Abqaiq has threatened global oil supplies. Washington has apparently concluded that the Houthis in Yemen were not capable of staging that attack and is examining evidence of involvement by Iranian and Iraqi elements. The situation is highly volatile.

■ Considering that Secretary Pompeo's foreign policy mindset somehow resembles Bolton's approach, do you think Trump would go for changing Pompeo as well?

A: Of course Trump can dismiss Pompeo but the Secretary of State has been adept at framing his positions so they do not directly challenge those of the President.

■ Given the recent change of Bolton, are the US State Department's pro-Israeli policies going to fade or shift?

A: Trump early on decided to pull the United States out of the JCPOA and presented other demands for changes in Iranian policies. He has expressed his desire for negotiations but has been rebuffed by Iran which has insisted that lifting of sanctions are a prerequisite to talks. Trump's desire to "make a deal" with Iran is anathema to the Israeli leadership. I assume that the State Department specialists continue to draw up policy choices for the Secretary to consider.

## Who is behind UN's worst crisis

**TEHRAN (FNA)**- The United Nations is facing its worst cash crisis in nearly a decade because almost one-third of its member states have not paid their annual dues, according to Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Guterres says the situation is so desperate that last month's General Assembly in New York was only possible because of emergency spending cuts made earlier in the year. The UN says while 129 member states have paid their dues for the organization's 2019 budget 64 others are still required to pay "urgently and in full." It says there is an outstanding amount of \$1.3 billion for the year.

As always, it is not that hard to guess which member state is the real reason why the UN runs the risk of depleting its liquidity reserves by the end of the month and defaulting on payments to staff and vendors. The US currently owes the organization more than \$1 billion. To be clear, Washington owes the UN \$381 million in back payments and \$674 million this year.

Meaning, the only way to avoid a default that could risk disrupting operations globally is for Washington to pay its dues. Moreover, Guterres has requested additional steps be taken immediately, including further reductions in official travel; postponing spending on goods and services; and discontinuing events scheduled outside official meeting hours at headquarters duty stations. Conferences and meetings may have to be postponed or services be adjusted too. He is reviewing further options.

Mind you, this is just one of the ways through which the US has managed to weaken the very foundation of the world body. The Trump administration has a track record of bashing global cooperation and promoting sizeable cuts in US funding for the UN along with the organization's programs and peacekeeping activities.

On July 13, after more than a year of negotiations, UN member governments agreed on a plan to tackle the nightmare of uncontrolled global migration in an organized and humane way. It wasn't easy to bring everyone on board, but, in the end, 192 nations concurred: There had to be concerted action. The UN, however, has 193 member countries. While the rest of the world moved toward formalizing and implementing the plan, the US laid claim to a position as a UN outlier.

Trump's refusal to join in a global attempt to deal with a global problem was not a great surprise; the administration had not been part of negotiations since late last year. Instead, as the other nations met in a spirit of compromise on July 13, the Trump administration was busy trying to locate the 3,000 children it had snatched from their desperate families in an immigration enforcement along the Mexican border.

The message for the UN should be clear by now: The world should go ahead as best it can without the United States. And there are indications that this is becoming an international



trend. In June, UN member nations began to respond to the Trump administration's disengagement and criticisms. The US has held a seat on the UN Human Rights Committee since 1995. With the four-year term of the current representative set to expire at the 2018, the Trump administration nominated another one. The committee rejected the US nominee. Five days later, the US withdrew from the Human Rights Council.

In reality, it is the Trump team that has almost methodically withdrawn US membership and money from several UN components and treaties, with severe financial costs to those organizations. The US is also withdrawing from UNESCO, walking out on more than \$500 million in unpaid dues!

Trump has barred official US support for the UN Population Fund as well, which would mean a loss of over \$30 million in the coming budget year. On a larger scale, the Trump administration has unilaterally limited American contributions to UN peacekeeping to 25 percent of its total budget.

However, Trump's domestic politics have a global effect. His unilateral decision to pull out of the Iranian nuclear accord has led the other signatories of the agreement to scramble for ways to keep it alive. He has pulled out of negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, leaving remaining parties to move ahead with deals that exclude the US. And Trump is now floating a withdrawal from the World Trade Organization and seems intent on sabotaging of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

In light of all these mounting if unpredictable attacks on global cooperation and multilateralism, the UN has no choice but to regroup and fight back. The world body should make it clear that Washington can no longer be seen as an impartial mediator of Middle East peace or the warden of world order and security. The UN has no other choice but to fight back for its peace-keeping and global cooperation institutions, as the Trump administration has every intention to weaken them institutionally and financially.





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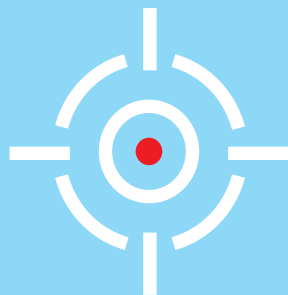
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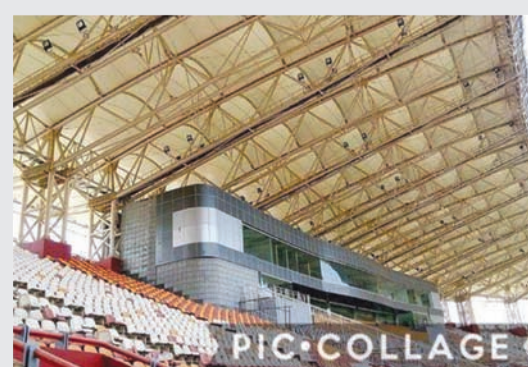
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Curriculum vitae with a recent photo and the relevant documents, including a list of referees with their contact details, must be scanned and emailed to: [tehranembassy@mfa.gov.cy](mailto:tehranembassy@mfa.gov.cy), the latest by Thursday, 31 October, 2019.



# NASA conducts spacewalk as world's 1st spacewalker dies

Astronauts replaced oversized batteries outside the International Space Station on Friday, as news broke of the death of the world's first spacewalker.

NASA interrupted live TV coverage of its second spacewalk this week to announce Leonov's death at age 85.

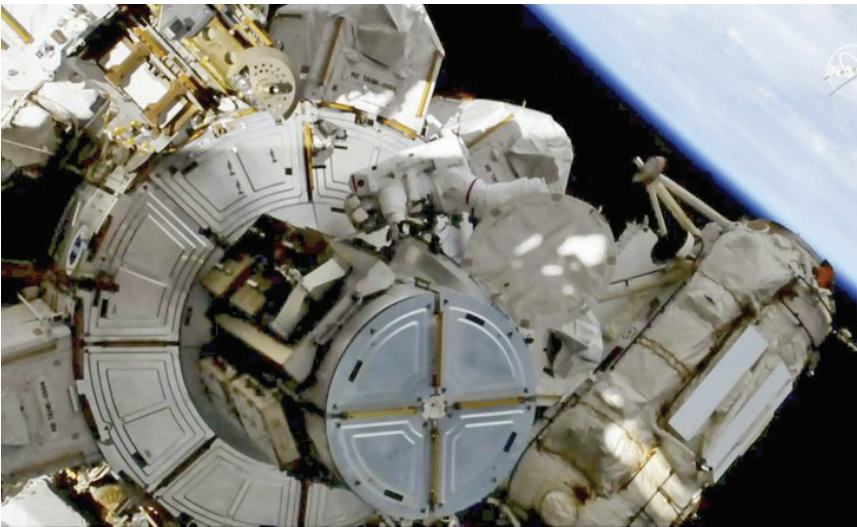
Leonov's 12-minute spacewalk on March 18, 1965, preceded the first U.S. spacewalk by Ed White by less than three months. He also was the Soviet commander of the Apollo-Soyuz joint space mission in 1975, a prelude to the international cooperation seen aboard the current space station.

As U.S. astronauts Andrew Morgan and Christina Koch wrapped up a successful seven-hour spacewalk, the rest of the station crew paid tribute to Leonov.

"This is a bittersweet day for all of us on the International Space Station," said Italian astronaut Luca Parmitano, who met Leonov in years past. "It is somewhat fitting that Leonov left us on the day of a spacewalk."

"Farewell, Alexei, and Ad Astra."

Five days after their first spacewalk, Morgan and Koch swiftly continued swapping decade-old batteries in the station's solar



power network with new and improved lithium-ion versions. These new batteries are so powerful only one is needed for every two of the hydrogen-nickel units, which will be junked.

By the midway point of Friday's excursion,

Morgan and Koch had finished installing three new batteries 260 miles (420 kilometers) up. Given the hefty battery size — about half a refrigerator with a mass of 400 pounds (180 kilograms) — the astronauts had to take turns holding each unit as they moved along the

station's sprawling framework. With that successfully behind them, they got a jump on next week's spacewalk.

It was the second of five spacewalks planned this month to install six new batteries that arrived via a Japanese supply ship two weeks ago. Morgan and Koch began the outdoor work Sunday. Morgan will be accompanied Wednesday by NASA's Jessica Meir, the other woman on board.

Morgan has been aboard the space station since July. Koch is two-thirds of the way into what will be the longest single spaceflight by a woman, 300-plus days. On the fourth spacewalk of this series planned for later this month, Koch and Meir will perform the world's first all-female spacewalk.

Friday marked the 35th anniversary of the first spacewalk by an American woman, Kathryn Sullivan, on Oct. 11, 1984. The Russians beat the Americans there, too. Three months earlier, cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya became the world's first female spacewalker.

Since Leonov's feat, there have been 227 spacewalkers including 14 women.

(Source: AP News)

## Model offers explanation for universe's most powerful magnets

By Brooks Hays

With the help of computer simulations, scientists have come up with an explanation for the formation of the strongest magnets in the universe, magnetars.

Models suggest stellar mergers can produce strong magnetic fields. When the magnetic star produced by a merger dies, a magnetar can form. Magnetars are neutron stars -- collapsed stellar cores -- with extremely powerful magnetic fields.

The sun features an outer layer of convective activity that produces strong magnetic fields, but most massive stars are without this feature.

"Even though massive stars have no such envelopes, we still observe a strong, large-scale magnetic field at the surface of about ten percent of them," Fabian Schneider, researcher



with the Center for Astronomy at Heidelberg University in Germany, said in a news release.

Scientists have previously hypothesized that stellar mergers could explain the ten percent that boast large magnetic fields.

"But until now, we weren't able to test this hypothesis

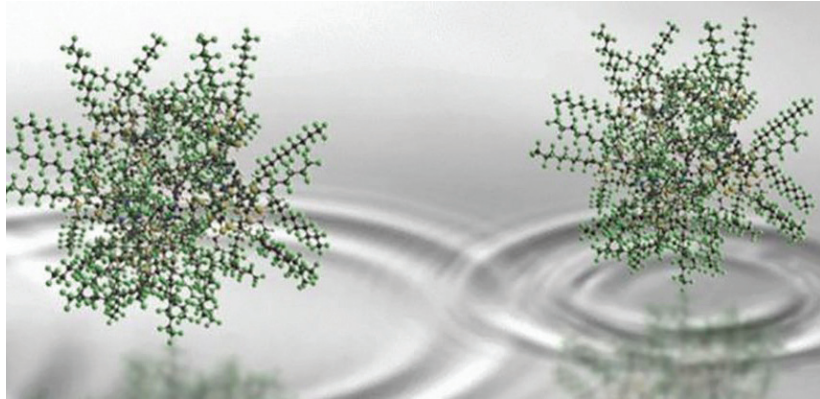
because we didn't have the necessary computational tools," said Sebastian Ohlmann from the computing center at the Max Planck Society in Garching.

To test the hypothesis, researchers used a sophisticated stellar simulation called the AREPO code, run on a cluster of powerful computers, to analyze Tau Scorpii, a magnetic star located 500 light-years from Earth.

Scientists had previously determined that Tau Scorpii is a blue straggler, which are produced by the merging of two stars. The simulations showed that the turbulence produced by the merger process can yield powerful magnetic fields.

The latest findings, published this week in the journal Nature, suggest roughly 10 percent of the stars in the Milky Way form similarly to Tau Scorpii -- a rate in agreement with the observed population of magnetic massive stars.

## In a quantum first, physicists put 2,000 atoms in two places at once



You might be familiar with the Schrödinger's cat thought experiment, where the eponymous feline in a box can be both alive or dead at the same time, often used to illustrate the multi-state paradox of quantum mechanics.

Well, now scientists have managed to apply that theory to huge molecules made up of 2,000 atoms.

Quantum superposition has been tested countless times on smaller systems, with physicists successfully showing that individual particles can be in two places at one time. But this type of experiment hasn't been carried out at this scale before.

What the experiment does is allow scientists to refine the hypotheses of quantum mechanics and understand more about how this particularly mind-bending branch of physics actually works -- and how the laws of quantum mechanics join up with the more traditional, larger scale, classical laws of physics.

"Our results show excellent agreement with quantum theory and cannot be explained classically," state the researchers in their published paper.

In particular, the new study involves the Schrödinger equation (yes, him again), which describes how even single particles can also act as waves in multiple places at once, interfering with each other just like ripples on a pond.

To test this, the scientists set up a double-slit experiment - an experiment that's very familiar to quantum physicists.

Traditionally, it involves projecting individual particles of lights (photons) through two slits. If the photons acted simply as particles, the resulting projection of light on the other side would simply show one band. But in reality, the light projected on the other side shows an interference pattern - multiple bands that interact, showing that light particles can also act as waves.

It effectively seem as if the photons are in two places at once, just like Schrödinger's cat. But as most of us are aware, the cat is only in two states while it remains unobserved. As soon as the box is open, it's either confirmed as

being alive or dead, not both.

It's the same with photons. As soon as the light is measured or observed directly, this superposition disappears and the state of the photon is locked in. This is one of the conundrums at the heart of quantum mechanics.

This same double-slit experiment has been done with electrons, atoms, and smaller molecules. And now physicists show it applies to massive molecules, too.

In this take on the double-slit experiment, the team was able to use these heavy molecules, made up of as many as 2,000 atoms, to create quantum interference patterns, as if they were behaving as waves and being in more than one place.

