



**Zam arrest astonished foreign intelligence services** 3



**Ghannouchi: Head of government rightfully belongs to Ennahda** 13



**Persepolis defeat Paykan in Iran Professional League** 15



**Warsaw Film Festival honors Iran's "A Hairy Tale"** 16

# Arbaeen has turned into a historic miracle

Rouhani thanks Iraqi president, PM for hosting Arbaeen



See page 2

## Iran's economy moving forward: CBI governor

**TEHRAN** — Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) said that the positive balance in Iran's non-oil trade is an indication that the country's economy is moving forward, Mehr news agency reported.

Speaking in a meeting with the representatives of the country's private sector at the place of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on Sunday, Abdolnasser

Hemmati said "the country's non-oil trade balance is currently positive and [it is] the negative impact of the oil sector [which] has slowed the total economic growth down, so the Iranian economy is moving [forward]."

According to Hemmati, CBI is managing the country's monetary affairs and runs its business through unsanctionable networks. →4

## SABITI oil tanker, hit in Red Sea, to undergo repair

**TEHRAN** — Iran Shipbuilding and Off-shore Industries Complex Co (ISOICO) will repair the SABITI oil tanker, which came under attack in the Red Sea on October 11, the ISOICO managing director has said.

In an interview with ISNA published on Sunday, Hamid Rezaeian-Asl said ISOICO will pay part of the repair costs. Rezaeian-Asl also said that attack on

the Iranian oil tanker, which has reported arrived in the port city of Bandar Abbas, was against international law.

Two separate explosions, possibly caused by missile attacks, hit the SABITI oil tanker owned by the National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC). The vessel was struck 60 miles from the Saudi port city of Jeddah. →2

## Michel Aoun's solution to Lebanon crisis

**TEHRAN** — Lebanese President Michel Aoun has said there is a surefire solution to the Lebanese crisis.

Aoun write on twitter that during the meeting with PM Saad al-Hariri, it was emphasized that the state budget should be adjusted without any new taxes or duties, and all plans submitted by any party would be canceled.

Meanwhile, tens of thousands of dem-

onstrators gathered in Lebanon's streets on Sunday for a fourth day of anti-government protests that have led to the resignation of a Christian party from the government.

Demonstrators, who have been on the streets since Thursday, have pledged to continue marching despite the resignations late on Saturday of four government members from the key political party, Lebanese Forces. →13



## ARTICLE

**Chang Hua**  
Chinese ambassador to Iran

## The CIIE: A gorgeous chorus of integrated world economy

**T**he 2nd China International Import Expo (CIIE) will be held in Shanghai, China from November 5th to 10th. Iran will participate in Country Exhibition, Business Exhibition and Hongqiao International Economic Forum (HIEF). Here, I would like to introduce the CIIE to Iranian friends.

The 1st CIIE achieved great success. On November 5th to 10th, 2018, the first CIIE was successfully held in Shanghai, China, with a profound influence around the world. First, the scale of the exhibition was large. Covering a total area of 300,000 square meters, 172 countries and international organizations participated, and 3,617 overseas companies took part in the exhibition, fully reflecting the strong appeal of the Chinese market. Second, the level of the exhibition was high. More than 220 of the world's top 500 companies participated in the exhibition, and more than 300 new products and technologies were first released. Third, the result of the exhibition was rewarding. More than 800,000 exhibitors and purchasers attended the conference, concluding contracts over US\$57.8 billion.

During the 1st HIEF, Chinese President Xi Jinping attended the opening ceremony and delivered a keynote speech. More than 30 foreign heads of states and international organizations delivered speeches and more than 4,500 delegates attended the forum. The Country Exhibition covered all five continents, including developed countries, developing countries and least developed countries. The Country Exhibition pavilions had different styles, highlighting their own characteristics, and making full use of high-tech means and diverse forms to display their unique regional culture and distinct advantageous industries, including goods trade, service trade, industrial development, investment, tourism and specialty. →7

## No 'plan B': Iranian students despair as visa applications revoked

**TEHRAN** — Since U.S. President Trump imposed a travel ban and pulled out of the Iran nuclear deal in 2018, relations between the two countries have soured dramatically. Officially, students are exempt from the ban. However,

The tighter policies have led to a decline in visa issuances to Iranians. There are about 12,000 Iranian students in the U.S. based on data from the Institute of International Education. But the number of Iranian student visas halved from 3,139 visas in 2016 to 1,643 in 2018, according to the U.S. State Department.

A spokesperson for the State Department said denied there had been a policy change when it came to issuing visas to Iranian students.

"International students are a priority for the Department of State, and we continue to welcome legitimate student visa applicants," a State Department official said. Customs and Border

Protection also denied there had been "changes to their policy on Iranian travelers with valid visas."

Pargar Holding, a company that helps Iranian students through the admissions and visa process, said that in the five years it has been operating, it has not seen anywhere close to that number affected. "Visa revocations are rare cases, impacting maybe one or two students a year," Morteza Alizadeh, a director at the firm, says.

The Iranians had been approved for single entry student visas, by U.S. embassies in Turkey and Armenia. (Iran and the U.S. do not have diplomatic relations, so consular affairs have to be dealt with via third-party countries.)

When they checked at the end of August, they saw that their Consular Electronic Application Center accounts were updated and their visas were still marked as issued.

The single entry visa meant they'd be gone

for five years — a big but worthwhile sacrifice for Sepideh, 26, a computer scientist who planned to go to the U.S. for her doctorate. Once at the airport, however, airline personnel turned her away and told her to contact the U.S. embassy.

Saaqi, 25, an engineering doctoral candidate also accepted to UC Irvine, had already signed up for classes. "My life is a complete blank. I don't have a plan B," she said. Mohammad-Ali, 27, says he's depressed and is rethinking his goals.

"I came back to the dilemma of abandoning my family, aiming high, versus having a more emotionally rich life," he wrote.

All the students got the same emails from their respective embassies: "Unfortunately, we do not have any information to share about your visa status."

The American Embassy in Yerevan, Armenia, emailed this message to Mohammad-Ali, who shared it with NBC News.

## Hamas decries Israel's participation in Bahrain meet

**TEHRAN** — he Palestinian Islamic resistance movement, Hamas, has strongly censured the participation of an Israeli delegation in a forthcoming US-led maritime security meeting in Bahrain, in the latest significant sign of warming ties between a number of Persian Gulf littoral states and the Tel Aviv regime after years of clandestine relations.

Hamas spokesman Hazem Qasem said in a statement on Sunday that attempts to "integrate the Israeli Occupation into the region are doomed to fail."

He blamed the parties that "normalize relations with Israel for Israeli assaults on the Palestinian people and their holy sites."

Israel's Channel 13 reported on Saturday that an Israeli delegation will attend the two-day summit in the Bahraini capital of Manama, which will run between October 21 and 22 and its main agenda is what its sponsors describe as "the Iranian threat in the Persian Gulf."

The event will be a follow-up to the US-led anti-Iran conference held in the Polish capital of Warsaw in February.

Speaking in an interview with English-language The Times of Israel daily newspaper on the sidelines of the US-led economic workshop in Manama on June 26, the top Bahraini diplomat recognized Israel's "right to existence," saying the regime was "there to stay, of course."

"Who did we offer peace to [with] the [Arab] Peace Initiative? We offered it to ... Israel ... We want better relations with it, and we want peace with it," Khalifah added.

He pointed to the so-called Arab Peace Initiative as the blueprint for normalization of diplomatic relations with Israel, terming the Tel Aviv regime's rejection of the plan as a "missed opportunity."

The Arab Peace Initiative, proposed by Saudi Arabia in 2002, calls on Israel to agree to a two-state solution along the 1967 lines and a "just" solution to the Palestinian refugee issue. The initiative has been repeatedly endorsed by the Arab League in 2002, 2007, and 2017. →16



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## Fans, friends bid farewell to legendary musician Hossein Dehlavi

**TEHRAN** — Musician Mohammad Sarir speaks during the funeral of the legendary composer Hossein Dehlavi in the courtyard of Tehran's Vahdat Hall on October 20, 2019.

Dehlavi died of Alzheimer's disease on last Tuesday at the age of 92.

He made strenuous efforts during his professional career, which spanned over 70 years, to adapt melodies in Iranian music for orchestral performances.



## PERSPECTIVE

**Mostafa Mousavi Sabet**  
Head of the Tehran Times  
Art & Culture Desk

## Visits to Munich on Tehran time

**T**he selection of Mehdi Hajvani as an Iran's nominee for the 2020 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award was a greater factor in causing me to increase my knowledge about his activities than his being a children's book writer and literature expert.

In my view, reading a book by a writer can more helpful to learn more about the writer than studying an extensive résumé with dozens of pages about him/her. Writers have always hidden themselves between the lines in their books, and as such I found Hajvani's latest book "Munich on Tehran Time".

The book gives an account of two trips he made to Munich in 2005 and 2008 after winning scholarships from the International Youth Library (Internationale Jugendbibliothek, IJB) in the southern German city.

The library grants the scholarship to foreign scientists with the objective of supporting research in the areas of international children's and youth literature, illustration, and promoting scientific exchange and international co-operation.

With the above goal in mind, I accompanied Hajvani on his journey virtually by reading "Munich on Tehran Time". In the preface to the book, he says that the impressions made during his six visits to Germany, including the abovementioned two trips, provided the motivation for writing the book. He had made the earlier trips to the country to visit the Frankfurt Book Fair and his relatives.

He writes about many topics ranging from streets and houses in Germany to Turkish expatriates and their football mania in the German city, which is home to Bayern Munich, the most successful club in German football history.

In gatherings with his library mates, he made extensive efforts to give fair and honest responses in his poor English — as he described it — to the questions about Iran. He didn't want to undermine his homeland, but at the same time he didn't want to give inaccurate answers to persons who know of Iran only through misinformation from the Western media. →16



## Rouhani: Iran to continue resisting against foes' plots, pressures

**POLITICAL** d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Saturday night that the only way to foil enemies' plots is to resist against their pressures.

"Leaders of the Zionist regime and Saudi Arabia along with extremists in the U.S. are after imposing pressures on the Iranian nation who have no way out but resisting against the foes," Rouhani said in a friendly meeting with a war-time disabled veteran.



"Fortunately, our people who enjoy correct understanding from the current situation and the enemies' plans have thus far resisted well. The government, for its part, has been doing its best to provide tranquility for the people's life," the president went on to say.

Rouhani said, "Those who have had grudge and anger against Iran for long years are now ruling the U.S. government. They embarked on withdrawing Washington from the nuclear pact that was affirmed by the UN and re-imposed sanctions against Tehran to put our nation under pressure."

In relevant remarks earlier this month, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyed Ali Khamenei told the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps commanders that the U.S. gained nothing by adopting the policy of maximum pressure against Iran.

"The U.S. policy of maximum pressure has failed. The Americans presumed that they can force Iran to make concessions and bring it to its knees by focusing on maximum pressure, especially in area of economy, but they have troubled themselves," Ayatollah Khamenei remarked.

"The maximum pressure (policy) has failed until this hour and I firmly say that this maximum pressure will fail to the end too," he added.

Ayatollah Khamenei underlined that Iran would certainly continue the revolutionary path and confrontation against the hegemonic powers.

## Funeral ceremony held for nuclear official Mohammad Ahmadian

**POLITICAL** d e s k **TEHRAN** – A large number of political, scientific and religious figures as well as parliament members and ordinary people took part in a funeral procession on Sunday for Mohammad Ahmadian, the deputy head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI).



December 2010.

He was also a member of scientific board of Shahid Beheshti University, managing director of the Nuclear Power Production and Development Company of Iran.

In late 2009, he was the Iranian contractor for construction of the Bushehr Power Plant in southern Iran.

Ahmadian was also energy vice-minister during presidency of Mohammad Khatami and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

## SABITI oil tanker, hit in Red Sea, to undergo repair

**1 →** The explosions hit the vessel's hull, causing heavy damages to the ship's two main tanks, which resulted in an oil spill in the Red Sea.

According to IRNA, the missiles hit the right side of the tanker's hull, creating holes measuring 50-to-150 centimeters.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif announced on October 15 that "one or more countries" had directed or facilitated the attack.

Zarif also said the raid on SABITI was a "state-sponsored act".

President Rouhani also told a press conference on October 14 that "what is clear is that a regime has done it with a support of certain countries."

Rouhani also told a press conference on October 20 that Iran has found some clues about the attack on the vessel but investigations are underway until a final conclusion is reached.

Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), said on October 12 that Iran will give a crushing response to the evil act in international waterways.

"Banditry and wickedness in the international waterways aimed at destabilizing movement of trade vessels will not go unanswered," Shamkhani said.

"A committee has been formed to conduct probe into the issue of the SABITI oil tanker which came under missile attacks off the Saudi coasts in the Red Sea and its findings will soon be handed over to the relevant bodies to make the required decision," Shamkhani noted.

# Iran to operate new part of Arak reactor within next 2 weeks

**POLITICAL** d e s k **TEHRAN** – The special aide for the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran (AEOI) announced on Sunday that the secondary part of the Arak heavy water reactor will become operational within the next two weeks.

Seyed Ali Asqar Zare'an made the announcement in his visit to the 48th exhibition on nuclear industry achievements in Kerman city in southern Iran.

Touching upon implementation of new projects as Iran is re-planning the Arak heavy water reactor, he said, "We will make the secondary part of the Arak heavy water reactor facility operational within the next two weeks. The secondary part includes 50 percent of the whole reactor."

He added, "Iran has nothing to hide and its nuclear activities and achievements are entirely peaceful."

Zare'an said that enmity by certain countries against Iran will never end and the country's atomic energy program is only a pretext for them to put Tehran under pressure.

The special aide added, "Our nuclear industry is indigenized. We have attained self-sufficiency in planning and building various models of centrifuges in the country."



"We are capable of producing 25 tons of heavy water in the country. We have 1,044 active centrifuges in the Fordo site and 5,000 more in the Natanz site," Zare'an explained.

He added, "Yellow cake is more important than centrifuge because it is a

preliminary and strategic material which is produced now in Iran. The entire world nations can purchase yellow cake from Iran but they don't sell it to us. Before the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, we had stored only 500 tons of yellow cake which was produced in South Africa but

## Iranian MP: Washington's economic terrorism violates human rights

**POLITICAL** d e s k **TEHRAN** – The U.S. unilateral economic sanctions against independent nations is nothing but a blatant violation of human rights, head of the Iranian parliamentary delegation who attended the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) conference in Belgrade has said.

"Washington's approach of imposing sanction as a tool to materialize its objectives, has created serious concerns over violation of human rights," Fatemeh Hosseini said.

"Today, among the founders of recognized institutions of international order, only the U.S. believes that it is capable of achieving interests via ignoring and violating fundamental principles of international law and human rights aimed at guaranteeing its own security at the price of destroying the other nations' security," the Iranian MP pointed out.

"Use of illegal tool of imposing economic sanctions or economic terrorism... to achieve the White House objec-

tives has caused serious concerns in regard human rights violations," Hosseini lamented.

"Negative impacts of such sanctions on ordinary people's life include lack of access to sufficient food, necessary medicine and healthcare services," she further said.

She also voiced regret about inability and indifference of political and legal institutions to counter such moves, calling for reforms in international bodies.

In an article earlier this month, the Washington Post said the U.S. sanctions on Iranian financial firms, including a bank that until recently handled most payments for Iran's imports of humanitarian goods, were having a chilling effect on foreign companies that helped supply medicine and other medical products.

The far-reaching sanctions on Iranian financial firms re-imposed about two weeks ago could endanger the flow of humanitarian goods as foreign banks and outside suppliers abandon business ties with their partners in Iran,



analysts and experts warned.

In recent months, some European banks refused to process payments even from Iranian firms that were exempt from sanctions out of fear of U.S. penalties, according to people familiar with the transactions.

## Arbaeen has turned into a historic miracle, Rouhani says

**POLITICAL** d e s k **TEHRAN** – Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has thanked the Iraqi officials, people and clerics for hosting millions of pilgrims during the Arbaeen season and said the Arbaeen gathering has turned into a "lasting historic miracle".

"This gathering shows that Arbaeen is not just an occasion on calendar, but a lasting historic miracle and a most powerful media to introduce Imam Hussein (AS) culture and Ashura," Rouhani said in a message to Iraqi President Barham Salih and Prime Minister Abdul-Mahdi published on Sunday.

He added that the Arbaeen march shows unity and solidarity between the Iraqis and the Iranians and is an example of forming a "united front against violence and discrimination".

In a separate message to pilgrims, Rouhani said the huge participation in

the Arbaeen march is showing the power of Islam more strongly and caused more disappointment among enemies.

"This year, this unique and indescribable epic, in contrary to the wishes of arrogant powers and their backers, showed the power of Islam more strongly and caused disappointment among enemies."

Arbaeen comes 40 days after Ashura, the day marking the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS) in the battle of Karbala in 680 AD.

Each year, a huge crowd of people flock to the Iraqi city of Karbala, where the holy

shrine of Imam Hussein is located, to perform mourning rites.

Considering one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, this year more than 20 million pilgrims visited the shrine of Imam Hussein, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and third Shia Imam, to mark Arbaeen.

According to reports, more than three million Iranian pilgrims traveled to Iraq this year to attend the mourning rituals.

This year, visa requirement was removed for the pilgrims as a "positive step" toward paving the way for more Iranian pilgrims

**In a message to pilgrims, Rouhani said the huge participation in the Arbaeen march showed the power of Islam more strongly and caused more disappointment among enemies.**

## South Korea urged to act on stalled pharmaceutical exports to Iran

**(Press TV)** – Iranian businesses and lawmakers are complaining that the South Korean government has not done enough to ensure that exports of pharmaceutical products to Iran continues despite American sanctions that have restricted banking transaction.

"We expect that the (South) Korean government solves the banking problems with special care," said Pouya Firouzi, who serves as the secretary of Iran-South Korea joint chamber of commerce, on Saturday.

Firouzi said pharmaceuticals are supposed to be exempt from the sanctions imposed by the United States on Iran since last year. However, he said South Korean Banks had backtracked from their commitments to process payments related to drug exports to Iran mainly because of the American sanctions.

"Although sanctions are unacceptable in their entirety,



food and medicine are exempt from sanction channels and banking problems should not have an impact on import of

such products," said the businessman.

An Iranian member of parliament echoed similar concerns, saying a halt to exports of key drugs and pharmaceutical materials to Iran was inhumane and should be regarded as a breach of international rules and conventions.

"Given the trade relations we have with this country (South Korea), this move is absolutely reprehensible," said Akbar Torki, who serves as member and spokesman of Iranian parliament's health committee.

The lawmaker said a halt to export of drugs to Iran over American sanctions was reminiscent of a ban on delivery of mobile phones to Iranian athletes during the Winter Olympic Games held in South Korea last year.

Torki warned that a continued ban would lead to consequences for Seoul as Iran would decide to reciprocate by banning imports of certain products from South Korea.

## Iran sends military delegation to Beijing Xiangshan Forum

**TEHRAN (FNA)** – Deputy Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Brigadier General Mehdi Rabbani, heading a high-ranking military delegation, arrived in China to participate in the 9th Beijing Xiangshan Forum.

Beijing Xiangshan Forum, whose original name is Xiangshan Forum, was initiated by the China Association of Military Science (CAMS) in 2006 as a track 2 platform for Asia-Pacific security

dialogue.

Since 2015, Xiangshan Forum has been co-hosted by CAMS and China Institute of International Strategic Studies (CIISS) and is renamed as Beijing Xiangshan Forum in 2018. So far, Beijing Xiangshan Forum has developed into a high-level security and defense forum in Asia-Pacific with significant international influence.

Beijing Xiangshan Forum is slated to be held with the attendance of over 70

countries on Monday.

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri underlined in September that Tehran and Beijing would witness profound development in their defense and military relations aimed at promoting peace and stability as well as security for both countries.

"During the meeting with the high-ranking Chinese military officials, we discussed useful issues, including ways to organize

Iran-China joint technical and industrial commission," Major General Baqeri told reporters after holding talks with senior Chinese military officials.

The chief of staff of Iran's Armed Forces said that the commission which will be held in Beijing in the near future with the participation of officials from both countries would focus on various issues in different fields of research, production and joint work on different products.



# Qatar says Iran-Saudi dialogue is essential

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Qatari Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lolwah R.M. Al-Khater has said that dialogue between Iran and Saudi Arabia is “essential”.

“Solving differences through constructive dialogue and diplomatic channels is essential,” ISNA quoted her as saying in a conference.

Imran Khan, the Pakistani prime minister, visited Tehran on October 13 to “facilitate” possible dialogue between Iran and Saudi Arabia which have been at loggerheads over a number of issues including the Saudi war on Yemen and Riyadh’s support for Trump’s anti-Iran moves.

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

Khan also visited Saudi Arabia on Tuesday.

The Pakistani prime minister visited Iran as the tension in the region is getting more complicated. On October 11, an Iranian oil tanker was struck by two missiles in the Red Sea, 60 miles away from Saudi coastlines.

Khan has said that he is making an effort to reduce tension between Tehran and Riyadh. Prior to the recent visit to Tehran, he held talks with Saudi Arabia’s leaders in Riyadh and Rouhani at the United Nations in September.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that Iran and Saudi Arabia should bridge differences.

In an interview with Aaj News, Qureshi said that Pakistan will continue efforts in line



with reducing tension in Iran-Saudi Arabia relations, ISNA reported on Tuesday.

UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric has said that Antonio Guterres, the UN secretary-general, welcomes Khan’s initiative to de-escalate tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Dujarric told reporters at the regular noon briefing in New York that the UN chief welcomes any such effort “as a matter of principle”, Associated Press of Pakistan reported last week.

Ammar al-Hakim, leader of the Iraqi National Wisdom Movement, has also expressed support for Pakistan’s initiative to mediate between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

“We praise and support initiative of Imran Khan, the Pakistani prime minister, on mediating between Tehran and Riyadh and ending tension between these two Muslim countries and bringing them into the negotiating table,” ISNA quoted him as saying in a message on Saturday.

On October 12, the Iranian Foreign Minis-

try said Tehran is ready for a talk with Saudi Arabia with or without a mediator.

During a joint press conference with Khan in Tehran on October 13, Rouhani, without mentioning Saudi Arabia, suggested that Iran will give a positive response to “good intention”.

Rouhani said Iran “welcomes efforts by the Pakistani prime minister to settle tensions in the region” and “restore peace and stability”.