The molecules were known as "oligo-tetraphenylporphyrins enriched with fluoroalkylsulfanyl chains", and some were more than 25,000 times the mass of a hydrogen atom.

But as molecules get bigger, they also get less stable, and the scientists were only able to get them interfering for seven milliseconds at a time, using a newly designed piece of equipment called a matter-wave interferometer (designed to measure atoms along different paths).

Even factors like the Earth's rotation and gravitational pull had to be factored in. It was worth the effort though -- we now know these giant molecules can be in two places at once, as well as much smaller atoms.

As quantum mechanics traditionally comes into play on very small scales, and classical physics on larger scales, the bigger the molecules we can get working with the double slit experiment, the closer we get to that quantum-classical boundary line. A previous record for this kind of study involved molecules up to 800 atoms in size.

"Our experiments show that quantum mechanics, with all its weirdness, is also amazingly robust, and I'm optimistic that future experiments will test it on an even more massive scale," says physicist Yaakov Fein, from the University of Vienna in Austria.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## Neuroscientists see unique brain changes in blind people who learn to 'see' with sound



Blind people who use echoes to map their surroundings, akin to how bats or dolphins navigate, have an adapted brain region that allows them to 'see' with sound, a new study suggests.

The primary visual cortex is where the human brain normally interprets signals from the eyes, but that doesn't mean it can only process visual data. In some cases, especially when vision is deprived, this flexible system might also use the same organizing principles to interpret sound.

By testing people expert in mouth-click-based echolocation, researchers have shown a pattern of brain activity in this group remarkably similar to that of sighted people when they're looking at light.

It's the first evidence that activity in the primary visual cortex can be flexibly ordered by how a sense is used, not necessarily the kind of sense being interpreted. And it clearly suggests that when this primary region is being under-stimulated, its system can be adopted by sound to map spatial locations.

"Although it is inarguable that primary sensory areas preferentially process input from one modality over others," the authors write, "they nonetheless retain the ability to carry out at least some of the characteristic tasks when relevant information is provided through another sensory modality."

"This is pivotal in our interpretation of the functional organization of the human brain."

This crossing of sensory inputs is not unheard of; our senses are sharing information all the time. In recent years, scientists have started to figure out that higher cortical areas, like the prefrontal cortex, are best understood in terms of the tasks they perform, not so much the specific senses they process.

So far, however, most evidence for this task-based structure has been confined to these higher-order sensory areas, not to the places where the sensory input is processed.

The first neuroimaging study of human echolocation, in 2011, shows the auditory and primary visual cortex are engaged when

stimulated by sound. It also found that just the processing of those sounds activated only the visual cortex; since then, several more studies have implicated the visual cortex in echolocation.

Using brain imaging of expert echolocators in action, the new research tested whether the 'visual' cortex can map the spatial layout of sounds in the same way as visual input.

While laying in a functional magnetic resonance imaging scanner, five blind people, five blind echolocators, and five sighted people listened to recordings of a clicking sound bouncing off an object at different locations in the room, and guessed where it was coming from.

The findings show that stimulus maps for sound in blind echolocators are directly comparable to those for vision in sighted people. And the more skilled the echolocator, the more similar this map becomes.

What's more, these same maps don't appear in people who are blind but don't use echolocation; this suggests the brain activity is not simply a result of higher cortical regions producing mental imagery.

"If one were to argue that the results could be explained by a combination of neuroplastic changes due to blindness and imagery, then we would expect at least source sounds to map in our blind control participants," the authors write, "but there was no evidence for this."

The sample size is admittedly small, with only five expert echolocators, but we have to keep in mind the skill is rather niche. The first study conducted in 2011, for instance, had only two expert echolocators.

The authors think it's entirely possible that the primary 'visual' cortex in expert echolocators is functionally necessary for the perception of space through sound.

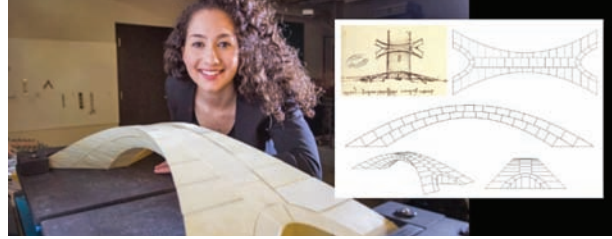
"An analogous neural map of space does not exist in primary auditory cortex, and so the map of space in primary 'visual' cortex might be the most suitable cortical site on which to map spatial location as conveyed through sound," they explain.

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## MIT engineers show Da Vinci's 500-year-old radical bridge design would have worked

We know that Leonardo da Vinci was a genius who was well ahead of his time, but even the great man himself might have struggled to believe that engineers would still be marveling over his creations some 500 years later.

Engineers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) have analyzed a bridge designed by da Vinci in 1502. Drawn up for Sultan Bayezid II, head of the Ottoman Empire, the huge bridge was intended to connect Istanbul and its neighboring city Galata.



In the end, da Vinci's design wasn't used, but the MIT team has carefully modelled the polymath's design, finding it to be structurally sound -- no mean feat, considering it would've been the world's longest bridge at the time, by some distance.

"It's incredibly ambitious," says structural engineer Karly Bast, from MIT. "It was about 10 times longer than typical bridges of that time."

Using surviving documentation, and knowledge about the construction materials and methods of the time, the team found that the 280-metre (919-foot) long bridge would have been able to stand and remain stable.

While the researchers haven't yet had a peer-reviewed paper published about their work, they did put together a 1:500 scale model to put to a rigorous set of tests.

The crafted 126 separately created, 3D-printed blocks, then put them together like a jigsaw: at 1:500 scale, the model ended up at around 81 centimeters or 32 inches long.

One of the most impressive parts of the bridge design is that it's all held together without any fasteners or mortar to connect the blocks.

"It's all held together by compression only," says Bast. "We wanted to really show that the forces are all being transferred within the structure."

Rather than following the contemporary trend for bridges with semicircular arches -- which would have required numerous piers along the bridge -- da Vinci instead went for a single, enormous, flattened arch.

It had to be high enough to allow sailboats to pass under, while maintaining essential rigidity, especially against lateral motions. To counter these motions, da Vinci envisioned splayed abutments on each side of the bridge, which are structures that steady the bridge in the same way that someone might spread their feet to avoid swaying.

Extra stabilization features were added by da Vinci to guard against the earthquakes that were known to happen in the area, and again the scale model testing showed that these would have worked very well.

The materials and construction methods that we've developed since da Vinci's time mean there are now better designs to make use of than this one, but it's still a phenomenal bit of engineering, that underlines the brilliance of da Vinci's mind.

The scale model was based on a small sketch in one of da Vinci's notebooks -- what we don't know is just how long he took to develop it. It's possible that this incredibly smart design was actually the result of just a few minutes of work.

"Was this sketch just freehanded, something he did in 50 seconds, or is it something he really sat down and thought deeply about?" says Bast. "It's difficult to know. He knew how the physical world works."

(Source: sciencealert.com)

## Twist-based refrigeration: Twisting and coiling 'twistocaloric' yarns to keep cool

An international team led by researchers at The University of Texas at Dallas and Nankai University in China has discovered a new technology for refrigeration that is based on twisting and untwisting fibers.

In research published in the Oct. 11 issue of the journal Science, they demonstrated twist-based refrigeration using materials as diverse as natural rubber, ordinary fishing line and nickel titanium wire.

"Our group has demonstrated what we call 'twistocaloric cooling' by changing the twist in fibers. We call coolers that use twist changes for refrigeration 'twist fridges,'" said Dr. Ray Baughman, director of the Alan G. MacDiarmid NanoTech Institute at UT Dallas. Baughman is a corresponding author of the study, along with Dr. Zunfeng Liu, a professor in the State Key Lab of Medicinal Chemical Biology in the College of Pharmacy at Nankai University in Tianjin.

According to the International Institute of Refrigeration, refrigeration and air conditioning consume about 20% of global electrical energy. Conventional refrigerators also release gases that significantly contribute to global warming.

As consumption continues to grow, especially due to the increasing needs of developing nations, researchers are investigating alternative cooling technologies to increase refrigeration efficiency, lower costs and reduce size.

Stretching a rubber band heats the rubber, and releasing the stretch cools it: This is called elastocaloric cooling. Other solid substances for cooling include electrocaloric and magnetocaloric materials, which cool via changes in electric and magnetic fields, respectively.

"This elastocaloric behavior of natural rubber has been known since the early 1800s. But to get high cooling from a rubber band, you have to release a very large stretch," Baughman said. "With twistocaloric cooling, we found that all you have to do is release twist."

Baughman's research teams previously developed artificial muscles made by tightly twisting and coiling fibers that range from carbon nanotube yarns to ordinary nylon thread and polyethylene fishing line.

In the current work, the scientists stretched rubber fibers, then twisted them until they not only coiled, but also supercoiled. Fast release of the twist resulted in surface temperature cooling of 15.5 degrees Celsius. Releasing both the twist and the stretch from the rubber produced even higher cooling of 16.4 degrees Celsius.

(Source: Science Daily)



## IKIA transports 49,000 Arbaeen pilgrims in 4 days

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Imam Khomeini International Airport has transported some 49,000 passengers from Tehran to Iraqi cities of Najaf and Baghdad to participate in the Arbaeen pilgrimage in a span of four days.

“Since the beginning of Arbaeen flights [scheduled] on October 9, 288 flights have been carried out and 48,934 passengers were transported from the airport to Najaf and Baghdad,” IKAC news service quoted deputy director of the Airport Operations Department at Imam Khomeini Airport City (IKAC) on Monday.



Hassan Khoshkhoo noted that Arbaeen flights from IKIA to Najaf and Baghdad began last week on October 9, managing to transfer 48,934 pilgrims and around 342,915 tons of cargo, adding 288 flights took off through Terminal 1 and Salam International Terminal in the mentioned period.

Last year, over 15 million Arbaeen pilgrims left Iran for Najaf and Baghdad to visit and pay tribute to the shrine of Imam Hussein (AS), the source said.

“Imam Khomeini International Airport registered 47,446 take-offs and landings in the last fiscal year that ended on March 20, 2019, register a 19% decline year on year. More than 7.27 million passengers and 141,704 tons of cargos were transported from the airport during the period to rank third on the list of Iran’s busiest airports in 2018.”

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

For the Arbaeen pilgrimage, which is a characteristic spiritual exercise, hundreds of thousands of people from various nationalities head for Karbala, where the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is laid to rest.

## Disney World’s Skyliner system up and running for tests, reports say

Walt Disney World’s Skyliner system is back up and running without passengers as the park begins retesting the new aerial cable car system before reopening to guests, according to local reports.

While Disney World’s official website still lists the Disney Skyliner as “temporarily closed,” local ABC and Fox affiliates report that the air gondolas have been running since Tuesday morning without passengers, as Disney reviews the malfunction that stranded passengers for hours on Oct. 5 when one of the cable cars became stuck in the air.

Video shared Sunday by Walt Disney World News Today shows gondolas moving through a boarding area as a part of the testing process.

“One of three Disney Skyliner routes experienced an unexpected downtime Saturday evening,” Disney said in a statement to USA TODAY at the time. “As a result, Skyliner will be closed while we look into the details.”

(Source: MSN)

## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Agricultural landscape of southern Oland

The southern part of Oland, an island in the Baltic Sea off the south-eastern coast of Sweden, is dominated by a vast limestone plateau.



People have lived there for some five thousand years, adapting their way of life to the physical constraints of the island. As a consequence, the landscape is unique, and there is abundant evidence of a continuous human settlement from prehistoric times to the present.

This outstanding human settlement has made optimum use of diverse landscape types on a single island. Limestone bedrock and a warm, dry climate have set limits for how the islanders can use their landscape.

Earlier, the land was divided into infields and pastures. The infields lay closest to the village and consisted of arable lands and meadows. The pastures – the alvar plains and the coastal lands – were used for grazing.

With the transformation of agriculture in the 19th century, this distinction disappeared on the mainland and elsewhere in Europe. Instead of being part of the agricultural system, pastures were used for timber production. In Oland, barren soil ruled this out, and the old division, with linear villages in ‘lawful location’, was retained and is easily discernible today.

Southern Oland is a living agrarian landscape where villages, arable lands, coastal lands and alvar plains make up this World Heritage property.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Iran’s travel balance remains positive in H1

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s travel balance remained positive in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21), deputy tourism minister said on Monday.

“Foreign arrivals in Iran grew by 26 percent during the first half of the current year in comparison with the same period last year,” Vali Teymouri said, CHTN reported.

The country’s travel balance kept being positive taking inbound and outbound passengers [in the six-month period] into account, the official noted.

“Getting over the last year’s economic shock and experiencing relative economic improvement let 4,258,944 people travel abroad in the first six months of this year, which represents 15.95 percent increase [year on year].”

The official reminded that the number of Iranians travelling abroad stood at 3,673,092 in the same period last year.

He put the number of international arrivals at 4,998,215 for the first half of the current [Iranian calendar] year, adding the number corresponding for the same period last year stood at 3,956,071.

The official forecast that the rise would continue in the second half of the year.

“Neighboring countries are a major source of tourism for Iran,” he said, adding, “Travelers from neighboring countries always hold the biggest share of arrivals in each country, and Iran is no exception.”

“Target countries have been identified based on [Iran’s] capacities in the fields of health tourism, religious tourism, natural and historical attractions.... and planning to attract more tourists is underway,” Teymouri explained.

Tourism minister Ali-Asghar Mounesani said in August that [Nearly] 7.8 million foreign nationals visited Iran over the past [Iranian calendar] year [ended March 20]



A view of the historical Allahverdi Khan Bridge in Isfahan, central Iran. Popularly known as Si-o-se pol, the monument is a stone double-deck arch bridge with approximately 300 meters in length.

that a significant number of whom were medical tourists.

“During the first three months of this year, the number of tourists arriving in the country increased by 40 percent, again [significant] part of whom was health tourism,” he said.

“Medical tourism is one of the most important fields of Iran’s travel sector and an [average] spending of \$2,400 per tourist indicates its importance.”