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

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

During his visit to the United Nations headquarters in New York late last month, Rouhani unveiled Iran’s initiative, called the Hormuz Peace Endeavor (HOPE), for peace and security in the Persian Gulf region. In his plan, Rouhani invited all regional countries to join the peace plan.

“Based upon the historical responsibility of my country in maintaining security, peace, stability and progress in the Persian Gulf region and Strait of Hormuz, I would like to invite all the countries directly affected by the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz to the “Coalition for Hope”, meaning Hormuz Peace Endeavor,” Rouhani said in his UN speech on September 25.

## Sputnik: Japan, France push for \$18b credit line for Iran to save JCPOA

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — France and Japan have jointly proposed offering Iran over \$18 billion in credit lines if Tehran comes fully back into compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Russian state-run news agency Sputnik reported on Sunday.

The Persian language website of Sputnik reported that the Japanese government has decided to provide backup for France’s initiative after Tehran demanded further credit to compensate negative impacts of U.S. sanctions.

The news agency added that the newly-offered credit line will be at least \$18.42 billion.

In the meantime, Tokyo believes that such financial supports may pave the way for resumption of talks between Tehran and Washington over the JCPOA, the agency added.



It seems the guarantee for the mentioned credit line will be Iran’s crude exports and that the credit line will be restricted to importing food stuff and medicine by Iran.

The United States unilaterally quit the JCPOA and re-imposed sanctions on Iran in May 2018 and tightened them sharply this year. However, after passage of a year Iran has decided to gradually remove limits on its nuclear program and has set a deadline to scale back its nuclear commitments further unless the Europeans keep their promises to salvage the deal.

Under the agreement, endorsed by the UN Security Council Resolution 2231, Iran is tasked to put caps on its nuclear program in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

## Zam arrest astonished foreign intelligence services, IRGC chief says



**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the arrest of Ruhollah Zam, the operator behind Amad News website and Telegram channel, has astounded foreign intelligence services.

In a statement, Major General Hossein Salami said the IRGC Intelligence Organization’s initiative foiled the enemy’s psychological war against Iran, Mehr reported on Sunday.

He said Amad News was operating with the aim of launching street riots, fomenting discord between the elite and authorities, publishing disinformation and rumors, and propagating pessimism and hopelessness among people.

He also thanked Iranian scholars, authorities, commanders and people for their congratulatory messages after Zam’s arrest and thanked God for the achievement.

Last week, the IRGC announced that Zam had been arrested during a complicated intelligence operation.

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 system.

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

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

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

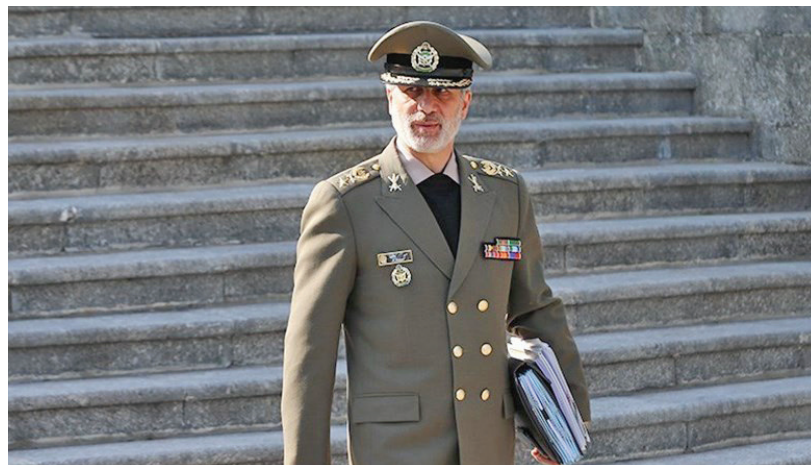
The Guards posted the news of his arrest on Zam’s Telegram channel with a following of over a million users, effectively taking over the administration of the popular channel.

It also posted a photo of Zam in custody, under which it was written: “This is just the beginning”.

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

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

## Hatami thanks Iraq for securing Arbreen trek



**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Defense Minister Amir Hatami has expressed gratitude to the Iraqi officials for efforts to secure the Arbreen trek, which was attended by over three millions of Iranian pilgrims.

In separate phone conversations with chief of staff of the Iraqi Joint Forces, Iraq’s interior minister, and a top commander of Hashd al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilization Units), Hatami thanked the Iraqi government and nation for their hospitality during the Arbreen season, Tasnim reported.

He described the organization of Arbreen processions as a symbol of fraternity, solidarity and strong bonds between the Iranian and Iraqi nations.

Brigadier General Hatami said the congregation has turned into a thorn in the side of Islam’s enemies.

The Arbreen pilgrimage, which is one of the largest religious gathering in the world, comes 40 days after Ashura, the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hussein (AS), the third Imam of Shia Muslims and the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

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

mourning rituals.

This year, Arbreen fell on Saturday, October 19.

Iranian Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli announced days ago that around 3.5 million Iranians have travelled to Iraq during this year’s Arbreen season.

Top Iranian officials and commanders have thanked the Iraqi government and nation for their kind hospitality to Iranian pilgrims.

Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on Saturday expressed his gratitude to the Iraqi nation, saying, “Arbreen is a day when all the huge rivers of divine love and affection move toward Imam Hussein (AS).”

Major General Hossein Salami further hailed the Iraqis’ measures to serve Iranian pilgrims and said, “The Iraqi people have shown their utmost kindness, love and hospitality, and we thank every single one of them.”

Salami also referred to the unity between Iran and Iraq, saying, “We are siding with the Iraqi brothers, and the warmth that the enthusiasts for Imam Hussein (AS) have created will melt the Global Arrogance (the U.S.).”

bring someone who had betrayed their people into the country with “a very complicated and wise plan”, Vaezi added.

On Tuesday, the IRGC announced in a statement that in a “complicated” operation, it had managed to arrest the administrator of a website “directed and supported by France’s intelligence service”.

“This evil mercenary element” was busted during a “sophisticated” intelligence operation, according to the IRGC statement.

## MEK trolls publish anti-Iran disinformation: envoy

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador to London Hamid Baeidinejad said on Sunday that members of the terrorist Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK) are using super-modern computers to publish disinformation and fake news in order to manipulate the public opinion in Iran.

Posting a photo of the group’s members, Baeidinejad tweeted, “This photo of members of the Monafiqeen (MEK) in Camp Ashraf in Albania was recently leaked.”



He added, “Many of the members of the organization, with non-military clothes, have laid their hands on new weapons, which are super-modern computers by which they extensively publish fake news and disinformation in order to poison public opinion.”

The MEK was established in the 1960s to express a mixture of Marxism and Islamism. It launched bombing campaigns against the Shah, continuing after the 1979 Islamic Revolution, against the Islamic Republic. Iran accuses the group of being responsible for 17,000 deaths.

Based in Iraq at the time, MEK members were armed and equipped by Iraq to fight against Iran alongside the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein during a war which lasted for 8 years.

In 2012, the U.S. State Department removed the MKO from its list of designated terrorist organizations under intense lobbying by groups associated to Saudi Arabia and other regimes opposed to Iran.

A few years ago, MEK members were relocated from their Camp Ashraf in Iraq’s Diyala Province to Camp Hurriyet (Camp Liberty), a former U.S. military base in Baghdad, and were later sent to Albania.

Murteza Hussain of The Intercept have recently revealed how the MEK uses fake social media accounts to curate a false narrative about Iran to influence U.S. policy.

Then a series of photographs were leaked from inside the MEK’s camp in Albania and published in Iran. The photos offer an unguarded glimpse into the operational and organizational life of the cult.

Earlier this year, Germany’s Der Spiegel revealed that members of the MEK undergo horrific training in a camp in Albania.

Der Spiegel said the members held in the camp practice “cutting throats with knife”, “breaking hand”, “removing eyes with finger” and “tearing down mouth”.

The German weekly magazine added those who left the cult group say the members are being tortured and subjected to psychological trauma.

Talking to 15 members of the group, the magazine said the camp in which 2,000 members are kept is 50 times the size of a soccer field.

## MP: UAE has released \$700m of Iran’s frozen assets

**POLITICAL DESK** **TEHRAN** — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has released \$700 million of Tehran’s frozen assets, an Iranian lawmaker announced on Sunday.

“The Emirates has been getting away from Saudi Arabia and the U.S. ... It has been trying to revisit its relations with Iran and has released \$700 million of Iran’s frozen assets,” Akbar Torki said, according to IRNA.

The UAE’s currency relations with Iran have improved recently and Iranian currency exchange offices in Dubai have resumed activity, the MP added.



Torki said the Emiratis have realized that at this juncture, the Westerners and Saudis cannot provide them with security.

“The Emirates introduces itself as the Switzerland of the Middle East, but trade, banking, energy, and aviation of this country depends on security,” he argued. “It knows that it cannot do anything with a lack of security.”

The remarks came a week after President Hassan Rouhani said Iran’s relations with the United Arab Emirates has been improving.

During a press conference on October 14, Rouhani said there have been “some contacts between Iran and the United Arab Emirates in recent months and some Iranian officials have gone to the Emirates and some officials have also traveled to Iran and the Tehran-Emirates relations has been better in recent months than ever before.”

Meanwhile, during his speech at the UN General Assembly in late September, President Hassan Rouhani extended the hand of friendship to regional countries by inviting all of them to form the Hormuz Peace Endeavor, also called the “Coalition for Hope”.

“Based upon the historical responsibility of my country in maintaining security, peace, stability and progress in the Persian Gulf region and Strait of Hormuz, I would like to invite all the countries directly affected by the developments in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz to the Coalition for Hope,” the president said.

## Vaezi lauds IRGC move to arrest Zam

**TEHRAN (Tasnim)** — Presidential chief of staff Mahmoud Vaezi praised the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps’ (IRGC) recent success in arresting Ruhollah Zam, the head of an anti-Iranian website and Telegram channel, saying the IRGC forces have acted wisely.

“In the past, we had stated that the activities and operations of some networks (in cyberspace) have nothing to do with providing information, advertising, or media,” Vaezi told reporters in the northern province

of Semnan on Sunday.

“They, including Amadnews, play into the hands of the enemy,” he added, referring to the counter-revolutionary website “www.amadnews.org” and Telegram channel “Amadnews”.

“Today, it became clear to our people, even people from other countries, and officials, that the network was working for the enemy’s (spy) services,” the official said.

The IRGC forces have acted very well and managed to



STOCK MARKET	
TEDPIX	301391.1
IFX	3732.75
Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir	

CURRENCIES	
USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,918 rials
GBP	54,511 rials
AED	11,437 rials
Source: cbi.ir	

COMMODITIES	
Brent	\$59.42/b
WTI	\$53.87/b
OPEC Basket	\$59.54/b
Gold	\$1,492.25/oz
Silver	\$817.62/oz
Platinum	\$893.90/oz
Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com	

## Annual saffron output to reach 430 tons by Mar. 2020

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Production of saffron in Iran will reach 430 tons in the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020), according to an official in the Ministry of Agriculture.



“Saffron is cultivated in 113,000-115,000 hectares of land in the country and each year about 1,000-2,000 hectares are added to the under-cultivation area, but we are planning to increase the figure more in the next years”, Hossein Zeinali, the director for the ministry’s plan of medical herbs, told IRNA.

About 85 percent to 90 percent of Iran’s saffron is produced in the northeastern provinces of North Khorasan and Khorasan Razavi and the eastern province of South Khorasan, the official said.

## India expresses disappointment over lack of support for IMF quota increase

India on October 19 expressed its disappointment over the lack of support to increase the quota structure of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

As per thehindu.com, IMF quotas, which are the primary source of IMF funds, determine voting shares. Quotas are supposed to be reviewed every five years although these reviews can be delayed.

India views the “lack of adequate support for a quota increase under the 15th GRQ (General Review of Quotas) as somewhat disappointing”, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her address to the annual meeting of the IMF in Washington.

“We, however, consider this as a temporary setback. We hope that the discussions in the next (16th) Round of the GRQ would achieve success in terms of quota increase to take care of the Fund’s resource adequacy,” she said.

The quotas are distributed according to a four pronged formula that considers a member country’s GDP, its economic openness, its “economic variability” and international reserves.

India’s quota is 2.76% and China’s is 6.41%, while the U.S.’ quota is 17.46%, which translates to a vote share of 16.52%, giving it a unique veto power over crucial decisions at the IMF, many of which require a super majority of 85%.

■ **The emerging market**

The quota review, Ms. Sitharaman said, should also address the long-pending issue of under-representation of the Emerging Market and Developing Economies (EMDEs) and the dynamic economies in the IMF’s quota shareholding.

The “representation of member countries in the IMF should be in line with the changing economic realities for this institution to continue staying relevant,” she said.

Quota increases under the 16th round and also in the future rounds should be seen as an opportunity to realign quota shares in favor of EMDEs to allow them a more meaningful role in the governance of this Institution, the Finance Minister said.

According to Ms. Sitharaman, to ensure the stability of the international monetary and financial system, it is imperative that the IMF continues to remain at the center of the Global Financial Safety Net.

For this to happen, the IMF should be able to maintain its current lending capacity to meet the needs of its members as well as meet such needs should a financial crisis occur, she said.

In this backdrop, there have been concerns about its resource adequacy, given that the 15th round of the GRQ is likely to conclude this year without any quota increase, she said.

This could seriously hamper the effectiveness of the IMF’s role in a crisis, as the only source which IMF could rely upon with certainty is its permanent resources, i.e. quotas, she said, noting that the IMF was conceived as a quota-based organisation and its legal as well as economic basis is enshrined in that concept.

Although acknowledging that the IMF’s borrowed resources (New Arrangements to Borrow and Bilateral Borrowing Agreements) have played a role in building its buffer, these remain temporary and backstop arrangements, she said.

# Iran’s economy moving forward: CBI governor

**1 →** “The fact that the foreign currency market is calmed is not a reason to believe that the sanctions are over, the pressure has even increased and the central bank is still sanctioned,” Hemmati said.

“In the past seven months we have secured over \$20 billion of foreign currency for importing basic goods. If this trend continues, we will achieve great successes in this regard,” he added.

Noting that many of the central banks of the countries in the region are eager for cooperation with Iran, Hemmati said “We

have even had several visits to the neighboring countries [to hold talks] however we will not reveal the details.”

During the event, Head of ICCIMA Gholam-Hossein Shafeie also delivered a speech, in which he emphasized the important role of CBI’s foreign currency committee, saying “Banks are the main vessels through which the economy moves forward, so they need to be managed and guided carefully.”

According to the official, the country’s current monetary condition is not in accordance with its productive sector and this



CBI Governor Abdolnasser Hemmati (L) and ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie attend a meeting of the representatives of the country’s private sector in Tehran on Sunday.

situation has led to corruption in the system and disruption of the income distribution patterns.

Shafeie said liquidity should be directed to the production and employment cycles, so the horizontal growth of the banking system must be stopped and banks should move toward productivity.

## Industry ministry to amend tax exemption regulations for free zones

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran’s Deputy Finance and Economic Affairs Minister said the ministry is planning on amending the regulations pertain to tax exemptions in the country’s free economic zones.

Mentioning the criticism facing the tax exemptions in free zones regarding their ineffectiveness, Mohammad-Ali Dehqan Dehnavi noted that supporting the country’s free zones as gateways to development of trade is important, however considering the abuses that is resulted



from such support, it seems that some amendment is in order, Mehr news agency

reported on Sunday.

“The solution is to reform the current path; it can include removing exemptions altogether or regulating and monitoring them,” he said adding that “Iranian National Tax Administration (INTA) is just needed to be provided with sufficient information on economic activities in the mentioned zones [to make the necessary decision].”

According to Dehnavi, the country’s free zones are currently in charge of their economic information, and the Tax Administration has no authority in

this regard.

“If this information is made available to the tax office [INTA], it will certainly help prevent tax evasion,” he added.

Mentioning a comprehensive tax information bank which INTA is collecting, the official said: “In its Comprehensive Tax Plan, INTA seeks to expand its database.”

“If all the country’s economic information could be collected into one comprehensive database in the form of a tax plan, we would surely see good results,” he added.

## Iran, Turkmenistan draft document on energy, transportation co-op

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran and Turkmenistan have prepared a document for cooperation in energy and transportation areas on the sidelines of the 15th Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Committee meeting, Tasnim news agency reported on Sunday, quoting a senior official.

“The chairs of the committee from both sides, also ordered the development of a timetable for operationalization of the document, particularly in the fields of energy, transport and commerce,” Iran’s Deputy Transport Minister Shahram Adamnejad said.

According to the official, cooperation in the mentioned areas is the two countries’ main priority at the moment.

Mentioning the fact that the event was held after a four-year hiatus, Adamnejad said “Holding joint economic committee meetings is very important in the current regional situation and it is a turning point in the economic cooperation between the two countries.”

The 15th Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Economic Committee meeting was held last week in Turkmenistan’s capital Ashgabat.

The event was attended by senior officials from both sides and Iran’s Transport and Urban Development Minister Mohammad Eslami was the Iranian chairman of the meeting.

Eslami arrived in Ashgabat on October

15 at the head of a high-ranking economic delegation comprised of representatives from the oil, energy and foreign affairs ministries as well as the country’s private sector.

The minister was also accompanied by several parliament members, Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs Amir-Hossein Zamaninia, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Vice Chairman Hossein Salahvarzi and Shahram Adamnejad.

On the sidelines of the committee meeting, the two sides’ businessmen and entrepreneurs discussed and followed up on expansion of economic relations.

During his two-day visit, Eslami also met

and hold talks with Turkmenistan’s President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow, minister of industry, communications and transport and also the host country’s industrialists.

Back in August, ICCIMA sent a trade delegation comprised of representatives of the country’s private sector active in a variety of areas including transportation, tourism, food industry, energy, construction materials, mining and joint ventures to attend Turkmenistan’s first Caspian Economic Forum (CEF) which was held in Awaza on August 11-12.

In that meeting the two sides had also agreed to expand their economic and political ties.

## Value of trades at IME rises 22% in a week

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — During weekdays ended on October 17, while 566,556 tons of commodities worth over \$642 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), the trading value and volume experienced growth of 22 percent and 29 percent, respectively.

According to a report from IME International Affairs and Public Relations Department, last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 253,102 tons of various products worth \$339 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 187,342 tons of steel, 3,940 tons of copper, 5,780 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 12 tons of precious metal concentrates as well as 23 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 312,814 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$314 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 114,000 tons of VB feed stock, 62,673 tons of bitumen, 82,673 tons of polymer products, 54,000 tons of lube cut oil, 41,090 tons of chemical products, 3,640 tons of insulation, 2,024 tons of argon as well as 19,000 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 640 tons of commodities were traded on the side market of IME.

On June 24, during the meeting of IME shareholders, IME Managing Director Hamed Soltani-Nejad said that this exchange has prepared ten macro plans to improve its performance during the current Iranian calendar year



(ends on March 19, 2020).

He mentioned development of underlying assets through existing instruments, development of financial instruments for commodity-backed securities, expansion of market size and depth, increasing cooperation with other organizations, and strengthening IME brand as some of the mentioned macro plans.

Soltani-Nejad has previously announced that IME accounted for 39 percent of the value of the total trades in the Iranian capital market during the past Iranian calendar year.

He put the value of IME trades at 1.78 quadrillion rials (about \$42.3 billion) in the past year.

The value of trades at IME rose 52 percent in the past calendar year from its previous year.

Over 24.84 million tons of commodities valued at 884.3 trillion rials (about \$21.05 billion) were traded at the physical market of IME, showing seven percent fall in the amount and 77 percent rise in the worth of trades year on year.

Applying new financial instruments in Iranian capital market was one of the achievements of the country’s exchange markets during the past year.

In this due, IME launched “option” in early March 2019 in an approach to diversify financing methods for agricultural products.

Option is a contract which gives the buyer (the owner or holder of the option) the right, but not the obligation, to buy or sell an underlying asset or instrument at a specified strike price prior to or on a specified date, depending on the form of the option.

And last week, IME launched “futures contract” for the pistachio deals.

Futures contracts (more colloquially, futures) are financial contracts obligating the buyer to purchase an asset or the seller to sell an asset at a predetermined future date and price.

Addressing the ceremony to launch this financial instrument, Soltani-Nejad said, “There is no futures contract for pistachio deals in any mercantile exchange in the world and it is the first time that such contract is launched in a mercantile exchange.”

## ‘We must do everything possible’ to avoid global ‘fracture’ caused by U.S.-China tensions, urges Guterres

Tensions around global trade and technology continue to rise and the international community needs to “do everything possible” to prevent the world being split into two competing spheres, led by the United States and China.

As per news.un.org, that was the message from UN Secretary-General António Guterres on Saturday, speaking during the World Bank Group and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Annual Meetings in Washington DC.

In remarks to the International Monetary and Financial Committee, the UN chief said that “during tense and testing times” he continued to “fear the possibility of a Great Fracture – with the two largest economies splitting the globe in two – each with its own dominant currency, trade and financial rules, its own internet and artificial intelligence capacities and its own zero-sum geopolitical and military strategies.”

A trade war between the two economic giants is threatening to wipe out gains across the global economy, which could shrink global GDP next year “equivalent to

the whole economy of Switzerland” said the new head of the IMF, Kristina Georgieva, just a few days ago.

Mr. Guterres told world financiers that “it is not too late to avoid” the division, but “we must do everything possible to avert this ... and maintain a universal economy with universal respect for international law; a multipolar world with strong multilateral institutions, such as the World Bank and IMF.”

■ **A sustainable development**

He noted three main areas where fiscal policy and investment in the future would be pivotal. First, make tax systems “smarter, greener, and more aligned behind the sustainable development and climate action agendas”, he urged.

Secondly align the whole financial system behind the 17 SDGs, or Sustainable Development Goals, incentivizing long-term public and private finance, and “revisiting financial regulations that may inadvertently encourage short-termism in financial markets.”

Third, “it is time to break the cycle of excessive debt build-up followed by painful

debt crises”, meaning taking a systemic approach to lend and borrow more responsibly.

And we must keep a focus on countries particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the climate crisis, namely Small Island Developing States. I fully support proposals to convert debt to investment in resilience such as through the Debt for Climate Adaptation Swap initiative”, noted the UN chief. “We should move this from idea to reality.

Together, let us raise ambition for development finance, climate finance, and finance that is inclusive and enables markets to grow, businesses to thrive and people to live in dignity.”

Speaking at a meeting of the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action, Mr. Guterres said that the 44-member group launched just six months ago, was a “vital part of our response to the climate emergency”.

■ **Benefits of great opportunities**

The Climate Action Summit last month in New York had shown the “world is waking up to the crisis”, with “great opportunities

ahead to reduce air pollution, save billions of dollars on disasters fueled by global warming, and unlock the true benefits of the green economy.

Despite a “glaring gap in ambition and finance” finance ministers can turn the tide: “You come to the table with a mix of tools, including tax policy, controlled spending and climate budgeting ... and you can end counter-productive subsidies for fossil fuels and pave the way for what I would like to see as a major trend: shifting taxation from income, to carbon.”

Sweden and Colombia are already using carbon taxes; Uganda is implementing a Climate Change Budget Tagging System; and the island of Dominica has used fiscal policy to improve preparedness for climate shocks, following a devastating hurricane.

“Your Coalition is taking the ‘whole of government’ approach we need for systemic change. We need to have in place by COP26, country-level road maps and fiscal policies for economic, technological and energy transitions”.



# '2500 new rooftop PV stations under construction across Iran'

**E N E R G Y** **TEHRAN** – Some 2500 new rooftop photovoltaic power stations (known as PV systems) are being constructed to be installed for households across Iran, the spokesman of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Organization (SATBA) announced.

According to the portal of Iranian Energy Ministry (known as PAVEN), Jafar Mohammadnejad stated that there are currently about 3500 PV systems operational across the country.

Most of these power stations have been installed in underprivileged areas, the official said.

He put the country's current installed capacity of renewable power plans at 841 megawatts (MW), saying that all of the mentioned power plants have been established by 115 private companies active in this field.

Mohammadnejad noted that there are 115 large scale (or MW-scale) renewable power plants operating across the country.

He emphasized that the guaranteed purchase price of renewable electricity has increased by about 30 percent, adding that this tariff is especially more attractive for



biomass power plants in the northern parts of the country.

The official further noted that 53,420 people are employed annually in the renewable

sector.

Back in June, the Director General of SATBA's regulatory office, Mojtaba Loni, had said that over 3,200 rooftop photovoltaic power stations were operational across Iran at the time.

"In addition to providing sustainable income for rural households and reducing urban immigration by creating an alternative business in drought-affected regions, installing such solar power stations, has led to a boost in livelihoods of border residents and less developed areas," Loni said.

According to Energy Ministry's data, renewables account for nearly seven percent of the country's total electricity generation capacity.

Of the country's total renewable capacity, 44 percent is the share of solar power plants while the share of wind farms stands at 40 percent and small-scaled hydropower plants generate 13 percent of the total renewable capacity.

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.

## Wind energy in Brazil: Ceará supplies wind turbines

Ceará had no wind power projects contracted, and expectations for a thermoelectric plant were dashed. Now, wind turbines sales to neighboring states are in the sights. In solar energy, Ceará had four winning projects.

As stated by ewind.es, Ceará had no wind energy projects contracted at the A-6 energy auction, held yesterday (18) in São Paulo. However, the state may benefit from the situation by providing wind turbines for wind farm projects contracted in other states in the Northeast. In the event, Ceará had four winning projects, all of photovoltaic solar energy, totaling investments of over R \$ 566 million and 120 Megawatts (MW) of power.

"From the point of view of participation, it was not so good for Ceará, but if you look from the point of view of who will supply the wind farm equipment, they will probably be supplied by the industries of Ceará. So it is still a positive fact to provide In a way, the business chain always brings investors, even though there is no park hired here at this auction," says Adão Linhares, Executive Secretary for Energy and Telecommunications of the Secretariat of Infrastructure (Seinfra).

For the holder of the Secretary of Economic Development and Labor of the State (Sedet), Maia Júnior, the outcome of the event was frustrating. The "result was received with a lot of sadness and frustration. First, because 10 days before the auction we learned that the purchase would be a frustration due to the low growth rates in the country. The offer was very large, but there was also a big appetite from investors to offer energy, whose price dropped a lot and that's positive," he details.

### Wind energy and gas thermal

The state had licensed 156 projects, 85 solar photovoltaic, 69 wind energy and 2 gas thermal. In all, the projects authorized for Ceará had a power of 7,467 gigawatts (GW), being 3,196 GW of solar energy (42.8%), 2,180 GW of thermal (29.1%)



and 2,091 GW of wind energy (28.1%).

"The problem was competitiveness. What we offer here is the same thing that was offered in Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte and Bahia. They had a larger number of structured projects than ours. For Ceará, it was reasonable because of the photovoltaic solar energy. The great frustration was with the main project we had in the thermoelectric area in Porto do Pecém. I received with great sadness this result", says Maia Júnior.

One of Ceará's major projects was a gas-fired thermoelectric plant that would be installed at the Pecém Industrial and Port Complex (Cipp).

However, due to competitive market issues, the state of Pará ended up taking advantage anchored in the tax incentives presented to investors. "In Pará, the Tax on Circulation of Goods and Services (ICMS) is zero for this project. And in Ceará it was not like that. The ICMS here is in the range of 4%," adds Maia Júnior.

For Linhares, the size of the Ceará thermoelectric project was one of the decisive factors for the result. According to plant

data, the project would have a capacity of over 2,000 MW.

### Actually a big project

"It was actually a big project that could have two bidding possibilities: one full and one half. And depending on the level of demand, it would come in. But I realized the Pará competitor, due to some competitive advantage, with the situations of tax incentives, enabling better competitiveness. Here, the size that it (thermoelectric) was, was not competitive. There is another auction that is scheduled and we enter with this participation," he considers.

Linhares also reiterates that the political and economic scenarios of the country did not favor the result for Ceará. "This is a difficult time for the Brazilian economy, politics. And that was adamant. We have a good prospect of reaction, and it is no wonder that the Government has already announced an auction for March. These auctions are based on the demands of the concessionaires. The "government does this based on what the utilities are asking for power."

For Maia Júnior, expectations for future events are good. "Now we have to wait for next year's auctions, because these companies that developed these projects in the area of thermoelectric, solar photovoltaic and wind, remain. They are already licensed, so we expect the investor to participate in the next auctions. Our expectation is that next year we can reverse the results we had in 2019, which were not what we wish it had been."

According to him, the state is well positioned in terms of electricity generation and new investments are being planned. "We are well positioned. There are large investments underway in Ceará. We are taking steps exactly to take back the role in this matter. It is to have patience. The investor was present. It has to be emphasized that the investor worked, developed projects, licensed the projects.

(Source: ewind.es)

## Total's first LNG bunker vessel launched

Total has launched its first large LNG bunker vessel, following a long-term charter contract between Total and Mitsui O.S.K. Lines (MOL) in February 2018.

After delivery in 2020, the bunker vessel will operate in Northern Europe, where she will supply LNG to commercial vessels, including 300,000 tons per year for CMA CGM's nine ultra-large newbuild container ships in Europe-Asia trade, for a period of at least 10 years.

Built by Hudong-Zhonghua Shipbuilding at their shipyard near Shanghai, the 18,600

cubic meter bunker vessel is fitted with GTT tanks. The 135-meter vessel is designed to be highly maneuverable for safe port operation.

Touted as the world's largest bunkering ship, she is larger than Nauticor's 7,500 cubic meter vessel Kairos. She also has more capacity than the Shell Shipping & Maritime managed Cardissa which can hold around 6,500 cubic meters of LNG. A 12,000 cubic meter vessel is under construction for Indah Singa Maritime, a subsidiary of MOL, at Sembcorp Marine shipyard.

An 8,500 cubic meter sea-going LNG bunker vessel is currently being built by the Dalian Shipbuilding Industry Corporation for an affiliate of ENN Energy Holdings. A 6,000 cubic meter vessel is under construction at Damen Yichang Shipyard, China for Eesti Gaas of Estonia.

Total is the second-largest private global LNG player, with an overall portfolio of around 40 million tons per year by 2020 and a global market share of 10 percent. It sold 22 million tons of LNG in 2018, and has stakes in liquefac-

tion plants in Qatar, Nigeria, Russia, Norway, Oman, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Australia and Angola.

Total Marine Fuels Global Solutions is Total's dedicated business unit in charge of worldwide bunkering activities.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that use of natural gas for transportation could grow by as much as 14 percent between 2016 and 2022. According to DNV GL, there were 154 LNG vessels in operation and 146 vessels on order as of April 2019.

## The UK reaches a remarkable renewable milestone

By Tsvetana Paraskova

The UK has just ended its first quarter ever in which electricity generation from renewables outpaced fossil fuel-fired power generation — a landmark achievement for the country that started the Industrial Revolution with coal.

While Britain's achievement pales in comparison to other renewable champions in Europe and elsewhere, it is nevertheless a milestone that highlights the advance of renewable energy in the world over the past decade. And the share of renewable energy in power generation is set to continuously grow, everywhere.

Declining technology costs and battery prices across the board have made unsubsidized wind and solar power the cheapest options for electricity generation in major economies, including India and China. Solar and wind power is now cheaper than coal in most of the world.

In the UK, as much as 40 percent of electricity generation in Q3 came from renewables — including wind, biomass, and solar — while fossil fuels accounted for 39 percent of generation, an analysis of the UK's Q3 electricity generation from Carbon Brief showed this week. Most of the remaining generation came from nuclear power, which generated 19 percent of UK's electricity in that quarter.

This was the first quarter in the UK history in which renewables generation exceeded fossil fuels since the first power plant opened in Britain in 1882.

Of the 39-percent share of fossil fuels, 38 percent was natural gas and less than 1 percent came from coal and oil combined, Carbon Brief said.

### The UK's power generation

The share of coal in the UK's power generation dropped from just above 30 percent in 2009 to less than 3 percent in



January-May 2019, National Grid said earlier this year, noting that in full 2019 "Britain is set to achieve a historic electricity generation milestone this year, with more electricity generated from zero carbon sources than fossil fuels."

As the UK aims to phase out coal by 2025, coal-fired electricity generation in the country has been at all-time lows in recent months. In May, the UK went coal-free for a full week for the first time since the 1880s, as its electricity generation used 0 percent coal-fired power.

Meanwhile, in the UK's latest Contracts for Difference (Cfd), twelve new renewable energy projects won contracts to provide some 6 GW of capacity — enough to power over seven million UK homes at record low costs as renewables are expected to come online below market prices for the first time, the UK government said.

The "prices are so low that the wind farms could generate electricity more cheaply than existing gas-fired power stations as early as 2023," Carbon Brief analysis suggested.

Rising wind — especially offshore wind — capacity has been the main driver of the UK's growing renewable capacity and electricity generation in recent years.

There are more advanced 'renewable' countries in Europe — Sweden, for example, generates more than 54 percent of its electricity from renewable sources on a sustainable basis.

The country targets to have 100 percent renewable electricity generation by 2040. Denmark generates more than 43 percent of its electricity from wind power.

### A major source of generation

Costa Rica, Norway, and Iceland generate nearly 100 percent of their electricity from renewables, but hydropower is a major source of their generation.

Europe's largest economy, Germany, saw a record share of renewable generation in the first half of 2019, thanks to stormy weather that boosted wind power generation.

Amid the heated debates over climate change and ways to save the planet before it's too late, three countries and their energy policies and power generation will shape the trends in renewables on a global scale — China, India, and the United States — due to the size of their energy markets.

Because of its huge market and huge investments in renewable energy capacity installation, China is capable of shocking the market with policy decisions.

In the United States, natural gas and wind are winning, while coal is losing in the race for shares of power generation. This year, annual electricity generation from wind in the U.S. is set to exceed hydropower generation for the first time and to become the leading source of renewable electricity generation — and it will stay so in 2020, the EIA says.

Globally, wind and solar are expected to account for a combined 50-percent share of electricity generation in 2050, BloombergNEF said in its New Energy Outlook 2019.

Europe is set to decarbonize the furthest and the fastest, while coal-heavy China and gas-heavy U.S. will play catch-up, BNEF says, noting that "wind and solar are now cheapest across more than two-thirds of the world. By 2030 they undercut commissioned coal and gas almost everywhere."

(Source: oilprice.com)

## OPEC's next meeting may unveil new approach to cuts

As the clamor grows for OPEC to slash even more oil production, and the group vows to consider any necessary action, its next meeting could result in an unusual step: a pre-emptive supply cut.

As per gulfnews.com, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and its partners — known as OPEC+ — have reduced output this year to contain a glut created by faltering oil demand and surging U.S. shale supply. Amid forecasts of a new surplus next year, there's a chorus of calls from Morgan Stanley to Commerzbank AG for the alliance to deepen the curbs when it meets in Vienna in December.

But in recent months global markets have grown tighter, removing any immediate need to act. If extra cutbacks are announced, it would mark a break with tradition for the group, which typically waits for a glut to emerge before responding.

"It would break the mold," said Derek Brower, a director at consultant RS Energy Group. "OPEC makes policy reactively, not proactively."

Depressed oil prices may compel the group to change its habits. Crude has slumped about 20 percent in six months to around \$59 a barrel in London — below the levels most OPEC nations need to cover government spending — and on Friday posted a weekly loss of 1.8 percent. A renewed sell-off in 2020 would squeeze revenues even further.



OPEC+, a collective of 24 producers that pumps half the world's oil, confronts a "daunting" surplus in the first six months of 2020 of about 1.2 million barrels a day, according to the International Energy Agency.

### The weakest global growth

Demand is being eroded by the weakest global growth in a decade and the U.S.-China trade war, while supplies are swelling in the U.S. and elsewhere. As a result, the group is facing a "serious challenge" to defend prices, said Neil Atkinson, the agency's head of oil markets.

The coalition agreed to cut output by 1.2 million barrels a day this year, a reduction that has been compounded by a range of crises, from sanctions on Iran to a missile attack on Saudi Arabia's oil-processing facilities. Nonetheless, traders and consultants from Gunvor Group Ltd to Rystad Energy AS recommend a further cutback when OPEC+ meets on December 5-6.

"If by December there are clear signs of economic weakness, then a further deepening by a minimum of 500,000 barrels a day would be highly likely," said Ed Morse, head of commodity research at Citigroup Inc. in New York.

OPEC's top officials have signaled they're prepared to consider this. Secretary-General Mohammad Barkindo said the group will do "whatever it takes" to prevent a market slump and that members are willing to "put all options on the table." Saudi Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman, who represents OPEC's biggest member, said his job is to check a surplus.

Even Russia's President Vladimir Putin, who leads OPEC's most important, yet often reluctant ally, has said he recognizes the need for further cooperation.

Yet announcing a supply cut while the market is in deficit would be a departure for the organization.

When OPEC+ was established in late 2016, surplus inventories had ballooned to a record of more than 300 million barrels and were still accumulating at a rate of 1.4 million a day, according to the Paris-based IEA. Its current round of cuts was agreed in late 2018, when supply was exceeding demand by 2.7 million barrels a day.

In the past, OPEC has more typically been criticized for acting too slowly. When a surplus brews, members are reluctant to gamble that sacrificing sales volumes will be compensated by higher prices. There's also the inevitable discussion over how much each nation should cut.

### Ignoring gloomy forecasts

"It's far easier for OPEC to sit on its hands, ignore gloomy forecasts for as long as possible and try to deal with any problems after they've emerged, rather than start the painful and tedious negotiations that are always needed before a new deal," RS Energy's Brower said.

When OPEC assemblies at its Austrian headquarters in December, global markets probably won't be telegraphing any immediate surplus to be dealt with.

World oil inventories contracted in the third quarter by the most in a decade, falling by 228 million barrels, according to OPEC, as summer demand proved surprisingly robust and the group's deliberate cutbacks were amplified by disruptions in Iran, Venezuela and Saudi Arabia.

Stockpiles are poised to shrink further in the fourth quarter, even if the kingdom has fully restored output from the September 14 missile and drone strikes, the IEA estimates. Inventories may decline by about 55 million barrels.

Yet the outlook for the first six months of 2020 may nonetheless spur the producers into acting. The alliance needs to cut supply by 1 million barrels a day, and the only question now is the timing, said Bob McNally, president of Rapidan Energy Group and a former oil official at the White House under President George W. Bush.

"Normally it's OPEC's habit to wait until they can see the oversupply in the whites of the eyes," McNally said. "But the heavily swollen balances for the first half of next year may push them to cut production earlier than planned."



## The global economic unraveling has come

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — President Donald Trump's trade wars, sanctions and economic terrorism against friends and foes have failed to transform themselves into something of value and substance, immediately or in the long run.

His tariffs promised to shower the United States with more jobs and affluence, but only brought financial loss and misery to businesses and households. His economic terrorism against Iran and others have only made them stronger. The most lasting consequences of his actions have also been the dismantling of global economy. The trade war has slowed down global growth, affecting the natural wealth of other nations and the local economies of household, neighborhood and community.



Strange enough, the disruptor-in-chief and sanctions hawks in Congress refuse to press the pause button on their economic-war instincts and anti-multilateralism agenda. They use false claims to import some of their most odious ideas into the mainstream. And they enjoy being acknowledged and appreciated for all the wrong reasons.

Wrong and disruptive because their economic wars and sanctions against friends and foes plus the global nature of their growing trade tensions have been taken in by the Group of 20 finance leaders as well. They represent 19 of the world's largest developed and developing nations and the EU, and they are not treating the economic wars like any other issue or even less than that.

As it happens, the IMF has warned that the trade war could knock 0.5 percent from global GDP output in 2020. Netherlands-based investment bank ING has said the damage will make 2019 the worst year for trade. Bundesbank President Jens Weidmann and Goldman Sachs analysts have all said the dispute could reduce global trade by 1% in the medium term, and if Trump ups the ante, the peak boost to core inflation could reach 0.9 of a percentage point, alongside a dent in US GDP.

Tell that to Trump and those still distracted by the memory of past glory in Congress with so much political interest directed elsewhere. They see no impact on US growth from the worsening trade conflicts and sanctions, claiming they have taken steps to protect consumers from disruptive agendas. These are the same households that Federal Reserve officials, including New York Fed President John Williams, say are "on the front line of the trade war". They say a boost to inflation is right around the corner, and with a potential drain on confidence among businesses and financial markets.

No doubt the damage from the US sanctions and trade and economic policies has made 2019 the worst year for global trade and economy. It is still happening in plain sight and it has negatively affected the whole world. The destruction is not just happening elsewhere; it is now true of the US as well. The full impact of the tariffs and economic frictions have fallen on American consumers and businesses, a drain on the economy beyond the direct cost of the levies, which Goldman Sachs analysts say did cost 1.4 billion US dollars a month last year.

This should spare no evidence of the coming economic catastrophe. The dispute has reached beyond the world's largest economy as many other economies are also performing bad. This should deliver a rebuke of Trump's obsession with sanctions, tariffs and trade conflicts. It represents a symbolic condemnation of his decision and exerts political pressure on him to normalize the abnormal.

The reality of the situation is that Trump cannot go on forever threatening friends and foes with disruptive sanctions, tariffs and trade wars. The global unraveling has come. Trump is better off accepting it as a signal that his trade and sanctions plans are not sound, rebuild those plans, and set sail once more toward the coveted goal of global community, which is recognition of a rules-based international order.

## U.S. cannot downplay its atrocities in Afghanistan

**TEHRAN (FNA)** — Escalating attacks by US forces over the summer have meant a higher toll among Afghan civilians.



The latest UN report covering July to September found it the bloodiest three month period in Afghanistan since they started keeping data in 2009. Up 42% from the same period in 2018, the report found 174 deaths and 3,139 injuries among civilians. Total casualties in the first nine months of the year are over 8,000, again the highest figure in years.

The UN emphasized the rate of US attacks across Afghanistan have been surging in particular over the past few months, with Trump scrapping the peace plan. The UN report rightly identified a big problem as being a belief that the war can still be resolved militarily. While they again tried to pin this position on the Taliban primarily, the Taliban did negotiate an entire deal right to the end to be signed, only for the US to back out at the last moment. The cabal of US war criminals are still under the illusion that if they tell this big enough lie and tell it frequently enough, it will be believed by the international community. But they cannot win that war. ➔7

# Hong Kong-style riots to haunt West

**GLOBALTIMES** — Supporters of the Catalan separatist movement publicly declared to have learned from the Hong Kong demonstrators, promoting the latter's tactics such as to "be water" and wearing masks to reduce the risk of being arrested. They seized the local airport on Monday and Tuesday, forcing a large number of flights to cancel. They also blocked roads and railways, set garbage cans on fire. Their slogan is "We're going to do a Hong Kong!"

Spain's Supreme Court on Monday sentenced nine Catalan separatist leaders to between nine and 13 years in jail, which, again, set local protesters ablaze. Demonstrations in Catalonia used to be peaceful. It seems that the protesters' use of violence in the four-month turmoil in Hong Kong has set an example for Catalan radicals.

Spanish officials strongly condemned the violence. Politicians from the US and the West obviously have no idea how to comment at this point. The EU and the US used to firmly support the Spanish government in cracking down on the Catalan separatist movement. But the demonstrators say they are learning from Hong Kong, while protests in Hong Kong have been applauded by the West as a "beautiful sight" of democracy. What's happening in Hong Kong is now occurring in the West. This is awkward.

Some mainstream Western media have kept a low key in covering the latest protests in Catalonia while downplaying its connection with Hong Kong or the slogan that local protesters are attempting to turn Catalonia into another Hong Kong.

In addition, some environmentalists in the UK are imitating Hong Kong protesters by occupying the London City Airport. In Australia, a group of environmentalists are also attempting to carry out Hong Kong-style protests. Signs that violence in Hong Kong might be mimicked by Western societies are emerging. Catalonia is more like the beginning.

The Western economy is overall sluggish and even in decline. Immigration issues, racial tensions and political differences have led to substantial dissatisfaction. At this point, making Hong Kong's violent protests an example is dangerous for Westerners.

The violence in Hong Kong is not resistance against so-called tyranny, which is completely fabricated. It is the result of the West's double standards. Because of support from the West, Hong Kong protesters dare to confront their legal system in an unruly way. But their confrontation could be imitated by Western



groups who are not satisfied with their situation.

Some elites in the US and the West are lost in their extreme geopolitical and ideological mindsets. They believe the turmoil in Hong Kong will cause trouble for China, so they tend to extol Hong Kong protesters. However, thanks to the "one country, two systems" principle, the chaos in the city will not spread to the Chinese mainland, but the West is not immune to that.

Catalonia is the first to be infected, but will not be the last. If the globalized world cannot jointly oppose violent political movements that challenge the order, it cannot be ruled out that the West will eventually become the severely afflicted area of the new type of violent movement.