The country hosted a record high of nearly

600,000 medical travelers during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 21), nearly equal to the figure for the whole past year, according to the Iranian association for promoting health tourism.

People from the Persian Gulf littoral states, Iraq and Syria as well as Iranian expatriates residing in Canada and Germany constituted the majority of medical travelers to the Islamic Republic, who received plastic, cosmetic, open-heart and

orthopedic surgeries amongst other treatments, Mohammad Panahi, a deputy for the association, said in July.

Medical tourism fetched Iran some \$1.2 billion last year, Panahi said, adding that the figure has increased by 20-30 percent in the first four months of this year.

The Islamic Republic has set its goals to exceed its yearly medical travelers to around 2 million in [calendar year] 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

## Khorramabad festival to feature tribal lifestyle, rituals, crafts and arts

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — A major festival, intended to turn the spotlight on the lifestyle, rituals, crafts and arts of various tribes and nomadic people across Iran, is scheduled to be held in Khorramabad, the capital of Lorestan province, from October 30 to November 2.

Exhibitors from all over the country have been invited to take part in the event, which will also reflect tourist attractions, natural sceneries and historical sites of the western province.

Over 60 stalls and 20 Siah-Chadors (“vast traditional black tents”) are set to be set up for the exhibit, provincial tourism chief Seyyed Amin Qasemi said on Saturday, Mehr reported.

Local cousin contests, live music performances, and demonstrations of culinary art are amongst other programs for the event that will be held in a park nearing the historical Falak-ol-Aflak fortress, Qasemi added.

A destination for domestic and foreign travelers, the fortress dates from the Sassanid era (224–651). It seems particularly imposing and dramatic when floodlit at night offering picturesque views of its encircling crenellated battlements.

Bisheh Waterfall, Snow Tunnel, Poldokhtar ponds, Soltani Mosque of Borujerd, Shapouri Bridge, and Shirez Canyon are amongst other tourist sites of the mountainous province.



People tour Falak-ol-Aflak fortress, which dominates Khorramabad, the capital of Iran’s Lorestan province.

## How facial recognition is taking over airports



Instead of scanning her boarding pass, the airport gate scanned her face.

In April 2019, traveler MacKenzie Fegan was left surprised and confused when she boarded a JetBlue flight from the United States to Mexico, without handing over her passport, or travel documents.

“There were plastic barricades across the front of each lane, I look to my right, and the gate opens,” she tells CNN Travel. “I was like, ‘What, just happened?’ There was no boarding pass scan, nothing like that.”

Before she’d even sat down on her airplane seat, Fegan, a New York-based journalist, fired off a Tweet to JetBlue, asking the airline to explain the process.

“Did facial recognition replace boarding passes, unbeknownst to me? Did I consent to this?” She wrote, clicking send.

About 10 minutes later, Fegan received a reply: “You’re able to opt out of this procedure, MacKenzie. Sorry if this made you feel uncomfortable,” read the response.

Implicit in the Tweet was the answer that, yes, on some JetBlue flights, facial recognition and biometric technology is used -- seemingly to speed up boarding, and sift out security threats.

Fegan’s initial Tweet received over 8,500 likes, sparking a thread where passengers voiced privacy concerns and

debated the pros and cons of a technology that’s becoming omnipresent in airports across the world.

“We are increasingly moving towards this type of automation -- personal data and biometric data being available to companies and to corporations,” says Fegan.

“I had a lot of questions, I think everybody should have a lot of questions.”

Biometric technology describes tech that uses your physiological characteristics -- think, the iPhone thumbprint that lets you use Apple Pay or unlock your phone without a password.

Other examples include iris recognition, fingerprints and facial recognition.

These all seem to have become ubiquitous in recent years, but the technology’s not new. It’s not even new to airports.

Raoul Cooper, British Airways’ senior digital design manager, tells CNN Travel that BA -- alongside other airlines flying domestically to and from London’s Heathrow Airport -- has been using facial recognition on domestic travelers for about eight or nine years.

At Terminal 5 and Terminal 2, international travelers and domestic travelers mix in the common departure lounge.

“We do have to, as a result of that, separate our customers in some way -- so that you don’t have international travelers getting on to a domestic flight, especially if they’re in transit -- they could, in effect, jump the border,” explains Cooper.

“So we have to put the right use of technology in and around there to stop that from happening.”

Cooper lays out how facial technology works for BA customers at Heathrow. When a customer arrives at the airport and goes through the first security checkpoint, their facial image is “grabbed.”

“We grab your face, and we associate it to your boarding pass,” he explains.

“[The camera] is looking at the face and taking a number of measurements and building out what we call a biometric template. And that is kind of like the algorithmic side or the mathematical representation of your face, and that allows us to run algorithms on it.”

When passengers board their domestic flight, another

camera will take a snapshot of their face, and then sync up the picture it takes of them as they board, with the earlier shot from when they arrived at the airport.

“If the two match within the right sort of realms of accuracy, we say great -- that does correlate and it correlates with the boarding pass, and so the customer can pass through.”

If there’s a “hiccup” with the system, as Cooper puts it, BA staff will go through the secondary process -- checking documents, calling over an agent if necessary.

This system’s been in operation for domestic travelers in the UK for more than a decade. More recently, BA introduced self boarding gates and investigating the use of facial recognition for international travelers.

The British carrier partnered up with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to trial facial recognition for international flights between Orlando and London.

Cooper stresses the speed advantages.

“One of our best times was boarding 240 customers in about 10 minutes, without causing massive queues on the aircraft,” he says.

On the other side of the Atlantic the U.S. government has been using facial recognition for the past 20 years or so, although it’s only ramped up biometric boarding recently.

Biometric entry-exit has been recommended -- but not widely enforced -- since the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996.

The 9/11 Commission Report -- an official report into the 2001 terror attacks on New York and Washington -- concluded that a biometric entry-exit screening system for foreign nationals was integral to U.S. national security.

Since the mid-noughties, any non-U.S. citizen who travels to the United States gets their picture taken and fingerprints scanned on arrival.

In 2017 President Donald Trump signed an executive order to accelerate the full roll out of airport biometrics for all domestic and international travelers, something also supported by Barack Obama’s administration.

Now facial recognition’s going nationwide.

(Source: CNN)



# Netizens wondering why Ecuador protests not receiving coverage dedicated to Hong Kong protests

By Ali Radmanesh

**TEHRAN** — The western mainstream media is accused of dedicating little coverage to surprisingly massive protests against a package of austerity measures prepared by the government of Ecuador, raising questions in social media that how the coverage would be if the protests had taken place in Hong Kong or Venezuela.

Massive protests organized by a number of social organizations have nearly paralyzed Ecuador.

The demonstrations emerged on October 2, a day after President Lenin Moreno announced a host of economic and social austerity measures suggested by the International Monetary Fund as a condition for loans.

On the same day, the police and the armed forces started to violently repress the protesters. On October 3, the government decreed a state of emergency for 60 days.

The measures include removing subsidies, raising gas and food prices, and restructuring work laws.

The National Assembly has ratified a law that makes it possible to confiscate private assets from those involved in corruption.

People are protesting a massive increase in general prices, and the government's agreement with the IMF, which would affect oil, mining and timber corporations, among others.

## ■ Ecuadorian government worried

Such strikes ousted three governments in the country in the early 2000s, so the incumbent government is greatly worried about its survival.

President Moreno and other high ranking government officials have alleged a destabilization plot by Correa as a justification for declaring a state of emergency, and sent the military and riot squads to repress the protesters.

Even the Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido tweeted about his support for President Moreno, claiming that there is a Maduro–Correa plot.

But many protesters say the claims that former president is supporting the protests are manipulation efforts.

They say the claims are made despite a decade of Correa's forceful opposition to the indigenous movement. Correa not only



For about two weeks, Ecuadorians were protesting the implementation of IMF-advised austerity measures.

imprisoned many indigenous leaders, but also intensified a surveillance state apparatus on them, violently repressing demonstrations and waiving many of their constitutional rights in favor of mining projects.

Early Monday, Moreno and leaders of the country's indigenous people struck onto cancel a disputed austerity package and end nearly two weeks of protests that have paralyzed the economy and left seven people dead.

Under the deal, Moreno will withdraw the International Monetary Fund package that triggered a sharp rise in the price of gasoline and diesel fuel by removing subsidies. Indigenous leaders, in turn, will call on their followers to end days of protests and street blockades.

However, social media users are still

furiously why the media is ignoring demands by the Ecuadorian protesters.

## ■ Media defending government

There have been documented cases of human rights violations, including several deaths, hundreds of people detained, dozens of grave injuries, public beatings, run-overs and many alleged cases of torture.

But major media has focused on rioting or damages caused by the protesters, and they are yet to see the police repression or the demands being raised by the population.

Videos of journalists in pro-government news channels such as Ecuador TV advocating for the government is being circulated on social media.

According to the Venezuela-based news website Orinoco Tribune, a video shows a reporter who is defending the role played

by security forces but she then cuts off an interview with a citizen when he comments about his reasons to be protesting against the Government.

Teleamazonas, one of the most followed media in the Ecuador, was the channel chosen by the President to offer an interview last Tuesday. The same day in their social media they gave extensive coverage to a “vandalized” bicycle rack. According to them, that was one of the outstanding moments amidst the conflict that is keeping the whole region in turmoil.

Separately, digital media outlets like El Comercio, Ecuavisa, and El Universo highlighted the “millionaire losses” caused by the protests and their respective strikes in strategic areas of the country, such as industry and tourism.

## ■ Double standard

However, some social media users are questioning the mainstream media's treatment of the protests.

Comparing the casualties of the protests in Ecuador with the casualties in Hong Kong, many users asked why the mainstream media is not dedicating more coverage to the Ecuador protests than Hong Kong protests.

Some others said they cannot remember the last time they mentioned the Gilets Jaunes in France, but there is nothing, except the shoe-sizes, of the protesters in Hong Kong that they don't know.

“Uprisings in Haiti, Ecuador and Honduras: silence on mainstream media. Color revolutions in Hong Kong and Venezuela: 24/7 coverage on mainstream media. Genuine/spontaneous revolutions are the ones that are not promoted by Western elites, this is the reality,” tweeted Enrico Ivanov.

On the other hand, some alternative and community media have been focusing on the performance of police officers and their excessive use of force.

For instance, the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador has been posting in their social media some videos of large mobilizations, together with the repressive response of the police.

Days ago, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) expressed its concern on the “excessive use of force by the police,” though it was not quite echoed in the local media.

**Uprisings in Haiti, Ecuador and Honduras: silence on mainstream media. Color revolutions in Hong Kong and Venezuela: 24/7 coverage on mainstream media.**

## The New York Times pumps another ‘evil Russia’ plot

By Finian Cunningham

**RT** — The “newspaper of record” New York Times arguably holds the record for peddling anti-Russia scare stories. This week the NY Times delivered yet another classic spook tale dressed as serious news.

Among its splash articles, under the headline “Top Secret Russian Unit Seeks to Destabilize Europe, Security Officials Say”, readers were told of an elite Russian spy team which has, allegedly, only recently been discovered.

It's called “Unit 29155” and purportedly directed by the Kremlin to “destabilize Europe” with “subversion, sabotage and assassination.”

According to the NY Times, this crack squad of Russia's most ruthless military intelligence agents were involved in an attempted assassination of an arms dealer in Bulgaria in 2015; the destabilization of Moldova; a failed coup against the Montenegrin government; and the alleged poisoning of former double agent Sergei Skripal in England last year.

The article states: “Western security officials have now concluded that these operations, and potentially many others, are part of a coordinated and ongoing campaign to destabilize Europe, executed by an elite unit inside the Russian intelligence system skilled in subversion, sabotage and assassination.”

The NY Times adds: “The purpose of Unit 29155, which has not been previously reported, underscores the degree to which the Russian president, Vladimir V. Putin, is actively fighting the West with his brand of so-called hybrid warfare — a blend of propaganda, hacking attacks and disinformation — as well as open military confrontation.”

This is all because, the readers are told, “The Kremlin sees Russia as being at war with a Western liberal order that it views as an existential threat.”

In response, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov dismissed it as more of the “pulp fiction category” which Western news media have manufactured with seeming increasing intensity over recent years. Peskov pointed out that Moscow has repeatedly stated its desire to normalize relations with Western states and the European Union in particular, contradicting the theme of the NY Times' piece.

Indeed, the Russian Embassy in Britain recently published a compilation of false articles peddled by Western media over the past four years. The NY Times features prominently as one of the main purveyors of scare stories about alleged malign Russian activities, from hacking into presidential elections, to targeting American power grids, to covert collusion



**For students of Propaganda 101, this week's tale makes a case study of how disinformation is disseminated in the guise of “news reporting.”**

with President Donald Trump.

For students of Propaganda 101, this week's tale makes a case study of how disinformation is disseminated in the guise of “news reporting.”

First of all, the NY Times reporter, Michael Schwartz, gives a meandering account of lurid dirty deeds performed in various international locations allegedly carried out by the supposed “elite” Kremlin hybrid warriors. But tellingly, there are no details evidencing Russian involvement. It's all lurid speculation spiced with fear-mongering, which reads like a pallid John le Carré spy novel.

Then, the usual giveaway that the NY Times is engaging in disinformation, it quotes anonymous security officials for apparent verification of its claims about “Unit 29155”. This is tacit admission of who the real authors are: Western spooks.

Next, a neat effort to give the lame story some legs is to quote named public figures. But these sources don't confirm the existence of the alleged Kremlin unit; they are merely invited to speculate on its existence and presumed malign purpose. One of those named sources is MI6 chief Alex Younger. Yes, that's right, the paper of record is quoting British military intelligence as a reliable source for public information. Another named source

is Peter Zwack, who is described as a former US military intelligence officer who worked at the American Embassy in Moscow. Zwack is quoted as describing Russians as “organically ruthless” (whatever that means), while the paper actually admits that “he was not aware of the unit's existence.”

The purpose of throwing a few names into the reporting mix is to lend a veneer of credibility to the nebulous, unverifiable, scary stuff that the anonymous spooks feed the reporter.

A special mention must be given to a third named source quoted by the NY Times. He is Eerik-Niiles Kross, an Estonian lawmaker and former military intelligence chief in Tallinn. He styles himself as “Estonia's James Bond,” and is known for his salacious Russophobic warnings of “imminent invasion of the Baltic states” — over the past three decades. Kross is quoted to speculate on the existence of the alleged Kremlin hybrid warfare unit. Of course, he dutifully serves up his notorious anti-Russian fear-mongering. But he is not confirming. His speculation is pseudo-validation of information that is essentially fictional.

All in all, the latest installment of anti-Russia propaganda from the NY Times this week is a damp squib among many previous baseless reports of alleged Kremlin malign

**“From the outset, the use of journalists was among the CIA's most sensitive undertakings,” writes Bernstein.**

activity. If it serves any purpose, it is perhaps a choice illustration of how disinformation is sneakily, insidiously presented as ‘news’. The fact that this should appear in a Pulitzer Prize-winning, supposedly premier, American newspaper is the disturbing part.

But it is no surprise to those who have long studied how the US corporate media has been under the control of state intelligence agencies for many decades, especially after the Second World War and during the subsequent Cold War against the Soviet Union.

In a seminal essay in 1977 for Rolling Stone magazine, award-winning journalist Carl Bernstein documented how the CIA systematically cultivated hundreds of reporters, columnists, editors, publishing executives and broadcast networks to function as conduits for disinformation — much of it directed at demonizing the Soviet Union.

“From the outset, the use of journalists was among the CIA's most sensitive undertakings,” writes Bernstein.

He added: “By far the most valuable of these associations, according to CIA officials, have been with the New York Times, CBS and Time Inc.”

How the CIA goes about planting false stories in the American and European media is outlined in this candid interview by John Stockwell, who was former National Security Council coordinator for the agency during the 1970s. Stockwell also added: “Enemies are necessary for the wheels of the US military machine to turn.”

You may wonder, if the Cold War ended nearly 30 years ago when the Soviet Union dissolved, why then do the NY Times and other Western media outlets continue to pump out anti-Russian propaganda? But that assumes the Cold War was primarily about the US opposing the ideology of communism. It wasn't. It was, and still is, all about imposing control over the masses so they don't ever challenge the power structure that deprives them of full democratic rights and decent livelihoods.

In a recent interview, philosopher André Vitchek makes the point that Western politicians and media like the NY Times keep harping on Cold War scare stories about evil foreigners in order “to distract their citizens from thinking about their increasingly limited freedoms and diminishing standards of living.”

The Cold War continues, and anti-Russia hysteria is but a distraction, as was the anti-Soviet hysteria. The aim is to distract the public from the real Cold War which is a war by the elites against democracy ever being actually realized among the masses.

## Mainstream media suddenly care about Syrian civilian casualties

By Brett Wilkins

**COMMONDREAMS** — Turn on any US cable news network or click on any mainstream media news story about the Turkish offensive in Syria and you'll see lots of worrying about civilian casualties. On the first day of the Turkish campaign, all the major networks covered the mass exodus of Kurds facing imminent bombing and invasion, with most also airing the first reports of Kurdish civilian casualties. Everywhere we see expressions of concern for the innocent Kurds caught in the path of Turkey's onslaught.

There was no such concern in 2014 when the United States began its five-year bombing campaign against Islamic State (IS) in Syria and Iraq. Mainstream media outlets that regularly reported war crimes and mass slaughter when they were committed by IS fighters, Syrian government forces or Russian air strikes were suddenly silent as US and coalition bombing and, later, ground attacks killed thousands of Syrian and Iraqi men, women and children, to the point where for several months in 2017 US-led forces were killing more Syrian civilians than IS, Russian bombing or even Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces. Even reliable alternative media outlets like Democracy Now only occasionally reported civilian casualties, even though they were happening almost every day.

While it is impossible to say exactly how many civilians have been killed by US-led bombing over the past five years, SOHR has counted 4,036 Syrian civilians killed by coalition forces since the bombing began.



A Syrian man carried a child who was retrieved from a collapsed building following a reported U.S. coalition air strike on the rebel-held neighborhood of Sakhur in the northern city of Aleppo in July 2016.

Human rights monitors including Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) and Airwars have been publishing daily reports of civilian casualties caused by all belligerents in Syria and Iraq for years. These groups compile casualty lists from local media and monitor groups and are highly credible sources. Their reports are, however, almost completely ignored by the US corporate media. With the exception of a relative handful of high-casualty incidents—like the time in March 17 when more than 200 people were killed when US warplanes bombed an apartment building in Mosul, Iraq—American media focus almost exclusively on US military casualties, with civilian deaths usually little more than an afterthought when they are mentioned at all.

While it is impossible to say exactly how many civilians have been killed by US-led bombing over the past five years, SOHR has counted 4,036 Syrian civilians killed by coalition forces since the bombing began. That's about 3.5 percent of all civilian deaths in Syria's eight-year civil war. Airwars estimates at least 8,214 and as many as 13,125 Iraqi and Syrian civilians have been killed in more than 34,000 coalition attacks over the past five years. Earlier this year, the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights (IHCR) said around 11,800 civilians, including some 2,300 children, had died in US-led strikes since 2014. Entire cities like Raqqa in Syria and Mosul, Iraq were destroyed in the US-led offensive to liberate them from IS, with almost no reporting on US corporate TV news and only somewhat better online reporting.

Why are US mainstream media outlets so loth to report civilians killed or wounded by US bombs and bullets? First, they're American, and one of the many truths that Americans hold self-evident is that “we're the good guys.” This mythology is upheld by the US military, which in addition to undercounting civilian casualties—the Pentagon claims coalition forces have only killed about 1/10th as many civilians as Airwars' high-end estimate—always asserts that US troops take great pains to avoid harming innocents. US officials also often deny credible casualty reports until presented with overwhelming evidence. Casualty counting in active war zones is also a perilous undertaking, with many reported casualties difficult or sometimes impossible to verify.

The vast bulk of US mainstream media outlets are corporate-owned, with much of the American ownership class having vested interests in waging war.

Self-censorship is also at play here. Journalists who ask too many tough questions tend to lose access to the people making the most important decisions. During times of conflict, there is also a tendency to rally around the flag that can be taken to such extremes that some of the nation's most vaunted publications shamefully act as mouthpieces for government talking points and even cheerleaders for war for the war du jour. This is by no means the exclusive province of conservative media—witness Brian Williams, the disgraced NBC Nightly News anchor turned MSNBC host who gushed how he was “guided by the beauty of our weapons” as Trump launched cruise missiles at Syria. Williams was misinterpreting lyrics by the late, great Leonard Cohen, who surely rolled over in his pine box coffin upon hearing Williams' words. Speaking of that cruise missile attack, so-called liberal media outlets across the nation approvingly asserted how, at long last, Trump was finally acting “presidential” by escalating an already dangerous conflict.

Finally, there's the elephant in the room: the vast bulk of US mainstream media outlets are corporate-owned, with much of the American ownership class having vested interests in waging war. And so while reporting on individual wartime triumphs and tragedies is permitted, asking why the US has been at war for this entire century, or pointing out that the United States military has killed more foreign civilians than any other armed force on the planet since dropping two nuclear bombs on Japan in 1945, seems strictly verboten. There are exceptions. But on the whole, it's as Keith Olbermann once said, “you can rock the boat, but you can never say that the entire ocean is in trouble. You cannot say... there's something wrong with our system.”

As the Turkey escalates its attack on America's (yet again) abandoned Kurdish allies, you can expect to see heart-rending images and reports about the innocent men, women and children killed and maimed in the campaign. The same goes for the next time Syrian or Russian forces go on the offensive. However, if coverage of civilian casualties caused by US action is what you're after, you'll have to look to foreign or alternative media sources. After all, as US General Tommy Franks flippantly declared before the invasion of Iraq, “we don't do body counts.”



## Iranian students win medals in ITE 2019

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian students won 6 medals in International Invention and Trade Expo (ITE) 2019 which was held in London on August 29-30, Mehr news agency reported on Monday.



ITE provides a business platform for inventors, manufacturers and dealers to present their latest products and innovations and exchange information. Delegations from more than 20 countries participated in the expo to present their patented inventions and new ideas.

Secretary of the 4th national student festival of Ibn Sina, Mehdi Rashidi Jahan, said that the international contest is a propitious place for exchanging views where partners and investors mingle in a positive atmosphere.

The students who have won the 4th national student festival of Ibn Sina participated in the ITE 2019 which was held with the support of more than 60 international scientific and research organizations, he added.

The young Iranian inventors won two gold, two silver and two bronze medals, he highlighted.

The 4th national student festival of Ibn Sina attended by more than 5,000 students, instructors and school principals held on May 2 to 3, with the support of the Vice Presidency of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education.

## Ban air miles and stop frequent flyers to combat climate change, report urges

Air miles should be banned because they encourage excessive flying, according to a report commissioned by the government's climate change advisers.

Frequent flyers should be hit by an "escalating air miles levy" to put them off flying too much, rather than encouraged by reward schemes, the report says.

The suggestions are aimed at the 15 per cent of the UK population estimated to be responsible for 70 per cent of flights, many of whom take additional flights to "maintain their privileged traveller status".

The report by Imperial College London, commissioned by the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), also suggests flights should advertise their emissions in a simple way easily understood by customers.

The report, Behaviour Change, Public Engagement and Net Zero, was authored by Dr Richard Carmichael.

It said that "high impact shifts in consumer behaviours" were needed for the UK to reach its goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, rather than the "small and easy changes" suggested to UK households in the past.

It added policy changes were required which were "consistent with the scale of the climate challenge, build optimism and commitment, and give weight to new ambitious narratives that inspire wide public participation".

The report also included wider recommendations on sustainable living, including weekly collections of food waste and changes to diet, particularly eating less meat and switching to largely plant-based diets.

It also suggested mandatory labels on food products to show the environmental impact of producing the item.

(Source: The Independent)

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### India and Pakistan talks

(January 07, 2002)

The British Prime Minister Tony Blair has now arrived in Islamabad on the latest leg of a regional tour which is hoped will ease tensions between India and Pakistan. This report by Nick Childs.

In public at least neither Mr Blair's visit nor the regional summit in Nepal which just preceded his arrival in Delhi have done anything to alter India's **position on** dialogue with Pakistan. If Mr Blair was hoping for a **softening** of India's demands he was quickly disappointed. In a joint news conference, the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee insisted India was for **dialogue**, but only once Pakistan had done more to **rein in** the militants. That view has now been underlined by the Indian foreign minister, Jaswant Singh, who declared that Pakistan's position hasn't changed.

Indian officials are sure to welcome Mr Blair's broad **denunciation** of terrorism **without distinction** and see it as a **vindication of their own stance** and diplomacy. But he **sidestepped** endorsement of India's detailed demands on Pakistan. Any sign of whether there is **room for maneuver** on India's demands will have to await the outcome of the British leader's talks in Islamabad. His ability to influence the two sides was always going to be limited **albeit** that his efforts were clearly with the blessing of Washington. Mr Blair's visit has received prominent coverage in the media here but not as much as the failure of the recent summit in Nepal to produce a diplomatic breakthrough.

■ **Words**  
**position on:** attitude towards  
**dialogue:** formal discussions  
**softening:** becoming less hostile  
**rein in:** restrain  
**denunciation:** severe public criticism  
**without distinction:** without exception  
**vindication of their own stance:** proof that their attitude is valid  
**sidestepped:** avoided  
**room for maneuver:** possibility of a compromise  
**albeit:** even though

(Source: BBC)

# WHO lauds Iran's commitment to public health coverage

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — World Health Organization Director General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, has said Iran's commitment to ensure highest health standards for all segments of population is commendable, ISNA reported.

Adhanom Ghebreyesus admired Iran's efforts on providing access to comprehensive healthcare services for all the residents, saying that offering healthcare services to all is a global commitment, and other countries must look to Iran as a role model in terms of public health coverage and primary healthcare.

He made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian Health Minister, Saeed Namaki, prior to the 66th session of the WHO Regional Committee for the Eastern Mediterranean in Tehran on Sunday.

Providing universal healthcare has recently been emphasized at the United Nations, and a resolution was recently adopted at the UN General



*Iranian Health Minister Saeed Namaki (L) meets Director General of World Health Organization Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus*

Assembly, he said.

Namaki, for his part, said "we also hope that the event would help boost international cooperation and infrastructure development of health sector among member states."

The 3-day event kicked off in Tehran on October 14, with health ministers and high-level representatives of the 22 countries and territories of the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region, partner organizations and civil society in attendance.

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

## UK renewables generate more electricity than fossil fuels for the first time



UK renewables have generated more electricity than fossil fuels for the first time, according to an analysis of energy use for the third quarter of this year.

Wind farms, solar panels, biomass and hydropower generated 29.5 terawatt hours (TWh) of energy for the months of July, August and September, compared to 29.1TWh from fossil fuels, according to Carbon Brief.

In 2010, 10 times more energy came from burning fossil fuels than renewable energy, but the cost of renewables has tumbled, with onshore wind and solar power frequently cheaper.

This marks the latest milestone in the rapid decarbonization of the UK's electricity system.

Dr Simon Evans, deputy editor of Carbon Brief, told The Independent: "The UK has made significant progress in cutting its CO2 emissions over the past decade.

"Almost all of that progress is thanks to the electricity sector, which as our analysis shows has seen fossil fuel generation halve since 2010 and renewables increase more than fourfold.

"Other parts of the economy have made very little progress. The UK will not be able to meet its legally-binding carbon targets in future without emissions cuts in other areas, such as heating and transport," he said.

Out of the total of 29.1TWh from fossil fuels, 28.4TWh came from gas, 0.4TWh

came from coal and 0.3TWh from oil, according to the analysis of national statistics from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

There are now just seven coal-fired power stations left in the UK, with the last one set to close by 2025.

Out of the 29.5TWh from renewable sources of energy, 14.6TWh came from wind, 8.8TWh from biomass, 4.7TWh from solar and 1.4TWh came from hydropower.

This is part of a growing trend and in the first three quarters of this year, renewables did better than fossil fuels on 103 out of 273 of the days.