■ **What 6% GDP growth means to China's economy**

China's GDP grew by 6 percent year-on-year in the third quarter, slower than expected. It has triggered widespread discussions at home and abroad. The downward pressure on China's economy is persisting. The US-launched trade war against China and the sluggish global economy have also had a negative influence, which weighed down China's GDP growth.

However, achieving China's GDP growth target in 2019, which is set between 6.0 and 6.5 percent, doesn't seem to be a problem. A 6 percent annual growth rate is still the highest among the world's major economies. This is not self-consolation, but the truth.

Amid sluggish global economic growth, a single economy's strength is relative, and the quality of its economic growth matters. China's economic growth mirrors the country's comprehensive national strength as well as people's living standards. China is still developing and has a huge potential.

Does China still enjoy the strongest growth among major countries? It certainly does. Take a look at China's infrastructure development, significant improvement in people's livelihood, advances in technology and national defense capabilities, and one would realize that the country's comprehensive



progress is without doubt the most prominent among major powers. Over the past few years, China's GDP growth rate has been in gradual decline but as the economy continues to grow, China's real GDP increase has continued to expand each year.

Is China's current comprehensive power stronger than five years ago? Have Chinese people's living standards, including food, clothing, housing and transportation, improved? Has China established or improved its social security, education, medical care and pension system? Has China promoted ecological and environmental protection? Has a greater portion of its population joined the country's modernization drive on a deeper level? Has the frequency of production safety accidents been reduced? Are more cities and towns cleaner? Are our lives generally more convenient and of better quality?

All those areas are related to the GDP growth. Regardless of which aspect is assessed compared to other major economies, China's change is arguably the most significant in the past five years. China's development is solid, not to mention the country's crackdown on corruption and its economic restructuring while setting goals toward meeting the needs of people at the same time. China's ability to develop and to optimize its development has remained robust. The country's development has never stalled and is unlikely to show signs of stagnation.

The problems the Chinese economy is facing are generally temporary and technical ones. The trade war will have an impact on sales of certain products. Proactive adjustments in the economic structure will inevitably bring temporary pain in certain fields. But suffering a bit does not necessarily mean it may not be beneficial to the long-term economic development. China's advantage lies in its resilience.

■ **Trade data shows resilience of China's economy**

Data released by the General Administration of Customs Monday shows China's total trade amounted to 22.91 trillion yuan (\$3.24 trillion) in the first three quarters of the year, growing 2.8 percent from a year ago. The country's exports rose by 5.2 percent to 12.48 trillion yuan and imports dropped 0.1 percent to 10.43 trillion yuan. Trade surplus of China expanded 44.2 percent during the period to 2.05 trillion yuan.

These data carry weight. The new round of high-level China-US trade talks has made substantial progress in some areas, triggering positive feedback from global markets on Monday. It is of special significance since China's trade can still grow in a harsh environment, which demonstrates the tenacity of the Chinese economy and the effectiveness of the measures to cope with internal and external challenges.

China-US trade has declined by a large margin in the first three quarters, a result of the trade war. However, China's trade with the EU and ASEAN has grown significantly, enough to offset a drop in China-US trade. It's worth mentioning that China's trade with Belt and Road route countries grew 9.5 percent. The country has diversified its trade markets and optimized its structure.

Under the backdrop of the trade war, the growth of China's exports proves the competitiveness of Chinese products. The latest WTO data shows that during the first seven months of the year, the growth rate of China's trade surpassed that of Germany, Japan and South Korea, consolidating its status as the world's top commodity trading country. This enables China to further restructure its economy, and master more initiatives no matter in trade talks or the trade war with the US.

The most important thing is to do our own things well. It is the lesson the trade war has taught the Chinese people. China will continue to open wider and develop its market. The efforts will create a chain reaction, leading to better-than-expected results.

We have seen the arrogance of some American elites during the trade war. But the performance of the Chinese economy has made them realize that wishing of a unilateral win for the US is increasingly unrealistic. However, there are also Americans who

opposed a trade war with China from the very beginning. As China's economy shows a greater internal driving force, relying less and less on the US market, rational voices will start to influence US society and sway public opinion incited by those elites.

There will always be uncertainty, but it is nothing to be feared. The Chinese economy is undergoing a historic transformation, which won't be an easy process. But we will not be overwhelmed by the difficulties. Hard work, perseverance and an optimistic Chinese society will create a better future.

■ **Ted Cruz's pernicious agenda in Hong Kong**

US Republican Senator Ted Cruz arrived in Hong Kong on Saturday to rally support for radical demonstrations that were losing steam. He dressed in black to mark "his solidarity with Hong Kong protesters." It is well known that the black shirt is increasingly associated with violence in Hong Kong, because almost all rioters are masked and dressed in black. For many, a person in black became synonymous with a thug.

Cruz said he supported non-violence, but that was only a cover for his public support for violent demonstrations in Hong Kong. He came to Hong Kong with the intent to disrupt rational thinking in the city and fuel the fire.

Look at the people who Cruz is most interested in Hong Kong. They are Jimmy Lai Chee-ying, Anson Chan Fang On-sang and radical opposition figures whose names the Senator refused to disclose. It is not difficult to imagine how Cruz will encourage those people to continue to confront.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam called off the meeting with Cruz who immediately accused the chief executive of "weakness." Cruz's arrogance and conceit has breached diplomatic protocol that politicians deserve. There may be different levels of reception given to a visitor. The world does not grant US senators the privilege of meeting at the highest level. Cruz takes himself too seriously.

While Cruz was glorifying violence in Hong Kong, rioters vandalized property and attacked police in several parts of the city on Sunday. A police officer was attacked by a thug who slashed his neck from behind. Cruz, who was in Hong Kong, was not heard condemning the rioters' action. Instead, he falsely accused the Hong Kong police of repression.

Cruz became one of the most prominent disruptive elements of Sunday's events in Hong Kong, giving a reason to some radical protesters to delude themselves amid flagging demonstrations. Cruz is definitely in the same league as Hong Kong's violent demonstrators. Cruz has created a political label for himself: anti-Chinese, anti-Communist and pro-Taiwan. With this visit to Hong Kong he wants to make political capital in the US and show himself to be more like a flag-bearer anti-China politician.

This is a blatant intervention in Hong Kong affairs, but Cruz has been an active voice among American politicians who accused China of "infiltration" and "trying to undermine US democracy." Hypocrisy has been programmed in this man. People like him even have the audacity to take the moral high ground.

Cruz came to Hong Kong with the sole purpose of destabilizing Hong Kong and making political capital out of it in the US. We think that if the US passes the so-called Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, people like Cruz should be blacklisted from visiting Hong Kong in the future and subjected to more sanctions. Their relatives should also be restricted in response to American moves.

Hongkongers who love the country should not be afraid of the US' anti-China forces. They may make some trouble, but they can't lead the way in the city. With the firm support of the central government, as long as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region government and the forces that love the motherland and Hong Kong act more resolutely, we will be able to keep accumulating achievements in stopping violence and curbing chaos. No matter how hard some American politicians try, they will eventually be pushed to the edge in Hong Kong.



# Trump and Biden; two political losers in 2020 election

By Saeed Sobhani

**TEHRAN** — Biden is very restless. Of course, this unrest is not his only concern! US President Donald Trump is not having a good day after Ukraine Gate! Trump knows full well that further disclosure of the story could turn him and Biden into two political losers in next year's presidential election. Here, the latest news and analysis on Biden and Trump's political situation Let's do:

Trump's Ukraine- Gate Attacks on Biden Echo Watergate As Medium reported, Those viewing and participating in tonight's Democratic debate should ignore the spin, and cut right to the chase. Trump's Ukraine-gate outrages are about exactly the same thing Watergate was: A corrupt President of the United States illegally attempting to destroy the Democratic presidential candidate he most fears will beat him for re-election. Remember the famous, frustrated injunction made to Bob Woodward during Watergate by "Deepthroat", FBI Agent Mark Felt, the original impeachment whistleblower:

"You're missing the overall!" Felt implored Woodward. "They [the Nixon White House] were frightened of Muskie; look who got destroyed. They wanted to run against McGovern; look who they're running against..."

The media and many in the Democratic Party, too, seem to be "missing the overall." Trump was out to destroy Biden. Look who's been falling in the polls. Trump hopes to run against Warren or another candidate that he views as weaker. Looks who's gaining in the polls. Whichever of the many Democratic legitimate candidates you might support, this influence seems undeniable. It is, in fact, a hugely troubling sign of how jaded the American polity has become — and how corrupt and amoral the Republican Party now is — that most people don't seem to recognize the eerie similarity between what Nixon did, and Trump has done.

In the political culture of the 1970's, such actions were judged as the most infamous, devastating political and Presidential scandal in American history. Under the Orwellian, right-wing, Fox News, "alternative fact", reality TV White House propagandistic culture of 2019, it is regarded by most of Trump's base, and apparently the entire Republican Party, as just business as usual. In this sense, Ukraine-gate is the Rorschach Test of our political degradation. Democratic candidates must denounce it as such in the strongest terms.

Of course, one major difference between Watergate and Ukraine-gate is that Trump tried to extort a foreign power into undermining a Democratic opponent, and appears to have sanctioned Rudy Giuliani's wide ranging "shadow" foreign policy with that goal directly in mind. So, if anything, Trump's crimes (that we know of so far) are worse than Nixon's since they involve forcing (and abetting as in 2016) foreign nations to warp our elections.

Nixon, while arguably no less devious than Trump, was necessarily less brazen because the political culture in his era would never have accepted such behavior, and indeed was shaken to its very foundation when it realized what had occurred during Watergate. In the early 1970s, such illegal, immoral behavior was so unthinkable that most people — in the general public, media and in Congress — doubted it until the Washington Post reporting and White House tapes confirmed it.

Today, does anyone actually believe Trump is incapable of such high crimes? Quite the opposite, no one on any side of the political divide appeared particularly surprised when the details of the transcript of the Ukraine call emerged. Trump himself, just to make sure no one mistook his intentions, suggested China investigate Biden in the immediate aftermath of the Ukraine transcript release. And months earlier he asserted that there was nothing wrong with asking foreign governments to gather dirt on his opponents. No one seemed shocked at this, coming from Trump.

Indeed, Trump originally made lampooning political correctness and violating norms of candidate conduct the key element in his meteoric rise to power in 2016, and the major element in titillating his reality-TV watching base. It seemed his electoral strategy was demeaning the political process itself as many of his followers seemed to want to. But like the Pandora's box of political discourse, once his insults, lies and manipulations began to be accepted so many Republicans and voters, there were no reins on his behavior.

Trump has become completely addicted to provoking outrage both personally as a narcissist, and politically as a strategy to rally his base. Yet now he must say and do ever more outrageous thing to gain the media attention he craves and believes he needs politically. Thus Trump quickly moved on to the violating dozens of norms of conduct as President, to besmirching the office as no other Oval Office occupant has ever done. With each new attack on defenseless Americans, which each new depraved tweet or vulgar insult, with another thousands lies, Trump views himself as more and more invulnerable to being held to account.

All of this is reminiscent of another Nixon fiasco, his "mad man theory" of Cold War politics. On several occasions, Nixon told his advisers that he believed he should consider acting so erratically that the Soviets would believe he was a madman, capable of starting a nuclear war, and therefore persuade them negotiate with him more compliantly.

What was stray, terrifying Nixon thought that his advisers dismissed. Trump has operationalized as his method of being President, culminating in extorting a foreign nation to persecute Joe Biden.

Trump truly is a mad man. He has now crossed a line that must demand impeachment, and/or removal from office by election, and he doesn't even know it. Trump once said he could "shoot someone down on 5th Avenue" and still be popular with his base. Well, he has done the political equivalent. Democrats and the rest of the country must hold him accountable and begin to rebuild the tattered reputation of the American Presidency.



## ■ 'Ukraine-Gate' Will Endanger Biden, Not Trump

But American conservatives reported that With the revelation by an intel community "whistleblower" that President Donald Trump, in a congratulatory call to the new president of Ukraine, pushed him repeatedly to investigate the Joe Biden family connection to Ukrainian corruption, the cry "Impeach!" is being heard anew in the land. But revisiting how this latest scandal came about, and how it has begun to unfold, it is a good bet that the principal casualty could be the former vice president. Consider.

In May 2016, Joe Biden, as Barack Obama's designated point man on Ukraine, flew to Kiev to inform President Petro Poroshenko that a billion-dollar U.S. loan guarantee had been approved to enable Kiev to continue to service its mammoth debt.

But, said Biden, the aid was conditional. There was a quid pro quo. If Poroshenko's regime did not fire its chief prosecutor in six hours, Biden would fly home and Ukraine would get no loan guarantee. Ukraine capitulated instantly, said Joe, revealing in his pro-consul role. Yet left out of Biden's drama about how he dropped the hammer on a corrupt Ukrainian prosecutor was this detail.

The prosecutor had been investigating Burisma Holdings, the biggest gas company in Ukraine. And right after the U.S.-backed coup that ousted the pro-Russian government in Kiev, and after Joe Biden had been given the lead on foreign aid for Ukraine, Burisma had installed on its board, at \$50,000 a month, Hunter Biden, the son of the vice president. Joe Biden claims that, though he was point man in the battle on corruption in Ukraine, he was unaware his son was raking in hundreds of thousands from one of the companies being investigated. Said Joe on Saturday, "I have never spoken to my son about his various business dealings."

Is this credible?

Trump and Rudy Giuliani suspect not, and in that July 25 phone call, Trump urged President Volodymyr Zelensky to reopen the investigation of Hunter Biden and Burisma. The media insist there is no story here and the real scandal is that Trump pressed Zelensky to target his strongest 2020 rival. Worse, say Trump's accusers, would be if the president conditioned the transfer of \$250 million in approved military aid to Kiev on the new regime's acceding to his demands.

The questions raised are several. Is it wrong to make military aid to a friendly nation conditional on that country's compliance with legitimate requests or demands of the United States? Is it illegitimate to ask a friendly government to look into what may be corrupt conduct by the son of a U.S. vice president?

Joe Biden has an even bigger problem: this issue has begun to dominate the news at an especially vulnerable moment for his campaign. Biden's stumbles and gaffes have already raised alarms among his followers and been seized upon by rivals such as Cory Booker, who has publicly suggested that the 76-year-old former vice president is losing it.

Biden's lead in the polls also appears shakier with each month. Senator Elizabeth Warren has just taken a narrow lead in a Des Moines Register poll and crusading against Beltway corruption is central to her campaign. "Too many politicians in both parties have convinced themselves that playing the money-for-influence game is the only way to get things done," Warren told her massive rally in New York City. "No more business as usual. Let's attack the corruption head on."

Soon it will not only be Trump and Giuliani asking Biden questions about Ukraine, Burisma, and Hunter, but Democrats, too. Calls are rising for Biden's son to be called to testify before congressional committees. With Trump airing new charges daily, Biden will be asked to respond by his traveling press. The charges and the countercharges will become what the presidential campaign is all about. Bad news for Joe Biden. Can he afford to spend weeks, perhaps months, answering for his son's past schemes to enrich himself through connections to foreign regimes that seem less related to Hunter's talents than his being the son of a former vice president and possible future president?

"Ukraine-gate" is the latest battle in the death struggle between the "deep state" and a president empowered by Middle America to go to Washington and break its grip on the national destiny.

Another issue is raised here—the matter of whistleblowers listening in to or receiving readouts of presidential conversations with foreign leaders and having the power to decide for themselves whether the president is violating his oath and needs to be reported to Congress.

Eisenhower discussed coups in Iran and Guatemala



and the use of nuclear weapons in Korea and the Taiwan Strait. JFK, through brother Bobby, cut a secret deal with Khrushchev to move U.S. missiles out of Turkey six months after the Soviets removed their missiles from Cuba.

Who deputized bureaucratic whistleblowers to pass judgment on such conversations and tattle to Congress if they were offended?

It's Warren, Sanders or Biden vs Trump — all the other Democrats are irrelevant

But Guardian reported that The Democratic nominee in 2020 will be Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren or Bernie Sanders. Everyone else is irrelevant.

Don't get me wrong. The entire field is impressive. Every candidate in last week's debate would make a far better president than the current inhabitant of the Oval Office. But let's get real. Biden, Warren, and Sanders each continue to garner around 20% in the polls while all others are in the single-digit doldrums. The frontrunners also have the money and the organization.

Yet eight Democrats have already qualified for the 20 November debate in the Atlanta area, including the senators Kamala Harris and Cory Booker, Mayor Pete Buttigieg, the entrepreneur Andrew Yang and the billionaire Tom Steyer.

By 13 November, the last date for meeting the Democratic National Committee criteria, I wouldn't be surprised if the former representative Beto O'Rourke, Senator Amy Klobuchar, the former housing secretary Julián Castro and Representative Tulsi Gabbard were also on board.

This is nuts. What's the point of another three-hour marathon? With so many candidates, all we get are sound-bites, gotchas and one-liners.

Perhaps someone in the second tier will be picked for vice-president or will end up in the next president's cabinet, or their exposure will help win a seat in the House or Senate, or a governorship. But this is not enough reason to continue this overly extended beauty contest.

Support must consolidate soon. Time is wasting. Take out the holidays and by 20 November the caucuses and primaries will be only weeks away. The Iowa caucuses are on 3 February.

If we were going into a normal general election, the huge field of wannabes wouldn't be a problem. But this won't be a normal election. These are not normal times. If you hadn't noticed, Donald Trump is not a normal president.

Impeachment is sucking huge amounts of oxygen from the political air, and will continue to do so for months. Meanwhile, Trump's campaign is in full gear. His fund-raising machinery — the Republican National Committee, Super PACs, his official campaign — has raised more than \$736m. That's more than any presidential candidate at this point in a campaign.

Trump has never stopped campaigning. His incendiary lies continue to reverberate through Fox News, rightwing radio and social media. The larger the Democratic field, the harder it is for any single candidate or message to break through the cacophony.

At the same time, second-tier candidates are under growing pressure to take pot shots at the front runners — planting negative stories, poking holes in their plans, building themselves up at their expense. This may be rational for them but it's irrational for the Democrats as a whole. The old saw that a nominee benefits from having to respond to many other candidates doesn't apply to this election.

If you thought the 'swift boating' of John Kerry in 2004 was outrageous, wait until Trump launches his aircraft carriers

Trump will not be debating subtle differences between Medicare for All and Medicare for Those Who Want It. He will accuse the Democrat of being a communist, and worse. It's time to for Democrats to hunker down. The debaters on 20 November should be Biden, Warren and Sanders.

Warren and Sanders should be given a chance to fully explain how their ideas differ. Biden needs to explain why he believes America should return to the politics we had before Trump, when that politics led to Trump. All three should have ample time to describe how they'd win over working-class Americans who have been shafted for 40 years. They also need room to discuss how they'll create a multi-racial, multi-ethnic coalition to take power back for the bottom 90%, and how they'll get big money out of politics and restore our democracy.

And they need to address how they'll take on Trump's malicious lies and anything-goes tactics. If you thought George W. Bush's "swift boating" of John Kerry in 2004 was outrageous, wait until Trump launches his aircraft carriers. Americans deserve a full opportunity to assess these three candidates and decide which should take on Trump. It's not too late for the DNC to tighten the rules for who gets to debate next.

## The CIIE: A gorgeous chorus of integrated world economy

**1 →** The second CIIE is quite worth expecting. Namely, its scale will be even larger. The exhibition area has increased from 300,000 to 330,000 square meters. More than 170 countries, international organizations, over 3,000 exhibitors and 400,000 purchasers have signed up for the exhibition. There will be more than 200 supporting and facilitating activities, such as interpretation of economy policies, release of research reports, international cultural exchange, corporate promotion, as well as sellers and buyers' matching negotiations. Its quality will be further upgraded. The exhibitors are more diversified. The number of companies in the world's top 500 and leading industrial enterprises exceeds that of the first CIIE, and there will be even more visitors and international purchasers. Professional, high-quality, cutting-edge and featured exhibits will be more concentrated and the quality will be further improved. Its innovation will be much stronger. This year, for the first time, the CIIE news release platform will be set up. The Chinese ministries and local governments will jointly interpret important policies. International organizations and research institutions will release annual reports and industrial reports respectively. The CIIE will continue to be chosen as an ideal platform by participating companies to launch their products and technologies, the number of which is expected to overpass last year's. Innovative exhibition forms such as quality life, technology life, and artificial intelligence will give participants a first-class experience.

As a major feature and highlight of the CIIE this year, there will be more than 60 countries participating in the Country Exhibition, covering an area of about 30,000 square meters. The theme of HIEF this year is "Openness, Innovation, Cooperation, and Win-win". More than 50 important speakers from political, business and academic fields including WTO Director-general, UNCTAD Secretary-general, Nobel laureate in economics and leaders of global top 500 enterprises, will jointly explore the new trend of global economic development, share their views and insights on meeting new challenges, overcoming difficulties, and finding ways for further developing globe economy in the new era.

The open and cooperative CIIE will never end. The CIIE was first initiated, planned, deployed, and promoted by President Xi Jinping in person. As an event to be held on an annual basis, the CIIE will feature good performance, good results and continued success in the years to come. Adhering to the global governance concept of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, the CIIE welcomes countries to share China's development dividends. It provides new opportunities for countries to expand exports to China, but also develop trade relations with third countries. It builds a new platform for countries to demonstrate national development achievements and to explore global economic and trade issues. It injects new impetus to global trade and world economic growth. Upholding the spirit of openness and cooperation, the CIIE is not a China's solo show, but rather a chorus of countries of all over the world. Working together with the international community, China is willing to develop the CIIE into an effective channel for the goods, technologies and services from the world to enter the Chinese market, an open and cooperative platform for countries around the world to strengthen cooperation and exchanges and conduct international trade, an international public product to promote economic globalization. China is willing to make joint efforts with the world to construct an open world economy, build a community with a shared future for mankind, and facilitate better development of global trade and world economy.

I believe that Iranian companies participating in this year's CIIE will be warmly welcomed with the world-famous Persian carpets, saffron, handicrafts and etc.. The Iran Country Exhibition High-Tech Pavilion will open a new window for China and other countries as well to perceive and further understand Iran's technological strength and advanced products with its featured products in the fields of IT, energy, environment, nano, biology and health. As an important hub along the Silk Road, Iran's voice and view will be heard at HIEF and spread to the rest of the world.

Here, I wish CIIE a gorgeous chorus of the integrated world economy and having a long-lasting profound impact of the world.

## U.S. cannot downplay its atrocities in Afghanistan

**6 →** What is clear is that the worse US violations of International Humanitarian Law get in Afghanistan, the more opportunities there are for the Pentagon to come up with new lies and fake statistics. Anyone who professes to worry about high civilian casualties thus ought to worry about the US-instigated humanitarian crises there.