However, despite huge success in the electricity sector, other parts of the economy have made little progress in reducing emissions.

Last year 6.8tns of greenhouse gases were emitted per person and by 2050 this will need to have dropped to zero.

The Committee on Climate Change's (CCC) annual report to parliament showed UK action to slash greenhouse gas emissions driving climate change is lagging far behind what is needed.

BEIS was awarded £30m extra in the latest spending round to "accelerate progress" on decarbonisation projects next year.

However, this was just 0.1 per cent of what is required, according to Britain's biggest environmental groups, including Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth.

(Source: The Independent)

## Italy proposes price cuts on plastic-free food and toiletries



Shoppers in Italy could soon receive discounts at the checkout on products sold without packaging under measures proposed by the government to reduce single-use plastic.

Food, drinks, shampoos, liquid washes and detergents sold from dispensers or in reusable containers would be cheaper, and shop bosses would be given financial incentives to offer products this way.

As part of a series of measures, which are due to be debated in cabinet on Thursday, shops would have new "green corners", and people who give up their cars and mopeds could be offered public transport season tickets or support to buy bicycles.

There would also be an urban reforestation plan, a £20m (£17.4m) investment in electric and hybrid school buses and an environmental campaign in schools.

It comes days after Sainsbury's, the second largest supermarket chain in the UK, removed all plastic bags for loose fruit and vegetables, offering instead net bags made of recycled bottles and encouraging customers to bring their own containers.

Supermarkets have come under a barrage of pressure from shoppers angry at the amount of plastic packaging on goods.

A Greenpeace report last year on supermarkets' plastic packaging found supermarkets were not moving fast enough to remove unnecessary and

non-recyclable plastic.

Earlier this year, Tesco pledged to ban any brands using excessive packaging from next year.

Giuseppe Conte, the Italian prime minister, said the country was seeking to be a leader in making its economy more sustainable, the Guardian reported.

On Thursday night, the country's council of ministers passed new environmental laws described by Sergio Costa, the environment minister, as "a revolution for the system... and the base on which we are founding the green new deal".

Mr Costa wrote on Facebook that while most attention is on the oceans; most waste ends up in rivers.

"If on the one hand it is true that the amount of plastic envelopes in rivers has decreased, thanks to European regulations and the introduction of biodegradable envelopes, up to about 1 per cent density, on the other we must note that the amount of bottles increased, reaching even 14 per cent, followed by food wrappers with 12 per cent, not to mention cigarette butts, with 9 per cent.

"Plastic waste in rivers represents about 37.5 per cent of the total present."

The Independent has asked the UK's environment department whether it has also considered introducing schemes offering discounts for loose produce.

(Source: The Independent)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## Clean air days double for Tehraners this year

Tehrani citizens have experienced a 2-fold rise in the number of clean air days since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21, 2018) compared to the same period last year, an official with Department of Environment has said.

Since the aforementioned period, clean air stayed in the capital for 27 days, while last year, during the same period, Tehraners breathed clean air for only 14 days, IRNA quoted Shina Ansari as saying on Sunday.

Also, the air quality of the capital was healthy for 262 days, while being unhealthy for sensitive groups for 59 days, she said, adding that compared to the same period last year, Tehran's air quality reached healthy levels for 229 days and 97 days of unhealthy for sensitive groups has hit the capital.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “-plast, -plasty, -plastic”

■ **Meaning:** living cell or particle

■ **For example:** The next approach is **angioplasty**, in which a catheter is used to balloon open the arrowed part of the artery.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Head something off

■ **Meaning:** to prevent something from happening, especially something bad

■ **For example:** The President intervened to head off the conflict.

## IDIOM

### Nip something in the bud

■ **Explanation:** to prevent something from becoming a problem by stopping it as soon as it starts

■ **For example:** Try to nip this kind of bad behavior in the bud.

## تهرانی‌ها امسال دو برابر بیشتر روزهای پاک داشتند

مدیرکل دفتر پایش فراگیر سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست گفت: تهرانی‌ها از ابتدای امسال تا امروز (۱۲ اسفند ۹۷) نسبت به مدت مشابه سال گذشته، دو برابر هوای پاک تنفس کردند.

شینا انصاری روز یکشنبه در گفت‌وگو با ایرنا افزود: تهران از ابتدای امسال تا امروز، ۲۷ روز هوای پاک داشته در حالیکه سال گذشته در مدت مشابه، تعداد روزهای پاک ۱۴ روز بوده است.

وی اظهار داشت: همچنین از ابتدای امسال تاکنون، کیفیت هوای پایتخت برای ۲۶۲ روز قابل قبول و ۵۹ روز ناسالم برای گروه‌های حساس بوده که در مدت مشابه سال گذشته به ترتیب ۲۲۹ و ۹۷ روز بوده که هشت روز نیز ناسالم برای تمام گروه‌ها بوده است.



# Syrian troops enter three towns after deal with Kurds

➔ Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group, said Kurdish authorities had "made compromises to Syria in order to stop the advance of the Turkish forces in the north."

SDF chief Ferhat Abdi Sahin, also known as Mazlum Abdi, acknowledged that "there would be painful compromises" with the Syrian government in a bid to save the lives of people.

"In light of the invasion by Turkey and the existential threat its attack poses for our people, we may have to reconsider our alliances," he said in an opinion piece published in the U.S. Foreign Policy magazine on Sunday.

Badran Jia Kurd, a senior Kurdish official, said the Kurds felt they had no choice but to turn to Damascus in the face of the "betrayal" of Washington, noting, "This has obliged us to look for alternative options."

Since it was launched on Wednesday, the Turkish military incursion has killed dozens



of people and displaced tens of thousands of Syrians.

On Sunday, President Tayyip Erdogan said Turkey's incursion will stretch from

Kobani in the west to Hasakeh in the east, going some 30 km (19 miles) into Syrian territory.

The Observatory said earlier Sunday that Turkish troops and their militant allies had entered Suluk, some 10 km from Turkey's border.

Addressing a news conference in Istanbul, Erdogan said Turkish forces had also besieged the Syrian border town of Tel Abyad, west of Ras al-Ain.

"We focused first on the 120-km area between Ras al-Ain and Tel Abyad. Thus we will divide the 480-km terrorist corridor down the middle," Erdogan said.

"Then we will take control of Hasakeh on the one side and Ain al-Arab (Kobani) on the other and complete the operation," he said, referring to towns either side of the current focus of operations.

According to Press TV, Turkish troops have so far seized control of 109 square km territory, including 17 villages around Tel Abyad and four villages around Ras al-Ain, Erdogan said.

## Yemeni forces shoot down drone collecting intelligence for Riyadh in Hudaydah

**TEHRAN** — A drone operated by the Saudi-led military coalition has been intercepted and targeted while flying in the skies over Yemen's strategic western province of Hudaydah.

The media bureau of Yemen's Houthis Ansarullah movement said in a statement on Sunday that Yemeni army forces, supported by allied fighters from the Popular Committees, shot down the aircraft as it was on a reconnaissance mission over Kilo 16 district.

Separately, a bomb explosion struck a group of Riyadh's mercenaries loyal to Yemen's former President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi south of al-Maton district in the northern Yemeni province of al-Jawf. Casualties were reported but the exact number remains unknown.

Earlier in the day, the Fakher area of the Qa'atabah district in Yemen's southwestern province of Dhale was the scene of an indiscriminate shooting by militiamen sponsored by the Saudi regime. Two refugee children were injured in the incident.

Mercenaries also shelled a number of villages in the Hays district of Hudaydah

province. No reports of damage or possible casualties were immediately available.

Moreover, Saudi-led forces sprayed a number of buildings on two streets in Yemen's western coastal city of Hudaydah with machinegun rounds. There were no quick reports of casualties though.

According to Press TV, Saudi Arabia and a number of its regional allies launched a devastating campaign against Yemen in March 2015, with the goal of bringing the government of Hadi back to power and crushing the Ansarullah movement.

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

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

## Pentagon chief sends mixed signals on impeachment

**TEHRAN** — Pentagon chief Mark Esper appears to vow to cooperate with the impeachment inquiry underway in the Democratic-held House against U.S. President Donald Trump, yet asserting that the White House also has a "say" in subpoenas sent to the Defense Department.

"We will do everything we can to respond to their inquiry, Chris," the American defense secretary told Fox News on Sunday. "My general counsel a week or two ago sent out a note, as we often do in these situations, to the key members in the Pentagon to say, 'Retain your documents and institute other controls... So, again, we will respond as we can.'"

Esper refused to say whether the Pentagon would meet that target date of subpoenas already sent to them.

"I don't know the status of what that document preparation is. I don't know what restrictions we may have internally with regard to releasing them," he said. "The White House has a say on the release of documents, as well. There are a number of things that play into this."

The Trump administration has been trying to stop staff from responding to subpoenas issued by the House to investigate the Ukraine scandal as part of the impeachment inquiry.

Trump's ambassador to the European Union, Gordon Sondland was reportedly preparing to finally appear before U.S. House despite formerly refusing to do so.

According to Press TV, Trump is under pressure for tying U.S. military aid to Ukraine to an investigation into Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, over allegations of corruption.

"The enclosed subpoena demands documents that are necessary for the Committees to examine this sequence of these events and the reasons behind the White House's decision to withhold critical military assistance to Ukraine that was appropriated by Congress to counter Russian aggression," the three House Democratic chairmen leading the impeachment inquiry wrote in a letter to Esper, giving him until October 15.

## Trump: 'Big sanctions on Turkey coming'

**TEHRAN** — U.S. President Donald Trump has said that "big sanctions" on Turkey are coming after its military launched an offensive against Kurdish fighters in northern Syria.

In a tweet on Monday, Trump also said that the Syrian Kurds targeted by Turkish forces may be releasing some Daesh prisoners to get the United States involved in the conflict.

"Big sanctions on Turkey coming! Do people really think we should go to war with NATO Member Turkey? Never ending wars will end!" he tweeted.

"We are not going into another war between people who have been fighting with each other for 200 years. Europe had a chance to get their ISIS (Daesh) prisoners, but didn't want the cost. 'Let the USA pay,' they said," he added. "Kurds may be releasing some to get us involved. Easily recaptured by Turkey or European Nations from where many came, but they should move quickly."

Turkey on Wednesday began pounding positions of the



Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) with jets and artillery and sent in troops to purge them from the area east of Euphrates.

The offensive came three days after Trump in a sudden change of policy told his counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan that he would pull U.S. troops from the region, effectively exposing the Kurdish militants to their arch-enemy, Turkey.

Shortly after the attack began, a bipartisan group of senators brought legislation that would freeze all assets Erdogan and other Turkish leaders have in the U.S. and impose visa restrictions until Ankara withdraws from Syria.

It would also slap sanctions on entities that do business with Turkey's military or support its domestic energy industry for use by its armed forces.

According to Press TV, Trump's move to withdraw troops from Syria was widely condemned by both Republican and Democratic Party lawmakers in Congress. House lawmakers are drafting a resolution to impose punitive sanctions on Turkey for its offensive in Syria.

## Catalan separatist leaders handed jail terms for independence bid

**TEHRAN** — Protesters have hit the streets in north-eastern Spain after the country's Supreme Court on Monday sentenced nine of the 12 accused Catalan separatist leaders to between nine and 13 years in prison.

The 12 were accused of sedition over their roles in the region's 2017 failed bid for independence.

Protesters blocked five regional roads across Catalonia, officials at the Catalan road traffic agency said on Monday.

Several streets in Barcelona were also blocked by protests, including parts of Diagonal avenue, which crosses the whole city, local police said. There were also protests

in several big Catalan municipalities, such as Girona and Lleida.

Train tracks were briefly blocked outside Girona, a separatist stronghold, rail operator Rodalies said on Twitter.

The independence leaders' sentences were lower than demanded by the prosecution - which had sought up to 25 years behind bars for former Catalan Vice President Oriol Junqueras.

"The Supreme Court has condemned Oriol Junqueras to 13 years of prison... on grounds of sedition and the misuse of public

funds," the ruling said.

The three other defendants in the landmark ruling were found guilty only of disobedience and not sentenced to prison. All defendants were acquitted of the most severe charge, rebellion.

The separatists were charged for their role in organising a referendum on the secession of the northeastern region of Catalonia from the Spanish state in October 2017.

The government and the Spanish opposition, however, have welcomed the court's decision.

"The sentence must be carried out and complied with," Jose Luis Abalos, the acting

public works minister told public broadcaster TVE.

"In Catalonia, there is a need for clear and responsible leadership on behalf of separatists."

The leader of the opposition People's Party said that Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez must affirm that he "will not pardon those convicted" and that he would on the side of the government "preserve public order and to avoid violent attitudes in the streets".

The separatist leaders' failed attempt to secede from the European nation had sparked the worst political crisis in decades, Al Jazeera reported.

## Queen says Britain still aiming for Brexit end of October

**TEHRAN** — Britain is still aiming for Brexit at the end of the month, Queen Elizabeth II said Monday, as she set out the executive's legislative program for a new parliamentary session.

"My government's priority has always been to secure the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union October 31," she told lawmakers, as last-minute talks continued in Brussels to secure a divorce deal.

Britain's government is planning a first post-Brexit budget for November 6, finance minister Sajid Javid announced Monday.

"This will be the first budget after leaving the EU," Javid said in a statement.

"I will be setting out our plan to shape the econ-

omy for the future and triggering the start of our infrastructure revolution. This is the right and responsible thing to do - we must get on with governing," he added.

Britain and the EU are currently locked in last-ditch talks to secure a divorce deal ahead of a crunch two-day summit for European leaders in Brussels starting Thursday.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson insists that Britain will leave the bloc October 31 as scheduled, even without an agreement, daily Star reported.

But British members of parliament last month passed a law requiring him to request a Brexit extension if no deal has been finalized by the end of the summit.

It remains unclear how Johnson intends to proceed in such a situation.

Meanwhile the budget, Javid's first as chancellor, was expected to build on proposals he set out last month for infrastructure, including hospitals and railways.