Append the further observation that the repeated response by the Pentagon to international criticism and condemnation has been to kill even more civilians, making the humanitarian crisis there even worse. However, fake reports will do nothing to help fix the problems of Afghanistan. Neither will dramatically under-counting the number of civilians the US has killed, for that matter.

And it is not just American officials that use such watered-down language. Britain and France also largely echo the US government line to greatly influence what the public thinks about their own complicity in civilian massacres. Their whitewashed lies and reports are remarkably reminiscent of those composed by the Pentagon to cover up the high-profile US-NATO massacre of civilians in Afghanistan.

The dust has settled and the facts have become clearer. The Pentagon regime cannot downplay its atrocities: Carnage in Afghanistan is surging under the Trump White House. The atrocities committed by US-led coalition air strikes on the pretext of targeting Taliban militants cannot be ignored. Such an approach is a recipe for disaster, as the US and NATO allies have demonstrated a tendency to exploit Taliban attacks for propaganda and military escalation.

Little ink has been spilled in the Western media for this truth, nonetheless. Also, there is no real discussion at the United Nations, let alone political debate, about whether or not the US-led bombing of civilians on the pretext of bombing Taliban is a good idea - not to mention whether or not these airstrikes are actually legal.

Per usual, mass casualty "incidents" will continue to rise by US-led forces in Afghanistan. And the United Nations won't be able to do anything about it. The world body will never investigate these atrocities, much less hold to account those guilty. It simply reflects UN's deference to power.

If the US government reports something, there are countless UN officials and allied ambassadors waiting in line to obediently echo it. With acquiescence, if not complicity, the UN has a long history of acting as mouthpiece to war-party Washington.



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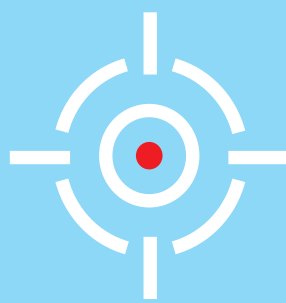
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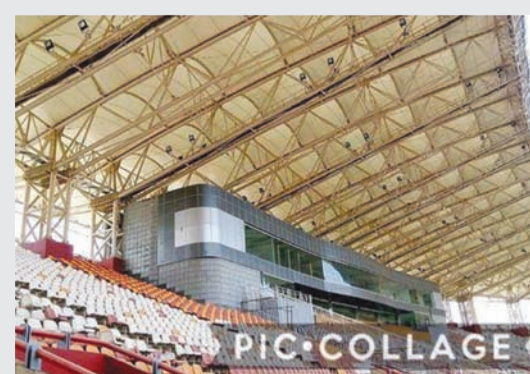
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# China’s next commercial rockets to make test flights in 2020, 2021: Xinhua

China will launch test flights for the next two space rockets in its Smart Dragon series meant for commercial use in 2020 and 2021, the official Xinhua news agency reported on Sunday, as an expected boom in satellite deployment gathers pace.

The release of the flight schedule by China Rocket Co, a unit of state-owned China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, comes two months after the firm’s first reusable rocket, the 23-tonne Smart Dragon-1,

delivered three satellites into orbit.

China envisions constellations of commercial satellites that can offer services ranging from high-speed internet for aircraft to tracking coal shipments. Reusable designs will enable frequent rocket launches and help keep costs down.

The solid-propellant Smart Dragon-2, weighing about 60 tons and with a total length of 21 meters, will be capable of sending 500 kg payloads into orbit at an altitude of 500



km (310 miles), Xinhua said. It is expected to conduct a flight test next year.

At about 116 tons and with a length of 31 meters, the Smart Dragon-3, set for a test flight in 2021, will be capable of sending 1.5 ton payloads into orbit, Xinhua added.

In July, Beijing-based iSpace became the first private Chinese firm to deliver a satellite into orbit on its rocket. Since late last year, two other startups have attempted to launch satellites but failed.

(Source: Reuters)

## November to feature rare Mercury Transit

By Brian Lada

One of the most highly anticipated astronomical events of the year is less than a month away, and if you want to see it with your own eyes, you will need to start preparing for it now.

A rare astronomical alignment known as a Mercury Transit will occur on Nov. 11 and will be visible across almost all of North America, South America, Europe, Africa and western Asia from 7:35 a.m. to 1:04 p.m. EST.

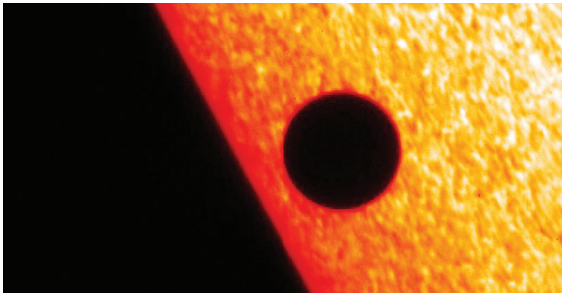
Similar to a solar eclipse, a transit is when a planet passes directly between the Earth and the sun. Transits are rare and only occur about 13 times every 100 years, with the next one not happening until Nov. 13, 2032.

However, to see the transit of Mercury next month, spectators will need the proper solar filter to safely look at the sun, as well as cloud-free weather.

Looking at the sun without the proper protection can lead to permanent eye damage, including distorted vision or loss of vision all together.

Following the 2017 total solar eclipse, there were reports from people across the country that their eyes hurt from looking at the sun, including one woman who had her retinas burned from observing the event without protective eyewear.

“This damage can be temporary or permanent and occurs with no pain. It can take a few hours to a few days after viewing the solar eclipse to realize the damage that



has occurred,” Prevent Blindness explains on its website. Prevent Blindness is an organization that works to prevent blindness and preserve sight by informing the public.

Similar to a total solar eclipse, onlookers will need specially made solar filters, such as eclipse glasses, to safely observe the Transit of Mercury.

People should order these solar filters now from a reputable vendor that meets the international safety standards so that they arrive in time for the transit on Nov. 11.

Millions of people used solar filter glasses during the 2017 Great American Eclipse, but many threw them away once the eclipse ended. But those that kept their glasses may be wondering if they are still good to use for the upcoming transit.

If your eclipse glasses or viewers are compliant with the

ISO 12312-2 safety standard and if the filters aren’t scratched, punctured, torn, or coming loose from their frames, you may reuse them indefinitely, the American Astronomical Society says on its website.

That being said, to see next month’s Mercury Transit, onlookers will need more than just a pair of eclipse glasses.

“Mercury is too small to see with your eclipse glasses and requires a safe solar telescope,” NASA said.

“Only ever view the sun through a telescope with a certified solar filter; otherwise you risk permanent damage to your eyes,” NASA added.

It is extremely important to make sure that the solar filter is on the proper end of the telescope. Looking through an ordinary telescope or binoculars with only a pair of eclipse glasses over your eyes will not work.

Folks that cannot get the proper viewing equipment in time can visit one of many astronomy clubs across the country holding a viewing event on the day of the Mercury Transit, or watch the event online.

Mercury transits may be rare, but happen far more often than Venus transits.

Venus transits are sometimes referred to as a “twice in a lifetime event” as they happen in pairs, separated by a long period of time. Most recently, there were a pair of transits on June 8, 2004 and June 5, 2012, and the next pair will not happen again until Dec. 10, 2117 and Dec. 8, 2125.

## Another reason why we might have never seen alien probes: They’re tiny micro-machines



By David Nield

What if alien spacecraft are already in our midst – and we don’t know about them because they’re tiny nano-structures? That’s the new idea put forward by one scientist seeking to explain the Fermi paradox.

This paradox – named after Italian-American physicist Enrico Fermi – posits that because the Milky Way is so vast and so old, the chances of alien civilizations being out there is actually pretty high... so where are they?

Maybe they’re buzzing around the Universe in micro-machines just a nanometer long, suggests astrophysicist Zaza Osmanov from the Free University of Tbilisi in Georgia. What’s more, he’s provided some pretty detailed calculations to go along with this slightly whacky-sounding idea.

Now it’s worth mentioning that Osmanov’s paper has yet to be peer-reviewed, so we can’t place too much importance on it just yet – but it does open up an intriguing possibility about how other civilizations might one day reach us.

The new study is based on the established idea of von Neumann probes: the thinking goes that aliens could send out self-replicating spacecraft to explore the galaxies, without having to risk leaving their home planet themselves.

Previous attempts to figure out how von Neumann probes could function have hit a common problem – self-replication needs a steady supply of new materials, and it’s not clear if deep space has enough suitable planets or rocky bodies to go around.

To get around the issue, Osmanov has

shrunk the scale right down. Microscopic probes would need much less in the way of materials, and could rely on hydrogen atoms floating through the interstellar dust for power.

These nanoscale probes would, in theory, be much more efficient than any previously imagined, and could replicate in just a few years – getting around the Universe relatively quickly. They’d also become very numerous (up to the level of trillions of billions) in a few short light-years of steady reproduction.

And that brings us to the question of how to spot them – according to Osmanov, this swarm of exploring probes would give off luminous emissions as they gathered up protons in their flight.

If we were looking in the right direction, we should be able to see them, he says, and assuming they were moving in formation, they might look like a comet several kilometers across in the infrared part of the spectrum.

Back to star gazing then – Osmanov gives us something else to look for in the ongoing search for life beyond our planet.

The idea that other life forms could be out there but perhaps not yet visible to us – or not yet wanting to be visible – is one that’s regularly put forward. It’s just a question of our technology getting to the level for us to spot the aliens who potentially have us under observation.

“All the aforementioned results indicate that if one detects a strange object with extremely high values of luminosity increment, that might be a good sign to place the object in the list of extraterrestrial von Neumann probe candidates,” writes Osmanov.

## NASA eyeing inflatable space lodges for Moon, Mars and beyond



When astronauts orbit the Moon or live on its surface in the decade ahead, they will probably be doing so inside inflatable space lodges now in development.

Dozens of NASA officials and veteran astronauts are wrapping up a review of five space habitat mockups built by different companies. The mockups offer the U.S. space agency ideas for an ideal Gateway - the planned research outpost in lunar orbit that will house and transfer astronauts to the surface of the Moon.

“The whole point is to define what we like and what we don’t like about these different habitats,” NASA astronaut Mike Gernhardt, principal investigator for the testing campaign, told Reuters.

He and his team were making a final inspection recently in Las Vegas, Nevada at the headquarters of Bigelow Aerospace, a space habitat company founded by hotel chain billionaire Robert Bigelow.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence in March told NASA to land its first crew of astronauts on the Moon by 2024. That accelerated timeline spawned the space agency’s Artemis program, which calls for privately built lunar landers, robotic rovers and Lunar Gateway – a modular space station in orbit around the Moon with living quarters for astronauts, a lab for science and ports for visiting spacecraft.

“Gateway is an opportunity to test all these structures in a deep space environment... as a prelude to going to Mars,” Bigelow told reporters. “Potentially we think that for the rest of this century, the expandable architecture is where it’s at.”

Bigelow’s B330 habitat, launched from Earth compacted inside a rocket, is made of a fabric-like material designed to shield inhabitants from deep-space radiation and

high-speed space debris. Once docked alongside other Gateway modules in lunar orbit, the habitat unfurls into a two-story, 55-foot-long (16-meter-long) outpost that up to six astronauts could stay in.

The lunar space habitat and colonization program is expected to cost over a billion dollars through 2028.

Four other companies are doing mockups: Boeing Co, Northrop Grumman, Sierra Nevada Corporation, and Lockheed Martin.

Each of the companies received a chunk of the \$65 million that NASA allotted in 2017 to develop the prototypes. The space agency’s proposed funding for 2020 includes \$500 million to kickstart development of an initial version of Gateway.

The companies are giving NASA ideas – such as where to place astronaut toilets, how big the beds should be and how many windows the station should have. Those will inform a blueprint that NASA is due to release in the coming months.

NASA wants the habitats to include exercise equipment, a small kitchen, noise-cancelling sleep stations that also block out light and “a reliable and easy-to-use toilet that’s in a location that minimizes the potential for cross contamination with science and meal preparation activities,” Gernhardt told Reuters.

Gernhardt and two other astronauts spent three days living in each prototype habitat.

For its Gateway habitat mockup, Lockheed Martin is outfitting beds, tables and windows in a 15-foot-wide and roughly 22-foot-long stainless steel structure originally designed as a shipping container to carry supplies to and from the International Space Station.

(Source: Reuters)

## Surprise discovery could explain how early Universe black holes grew so enormous

In recent years, cosmologists peering back to the very dawn of our Universe have discovered something peculiar. A whole bunch of supermassive black holes - in a time thought way too early for such massive objects to have formed.

Exactly how they got to be so freaking huge so quickly is a heck of a puzzle - but a new surprise discovery might have delivered an answer. The disc of dust and gas around a supermassive black hole is moving in such a way that it’s slurping down material faster than it would normally.



That means it’s gaining mass faster than expected - which in turn could explain what happened in the earliest days of our Universe.

The location of this anomalous black hole is the heart of a galaxy called Messier 77, or NGC 1068, around 47 million light-years away.

It’s a Seyfert galaxy, which means the supermassive black hole at its center is actively accreting matter from the space around it.

Because of this, the black hole is surrounded by a huge, swirling, doughnut-shaped cloud that, in visible wavelengths, obscures it and the thin disc of material it’s slurping up, called the accretion disc. But when you look at the black hole in radio wavelengths, a greater level of detail can be picked out.

That’s what a team of astronomers just did, using the Atacama Large Millimeter/submillimeter Array (ALMA) in Chile.

Thanks to this new view, they were able to measure the movement of the gas in the inner orbits of the torus - and they found something unexpected.

“Surprisingly, we found two discs of gas rotating in opposite directions,” said astronomer Violette Impellizzeri of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO).

“Counter-rotating gas streams are unstable, which means that clouds fall into the black hole faster than they do in a disk with a single rotation direction. This could be a way in which a black hole can grow rapidly.”

The supermassive black hole at the heart of M77 - aka M77\* - is around 15 million times the mass of the Sun, which means its event horizon is over 88 million kilometers (54 million miles) across. But its gravitational influence extends much farther.

According to the team’s observation, the inner disc swirling around the black hole (and into it, like water into a drain) starts at about 2 light-years from the black hole, and extends to about 4 light-years. That’s rotating one way.

The torus itself extends much farther, from 4 light-years to 22 light-years. It’s rotating in the opposite direction.

If this is indeed how black holes grow more quickly, it’s really cool. But! It’s also raised another huge mystery.

“We did not expect to see this, because gas falling into a black hole would normally spin around it in only one direction,” Impellizzeri said. “Something must have disturbed the flow, because it is impossible for a part of the disc to start rotating backward all on its own.”

Counter-rotational flows in space are not actually unprecedented. The thing is, though, is that they’re usually seen on different scales - galactic scales, where the counter-rotation occurs thousands of light-years away from the galactic center.

“The counter-rotation always results from the collision or interaction between two galaxies,” said astronomer Jack Gallimore from Bucknell University.

“What makes this result remarkable is that we see it on a much smaller scale, tens of light-years instead of thousands from the central black hole.”

What the team thinks might have happened is that counter-rotating material fell into the torus from the host galaxy, or a passing counter-rotating satellite dwarf galaxy got sucked in. And, although the orbits are currently stable, the situation is likely a temporary one.

“[It] will change when the outer disc begins to fall onto the inner disc, which may happen after a few orbits or a few hundred thousand years. The rotating streams of gas will collide and become unstable, and the disks will likely collapse in a luminous event as the molecular gas falls into the black hole,” Gallimore said.

“Unfortunately, we will not be there to witness the fireworks.” (Source: sciencealert.com)

## We can’t stop watching this robot hand seamlessly solve a Rubik’s cube

OpenAI, the artificial intelligence development company co-founded by Elon Musk, just built an AI-powered robot hand that can solve a Rubik’s cube by itself.

After years of practicing in simulations, the robot hand is finally nimble enough to solve the puzzle about 60 percent of the time, though that number drops to 20 percent when faced with what OpenAI calls a “maximally difficult scramble”.

All told, video footage of the hand and its puzzle-solving AI at work is an impressive demo of the rapid progress engineers are making in the nascent field of dexterous, humanoid robotics. OpenAI first programmed algorithms capable of solving a simulated Rubik’s cube in 2017, but bringing that capability to the messy real world took years longer.

Armed with a deft reinforcement learning algorithm, the company says it was able to get a robot hand based on 15-year-old hardware to manipulate and solve the cube even when researchers bothered it, according to OpenAI’s research paper.

In bonus footage included in the company’s blog post, the robot continues to work a Rubik’s cube while ignoring a stuffed giraffe prodding it and other annoyances like tying its fingers together or briefly covering up the cube with a blanket.

Now that it’s able to overcome those surprise challenges, OpenAI hopes it’s on the path toward more general-use AI.

“We set this goal because we believe that successfully training such a robotic hand to do complex manipulation tasks lays the foundation for general-purpose robots,” reads the blog post.

(Source: sciencealert.com)



## Sanctions no obstacle for Austrian tourists to visit Iran: envoy

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Vienna's ambassador to Tehran **d e s k** believes that U.S. sanctions against Iran will be no obstacle in the path of Austrian tourists to travel to the Islamic Republic.

Stefan Scholz told ISNA in an interview released on Sunday that Austrian arrivals in Iran is not affected by the sanctions and threats. Austrian Airlines does not also suspend or restrict its flights to Iran, he noted.



Vienna's ambassador to Tehran, Stefan Scholz, in an undated photo

Scholz said it is a great achievement that Austrian Airlines will continue operating flights to Iran, adding: "As you know many [European] airlines have stopped direct flights to Iran but Austrian Airlines has been trying to connect Iran to [other] European capitals and we are very happy about that. This is a great privilege for Iran as a tourist destination."

In an interview with the Tehran Times in September, the envoy said that his country has made collective efforts to maintain Iran's landmark nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. "Austria is small [country] but strategic contribution for maintaining and preserving the deal is to create a network of sector partnerships. Eco-tourism will be the latest, new sector partnership." Talking about commonalities and the history of relations between the two nations, he said "Austria and Iran have a long history in common. It's an incredible special profile that distinguishes us from many other countries. We have 700 years of documented contacts, 500 years of partnership and about 60 years of full diplomatic relations."

"Austria and Iran have a long history in common. It's an incredible special profile that distinguishes us from many other countries. We have 700 years of documented contacts, 500 years of partnership and about 60 years of full diplomatic relations."

Last November, the Trump administration reinstated sanctions on Iran, mainly the ones that had been lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal, in order to batter Iran's economy.

## Asia remains the largest tourism growth market

Trips abroad from Asia are continuing to increase. After surging by seven percent in 2018, during the first eight months of 2019 they rose by a further six percent. This is in part due to international trips within Asia, which are a significant growth driver.

Despite an anticipated decline in year-on-year growth, the prospects for 2020 remain good. These are the findings of the first trend analysis of the World Travel Monitor, to be presented by IPK International at this year's ITB Asia (16 - 18 October) in Singapore. The report was commissioned by ITB Berlin.

The World Travel Monitor is based on the results of representative interviews with more than 500,000 people in over 60 global travel markets. It has been compiled for more than 20 years and is recognized as the most widescale continuous survey of global travel trends.

(Source: Travel Daily News)

## ROUND THE GLOBE

### bbey of St Gall

The Abbey of St Gall is located in the town of St Gall in the north-eastern part of Switzerland, and largely owes its present appearance to the construction campaigns of the 18th century. A UNESCO World Heritage site, the Abbey of St Gall is an outstanding example of a large Carolingian monastery and was, since the 8th century until its secularization in 1805, one of the most important cultural centers in Europe.



It represents 1200 years of history of monastic architecture and is a typical and outstanding ensemble of a large Benedictine convent. Almost all the important architectural periods, from High Middle Ages to historicism, are represented in an exemplary fashion. Despite the diversity of styles, the conventual ensemble gives the impression of overall unity, bordered on the north and to the west by edifices of the town of St Gall that are, for the most part, intact.

It is an impressive architectural ensemble comprising different buildings regrouped around the main square of the abbey: The west side includes the ancient abbatial church (the present cathedral), flanked by two towers and the ancient cloister, which today houses the abbatial Library; located on the east side is the "Neue Pfalz", the present seat of the canton authorities.

The northern part of the square is composed of buildings of the 19th century: the ancient arsenal, the Children's and Guardian Angels' Chapel and the former Catholic school.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Foreign visits to millennia-old Hasanlu on the rise

**TOURISM** **TEHRAN** — Foreign **d e s k** visits to Hasanlu, a millennia-old archaeological site in northwest Iran, has been on the rise over the past couple of months, director of the historical site has said.

The number of international travelers visiting Hasanlu historical complex has increased by 64 percent in the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (started March 21) compared to the same period last year, Hassan Shiri said on Saturday, CHTN reported.

"Some 5,400 foreign nationals toured the historical complex during the period, which shows 64 percent growth year on year," the official said.

A majority of the foreign visitors were from France, Germany, Italy and Russia, he added.

"The [Hasanlu] complex is the largest Iron Age town in the Middle East, and its oldest layer dates about 8,000 years and the complex has a special status in architecture."

Last year, Shiri announced that Iran's cultural heritage body was making efforts to inscribe Hasanlu on the UNESCO World Heritage list, saying "An all-inclusive dossier on Hasanlu has been compiled and is ready to be submitted to the UN cultural body."

Among the most important objects uncovered at Hasanlu are an unusually decorated silver bowl, several iron garment pins headed by bronze lions, a solid gold bowl, a knife handle with gold cloisonné, and two hollow bronze horse heads that served to hold liquids.

According to the Britannica Encyclopedia,



Foreign travelers visit the ruins of Hasanlu, a millennia-old archaeological site in northwest Iran.

Hasanlu was inhabited from about 2100 to about 825 BC, but the richest period yet excavated dates to the 10th and 9th centuries BC. The period, often called "Mannaean" after the name of the people who lived in

the area, is characterized by a gray pottery accompanied by black and red varieties, the black ware being of much finer quality and probably made in imitation of metal vessels Experts say parallels to the motifs on the

Hasanlu objects have been found in Elam, Assyria, north Syria, and Urartu, indicating that Iran not only received considerable cultural and artistic stimuli from other areas but also in turn exerted influence on the Middle East.

## Omidvar brothers, Iran's great global adventurers

By David Robie

They have been dubbed the "Persian Indiana Joneses". Their adventures are fabled and hair-raising, as shown by a Jivaro shrunken human head and relics from curious rituals on display from almost 70 years ago.

But the Omidvar brothers from Iran were no gung-ho adventurers, merely gate-crashing hidden tribal and indigenous communities around the world. They were also no elitists.

They were courageous research adventurers and their motto was "all different – all relative".

Today their exploits and treasured artefacts are kept alive in the fascinating Omidvar Brothers Museum, housed in a restored coach gatehouse near the Green Palace in the Pahlavi era Sa'ad Abad forest complex in North Tehran.

I encountered younger brother Issa Omidvar, now 88, at an amusing public talk he gave at the museum last month, and I took the opportunity to interview him. His elder brother, Abdullah, 90, lives with his wife in Chile where they started a business.

Their adventures and survival were of special interest to me, as in 1972-74 I had spent a year travelling across Africa in two stages from Cape Town to Algiers, driving across the Sahara Desert in the process – chicken feed compared with the brother's two global odysseys totalling a decade, 1954-1964.

Travelling east from Tehran via the country's second city of Mashhad, the brothers first passed through Afghanistan, then Pakistan, India, south-east Asia and Australia, where they lived with Aborigines. Eventually they crossed the Pacific to Rapanui and headed north through Alaska and Canada into the Arctic.

After a huge sweep through North and South America, they rounded off their first seven-year journey in Antarctica.

Following a short break back home in Iran, the brothers set off again on a second exploration trip in a Citroen 2CV across Africa, including the Congo and the pygmy country of the Ituri jungle. They filmed their exploits along the way.

As Guardian travel writer Kevin Rushby wrote in 2013, "they created a visual record that is now a milestone in film history, a documentary record of a vanished world: peoples, cultures and even entire countries that no longer exist."

According to Issa at his public Tehran talk, "We had the opportunity of visiting, and holding talks with most presidents, prime ministers, kings and cultural personalities of the world."

However, many of the communities that they described in their remarkable book, Omidvar Brothers: In Search of the World's Most Primitive Tribes, and showed in their various documentaries, no longer live as they once did, untouched in remote locations.

The Omidvar mission – they started off on their motor bikes in 1954 with the equivalent of merely \$90 each in their pock-



David Robie (R) talks to Issa Omidvar about the brothers' research travel philosophy.

ets – was about scientific research and documentary making.

In the book preface Nikfarjam, then international affairs director of Aryan International Tourism Magazine, wrote that the Omidvar brothers were "the greatest explorers, adventurers and seekers of knowledge in 10 years of scientific expedition ... searching [for] the most primitive tribal people in unknown lands of our planet earth who had never had contact with the outsider before ...

"The live stories ... will take the reader ... to the most severe climatic and various geographical conditions living with unknown savage tribes.

"In fact, [this] scientific research has been so adventurous and exciting that hardly anyone can believe all are true and serious."

But true they are.

The Iranian Organization of Cultural Patrimony added in their foreword: "The fruits of their exploration are ... great photographic and documentary films, hunting equipment and household utensils from diverse primitive tribes.

"With such a treasure, unique of its kind, the Omidvar Brothers Museum illustrates the wealth, complexity and diversity of human culture ... and of human organization that succumbed, victims of the world's explosive development."

Browsing through the illustrated book in Farsi (an English-language edition also exists), I came across these sample passages:

■ **Kabul**

"The first capital we visited was Kabul, a city with few main streets. There were few vehicles, which was a blessing, but there were lots of bicycles on the streets. Even prominent and well-known people used bicycles ... One day we were surprised to see the chancellor of Kabul University riding an old bicycle."

■ **Jalalabad**

"We passed through Jalalabad towards the border of

Pakistan. To our delight we discovered a wedding party with riflemen and prepared to photograph ... Unknown to us ... was that this tribe didn't like to have photos taken, especially of their ceremonies. When they saw us their cheerful shouts immediately changed to a cry of death and they began hurling hundreds of rocks at us."

■ **Sri Lanka (then Ceylon)**

"It is said that Adam and Eve were expelled from Heaven and began their earthly life in Ceylon. We boarded the ship called Safinet al Arab ... She was 43 years old and in considerable disrepair with a capacity of 1100 people, mostly pilgrims for Mecca ... on the third day one of the Muslim passengers died, creating chaos. The authorities had no choice but to bury the body at sea. From that moment we feared that a similar fate might befall us."

■ **Hyderabad**

"The Kite War is as significant for the people of Hyderabad in India as horse racing is for the British, bullfighting for the Spanish and football for the Brazilians ... Common people and nobles alike participate in the kite competitions, betting enormous amounts of money."

■ **Lucknow**

"When we arrived it was a national holiday – the Colour Festival ... We were settled at the university dormitory and sleeping when at dawn we awoke with a loud noise. The students pounded on the door and looked as if they had escaped from Hell. Each with a bucketful of water colours and after rubbing some colour on our forehead, they threw each other in a colourful pond."

■ **Himalayas**

"In order the climb the Himalayas, we had to pass through dangerous, swampy forests to reach the slopes pf the mountains. We had not seen such a dreadful forest ... Such a threat becomes a hundredfold at night. The roars of wild animals, especially tigers, made us shake with fear ... We touched our legs and found a small creature, a leech. We turned on our flashlight and saw a great number of leeches sucking our blood."

■ **Amazon**

"We were nearing the horrifying tribe of Jivaro [in the headwaters of the Marañon River]. We reached a settlement of huts made of wild sugarcane leaves and bamboo around a clearing. All the men and women with painted bodies were standing by their huts waiting for us. Although they had seen other white people, it was interesting for them to see us – maybe at that moment they were measuring our heads to be shrunken!"

In my interview with Issa Omidvar, he stressed the critical importance of the value of international travel as a contribution to "global understanding and peace".

(Source: Asia Pacific Report)

## Coffins of 3,000-year-old mummies opened in Egypt

Archaeologists in Egypt on Saturday opened the coffins of two of the 30 mummies discovered earlier this year and estimated to be 3,000 years old.

In April, the remains were found by accident under a mound behind the Asasif Necropolis on the west bank of the Nile river in the Valley of the Kings. The archaeologists were conducting an unrelated dig when one coffin was found, Mostafa Waziri, secretary-general for Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, told NBC News.

On Saturday, two of the coffins were pried open during a ceremony in Luxor. The others were opened earlier.

The coffins, which were adorned with paintings and inscriptions, contained preserved mummies of 23 adult males, five adult females and two children. The adults were most likely priests.

"This discovery is one of the largest and

most important discoveries that have been announced during the past few years as it includes so far more than 20 colored wooden human coffins, in a distinct state of conservation, colors and inscriptions in full and are still closed, and were revealed in the situation that left them," the Antiquities Ministry wrote on its website. "The ancient Egyptian where they were found gathered in a cache in two levels, one above the other."

On Tuesday, the ministry posted on Twitter images from the site.

The coffins were found sealed "as the ancient Egyptians left them," according to the ministry.

During the news conference, archaeologists pried open two of the coffins to uncover mummies wrapped in cloth -- one man and one woman. A piece of skull was visible among each one.

The gender was determined by the



Archaeologists in Egypt visit mummies, which were discovered earlier this year in Luxor and estimated to be 3,000 years old. (Photo courtesy Egypt's Antiquities Ministry)

shape of their hands. The women were buried with their hands open while men's hands were closed.

The coffins are believed to be much older

than most tombs at the Asasif Necropolis in the ancient town of West Thebes that date to the Late Period, which ended in 332 BC.

The newly excavated tomb is one of several ancient burial sites located in the ancient city.

"The mission has mapped around 300 tombs dating back from the 6th century BC to the 4th century AD, located in the area surrounding the Mausoleum of the Aga Khan, on the Aswan West Bank," ministry officials wrote. "The Egyptian archaeologists had already excavated 25 tombs in the area from 2015 to 2018."

Because these coffins were buried in the sand, they were completely intact, instead of being destroyed by termites.

They will be displayed in the Grand Egyptian Museum to open in Giza near Cairo next year.

Luxor is 409 miles south of Cairo.

(Source: UPI)



# The big lies disseminated by western MSM on Syrian crisis

By Ali Radmanesh

**TEHRAN** – The western governments have for years been working to smother all discussions about Syria in a fog of propaganda, trying to ensure that their fabricated narrative of the crisis is what the world believes about the Syria debacle.

The first part of an article trying to dissect big US lies was published on the October 20 edition of Tehran Times.

This is the final part of the article:

## ■ Lie #3: The Trump administration is pulling us troops out of Syria

This is not happening, and anyone who believes Trump is actually ending US involvement has been duped. It's also not the first time we've heard promises from Donald Trump on an end to the wars in the Middle East.

Over a year ago Trump proclaimed that he would be pulling the troops out of Syria, yet, only a week later it was determined that they would remain. Recently Trump made the claim again, and only days later the Pentagon admitted that US troops were only going to be shifted back from the border while the Kurds, our former allies, would be attacked by Turkish forces. Turkey's military spokesman has said that they will "correct the demographics changed by the YPG (Kurdish defense units much like citizen militias) in Northeast Syria". In other words, the goal is ethnic cleansing, and as the Armenian genocide teaches us, the Turks are no strangers to ethnic cleansing.

Trump is not the only world leader to pull this kind of stunt, either. Vladimir Putin did the same thing in 2016, announcing an end to military action by Russia in Syria and a removal of troops, only to keep Russian forces there and well entrenched. The Russian presence has done little to prevent a flurry of Israeli air strikes against Syria, nor have they acted to prevent the Turkish invasion, so we must question what exactly Russia is still doing there as much as the US?

These constant fake-outs on a Syrian withdrawal are meant only for the general public as a way of pacifying concerns, and it seems to be working. To this day many people still believe that Trump had pulled US troops out of Syria (or is withdrawing them right now) and Putin pulled Russian troops out after "defeating ISIS". None of this ever happened. If you tell a big lie enough times the uneducated masses will start to adopt it as the truth.

## ■ Lie #4: The international community is sincerely worried about a Kurdish genocide

Wow, it truly warms my heart to witness the sudden international outpouring of support for the Kurds in Syria. Establishment rags like the Washington Post and the New York Times, the EU government, the Israeli government, even Trump himself are all announcing their



Total destruction: Syrian soldiers patrol in south Damascus, Syria, in May 2018.

support for the Kurds and admonishing Turkish actions. They are all ready to enforce sanctions or even go to war in the name of defending the Kurdish people. How noble...

The truth is, none of these agents of despair have any concern for the Kurds, and they will do nothing to save them until it's too late. Later, they will act, but not to save any remaining Kurds. A Kurdish genocide is only a means to an end. And here we start to see the entire reason for the Syrian crisis unfold...

## ■ Lie #5: The Kurds are not our concern, or, they are "getting what they deserve"

On the flip side of the paradigm, I'm seeing the Trump cult making some outlandish arguments (as they always do) to rationalize the president's bizarre and abrupt policy actions. The first argument claims that "it's about time" that a president "stood against the deep state" and ended US involvement in Syria, and we should let Turkey and the Kurds sort out their own mess. I would repeat the fact that Trump is not leaving Syria or any other nation in the Middle East with a US military presence. He is only pulling troops back and leaving the door open to Turkish attack.

I would also point out once again that it is not "their mess", it is a mess created by western governments including the US.

The Kurds lost tens of thousands of fighters battling ISIS, and the Turkish incursion into Syria seems to be taking advantage of their weakened defenses. This is a situation the US created. The Turkish invasion is a DIRECT result of the destabilization of Syria, and Trump's pullback from the northern border was the icing on the cake. It acted as a form of permission by the US that Turkey could now do whatever they wanted (for a time).

I am also seeing the narrative that the Kurds are "getting what they deserve".

Some argue that the Kurds were stupid for trusting the US government as an ally and now they are reaping the consequences. This is

hardly a valid assertion. Punishing the victims of a con for being conned is not the American way. At least, it shouldn't be the American way. Also, the Kurds are not the real target of this disinfo campaign; conservatives are the target, and they're falling right into the trap. I believe this is a propaganda narrative designed to make conservatives sound like sociopaths.

Trump's claim that the Kurds were "not really our allies" as they "did not help us during WWII", and that they were only defending their homes rather than supporting our efforts against ISIS shows an insane (but calculated) disinformation campaign designed to make conservatives look monstrous and untrustworthy. If Trump was really against the "deep state" he would not try to tarnish the image of our only legitimate allies in the region.

Finally, another narrative being spread around is that because the Kurds have a socialist form of governance, they deserve to be wiped out. I would remind the people making this claim that the Kurds are not trying to force their political ideologies on anyone, and Turkey's Erdogan is a classic totalitarian who has tightened his grip on the nation using every trick in the book, including a false flag coup attempt. Socialists or not, the Kurds don't deserve ethnic cleansing.

Yes, the US should not have been in Syria in the first place, but then again, we ARE in Syria, and it doesn't look like we're leaving, so if we're going to be there we might as well do some good with our presence and act as a deterrent to an obvious Turkish attempt to erase the Kurds (our allies who fought a terrorist threat the US government funded) from the area. Of course, it's too late for that now...

## ■ What is really going on in Syria?

If you're not buying the mainstream narrative, you might be wondering why Donald Trump would suddenly abandon the Syrian border allowing Turkey to invade? You also might be wondering why he would then immediately threaten to "crush" Turkey with

economic sanctions and place "thousands of US troops" on the ground if his goal was to end US involvement in Syria? The answer is in the macro-picture. That is to say, we have to ask the most important of all questions – Who benefits?

As I've mentioned in previous articles, geopolitical events are being exploited by the globalist establishment as distraction and cover for their controlled demolition of the economy. They need scapegoats for the implosion of the Everything Bubble, an implosion they started in 2018 with liquidity tightening policies that has now accelerated into a full-blown financial crisis. The Turkish invasion of Syria may be the pinnacle distraction event.

With engineered chaos in Syria, Trump's globalist handlers can achieve a historic level of chaos while avoiding direct culpability. What do we get when we combine all the elements listed above along with lies on both sides of the political paradigm? Well, we get a rationale for war. We also get yet another event which makes Trump look like a bumbling villain and conservatives look like fools or soulless robots.

By extension, any tensions with Turkey suggest the beginning of the end for NATO. As I predicted in January of 2019, it appears that Turkey, a key component of the Western alliance, is about to exit. This furthers the globalist goal of the deterioration of the West; the decline of the old world order making way for their "new world order" in which Eastern powers will play a larger role in conjunction with certain European elements. This is a dynamic globalists like George Soros have publicly and proudly discussed in the past.

The Kurds may also be a direct target of the globalist agenda. In a declassified CIA document titled "The Kurdish Minority Problem", the agency indicated that the establishment has seen the Kurds as an unknown factor (which they don't like) that is fiercely independent (which they really don't like) as far back as the 1940s. The CIA suggests that the Kurds are an uncontrolled element that could make establishment goals in the region difficult to achieve.

One "mistake" (or false flag) could ignite a conflagration between the nations involved. This is why the EU, the Russians, the Israelis and Trump all suddenly care so much about the Kurdish plight. They CREATED the Kurdish plight, and now they are going to use it to turn Syria into a massive powder keg. Syria is an artificially manufactured "linchpin", as DARPA would call it. It is designed to provide catastrophe while maintaining plausible deniability for the establishment. Trump's actions in Syria may seem random, but they make perfect sense when we understand that he is serving a greater agenda. The US "withdrawal" is not a withdrawal, it is a prelude to a bigger conflict which benefits the globalist cabal.

## BBC adds politics and history to borscht and serves it up to severe Russia-Ukraine relations

By Martyn Andrews

**RT** — Borscht has been a popular soup across Europe for centuries. Now it's also a political weapon, and, if nationalism makes sense in the context of what we eat, it's ironic that a blood coloured soup is making people's blood boil.

But how can beetroot soup cause so much outrage? Perhaps when history and politics is added to the mix, and often, it's a recipe for disaster.

Earlier this year, the Russian Federation's Ministry of Foreign Affairs tweeted: "A timeless classic, #Borscht is one of Russia's most famous & beloved #dishes & a symbol of traditional cuisine."

A recent BBC online article states that the world of Twitter in Ukraine exploded in response to that tweet and responded with anger and humour. "As if stealing Crimea wasn't enough, you had to go and steal borscht from Ukraine as well." It seems the Soviet soup has turned sour.

The BBC's contentious recipe regarding "the battle of the borscht" seems to be just sticking its fingers in the broth. Bordering countries often have a strong rivalry and tumultuous history and Ukrainians have a right to say borscht belongs to them. But with the blurred lines of Ukraine being in the USSR black and white soon becomes grey (or in this case red). Is borscht really a food Russia developed through occupation? Or maybe the journey of social history and food is something far more complicated. Hmm.



The BBC article also interviews Olesia Lew, a New York-based chef at Veselka, a Ukrainian diner in New York. She adds "I say borscht is Ukrainian, not just from a nationalistic point of view, but because the soup hails from the land of Ukraine, and those ingredients have been found in the country's archaeological record into the distant past."

The BBC continues with a final twist of the knife: "Ukrainian Wikipedia lists borscht as 'found in Ukrainian, Belarusian, Polish, Lithuanian, Iranian and Jewish national cuisines,' .... but fails to mention Russian cuisine.

Whoever knew borscht was popular in Tehran? Now you know! But if the BBC wants to politicize this beetroot dilemma and accuse Russia of "cultural appropriation," they should try telling that to 145 million Russians and see their response! Vodka might be needed.

So, where does borscht actually come from? Who even cares? With food passionately being part of our culture and identity, some fingers point towards Eastern Europe and state that borscht is originally Ukrainian dating back to the 14th century. It also features in numerous cold climate Baltic and northern Slavic cultures including Russia (who also state that Borscht was created there). It's here, where the cultural conundrum begins.

The social debate surrounding the origins of borscht dates back centuries (the same niggling debate vodka has, but let's not go there). The English spelling of Borscht (also known as borsch, borsht, or bortsch) actually comes from Yiddish, and is derived from a Slavic word from the hogweed plant. This was pickled and placed into large pots of boiling water along with vegetables and old bones, and so the famous red soup was born.

The reality is, that as centuries pass, dishes spread far beyond their supposed places of origin and in this case, is integrated into modern day cuisines of Ukraine, Belarus, Poland, Lithuania, and Russia to name but a few. Borscht can even be found in certain Chinese cities, brought by the building of the Manchurian Railway as a branch line of the Trans-Siberian Railway in the late 19th century and early 20th century refugees fleeing the Russian Revolution.

Is saying that "borscht is Russian" really a message of oppression? Did the sly Soviets steal this celebrated soup to pass off as their own? Whatever the answer and food feuds aside, does this give the BBC the blood curdling ammunition to target Russia? Yes, there are political tensions between Russia and Ukraine, but food should unite people, not pull them apart. Maybe, along with ravioli, dumplings, and dim sum, there are several culinary connections to the same dish as well as countless ways to make it?

Is this debate and finger pointing another attempt at cultural appropriation by the Kremlin? Geopolitics and information war meets a cooking catastrophe? It's important to note that Poland and Belarus also claim Borscht to be theirs, so it's Soviet soup for all.

Fish and chips believe it or not, isn't British but a hybrid of traditions. Portuguese Jews famously deep fried fish and, according to one version, brought the cooking style to England in the Middle Ages.

Communities in Northern France enjoyed frying potatoes in fat during the winter months (hence French-fried potatoes). Though Belgians enjoyed them too. Roll along a few centuries and fish and chips became a famous seaside treat in the UK. Just don't tell the British tourist board!

Borscht is an example of a dish that rises above national boundaries, and so defies narrow definitions of nationalism. Maybe soup shouldn't really be used a political prawn, sorry, pawn... I've food on the brain.

Shall we discuss vodka now?

## Everyone's a conspiracy theorist, whether they know it or not

By Caitlin Johnstone

**ActivistPost** — Plutocratic propaganda outlet MSNBC has just run a spin segment on the breaking news that the medical examiner's determination of the cause of Jeffrey Epstein's death is "pending further information".

"Our sources are still saying that it looks like suicide, and this is going to set conspiracy theorists abuzz I fear," said NBC correspondent Ken Dilanian. "NBC News has been hearing all day long that there are no indications of foul play, and that this looks like a suicide and that he hung himself in his cell."

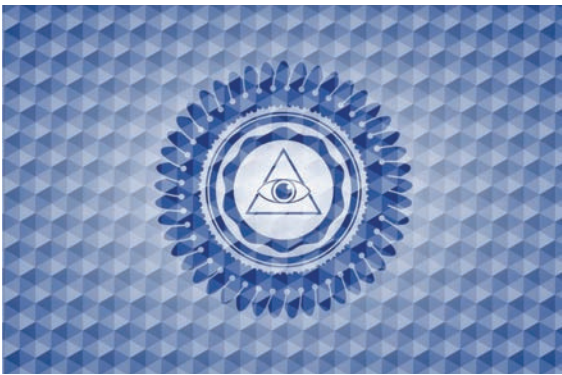
Dilanian, who stumbled over the phrase "conspiracy theorists" in his haste to get it in the first soundbyte, is a known asset of the Central Intelligence Agency. This is not a conspiracy theory, this is a well-documented fact. A 2014 article in The Intercept titled "The CIA's Mop-Up Man" reveals email exchanges obtained via Freedom of Information Act request between Dilanian and CIA public affairs officers which "show that Dilanian enjoyed a closely collaborative relationship with the agency, explicitly promising positive news coverage and sometimes sending the press office entire story drafts for review prior to publication." There is no reason to give Dilanian the benefit of the doubt that this cozy relationship has ended, so anything he puts forward can safely be dismissed as CIA public relations.

When I mentioned Dilanian's CIA ties on MSNBC's Twitter video, MSNBC deleted their tweet and then re-shared it without mentioning Dilanian's name. Here is a screenshot of the first tweet followed by an embedded link to their current one (which I've archived just in case):

Up until the news broke that Epstein's autopsy has been unable to readily confirm suicide, mass media headlines everywhere have been unquestioningly blaring that that was known to have been the cause of the accused sex trafficker's death. This despite the fact that the FBI's investigation has been explicitly labeling it an "apparent suicide", and despite the fact that Epstein is credibly believed to have been involved in an intelligence-tied sexual blackmail operation involving many powerful people, any number of whom stood plenty to gain from his death.

So things are moving in a very weird way, and people are understandably weirded out. The response to this from mass media narrative managers has, of course, been to berate everyone as "conspiracy theorists".