However Jon Trickett, the Labour Party's Cabinet Office spokesman, was sceptical the budget would be delivered as planned, with opposition parties threatening to topple Johnson's government and the prime minister himself pushing for a snap election.

"I would be surprised if there is a budget at that time because they've no idea whether they're going to get this Brexit proposal through the House (of Commons) or not," he told BBC Radio.

## Iran is taking the next nuclear step

➔ Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, surrendered to her Western counterparts much earlier than expected. As a result, by mid-2017, talks between American and European diplomats on changing the nuclear deal entered a new phase. A deal in which diplomats from the United States, Germany, France, and Britain, worked on a common goal called "complementary" or "secondary" agreement aimed at achieving Trump's four demands.

European officials have continued to meet White House demands since Trump left the nuclear deal with Iran. An issue that is no longer hidden from public view of the world!

## Kais Saied elected Tunisia president with slogan of support for Palestine

➔ **Palestinian Groups Congratulate Kais Saied**

Meanwhile, Palestinian resistance movements Hamas and Islamic Jihad congratulated Kais Saied on winning Tunisia's presidential election.



In separate statements, the two movements hoped that the election result would lead to Tunisia's further progress and development.

They also hailed the incoming president's support for the Palestinian cause.

Tunisia's electoral commission was expected to confirm on Monday that voters gave conservative political outsider Kais Saied a sweeping mandate to be the next president, thanks largely to young people who flocked to his side.

"He was elected very comfortably," political scientist Selim Kharrat said.

With his three million estimated votes, Saied won double that of all 217 politicians combined who were elected in October 6 general elections.

Last week, Tunisia's Watania TV aired a debate between the two final contenders in the country's presidential race, with the issues of Israel coming up in the debate.

Kais Saied said that the problem is not with the Jews and that Tunisians, including his father, protected Jews from the Nazis. He also said that anybody who normalizes relations with Israel, with which he said Tunisia is in a state of war, should be tried for treason.

## Iran has foiled hostile plan in the region

➔ This is a great achievement for all countries in the region, which can herald a bright future for Iran, such as cultural, economic and political influence across a vast area extending to the Mediterranean coast.

This is an area that can change the fate of Iran and have a profound impact. This matter is so serious since the area extended from Tehran to Latakia and Beirut.

This regional achievement, if nothing bad happens and security is established, can resolve all economic problems, terminate pressures, and bring great prosperity. We should be grateful for this opportunity and seize it.

Beside Iran, there were also non-calculable factors that made the achievement happen, including domestic developments in the U.S., Britain, France, and Western Europe. Many issues were beyond our control and imagination. It can be said that our destiny led us to this point.

## Putin visits Saudi Arabia

**TEHRAN** — Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Saudi Arabia Monday, where he was set to seal oil agreements and try to use his influence to defuse tensions boiling in the Gulf.



His meetings with King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman comes following attacks on Saudi oil installations that Riyadh and Washington have blamed on Moscow ally Tehran.

Oil will be "the main topic of discussion" between the leaders, Russian political analyst Fyodor Lukyanov said, as a deal between the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and Moscow is due to expire next spring.

Moscow is not a member of OPEC, but it has worked closely with the group to limit supply and push up prices after a 2014 slump that wreaked havoc on the economies of Russia and cartel heavyweight Saudi Arabia.

In an interview with Arabic-language television channels ahead of his visit, Putin praised his good relations with the Saudi royals, AFP reported.



## Fresh off world record run, Kosgei thinks women can go even faster

Like any true competitor, Kenya's Brigid Kosgei does not plan to coast on her latest accomplishment — even if that happens to be running the fastest-ever women's marathon.

Hours after shattering Paula Radcliffe's 16-year-old world record, running the Chicago Marathon in two hours, 14 minutes and four seconds, the 25-year-old said she believes any number of competitors could beat her.

"If a lady can prepare good and they have no injury... they can reduce to reduce to 2:12 or one minute to 2:13," Kosgei told a news conference.

But while she stopped short of pointing to a 2:10:00 marathon for herself, she made clear that her sole goal is getting even faster. "I'm still focusing to reduce my time again – if it's possible," Kosgei said. "If my body would be good (I could) reduce little by little, slowly."

While her year-to-year career improvement could hardly be described as "slow," it has been steady. In 2017 and 2018 she finished the Chicago Marathon in 2:20:22 and 2:18:35, respectively, after logging a year-end best time of 2:24:45 at Lisbon in 2016.

The 25-year-old arrived in the Windy City as an overwhelming favorite, having won the race in 2018.

Last month she clinched the unofficial best women's half marathon time of 1:04:28 at the Great North Run and earlier this year she became the youngest woman to ever win the London Marathon.

Her confidence showed at the start of the race, when she set an aggressive pace of 3:05.59 minutes per kilometer in the first 5km, causing commentators to fret that she had perhaps overextended herself.

"I was too fast because I wanted to leave the group and focus," said Kosgei. "I come here to run my own pace, I don't depend on someone."

(Source: Reuters)

## Boxer being treated for brain injury after Charles Conwell fight

Boxer Patrick Day is in an "extremely critical condition" after his defeat by Charles Conwell in Chicago.

The 27-year-old American is in a coma with "a traumatic brain injury", said his promoter.

Day was taken to Northwestern Memorial Hospital after being knocked out in the 10th round of his super welterweight bout on the undercard of the Oleksandr Usyk-Chazz Witherspoon fight in the US.

"Pat makes any room he is in a better place," said promoter Lou DiBella.

"I've never met anyone who's met Patrick and not liked him. Never heard him utter a mean word. Never seen him greet someone without a big smile. Life doesn't seem fair sometimes.

"Please keep Pat in your prayers, thoughts and hearts."

Day was taken from the ring on a stretcher on Saturday.

British boxing promoter Eddie Hearn wrote on social media: "Deepest prayers with Patrick right now."

His company, Matchroom Boxing, which organized the event, also posted to say Day had "been taken directly to hospital".

Speaking after the fight, 21-year-old American Conwell told IFL TV: "I give my blessings and concerns to him and his team. I hope he is OK. I know he is a great person."

(Source: BBC)

## Doping court sets date for Chinese swimming champ Sun

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has given Chinese Olympic and world champion swimmer Sun Yang, accused of smashing a doping test sample with a hammer, a November court date, swimming's governing body said Monday.

"The CAS hearing concerning the swimmer Sun will take place on November 15 in Montreux," an official for FINA, the world swimming federation, told AFP.

The court action follows an explosive report from FINA's own anti-doping committee in January saying Sun had used a hammer to smash a blood sample during an out-of-competition test in September last year.

However FINA agreed with Sun, winner of multiple world and Olympic titles, that testers had failed to produce adequate identification or follow protocol during the testing, clearing him of wrongdoing.

But the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) responded by taking the case to CAS.

In a break with the CAS tradition of holding sessions behind closed doors, the hearing will be open to the public and will take place away from the court's headquarters in Lausanne.

The hearing was originally fixed for September but postponed at the request of one of the parties, CAS said in August.

(Source: France 24)

## Roger Federer wants to compete at Tokyo 2020 Olympics

As he nears the end of a remarkable career Roger Federer says he wants to play for Switzerland at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

The Swiss great, 38, had been undecided on competing in a fourth Games, but after an exhibition match with John Isner in Tokyo he revealed he will have another shot at one of the very few titles to have eluded him -- Olympic singles gold.

The 20-time grand slam champion won silver in London in 2012 and clinched gold with Stan Wawrinka in doubles in Beijing in 2008. His missed the Rio Games in 2016 with an injury. "I've been debating with my team for a few weeks now, a month actually, what I should do in the summertime after Wimbledon in terms of before the US Open," said Federer in Japan.

"At the end of the day, my heart decided I'd love to play the Olympic Games again. I carried the flag twice for Switzerland in Athens and Beijing, got a gold and a silver. So I'd love to play again -- I'm very excited."

Federer will need a wildcard to be eligible to play as he has not competed in the Davis Cup for Switzerland in this Olympic cycle.

The Olympics runs from July 24-August 9 next year, falling two weeks after Wimbledon and three weeks before the US Open.

Federer won his last grand slam title at the Australian Open in 2018, but he reached the final of Wimbledon this year, losing in five sets to Novak Djokovic after holding two match points.

(Source: CNN)

# Barcelona offer support to jailed Catalan separatist leaders

Barcelona have announced their support for the nine separatist leaders from Catalonia handed prison terms of between nine and 13 years over their role in a failed bid for independence from Spain.

The Spanish champions said "prison is not the solution" and called on political leaders to engage in dialogue to resolve the ongoing conflict.

All nine defendants had been held without bail for almost two years and were sentenced on Monday. They were all acquitted of the gravest charge, rebellion, but were found guilty of sedition. Three other defendants were found culpable of disobedience but were not handed jail terms.

The landmark ruling in Spain relates to a 2017 referendum on independence, which was deemed illegal by central government, organized by Catalan politicians and civil leaders.

"In the same way that the preventive prison sentence didn't help to resolve the conflict, neither will the prison sentence given [on Monday], because prison is not the solution," Barca said in a statement.

"The resolution of the conflict in Catalonia must come exclusively from political dialogue.

"Therefore, now more than ever, the club asks all political leaders to lead a process of dialogue and negotiation to resolve this conflict, which should also allow for the



release of convicted civic and political leaders.

"Barcelona also expresses all its support and solidarity to the families of those who are deprived of their freedom."

Elsewhere, the Catalan Football Federation announced all activity on Monday had been suspended, while La Liga side Espanyol, based in Barcelona, and second division side Girona also released short statements.

## Ex-Chelsea, Arsenal GK Petr Cech makes stellar ice hockey debut



Former Arsenal and Chelsea goalkeeper Petr Cech made his competitive ice hockey debut on Sunday, helping the Guildford Phoenix win on a penalty shootout save.

The 37-year-old is a big fan of the sport and said he it was a dream to play in a game after his retirement from football last year. He signed last week with Guildford, who play National Ice Hockey League South 2.

"It is kind of a childhood dream to come and play one game, which has [now] happened," said Cech, whose penalty save as netminder beat Swindon Wildcats 2 and helped maintain Phoenix's perfect start. "Nobody will ever take this away from me, which is really nice."

Cech wore a custom-made goalie mask adorned with the Union Jack flag on top, along with the crests of Chelsea and Arsenal.

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Cech wore a custom-made goalie mask adorned with the Union Jack flag on top, along with the crests of Chelsea and Arsenal.

"If you have a dream and you chase it and you do everything to make it happen... I have done that in football and all my dreams have come true," he added after the 3-2 win. "I said, 'this might be the last dream I was hoping to [tick off]'. But I worked hard for it."

Cech serves as a technical advisor for Chelsea, where he played 10 seasons and won four Premier League titles and the 2012-13 Champions League. After his time at Stamford Bridge, he played an additional four campaigns at London rivals Arsenal before retiring.

(Source: ESPN)

## Mercedes reset targets as sixth F1 title double sinks in



Formula One champions Mercedes are wondering how far they can go after securing an unprecedented sixth successive title double in Japan on Sunday.

The Silver Arrows wrapped up the constructors' crown with four races to spare at Suzuka, with only Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas now left in the running for the other championship.

Hamilton is 64 points ahead of the Finn, Sunday's winner, and firmly on course to secure his sixth title with only Michael Schumacher — on seven — ahead of the Briton in the sport's all-time record books.

"Every year we are trying to set objectives that motivate us," Mercedes F1 principal Toto Wolff told reporters as the team celebrated.

"So we have beaten the Ferrari record now and we've got to reinvent ourselves for next year."

Ferrari won six successive constructors' titles between 1999 and 2004, with Schumacher taking five drivers' crowns in a row from 2000-04.

Hamilton has already claimed several of Schumacher's records but the two big ones — the most titles and races won — are still to be matched.

The 34-year-old is on 82 wins, nine short of Schumacher's 91, with that also looking a realistic target for 2020 given that Hamilton is averaging 10 wins a season over the past six campaigns.

Mercedes are still far off Ferrari's record 16 constructors' championships and 15 drivers' titles but making it six on Sunday was massive for a team who have tried to portray themselves as underdogs against a faster Ferrari this season.

"The pressure is enormous," said Wolff. "The truth is you are setting your own bar very high, and your own expectations, and then just not meeting those expectations is extremely painful."

Next season, with 22 races, will be the longest ever and Mercedes are already concerned that Ferrari have a performance advantage that they can carry over to good effect with stable rules before an overhaul in 2021.

Ferrari have been on pole for the past five races and locked out the front row in Suzuka, and Wolff said their could be no complacency and there was still plenty of work to be done.

(Source: Reuters)

## Poland, Russia reach Euro 2020 as Germany, Netherlands close in

Poland and Russia secured their places at Euro 2020 on Sunday with victories over North Macedonia and Cyprus respectively, while Germany and the Netherlands boosted their hopes of reaching the finals.

Russia eased to a 5-0 thrashing of 10-man Cyprus, with Poland joining them, Belgium and Italy in qualifying this week by seeing off North Macedonia 2-0.

Stanislav Cherchesov's Russia, who reached the World Cup quarter-finals on home soil last year, only had to avoid defeat in Nicosia to follow Belgium in qualifying from Group I.

Valencia winger Denis Cheryshev fired in a ninth-minute opener for the visitors, before Magomed Ozdoev, who scored a fabulous long-range strike on Thursday against Scotland, made it two midway through the first half.

Any thoughts of a Cyprus comeback were ended in just the 28th minute when Kostas Laifis was dismissed for a nasty lunge on Russian full-back Sergei Petrov.

Striker Artem Dzyuba scored his third goal in two games in the 79th minute, before Aleksandr Golovin and Cheryshev's second completed the rout late on.

Russia will attempt to overtake Belgium, who beat Kazakhstan 2-0 earlier on Sunday, at the summit when they host the world's number one side on November 16.

The European Championship finals, which start on June 12 next year, are being held at 12 different venues across the continent, including Saint Petersburg in Russia.

Poland went into their game against North Macedonia knowing victory would punch their ticket for the Euros.



They were forced to be patient by the visitors, who could qualify through the playoffs after winning their Nations League group if they fail to do so automatically.