"Jeffrey Epstein: How conspiracy theories spread after financier's death" reads a BBC headline. "Epstein Suicide Conspiracies Show How Our Information System Is Poisoned" reads one from the New York Times. "Conspiracy Theories Fly Online in Wake of Epstein Death" warns The Wall Street



Journal. "Financier Epstein's Death Disappoints Victims, Launches Conspiracy Theories" reads the headline from US government-funded Voice of America.

These outlets generally match Dilanian's tone in branding anyone who questions the official story about Epstein's death as a raving lunatic. Meanwhile, normal human beings all across the political spectrum are expressing skepticism on social media about the "suicide" narrative we're all being forced-by the establishment narrative managers, many of them prefacing their skepticism with some variation on the phrase "I'm not a conspiracy theorist, but..."

"I'm not a conspiracy theorist but there are an awful lot of very powerful people who would like to see this Epstein thing go away. Is anyone investigating the guard on duty?" tweeted actor Patricia Heaton.

"I am not into conspiracy theories. But Epstein had destructive information on an extraordinary number of extraordinarily powerful people. It is not easy to commit suicide in prison. Especially after being placed on suicide watch. Especially after already allegedly trying," tweeted public defender Scott Hechinger.

Journalist Abi Wilkinson summed up the silliness of this widespread preface very nicely, tweeting, "I'm not a conspiracy theorist" is such a weird assertion when you think about it, the idea there's a binary between believing all conspiracies and flat out rejecting the very concept of conspiracy in all circumstances."

Indeed, I think it's fair to say that everyone is a conspiracy theorist if they're really honest with themselves. Not everyone believes that the official stories about 9/11 and the JFK assassination are riddled with plot holes or what have you, but I doubt that anyone who really sat down and sincerely grappled with the question "Do powerful people conspire?" would honestly deny it. Some are just more self-aware than

others about the self-evident reality that powerful people conspire all the time, and it's only a question of how and with whom and to what extent.

The word "conspire" is defined by Merriam-Webster as "to join in a secret agreement to do an unlawful or wrongful act or an act which becomes unlawful as a result of the secret agreement". No sane person would deny that this is a thing that happens, nor that this is likely a thing that happens to some extent among the powerful in their own nation. This by itself is a theory about conspiracy per definition, and it accurately applies to pretty much everyone. Since it applies to pretty much everyone, the label is essentially meaningless, either as a pejorative or as anything else.

The meaningless of the term has been clearly illustrated by Russiagate, whose adherents react with sputtering outrage whenever anyone points out that they're engaged in a conspiracy theory, despite the self-evident fact that that's exactly what it is: a theory about a band of powerful Russian conspirators conspiring with the highest levels of the US government. Their objection is not due to a belief that they're not theorizing about a conspiracy, their objection is due to the fact that a highly stigmatized label that they're accustomed to applying to other people has been applied to them. The label is rejected because its actual definition is ignored to the point of meaninglessness.

The problem has never been with the actual term "conspiracy theory"; the problem has been with its deliberate and completely meaningless use as a pejorative. The best way to address this would be a populist move to de-stigmatize the label by taking ownership of it. Last month Cornell University professor Dave Callum tweeted, "I am a 'conspiracy theorist'. I believe men and women of wealth and power conspire. If you don't think so, then you are what is called 'an idiot'. If you believe stuff but fear the label, you are what is called 'a coward'." This is what we all must do. The debate must be forcibly moved from the absurd question of whether or not conspiracies are a thing to the important question of which conspiracy theories are valid and to what degree.

And we should probably hurry. Yahoo News reported earlier this month that the FBI recently published an intelligence bulletin describing "conspiracy theory-driven domestic extremists" as a growing threat, and this was before the recent spate of US shootings got establishment narrative-makers pushing for new domestic terrorism laws. This combined with the fact that we can't even ask questions about extremely suspicious events like Jeffrey Epstein's death without being tarred with this meaningless pejorative by the mass media thought police means we're at extreme risk of being shoved into something far more Orwellian in the near future.



# Tehran to host Climathon 2019

**ENVIRONMENT** **TEHRAN** — Tehran Municipality plans to hold programs in line with Climathon 2019 on October 24-25, looking for optimal solutions for issues such as air pollution and waste management.

With a powerful solutions-hackathon at its core, Climathon is a year-round program, which powers a global wave of change makers and innovators to help humanity achieve zero emissions in 20 to 30 years.

Climathon has grown to over 100 cities and with a global reach in the millions. By 2022, it will unite over 1,000 cities, 100,000 participants, engaging 1 million citizens and reaching over 100 million.

Mobility, retrofitting old buildings, sustainable urban food systems, changing



unsustainable consumption and production patterns, addressing water shortage, emission reduction, natural disaster resilience, curbing air pollution and waste management are the main issues addressed by Climathon 2019.

The focus of the event, which will be held in partnership with Tehran Municipality, Tehran's Waste Management Organization and the NGOs Headquarters, is to reduce waste production, Mehr reported on Sunday.

More than 100 academic experts, environmental NGOs, students, and associations are to participate in the event.

On the second day of the program, a brainstorming and consulting workshop will be held by trainers and experts to compete with other countries and the winner receives a prize of €10,000.

## Fastest ants in world found in northern Sahara, researchers say

The sand dunes of the northern Sahara are home to the fastest ants in the world, according to researchers who clocked the insects foraging for food in the blistering midday sun.

Video footage reveals the ants galloping across the scorching sand at speeds approaching one metre per second, the equivalent of a house cat tearing about at 120mph.

The faster the ants ran, the more they took to the air, in gallops that brought all six legs off the ground at once. At full pelt, the insects travelled 108 times their body length per second, the researchers found.



“They fly through the air with no feet on the ground from stride to stride,” even at relatively slow speeds, said Sarah Pfeffer, who studies animal behaviour at Ulm University in Germany.

There is a reason Saharan silver ants, or *Cataglyphis bombycina*, have evolved to be fleet of foot. Unlike other desert creatures which shelter from the intense noon heat, for the ants it is a prime time to scavenge. When the desert is at its hottest, they emerge from their nests and zip about looking for food – often the carcasses of less fortunate creatures that have succumbed to the brutal temperatures.

To survive, the ants have silvery hairs that reflect the sun's rays. But even with this coating and other adaptations, the ants can barely survive the 60C (140F) heat and need impressive speed and navigational skills to find food and return to the nest before falling victim to the heat themselves.

Before Pfeffer and her colleagues could clock the ants racing around the desert, they first had to find them. The scientists travelled to Douz, a town in southern Tunisia, and scoured the nearby dunes for the streaks of silver that are the ants in motion.

Having traced some ants back to their nest, the researchers laid an aluminium channel along the ground and placed mealworms or shortbread crumbs at the far end. Above the track they attached a downwards-facing high-speed video camera to record the ants as they tore back and forth.

Once slowed down, the footage shows the ants coordinating their movements with incredible precision, moving three legs – which work together as a tripod – at a time. Running flat out, the ants covered 85.5cm per second in 47 strides, more than 10 times Usain Bolt's stride rate. Between each stride, each ant foot touched the ground for as little as seven milliseconds.

Similar footage of another fast desert ant, *Cataglyphis fortis*, which is found in the Tunisian salt pans, recorded the insects hitting a top speed of 62cm per second. Details are published in the Journal of Experimental Biology.

While the Saharan silver ants have shorter legs than their salt pan cousins, the furious stride rate more than compensates, the scientists found. Beyond teasing out the biomechanical secrets of the ants' incredible speed, the research reveals tricks that engineers can exploit to build smaller, faster, scampering robots, Pfeffer said.

(Source: The Guardian)

## WORDS IN THE NEWS

### Afghan Aid Conference

(January 21, 2002)

International donors have been pledging millions of dollars towards the future of Afghanistan at a conference in Tokyo. It was an impressive sounding list of **pledges** from some of the world's richest nations and **it's looking as if** the United Nations should come close to its target, at least for the first year of the **reconstruction effort**. The European Union was the biggest **donor**, offering nearly 500 million dollars for the first year. The United States has pledged around 300 million dollars. Britain has put forward a similar amount though for a five-year period. All this after a powerful appeal for help from the new Afghan leader, Hamid Karzai.

«I stand before you today as the citizen of a country that has had nothing but disaster, war, brutality and **deprivation** against its people for so many years.»

Now the real discussion begins over how to get the money to the Afghan people and what to spend it on. Mr Karzai said his first priority was education. Ahead, he suggested, even of providing food. He set the **ambitious goal** of reopening Afghanistan's schools and Kabul University by the end of March. The United States has **stressed the importance** of security and of combatting drug production. As the UN Secretary General, Kofi Anan pointed out, the true test will be whether countries **make good on their pledges** and whether they provide the money that is urgently needed right now. The Afghan government is still **short of cash** for the most basic necessities. Most **civil servants** in Kabul have not been paid for the last six months.

#### Words

**pledges:** promise of money or aid  
**it's looking as if:** it seems as if  
**reconstruction effort:** re-building plan  
**donor:** a person, country or group of countries giving money  
**deprivation:** poverty  
**ambitious goal:** large and difficult aim  
**stressed the importance:** emphasized the need for  
**make good on their pledges:** keep their promises (to give money)  
**short of cash:** lacking money  
**civil servants:** government workers

(Source: BBC)



## Cyber police to set up branch at DOE



**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Cyber police will set up a branch at the Department of Environment (DOE) to monitor and deal with environmental crimes in cyber space along with combating animal abuse, cyber police chief Vahid Majid has said.

“We are seriously investigating and dealing with animal abuse cases, so that all videos related to animal abuse are immediately observed by the cyber police,” IRNA quoted Majid as saying on Sunday.

“We treat criminals in accordance with the penalties provided in the law

on illegal hunting and animal cruelty,” he noted.

He went on to say that the cyber police had a meeting with the DOE and came to an agreement on establishing an office with the aim of monitoring and dealing with environmental crime in cyberspace.

Although, environmental monitoring in cyber space is already underway, we plan to take up more specialized actions to prevent animal cruelty, he explained.

He further called on the people to report any cases of animal abuse to be pursued in judiciary.

## Plastic bags were created to save the planet, inventor's son says

Plastic bags were invented to save the planet, according to the son of Swedish engineer Sten Gustaf Thulin who created them in 1959.

The bags were developed as an alternative to paper bags, which were considered bad for the environment because they resulted in forests being chopped down.

They were significantly stronger than paper bags, which meant – in theory – they could be used over and over again.

However, single-use plastic took off and now our consumption of this polluting material is one of the biggest threats facing the world's seas, with marine plastic set to outweigh fish by 2050.

Raoul Thulin, son of Sten, told the BBC: “To my dad, the idea that people would simply throw these away would be bizarre.

“He always carried [a plastic bag] in his pocket folded up. You know what we're all being encouraged to do today, which is to take your bags back to the shop, he was doing back in the Seventies and Eighties, just naturally, because, well, why wouldn't you?”

Mr Thulin's bags were patented by a company called Celloplast and by the mid-1960s they were replacing paper and cloth alternatives in Europe. By 1979, plastic bags accounted for 80 per cent of Europe's bag market.



In 1982, two of the biggest supermarket chains in the US – Safeway and Kroger – switched to plastic bags and by the end of the decade they almost replaced paper bags around the whole world.

Plastic bags are now produced at a rate of one trillion a year, according to the UN.

While animals have been documented consuming or

## 3,318 prisoners of involuntary crimes released



**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** — Since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), 3,318 prisoners who had committed unintentional crimes have been released, head of Blood Money Organization has said.

Total debt of the prisoners was added up to about 9 trillion rials (nearly \$214 million), ISNA quoted Asadollah Joolaei as saying on Sunday.

However, some half of the sum was forgiven by the plaintiffs, and benefactors contributed to release these people, he explained.

Referring to female prisoners of unintentional crimes, he stated that 136 women accounting for 4 percent of the whole

prisoners were freed during the first six months of this year.

Last year, charity fundraising events helped free more than 10 thousand prisoners and contributions totaled nearly 5.7 trillion rials (nearly \$135 million).

Iranian parliament, Majlis, has approved 2 trillion rials (nearly \$47 million) to be earmarked for releasing prisoners of unintentional crimes with the priority given to female prisoners, Mehr reported in January.

Within the framework of the budget bill for the current year, the money which has seen 100 percent increase year on year, will be allocated to freeing prisoners mostly jailed for unintentional financial crimes.

becoming entangled in plastics, the toxic effects the man-made substances have when they break down and end up inside marine organisms are still not clear.

Increasingly countries are looking to ban the bags.

In 2002, Bangladesh became the first country in the world to do so and now more than two dozen countries have followed suit.

However, alternatives to plastic bags are not necessarily the greener option. Although opting for paper or cotton bags would reduce litter and waste, they have other significant environmental effects.

According to the UK Environment Agency, a paper bag has to be used three times to be as environmentally friendly as a plastic bag that is recycled.

Making paper bags uses more energy and water and they are also heavier, which makes them more expensive to transport.

Bags made of cotton – a crop which requires huge amounts of water to grow – need to be used at least 131 times to be as good as a recycled plastic bag.

Currently, the majority of plastic bags are not recycled and end up in landfill or polluting the environment where they take up to 1,000 years to degrade.

(Source: The Independent)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

## Motorcyclists responsible for 63% of accidents in Tehran

Motorcycle riders are the highest contributors to road fatality being responsible for 63 percent of the accidents happened in the Iranian capital in the first 10 months of the current [Iranian calendar] year (starting on March 21, 2018), head of accidents department of Tehran Traffic Police has said.

Unfortunately, motorcycle users represent over 38 percent of the total traffic fatalities happened in the aforementioned period, Tasnim quoted Ehsan Momeni as saying on Tuesday.

As per the figures revealed by forensics, young motorcyclists aged 18-28 years constituted 33 percent of the fatal crashes resulted in their deaths, while being blamed for over 63 percent of the total accidents, he lamented.

## PREFIX/SUFFIX

### “galacto-, gala-, galact-”

■ **Meaning:** milk  
■ **For example:** The Milky Way is the *galaxy* which is the home of our Solar System.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Have (got) something against somebody/something

■ **Meaning:** to dislike or be opposed to someone or something for a particular reason:  
■ **For example:** I can't see what you've got against the idea.

## IDIOM

### Bucket list

■ **Explanation:** a list of things a person would like to do or achieve before a certain age or before dying  
■ **For example:** I have never visited the pyramids of Egypt but they're on my bucket list.

## راكبان موتورسیكت در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات تهران مقصر بودند

رئیس اداره تصادفات پلیس راهور تهران بزرگ گفت: در ده ماهه نخست سال ۹۷ راکبان موتورسیکلت در تهران در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات به عنوان مقصر حادثه شناخته شده‌اند.

به گزارش روز سه شنبه خبرگزاری تسنیم؛ سرهنگ احسان مؤمنی در تشریح تصادفات منجر به فوت شهر تهران گفت: ۳۸ درصد کل متوفیان حوادث رانندگی مربوط به موتورسیکلت سواران بوده است. وی اظهار کرد: با توجه به آمار پزشکی قانونی ۳۳ درصد راکبان موتورسیکلت فوتی ۱۸ تا ۲۸ سال سن داشته‌اند و در ۶۳ درصد تصادفات به عنوان مقصر حادثه شناخته شده‌اند.



# McConnell: Trump's Syria withdrawal is 'strategic nightmare' for Israel

**TEHRAN** — U.S. Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell has called President Donald Trump's decision to pull out troops from Syria "a strategic nightmare" for Washington's allies, such as Israel and Jordan.

"Withdrawing U.S. forces from Syria is a grave strategic mistake," McConnell, the top Republican in Congress, wrote in an op-ed published in The Washington Post on Friday.

"It will leave the American people and homeland less safe, embolden our enemies, and weaken important alliances," he added.

Turkey last week began pounding the positions of Kurdish fighters with jets and artillery and sent in troops to purge them from the area east of Euphrates.

The offensive came three days after Trump announced he would pull U.S. troops from the region, effectively exposing its allied Kurdish militants to their archenemy, Turkey.

Trump defended his decision to pull U.S. troops out of Syria as "strategically brilliant."

McConnell has condemned Trump's withdrawal of troops from northeast Syria.

Fighting has continued despite a temporary ceasefire Vice President Mike Pence brokered with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.



"The combination of a U.S. pullback and the escalating Turkish-Kurdish hostilities is creating a strategic nightmare for our country," McConnell wrote in his article. "Even if the five-day ceasefire announced

Thursday holds, events of the past week have set back the United States' campaign against [Daesh] and other terrorists," he said.

On Thursday, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said Washington and Ankara had

agreed on a five-day ceasefire in Turkey's attacks on Kurdish fighters in the region. The agreement followed negotiations between Pence and Erdogan at the presidential palace in Ankara.

Pence said Ankara would halt its offensive, dubbed Operation Peace Spring, for 120 hours in order to allow Kurdish fighters from the People's Protection Units (YPG) to withdraw 30 kilometers from the Turkey-Syria border.

"We saw [Daesh] flourish in Iraq after President Barack Obama's retreat. We will see these things anew in Syria and Afghanistan if we abandon our partners and retreat from these conflicts before they are won," McConnell wrote.

McConnell's remarks come as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said Israel has "fundamental rights" and retains "operational freedom" to operate in Syria.

According to Press TV, Israeli politicians have expressed concerns that the U.S. pullout from Syria will further strengthen Iran's position as a regional power at a time when Damascus is eliminating the last remnants of terrorists and reasserting control over all the country.

## Turkey and Russia to discuss removal of Kurdish militia from Syrian towns

**TEHRAN** — Turkey and Russia will discuss the removal of the Syrian Kurdish YPG militia from the northern Syrian towns of Manbij and Kobani during talks in Sochi next week, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Sunday.

Turkey paused its military offensive into northeastern Syria after President Tayyip Erdogan agreed on Thursday, in talks with U.S. Vice President Mike Pence, a five-day ceasefire to allow the YPG to withdraw from a "safe zone" Ankara aims to establish near its border.

The truce is also aimed at easing a crisis triggered by U.S. President Donald Trump's abrupt decision this month to withdraw all 1,000 U.S. troops from northern Syria, a move criticized in Washington and elsewhere as a betrayal of Kurdish allies who had fought for years alongside U.S. troops against ISIL.

But Trump's move also means the extent of Turkey's ambitions in the region is likely to be determined by Russia and Iran, who both support Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and are looking to fill the vacuum created by the U.S. retreat.

Assad has already deployed his forces in territory formerly protected by Washington, invited by the Kurds. Erdogan, who has backed rebels fighting to oust Assad, has said Turkey

has no problem with Syrian government forces deploying near the border.

Speaking at an interview with broadcaster Kanal 7 on Sunday, Cavusoglu said urgent talks between Erdogan and Russia's Vladimir Putin would be held next week.

"We will discuss the removal of the YPG terrorists from our borders, namely Manbij and Kobani, with the Russians," Cavusoglu said.

"We believe we can reach an agreement with them to work together in the future, just like we have before."

Ankara regards the YPG, the main component of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), as a terrorist group because of its links to Kurdish insurgents in south-east Turkey. The YPG has been a close U.S. ally in the fight against ISIL terrorist group.

The SDF and Damascus struck a deal this month to counter the Turkish offensive in northeastern Syria, prompting Syrian army forces to deploy in Manbij and Kobani, towns of strategic importance given their location on the Syrian border with Turkey.

While Erdogan and Putin have forged close ties over defense and energy cooperation, Moscow has said the Turkish offensive into Syria was "unacceptable" and should be limited.



Erdogan on Saturday said he would also discuss Syrian army deployment in northern Syria with Putin, saying the two needed to find a solution to the matter. But he warned that "we will continue to implement our own plans" if a solution could not be reached, without elaborating.

According to Reuters, Russian officials had spoken to Assad on Friday about the need to de-escalate the situation in northeast Syria, Russia's foreign ministry said on Saturday.

## U.S. troops leaving Syria will move to Iraq: Pentagon

**TEHRAN** — U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper says all of the American troops pulling out of northeastern Syria will move to western Iraq.

"The U.S. withdrawal continues apace from northeastern Syria... we're talking weeks not days," Esper told reporters en route to the Middle East late on Saturday, noting that the process is being conducted via aircraft and ground convoys.

He also put the number of U.S. forces moving to Iraq at about 1,000, saying, "The

current game plan is for those forces to re-position into western Iraq."

In a major U-turn in the U.S. military policy, the White House announced on October 6 that the U.S. would be withdrawing its forces from northeastern Syria, clearing the path for an expected Turkish incursion into the region.

Three days later, Turkey launched the offensive with the aim of purging the northern Syrian regions near its border of U.S.-backed Kurdish militants, whom it views as terrorists linked to local auton-

omy-seeking militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Esper claimed that the U.S. troops going into Iraq will have two missions, including helping "defend Iraq" and performing an alleged campaign against the Daesh terrorist group.

"Things could change between now and whenever we complete the withdrawal, but that's the game plan right now," he said.

The Pentagon chief further stressed that he had spoken with his Iraqi counterpart about the U.S. plan.

The additional troops are expected to add to the more than 5,000 American troops already based in Iraq.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Esper said he will discuss with other NATO allies at a meeting next week the way ahead for what he called the counter-Daesh mission, Press TV reported.

On Thursday, Ankara agreed to pause its incursion into Syria for 120 hours while the US facilitates the withdrawal of Kurdish militants from a 20-mile safe zone along the Syrian-Turkish border.

## Michel Aoun's solution to Lebanon crisis

➔ Labor Minister Camille Aoulosleiman, one of the four to quit the government, told Al Jazeera shortly after the decision that they had "lost faith in the government's ability to effect change and address the problem".

Lebanese citizens have been suffering from tax hikes and dire economic conditions in the heavily indebted country.

Lebanon's public debt stands at around \$86bn - more than 150 percent of gross domestic product, according to the finance ministry.

The grievances and anger at the government's lack of solutions erupted into protests on Thursday, sparked by hikes in taxes including a proposed \$0.2 tax on calls via messaging apps such as WhatsApp.

Such calls are the main method of communication for many Lebanese and, despite the government's swift abandonment of the tax, the demonstrations quickly swelled into the largest in years.

"It is day four and protesters are back on the street. It's not just in the capital Beirut, but across the country. The message they [protesters] are giving is of defiance and that they will continue to demand the resignation of the government," said Al Jazeera's Zeina Khodr, reporting from Beirut.

"While there are tens of thousands on the street pro-



testing, there are still people who are backing the political parties, so it is not going to be easy to bring a change. These people out there want a nationalist leader whose loyalty is to Lebanon and not a political party."

In an attempt to appease demonstrators, Lebanon's finance minister, following a meeting with Prime Minister Saad Hariri, announced that they had agreed on a final budget that did not include any additional taxes or fees.