But Przemyslaw Frankowski prodded home less than 60 seconds after coming on as a substitute in the 74th minute, before Akardiusz Milik made the points safe.

Poland remain three points clear of Austria, who won 1-0 in Slovenia, at the top of Group G, with North Macedonia and Slovenia five points further adrift.

■ **Dutch see off Belarus**

Ronald Koeman's Netherlands remained at the top of

Group C ahead of Germany on head-to-head record with a nervy 2-1 win over Belarus in Minsk.

The Dutch lead third-placed Northern Ireland by three points after beating Michael O'Neill's side 3-1 on Thursday.

Georginio Wijnaldum headed the away team in front in the 32nd minute, shortly after Denis Laptev had spurned a golden chance to give Belarus a shock lead.

The Liverpool midfielder doubled the advantage before the break with a wonderful 25-yard strike into the top corner, and although Stanislav Dragun gave Belarus hope early in the second half, the Netherlands held on with relative comfort.

"We have to do better than we did in the second half, although in the end we had things under control," Dutch captain Virgil van Dijk told television channel NOS.

"We are now very close to qualifying for the finals, and ultimately that's what counts."

Victory in Belfast over the Northern Irish next month would secure the Oranje a first appearance at a major tournament since finishing third at the 2014 World Cup.

Germany eased to a 3-0 victory in Estonia despite seeing Emre Can sent off in the 14th minute.

Ilkay Gundogan, who along with Can before kickoff 'unliked' a controversial Instagram post by Turkey forward Cenk Tosun, scored twice, with Timo Werner also finding the net.

Joachim Loew's side host Northern Ireland in their final game, which could decide second place.

(Source: AFP)



# Bahrain a tough team to beat: Marc Wilmots

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran national team head coach Marc Wilmots says that Bahrain are a team tough to beat but they are ready to win the match.

Team Melli will meet Bahrain at Bahrain National Stadium in Riffa on Tuesday's matchday 4 of Asia's Round 2 qualifying for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar in Group C.

"We have defeated Hong Kong and Cambodia so far and want to continue our winning way. We know that Bahrain are the team tough to beat because they give their opponents no scoring chance. In spite of that, we are ready to defeat them," Wilmots said in the pre-match press conference.

Iran smashed Cambodia 14-0 in Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Thursday but the Belgian coach says that the game was over.

"Don't forget Cambodia match. We will play Bahrain, the team with a good defensive performance. We need to be patient against them," he said.

"Bahrain are different with Cambodia. They looked solid in defense. Our players could be in trouble if they think it will be an easy match," Wilmots declared.

Iran have not defeated Bahrain, who famously inflicted a 3-1 defeat on Team Melli on the road to Korea/Japan 2002, in their home so far.

"We have to respect our opponents but we are ready to change the history. Iran will face Bahrain with full concentration and the players must make history in this match. We are moving step by step and want to take maximum points," Wilmots added.

"Our approach is to change the defensive football and play attacking football. We've analyzed Bahrain and we know that they are a difficult team to defeat," Wilmots concluded.



## Iran advance to ANOC World Beach Games semis



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Iran defeated Paraguay 5-4 to book a place at the Association of National Olympic Committees World Beach Games semi-finals Monday night.

Mohammadali Mokhtari, Edgar Daniel Barreto Sosa (own goal), Mahdi Shirmohammadi, Hamid Behzadpour and Mohammad Masoumzadeh scored for Iran. Carlos Alfredo Carballo Ruiz (twice), Jesús

Amado Rolón Caballero and Carlos Valentín Benítez were on target for Paraguay.

Iran had already defeated Ukraine and Senegal in Group C.

Senegal also defeated Ukraine 7-5 in the group.

Iran qualified for the semis as the winners.

Beach soccer is one of 14 sports being showcased at the World Beach Games, which are being held in Doha, the capital of Qatar, from 11-16.

## Sadeghi wins silver in karate kata at ANOC World Beach Games



**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Fatemeh Sadeghi from Iran claimed a silver medal in karate kata at the Association of National Olympic Committees World Beach Games on Sunday.

Sandra Sánchez from Spain won the women's individual kata with a score of 26.28 points.

Sadeghi finished in second place with 24.66.

Maria Dimtrova of the Dominican Re-

public and Mo Lau of Hong Kong won the bronze medal.

The 2019 World Beach Games, officially known as the ANOC World Beach Games Qatar 2019 and commonly known as Qatar 2019, is an inaugural international beach multi-sport event organized by the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC).

The competition started on 11 October and will finish on 16 October in Doha, Qatar.

## Regional derbies take top billing

Top-of-the-table match-ups and regional derbies headline the action on Tuesday's matchday 4 of Asia's Round 2 qualifying for the 2022 FIFA World Cup Qatar™, with leaders Japan, Qatar, Korea Republic and United Arab Emirates all pitted against their nearest rivals.

Meanwhile, the likes of Australia, IR Iran and China PR enter their third outings aiming to maintain a hitherto unblemished record. Elsewhere, India entertain Bangladesh and Indonesia welcome Vietnam in what promise to be enticing regional derbies. Join FIFA.com as we preview these match-ups across Asia.

### Matchday 4 fixtures (15 October)

- **Group A:** Philippines-China PR, Syria-Guam
- **Group B:** Chinese Taipei-Australia, Jordan-Nepal
- **Group C:** Bahrain-IR Iran, Cambodia-Iraq
- **Group D:** Palestine-Saudi Arabia, Singapore-Uzbekistan
- **Group E:** India-Bangladesh, Qatar-Oman
- **Group F:** Tajikistan-Japan, Mongolia-Kyrgyz Republic
- **Group G:** Thailand-United Arab Emirates, Indonesia-Vietnam

### ● Group H: Korea DPR-Korea Republic, Sri Lanka-Lebanon

#### ■ The match

Korea DPR-Korea Republic

Sharing top spot in Group H with six points each, these two teams enter the showdown in Pyongyang knowing that the victor will move clear at the summit of the table. With only the group winners advancing to the next stage, it is a match which neither side can afford to lose.

In a sense, Paulo Bento's visitors boast a slight mental edge, having remained undefeated in the pair's past six World Cup qualifying meetings with three wins and three draws. Yun Jongsu's hosts can, however, look to their trademark resilient play which has seen them frustrate opponents time and again.

Even the match itself is special - it marks the first time that Korea DPR has hosted Korea Republic on home soil in nearly three decades. Ten years back, the Chollima twice held their southern neighbors in neutral Shanghai in their 'home games' en route to successful qualification for South Africa 2010. Sri Lanka host Lebanon in the other group match.

#### ■ The other attractions

In Group A, Marcello Lippi's China travel to Philippines seeking their third straight win. Team Dragon will look to the goalscoring form of Espanyol forward Wu Lei who scored a brace in their 3-0 drubbing of the Azkals in January's 2019 AFC Asian Cup. In the other match, Syria entertain Guam knowing that there is no room for slip-ups if they are to keep pressure on the Chinese before the two sides' crunch tie in Dubai next month.



Group B front-runners Australia travel to Chinese Taipei aiming to strengthen their grip on the section with a third consecutive victory. Furthermore, this match provides another opportunity for coach Graham Arnold to test new young players and formations. Second-place Jordan, meanwhile, entertain Nepal in the section's other game seeking to bounce back, having being held to a disappointing goalless draw by Kuwait.

In Group C, Marc Wilmots' free-scoring Iran will likely have their first real test against hosts Bahrain who famously inflicted a 3-1 defeat on Team Melli on the road to Korea/Japan 2002. Any slip-ups by Iran will benefit Iraq, who can move to the top of the table with a win in Cambodia.

Group D's Palestine will be hoping to reproduce the form which saw them stun Uzbekistan 2-0 in the opener when they entertain Saudi Arabia. In fact, the hosts did catch the Green Falcons by surprise by holding them to a goalless draw at home four years ago during Russia 2018 qualifying. In the other match, Uzbekistan face a must-win against hosts Singapore if they are to keep their campaign on track.

Group E leaders Qatar welcome Oman seeking to prolong their undefeated head-to-head record, having

managed two wins and two draws in the past four World Cup qualifying meetings. In the other match, India host pointless Bangladesh in Kolkata's mighty Salt Lake stadium with each side desperately seeking to rekindle hopes with a first win.

In Group F, joint leaders Tajikistan and Japan do battle with both seeking to move clear with victory. The visiting Samurai Blue smashed 12 unanswered goals past Tajikistan over two legs on the road to Brazil 2014. Mongolia, meanwhile, will look to their ever-growing home support in this campaign as they aim to spring another surprise against visiting Kyrgyz Republic.

Group G pace-setters United Arab Emirates know they will face a tough test in Thailand after the pair played out a tense 1-1 draw in their last meeting during the Asian Cup. In the other match, pointless Indonesia entertain Vietnam desperately needing a win to keep their hopes alive.

#### ■ Did you know?

India's meeting with neighbors Bangladesh is the pair's third FIFA World Cup qualifier and 29th match in all competitions since 1978. The Indians have emerged the dominant side so far with 15 wins and just two defeats.

(Source: FIFA)

## FIVB World Cup: Italy beat Iran in epic match

**S P O R T S** **TEHRAN** — Italy rallied from two sets down to defeat Iran 3-2 (25-27, 27-29, 30-28, 25-17, 15-13) at the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup on Monday at Hiroshima Green Arena.

Italy's Dick Kooy racked up a game-high 28 points and Milad Ebadipour scored 23 points for Iran.



"First of all, congratulations to the Italian team for the victory. It was a really tough game. Maybe Italy deserved to win the first set, but for sure we deserved to win the third. But it was a really tough game and dramatic to the end. It was a really big game and congratulations again to my colleague for this victory," Iran coach Igor Kolakovic said.

Team Melli will play Poland on Tuesday.

The 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup is the 14th staging of the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup, contested by the senior men's national teams of the members of the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB), the sport's global governing body.

The tournament is being held in Japan from Oct. 1 to 15. Japan played hosts for this event for the twelfth consecutive time since 1977.

This is the first time since 1989 that FIVB decided not to allocate any spots in the Olympics, due to Japan hosting the 2020 Summer Olympics.

## Iran not lucky enough against Italy: Saeid Marouf

Iran national volleyball team captain Saeid Marouf says that they were not lucky enough to beat Italy at the 2019 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Cup on Monday.

Italy pulled off a sensational comeback from two sets down to beat Iran 3-2 (25-27, 27-29, 30-28, 25-17, 15-13) at Hiroshima Green Arena.

"I think everybody in the hall enjoyed watching the game because both teams fought for every point. It was a strange day in our sport - in the second set they had a chance to close the set and lost that chance; in the third set we had the chance to close the set and the match but we lost that chance. After that they started to serve strong and received much better than the first three sets. In the fifth set, the tie-break, it was 15-13,' Marouf said.

"There's nothing to say, just it was a good fight. Game number 10, again a tie-break, we're so tired and don't have a lot of players on the bench to help the team. It's important that we tried our best. We were not lucky enough today but I think we are satisfied," he stated.

Iran coach Igor Kolakovic says the match against Italy was really a tough game.

"First of all, congratulations to the Italian team for the victory. It was a really tough game. Maybe Italy deserved to win the first set, but for sure we deserved to win the third. But it was a really tough game and dramatic to the end. It was a really big game and congratulations again to my colleague for this victory," Kolakovic said.

(Source: FIVB.org)

## Iran new member of the World Ice Hockey Federation

**IRNA** — The Head of Iran's Skating Federation Bahman Mohammadrezaei said on Monday that the Iranian federation signed an agreement with the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) to become a member of the World Federation after 111 years.

Speaking to IRNA on Monday, he said it is a brilliant move for the Iranian skaters and we have special plans for the exciting field.

"We will be competing in the upcoming Winter Olympics to be authorized to attend this important event," he said.

The conditions for skating in Iran are very ideal and all sections of the federation are doing their best to attain the goal, he said adding that the federation seeks to provide necessary infrastructure for skating since the prospect of this field is very promising.

## Infantino lauds Iranian women attending Cambodia match

FIFA President Gianni Infantino believes that Iranian women recently attending soccer match with Cambodia is a "step in the right direction".

Around 3,500 female fans were allowed into the 78,000 seater-capacity Azadi stadium.

"I am very confident that this will now become the norm. I was extremely happy that for the first time women in Iran were allowed, not only allowed to go to a football game but to buy, as well, tickets to attend the game.

"It's a step in the right direction. Therefore my gratitude goes to everyone but in particular to these women who were cheering for more than 90 minutes in a game and are living there passion.

"I think men and women alike, we all love football, and the message that came this week from Iran is a message of hope, and I think the world needs more of these messages of hope. There is more to do but we are on the right path," Infantino said.

(Source: Yahoo News)



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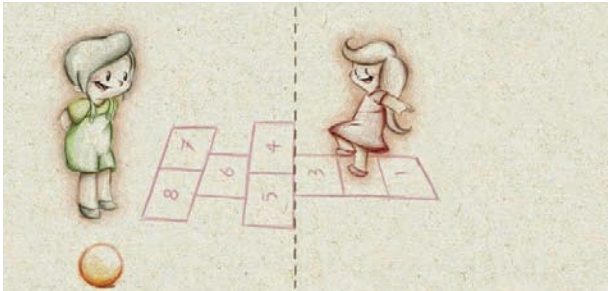
GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Remove badness from another's breast by  
uprooting from your own.

Imam Ali (AS)

## Iranian animations competing in Brazilian festival

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — “This Side, Other Side” and “Each Other” (Yek Digar), two animations from Iran are competing in the Animage, an international animation festival currently underway in the Brazilian city of Recife.



A scene from “This Side, Other Side” by Lida Fazli.

“This Side, Other Side” by Lida Fazli shows that no border can block friendship and affection between children, hoping that the adult world, as well as the children’s world, would be full of peace and friendship.

“Each Other” (Yek Digar) by Sarah Tabibzadeh portrays a young man who works in a bedroll selling shop and accidentally loses one of its layers.

This year the festival, which will run until October 20, received submissions from different countries. About 80 short animated films are competing in the event.

## “Japanese Disappearances” appears in Iranian bookstores

**CULTURE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — French writer Eric Faye’s novel “Japanese Disappearances” (“Eclipses Japonaises”) has recently been published in Persian by Ofoq Publications in Tehran.

Translated by Mahmud Gudarzi, the 2016 book is based on a true story of the abductions of Japanese citizens from Japan by agents of the North Korean government, which took place during a period of six years from 1977 to 1983.

The book tells the story of a 13-year-old girl Naoko Tanabe and a 20-year-old girl Setsuko Okada who are kidnapped by North Koreans in 1977.

They are assumed to have drowned or run away from home while they are forced to change their names, kept under control and isolated from other people with no hope of leaving.

## Vietnam pulls DreamWorks’ “Abominable” film over South China Sea map

**HANOI (Reuters)** — Vietnam has pulled DreamWorks’ animated film “Abominable” from cinemas over a scene featuring a map which shows China’s unilaterally declared “nine-dash line” in the South China Sea, state media reported on Monday.

The U-shaped line is a feature used on Chinese maps to illustrate its claims over vast expanses of the resource-rich South China Sea, including large swathes of what Vietnam regards as its continental shelf, where it has awarded oil concessions.

Last week, sports network ESPN faced criticism of its coverage of a row between the National Basketball Association (NBA) and China after using a map that featured the line.

China and Vietnam have been locked in a standoff since China dispatched a vessel to conduct an energy survey in waters controlled by Vietnam in early July. “We will revoke (the film’s license),” Ta Quang Dong, deputy minister of culture, sports and tourism, was quoted as saying by the Thanh Nien newspaper.

The ministry is in charge of licensing and censoring foreign films. “Abominable”, about a Chinese girl who discovers a yeti living on her roof, was jointly produced by Shanghai-based Pearl Studio and Comcast-owned DreamWorks Animation and was first shown in Vietnamese cinemas on Oct. 4.

# Ali Musavi Garmarudi, Faramarz Qaribian join “Forty Days of Love” honorees

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Poet Seyyed Ali Musavi Garmarudi and actor Faramarz Qaribian have been added to the list of the 40 cultural figures who will be honored in the program “Forty Days of Love” on October 21.

The National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) has organized the program to honor those cultural figures who have created outstanding works about the tragedy of Ashura over the past century.

Garmarudi will be honored for his poetry on Ashura named “Bloodline”, and Qaribian for his role in the film “The Messenger” directed by Fariborz Saleh, the NLAI announced on Monday.

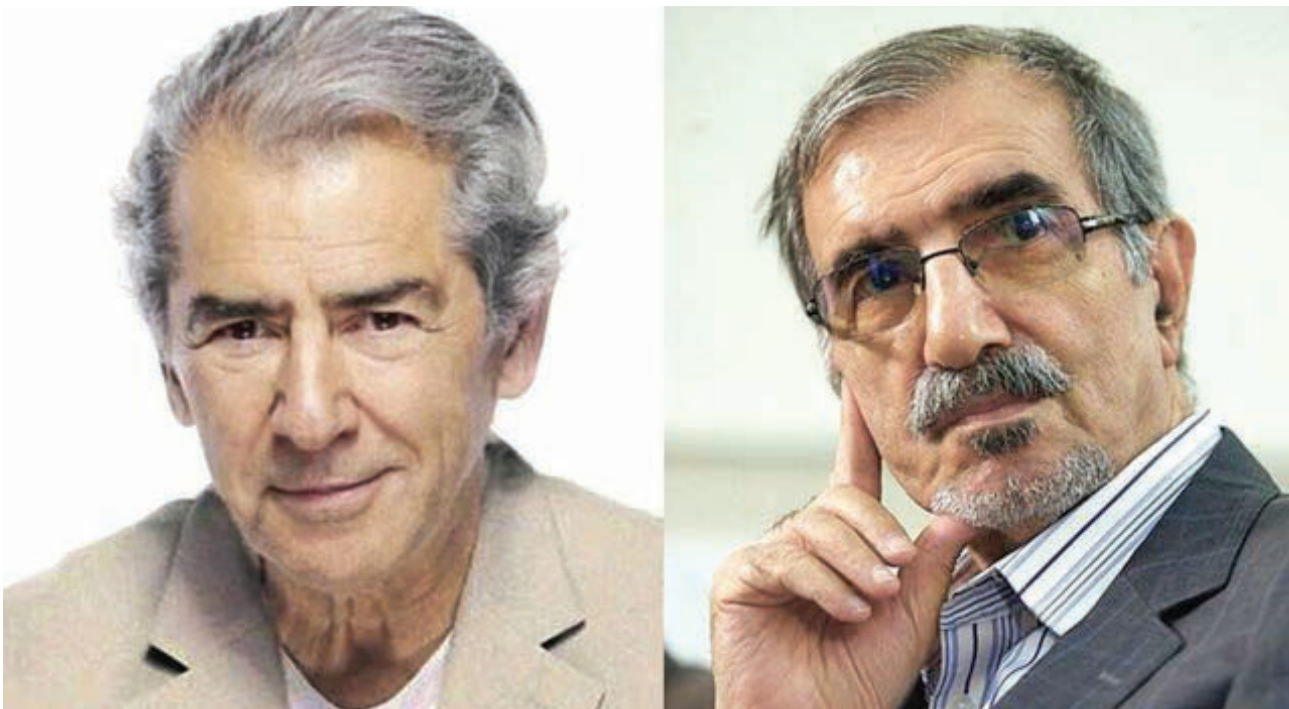
Qaribian portrays Qays ibn Musahir Al Saidawi, an envoy of Imam Hussein (AS), who is martyred on the way to Kufa.

Ashura is the 10th day of Muharram, the day upon which Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred in Karbala as a result of their valiant stand against the injustices of the oppressive Umayyad dynasty in 680 CE.

Earlier last week, the NLAI announced that master of Persian miniature Mahmud Farshchian and director and writer Bahram Beizai are among other artists who will be honored in the program.

Farshchian has created several paintings including “The Evening of Ashura”, “Ali-Asghar (AS)” and “The Standard-Bearer of Truth” about the tragedy of Ashura.

Beizai is the writer of the play “The Fateful



This combination photo shows actor Faramarz Qaribian (L) and poet Seyyed Ali Musavi Garmarudi.

Day”, a screen adaptation of which was made by director Shahram Asadi in 1995.

The film is the story of a Christian man who converts to Islam for the love of a Muslim girl. At the wedding, he hears voices

calling for help. He leaves the ceremony and takes a journey to Karbala. But he arrives at the end of the Battle of Karbala after the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions.

In addition, the Tehran Symphony Orchestra will be performing “The Fateful Day” film score composed by Iranian maestro Majid Entezami at the honoring program. Entezami himself will conduct the concert.

## Film scores by Lionel Newman to be reviewed in Tehran



A poster for a review session for Lionel Newman’s film scores at Tehran’s Niavaran Cultural Center.

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Film scores by American composer Lionel Newman will be reviewed during a session at the Niavaran Cultural Center in Tehran on Thursday.

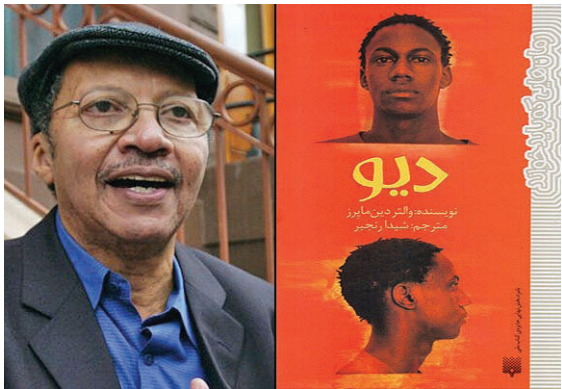
Iranian musician and scholar Nasrollah Davudi is scheduled to discuss a number of Newman’s works during the session.

Newman (1916–1989) was a well-known conductor, pianist, and film and television composer. He received 11 Academy Award nominations, and won an Oscar for Best Score of a Musical Picture for “Hello Dolly!” with his fellow composer Lennie Hayton in 1969.

Newman composed soundtracks for numerous movies, including “Cleopatra”, “The Sand Pebbles”, “The Agony and the Ecstasy”, “The Long Hot Summer”, “The Young Lions”, “Alien” and “The Omen”.

He was also the musical supervisor for “Star Wars”, “The Empire Strikes Back”, “Return of the Jedi”, “Monsignor” and “The Fury”.

Earlier in September, the center reviewed works by Lionel’s brother Alfred, another prominent musician from Newman family, who is known for his work on “All About Eve”, “How the West Was Won” and “Camelot”.



A combination photo shows American author Walter Dean Myers and the front cover of the Persian version of his novel “Monster”.

## Scorsese says he wanted to ‘enrich’ past De Niro work with “The Irishman”

**LONDON (Reuters)** — Martin Scorsese reunites with Robert De Niro in “The Irishman”, a 3-1/2 hour long mob drama the acclaimed director said he chose to do with his frequent collaborator to build on their past work together rather than replicate it.

Set over several decades, “The Irishman” looks at a Pennsylvania organized crime family with Oscar winners De Niro, Al Pacino and Joe Pesci in the main roles.

The Netflix movie, which closes the BFI London Film Festival on Sunday, uses digital de-ageing technology to show the characters in their 30s and 40s. De Niro, Pesci and Pacino are all in their 70s.

The project is Scorsese’s and De Niro’s latest collaboration following acclaimed works like “Taxi Driver”, “Raging Bull”, “Goodfellas” and “Casino”.

“I was really looking for something with Bob (De Niro) to enrich more or less where

we had gone in the ‘70s and the ‘80s and the early ‘90s,” Scorsese told a news conference.

“To just replicate what we had been trying to do at the beginning of our careers wouldn’t be enriching in any way.”

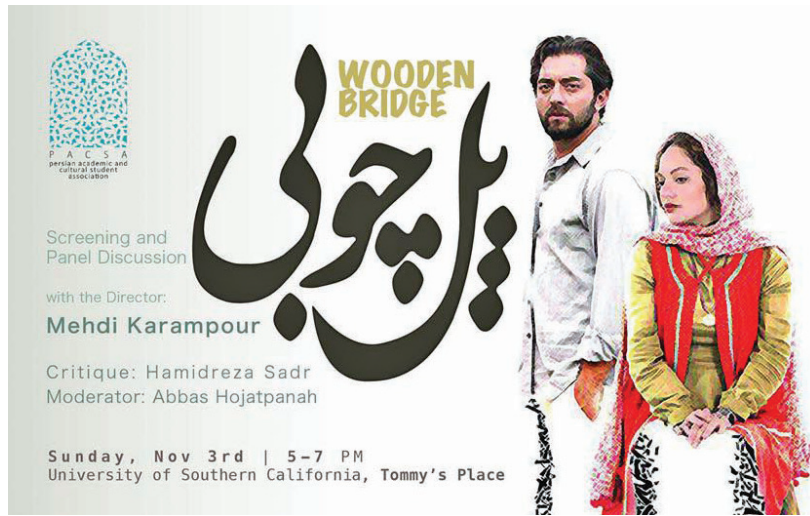
The film, which runs just short of 3-1/2 hours, begins with elderly narrator Frank Sheeran, played by De Niro, recounting his life.

Told in flashbacks, the audience sees him as a soldier, truck driver and eventually mob hitman after meeting organized crime boss Russell Bufalino, played by Pesci.

The plot, based on Charles Brandt’s book “I Heard You Paint Houses”, is tied to the disappearance of former U.S. Teamsters union boss Jimmy Hoffa, portrayed by Pacino in his first Scorsese collaboration.

“I’d known Marty and Bob a very long time so when Bob ... called me ... it sounded really interesting and the opportunity to work with them was very important to me,” Pacino said. “For

## “The Wooden Bridge” to go on screen at USC in Los Angeles



A poster for the screening program for Mehdi Karampur’s 2012 movie “The Wooden Bridge” at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles.

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian director Mehdi Karampur’s 2012 movie “The Wooden Bridge” will go on screen during a program at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles on November 3.

The film is about a couple, Amir and Shirin, who decide to emigrate from Iran after ten years of their marriage, but they face several problems.

To solve the problems, Shirin accepts the help of their old university professor, Kamran Sabuhi, and goes to him to make

the visa arrangements in Dubai. Despite his initial disapproval due to Sabuhi’s affection for Shirin, Amir agrees to the plan eventually and Shirin leaves Iran.

Meanwhile, in Iran things get more complicated when Amir’s sister is arrested by police and his old love, Nazli, comes back to him after ten years.

Organized by the Persian Academic and Cultural Student Association (PACSA) of the university, the screening will be followed by a review session, which will be attended by Karampur and Iranian critic Hamidreza Sadr.

## Persian publisher to review Walter Dean Myers’ “Monster”

**CULTURE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian publisher Peydayesh plans to hold a session on Wednesday to review American author Walter Dean Myers’ young adult novel “Monster”.

The book was originally published by HarperCollins in 1999. A Persian translation of the book by Sheida Ranjbar appeared in Iranian bookstores in 2006.

Ranjbar has made some revisions to the book in the new edition, which has recently been released by Peydayesh.

“Monster” begins with 16-year-old Steve Harmon writing in his diary awaiting his trial for murder. Musing on his short time in prison so far, he decides to record this upcoming experience in the form of a movie screenplay.

Kathy O’Brien, Steve’s lawyer, informs him on what will happen during the trial.

The novel was nominated for the 1122 National Book Award for Young People’s Literature, won the Michael L. Printz Award in 2000 and was named a Coretta Scott King Award Honor the same year.

“I judge this book to be remarkable because of its precise language, beautiful prose and elegant style of narration,” Ranjbar said after her Persian translation of “Monster” was published for the first time in 2006.

“Monster” was adapted for a film of the same name directed by Anthony Mandler. It premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2018.



Director Martin Scorsese and cast members Al Pacino and Robert De Niro arrive for the screening of “The Irishman” during the 2019 BFI London Film Festival at the Odeon Luxe Leicester Square in London, Britain October 13, 2019. (Reuters/Henry Nicholls)