"That letter was sent because parliament required it to be sent... but parliament can't change the prime minister's mind, parliament can't change the government's policy or determination."

In yet another twist to the running Brexit drama, Johnson sent three letters to Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council.

First, a brief cover note from Britain's EU envoy explaining that the government was simply complying with the law; second, an unsigned copy of the text that the law, known as the Benn Act, forced him to write; and a third letter in which Johnson said he

did not want an extension.

"I have made clear since becoming Prime Minister and made clear to parliament again today, my view, and the Government's position, that a further extension would damage the interests of the UK and our EU partners, and the relationship between us," Johnson said in the third letter, signed "Boris Johnson".

The EU, which has grappled with the tortuous Brexit crisis since Britons voted 52%-48% to leave in a 2016 referendum, was clearly bewildered by the contradictory signals from London.

## Hamas decries Israel's participation in Bahrain meet

➔ The Bahraini foreign minister further encouraged Israel to approach Arab leaders about issues of concern regarding the proposal.

"Come and talk to us. Talk to us about it. Say, guys, you have a good initiative, but we have one thing that worries us," he said.

The so-called Peace to Prosperity workshop opened in Bahrain on June 25 and ran through June 26.

It apparently sought to advance the economic aspects of President Donald Trump's controversial proposal for "peace" between the Israeli regime and Palestinians, dubbed "the deal of the century."

According to Press TV, the Palestinian leadership boycotted the meeting, leading critics to question the credibility of the event.

## Anti-separatists rally in Barcelona after pro-independence unrest

**TEHRAN** — One of the most prominent figures against independence for the Spanish region of Catalonia staged a counter-protest on Sunday after a week of separatist unrest and called for an end to the violence.

Albert Rivera, head of the pro-unionist Ciudadanos party, told hundreds of flag-waving supporters that Spain's acting Socialist government was not doing enough to end the chaos sparked by the jailing of separatist leaders.

"People can't take their children to school, they can't open their businesses," Barcelona-born Rivera said. "We need a Spanish government that protects the weak."

Pro-independence supporters have taken to the streets of Barcelona for six days running in often violent confrontations with police that have left several hundred injured and caused 2.5 million euros (\$2.8 million) of damage.

A policeman and a protester remain in critical condition, Barcelona Mayor Ada Colau said on Sunday, adding that "several people" had been blinded in one eye by police rubber bullets, Reuters reported.

## Indonesia's President Joko Widodo sworn in for final term

**TEHRAN** — Indonesia's President Joko Widodo has been sworn into office for his second and final five-year term amid a string of fresh challenges around security, corruption and economic slowdown.

Widodo, a former furniture salesman popularly known as Jokowi, took oath at a ceremony in the capital, Jakarta, attended by politicians and foreign dignitaries that was broadcast live on national television on Sunday.

Re-elected in polls that took place in April, the 58-year-old was sworn into office along with 76-year-old vice president Maruf Amin, who replaces Widodo's vice president in his first term, Jusuf Kalla.

More than 30,000 security personnel were deployed in the capital with police locking down some parts of the city and closing off streets surrounding the parliament building and the presidential palace. Mass demonstrations were also banned on Sunday over security fears.

On his way to the ceremony, Widodo got out of his convoy with some of his security escorts and shook the hands of supporters, who shouted his name, waved the country's flag and called him "bapak" or father.

"This is the second time ... most importantly, we must work together immediately to bring Indonesia to prosperity," Widodo told reporters before leaving for Parliament, adding that he had completed the picking all members of his Cabinet.

## U.S. defense chief in Afghanistan as U.S. aims to restart peace talks

**TEHRAN** — U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper has arrived in Afghanistan where stalled peace talks with the Taliban and persistent attacks by armed groups have complicated the Trump administration's pledge to withdraw more than 5,000 American troops.

Esper told reporters travelling with him that he believed the U.S. could reduce its force in Afghanistan to 8,600 without hurting the counterterrorism fight against al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, ISIS) terrorist group.

But he said any withdrawal would happen as part of a peace agreement with the Taliban.

The U.S. has about 14,000 American troops in Afghanistan as part of the U.S.-led coalition.

U.S. forces are training and advising Afghan forces and conducting counterterrorism operations.

President Donald Trump ordered a troop withdrawal in conjunction with the peace talks that would have left about 8,600 American forces in the country.

U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad brokered a preliminary peace deal with the Taliban, but a surge in Taliban violence and the death of an American soldier last month prompted Trump to cancel a secret Camp David meeting where the agreement would have been finalized.

He declared the tentative agreement dead.

## Tunisia-Rached Ghannouchi: Head of government rightfully belongs to Ennahda

**TEHRAN** — After a massive win in the legislative elections with 52 seats, Ennahda Movement President Rached Ghannouchi asserted that the party has started negotiations to form the next government.

He also exclaimed that the office of the Head of government rightfully belongs to Ennahda, however, this matter is more amenable to consultation and negotiation, tunisienumerique reported,

## Brexit will happen on Oct. 31 despite PM's unsigned delay request, UK says

**TEHRAN** — The British government insisted on Sunday the country will leave the European Union on Oct. 31 despite a letter that Prime Minister Boris Johnson was forced by parliament to send to the bloc requesting a Brexit delay.

The Brexit maelstrom has spun wildly in the past week between the possibility of an orderly exit on Oct. 31 with a deal that Johnson struck on Thursday and a delay after he was forced to ask for an extension late on Saturday.

Johnson's defeat in the British parliament over the sequencing of the ratification of

his deal exposed the prime minister to a law passed by those opposed to a no deal departure, demanding he request a delay until Jan. 31.

Johnson sent the request note as required, but unsigned, and added another signed letter arguing against what he cast as a deeply corrosive delay. One of his most senior ministers said Britain would still leave the bloc on Oct. 31.

"We are going to leave by October 31. We have the means and the ability to do so," Michael Gove, the minister in charge of no-deal Brexit preparations, told Sky News.



## Bayern Munich confirm Niklas Süle has torn ACL

It was not an ideal return from the international break for Bayern Munich. Away to neighbors FC Augsburg, the Bayern players foolishly threw away two points in the dying minutes of the game.

But the biggest worry of the game happened in the 12th minute. Niklas Süle's knee completely gave way after he awkwardly landed after a non-contact run. It looked painful and supporters later feared the worst when they saw the German international hobbling on crutches from the stadium.



After the game, Niko Kovac shared the supporters' worry that their star defender could very well miss the rest of the season. Now it is confirmed that he has torn his ACL, an injury that could see Süle working on his recovery for the next 8-10 months. Bayern already have had a shaky start to the season, conceding ten goals in eight games. The injury is also a long-term worry for Joachim Löw, who may very well be without Süle at the UEFA Euro 2020. *(Source: bavarianfootballworks.com)*

## Horse death toll at Santa Anita reaches 34

Another horse died at Santa Anita Park on Saturday, bringing to 34 the number to have perished at the southern California track since December.

The Stronach Group track owners announced that three-year-old gelding Satchel Paige had been "humanely euthanized" after the fifth race on the card.

The latest death comes less than two weeks before the track hosts the high-profile Breeders' Cup world championships.

In a statement, Stronach Group said the horse had been pulled up during the race and subsequently diagnosed with an open fracture of his left front ankle.

"Satchel Paige will undergo a necropsy ... on behalf of the California Horse Racing Board, as is mandatory for all on-track accidents," said Stronach Group chief veterinarian Dionne Benson. "The accident and the necropsy report will be reviewed to learn what, if anything, could have been done to prevent the accident."

Santa Anita Park has been under scrutiny over its alarmingly high fatality rate.

Racing at the track was canceled for more than three weeks in March following a series of fatalities.

Santa Anita hired a consultant to lead a study of the track surface and the California Horse Racing Board also investigated.

Some \$22 million in prize money will be up for grabs at the two-day Breeders' Cup meeting on Nov. 1-2.

*(Source: Reuters)*

## Ancelotti: I'll call Zlatan Ibrahimovic about Napoli move

Napoli head coach Carlo Ancelotti joked about Zlatan Ibrahimovic joining the Serie A club.

Carlo Ancelotti joked he will call Zlatan Ibrahimovic about a move to Napoli following Saturday's 2-0 win over Hellas Verona.

LA Galaxy superstar Ibrahimovic talked up his chances of a return to Serie A as the 38-year-old expressed his interest in playing for Ancelotti's Napoli.

Former Juventus, Inter and AC Milan striker Ibrahimovic claimed he would score 20 goals a season in Italy's top flight during an interview with Gazzetta dello Sport.

Responding to Ibrahimovic's comments after Arkadiusz Milik's double guided Napoli past Verona, head coach Ancelotti told Sky Sport Italia: "I'll call him tonight and say we're waiting!"

"I have a great deal of affection for him, I saw he scored 29 goals in 30 MLS games.

"Tomorrow, after I've called him, I'll let you know how it went!" Ibrahimovic and the Galaxy are in action in the MLS play-offs on Sunday.

The Galaxy will meet Minnesota United for a spot in the Western Conference semi-finals against Supporters' Shield champions Los Angeles FC.

Ibrahimovic netted 30 goals during the regular season, four adrift of top scorer and LAFC captain Carlos Vela.

Ex-Manchester United star Ibrahimovic is out of contract at the end of the season and the veteran has been linked with a return to Italy, as well as Argentine giants Boca Juniors – where Roma great Daniele De Rossi is based.

*(Source: Fox Sports Asia)*

## Justin Thomas holds off Danny Lee to win CJ Cup

Inaugural champion Justin Thomas staved off a challenge by Danny Lee to claim his second CJ Cup title in three years with a two-shot victory over the Korean-born New Zealander at Nine Bridges on Sunday.

The overnight leaders were level for the first 13 holes before Thomas surged ahead with a birdie on the 14th, while Lee bogeyed the 15th and 16th to effectively drop out of contention.

Thomas eventually signed off with a five-under 67 for a winning total of 20-under 268, while Lee carded 69 to finish in second place to the American.

"It was a very, very tough day," Thomas said after his 11th PGA Tour victory.

"Danny made it extremely difficult. He really made a lot of putts, a lot of unbelievable up and downs to kind of keep me from getting all the momentum. I really, really played solidly today."

"My dad turned 60 last week, so maybe it's a little 60th birthday gift to him."

*(Source: Irish Times)*

# Wayne Rooney departs MLS as DC United go down to Toronto in playoffs

As it felt like it was only just getting started, Wayne Rooney's career in MLS is over.

On a chilly fall evening in Toronto on Saturday night it came to an end, as D.C. fell 5-1 to Toronto FC after extra time in Round One of the Audi 2019 MLS Cup Playoffs. Soon, he'll return to England, with Derby County.

Though just a season and a half, the English legend left his mark on the league, providing countless memorable moments, helping take D.C. United from the bottom of the Eastern Conference last season to back-to-back playoffs and forming what was for a time one of the brightest partnerships in the league alongside Lucho Acosta.

Rooney's stay in MLS may have been extended a little longer. The 33-year-old had a pair of golden opportunities to bring United level in the second half of the loss, but it wasn't to be as Quentin Westberg stood tall against Rooney in back-to-back saves. It was emblematic of his final half-season with D.C., in which he failed to score in any of his final eight appearances, including the playoff match. Rooney did play a part in United's equalizer deep into stoppage time, supplying the corner from which Lucas Rodriguez found the back of the net. But the night ended in bitter disappointment as Toronto poured on the goals in extra time before Rooney went to the bench for the remaining garbage time.

Still, that doesn't erase the mark Rooney made on the league during his MLS career.

Rooney arrived midway through last season in conjunction with the opening of Audi Field, D.C. United's long-anticipated new stadium. He was an integral part of



the physical manifestation to signify that United were evolving. They won their first game at their new home as Rooney made his debut from the bench, adding an assist.

It was the start of a magical run from the bottom of the East to the playoffs,

fueled by Rooney and his partnership with Acosta. Together, the pair dragged D.C. forward with some of the league's most aesthetically pleasing soccer. Rooney had 12g/7a while Acosta 9g/10a after Rooney arrived, both in 20 appearances.

And they combined for one of the iconic

moments in recent memory: The Tackle.

This season, though 2019 hasn't gone nearly to plan for D.C. as Rooney didn't hit the same heights before announcing he'd return to England after the season and Acosta fell out of the starting XI, Rooney made his time count. He scored an AT&T Goal of the Year candidate, a delirious lob from inside his own half.

In all, Rooney had 23 goals and 15 assists in 48 regular-season appearances. There were admittedly some unhappy moments thrown into the mix, including two red cards this season and a pair of playoff losses, yet his stay in the league will be thought on fondly by those around D.C. United, particularly because his impact can't be quantified.

"He's been a big plus for this club," head coach Ben Olsen told MLSSoccer.com's Ian Quillen this week. "He's been a part of, coupled with the stadium, USL over the last year and a half, some announcements that have really pushed this club forward. Working with him, it's been a really good relationship. On the field, I think he's helped us in a big way. Off the field, I think he's pushed me. I think he's made me a better coach, a better manager. And I think he's been a very good teammate and a good ambassador to the club."

On and off the field, Rooney will be missed. As he transitions to the latter part of his playing career while starting his days as a coach, perhaps England's all-time leading scorer will one day be back in the league, this time making his impact felt from the sidelines.

*(Source: mlssoccer.com)*

## Haringey Borough walk off after goalkeeper 'racially abused' by Yeovil Town fans



Haringey Borough's fourth-round FA Cup qualifying fixture against Yeovil was abandoned on Saturday after the home side walked off the pitch following racist abuse aimed at their goalkeeper by away supporters.

Haringey goalkeeper Valery Douglas Pajetat, who is from Cameroon, told BT Sport that he had been racially abused by fans, and that they had thrown objects and spat at him.

The club tweeted after the match to confirm it had been abandoned. The post read: "Sorry for the late update but wanted to make sure we gave correct information.

"Game has been abandoned following racial abuse. Horrendous afternoon. It must be said that 99.9% of @YTFC fans are also disgusted by what's happened as much as we are.

"One club, one community."

Yeovil also tweeted in the aftermath of the game, where they said both sets

of players had returned to the pitch in a "show of solidarity."

A spokesperson for the FA later tweeted: "We are deeply concerned about the allegation of discrimination from an area of the crowd towards a player during the FA Cup fourth-round qualifying match between Haringey Borough and Yeovil Town, which resulted in the fixture being abandoned.

"There is no room for discrimination in our game and we are working with the match officials and the relevant authorities, as a matter of urgency, to fully establish the facts and take the appropriate steps."

The incident comes days after England players suffered racial abuse during their Euro 2020 qualifier against Bulgaria in Sofia.

Gareth Southgate's players initiated a three-step FIFA protocol in that fixture, but opted not to walk off the pitch.

*(Source: Independent)*

## VAR company apologizes for confusion on calls in Spurs-Watford draw



The company that provides VAR technology promised to work with officials and the Premier League after problems mired a 1-1 draw between Tottenham Hotspur and Watford.

Watford initially got off to a flying start in Saturday's match when Abdoulaye Doucoure scored in the sixth minute for the visitors.

The league's basement club, however, were later not given a potential penalty when Gerard Deulofeu was tripped by Jan Vertonghen.

More controversy arose when Dele Alli denied Watford their first win in nine games with a late strike that was initially ruled out for handball then awarded after a VAR review, even though Harry Kane appeared to push defender Christian Kabasele in the build-up.

The moment was also shrouded in confusion when the screens at the Tottenham Hotspur stadium at first said "No Goal" before correcting itself to show the goal

had been awarded.

Hawk-Eye Innovations, the company which provides the technology, apologized to both teams' fans "for the confusion caused."

"We are working together with the Professional Game Match Officials Board and the Premier League to understand the root cause of this problem and propose a series of measures to ensure it won't happen again," it said in a statement.

Watford coach Quique Sanchez Flores said he is losing his faith in VAR as a force for good in the game after the two decisive decisions went against his side.

"I was thinking VAR is something objective but I'm starting to think it's very subjective," Sanchez Flores said after the game.

"I think it's a foul from Kane on Kabasele, he pushed him with his hands. I think we are losing something. It's very weird, you think VAR is helping football but then it's not."

*(Source: ESPN)*

## Shcherbakova, 15, wins in senior grand prix debut

Russian 15-year-old Anna Shcherbakova won the Skate America Grand Prix in Las Vegas on Sunday with a brilliant performance in the free skate.

In her senior grand prix debut, Shcherbakova landed a dazzling series of jumps to surge past American Bradie Tennell, who had led following the short program.

"I was so excited to skate here and show my program," Shcherbakova said after landing a quadruple Lutz, triple toe combination.

"It was a little bit relief but I need to fight for every element until the end, and only when I did my final pose was I so happy."

Shcherbakova was rewarded by the judges with 160.16 points, which included no deductions.

She let out a broad smile on receiving her score, but was not assured of victory, with Tennell awaiting her turn on the ice.

Shcherbakova's total of 227.26 points proved too much for Tennell, who had



to settle for second place on 216.14. Earlier, world champion Nathan Chen

claimed his third consecutive victory in the men's event by putting on a clinic

in the free skate.

The 20-year-old American, skating to music by Elton John, earned a prolonged standing ovation from the adoring crowd after his flawless performance.

He had no deductions and posted a technical score of 102.38, together with a presentation mark of 94.

Adding to his score from the short program, Chen recorded a total of 299.09, finishing 45 points clear of the runnerup, fellow American Jason Brown.

Despite his runaway win, Chen kept his feet on the ground afterwards, unlike during much of his performance on the ice.

"Most programs I make mistakes, so there are a few things I want to clean up, continue developing the programs as much as I can," he said in an interview.

In the pairs competition, Chinese duo Cheng Peng and Yang Jin scored their first ISU Grand Prix victory.

*(Source: Reuters)*



# Iran’s Moradi to participate at 49th Challenge “210”

**S P O R T S   TEHRAN** — Iranian weightlifter Sohrab Moradi has started his training in Hanover, Germany to prepare for the 49th Challenge “210”. The competition will be held in Tramelan, Switzerland from October 24 to 27. This competition is a bronze tier qualifying event for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and acts as one of the six necessary competitions that can fulfill qualification. The new system of Olympic Qualification requires weightlifters to compete on six occasions in the 18-month qualification period, which kicked off on Nov. 1, 2018 and runs through April 30, 2020. 2016 Rio Olympic gold medalist Kianoush Rostami (96kg) and 2017 Weightlifting World Championships silver medalist, Saïd Ali-hosseini (+109kg), have been left off Iran’s weightlifting team for the 49th Challenge “210”. Moradi, Rio 2016 gold medalist, underwent shoulder surgery in Germany in August. He missed the 2019 Weightlifting World Championships in Pattaya, Thailand in September due to lack of preparation. Moradi broke weightlifting’s longest standing world record on his way to gold in the men’s 94kg class at the 2018 Asian Games. He lifted 189kg in the opening discipline to better the snatch record set at 188kg in 1999 by Greece’s Akakios Kakiavilis. Moradi has won World Championships two times at the 2017 Anaheim and 2018 Ashgabat. He also won Asian Championships twice in 2009 Taldykorgan and 2012 Pyeongtaek. Moradi claimed a gold medal in the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta, Indonesia.



## Persepolis defeat Paykan in Iran Professional League



**S P O R T S   TEHRAN** — Persepolis football team defeated Paykan 2-1 in Iran professional League (IPL) on Sunday. In the match held at the Azadi empty stadium, Mehdi Torabi gave the hosts into the lead in the 19th minute. Saïd Vasei equalized the match with a long-range shot in the 36th minute. Persepolis put Paykan under pressure in the second half and created some chances

but their strikers lacked of the cutting edge. In the 82nd minute, Ahmad Noorollahi opened the goal with a header. Persepolis striker Mehdi Abdi, who came off the bench in the 66th minute, was sent off in the 83rd minute for a violent conduct. Pars Jonoubi played out a goalless draw with Sanat Naft. Earlier on the day, Foolad defeated Machine Sazi 3-2.

## Iran beaten by Bahrain at 2020 Olympics qualification



**S P O R T S   TEHRAN** — Iran handball team lost to Bahrain 29-26 at the Duhail Handball Sports Hall in Doha at the 2019 AHF Men’s Asian qualification on Sunday. Iran, who had started the campaign with a 28-27 against South Korea in Group B, will play Kuwait on Tuesday. South Korea defeated Kuwait 36-32 in the group. Bahrain remained

top of the group with this win. In Group A, Saudi Arabia defeated Hong Kong 41-6 and hosts Qatar thrashed India 40-10. The top two teams of each group advance to the semi-finals and then final, with the winner booking their ticket through to the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. The runner-up will qualify for the IHF Olympic qualification in April.

## The race for the Golden Boot

When Bafetimbi Gomis bagged a brace in the first leg of the 2019 AFC Champions League semi-final against Al Sadd, not only did he make up for his earlier own goal en route to a 4-1 victory, he also moved joint top of the scoring charts. Gomis and Leonardo – who has left Al Wahda to join Shabab Al Ahli since the Emirati side were eliminated – are tied with nine goals apiece, but with the Saudi team potentially having three more games to play, the Frenchman is the favorite to win the top scorer award come November 24. But, while one more goal would see the Al Hilal target man take pole position, there remains a chasing pack who will have one eye on the accolade. Ahead of the semi-final second legs next week, the-AFC.com takes a closer look at the contenders.

- **Bafetimbi Gomis**
  - (Al Hilal – 9 goals)

Having joined Al Hilal from Turkish giants Galatasaray in mid-2018, the 34-year-old’s introduction to Asian football could hardly have gone any better, with nine goals in 11 games a superb return. Gomis netted four goals in the group stage but a hat-trick away at domestic rivals Al Ahli in the first leg of the Round of 16 and the double against Al Sadd have been by far his most telling contributions. The former Lyon and Marseilles man has played every minute of every game – averaging a goal every 110 minutes – and just over one in three of his attempts (34.62%) have found the back of the net. Perhaps surprisingly, just one of Gomis’ goals has come in Riyadh, something he will look to rectify in the second leg against Al Sadd as the striker looks to move on to double figures.



- **Leonardo**
  - (Al Wahda – 9 goals)

The fact Leonardo remains in the race to be crowned top scorer is largely down to a hugely impressive four-goal haul against Al Rayyan in the group stage. The Brazilian registered eight goals in total in the group stage as the Abu Dhabi club advanced to the knockout rounds for the first time since 2007. Leonardo added another in the Round of 16 defeat to Al Nassr to take him to nine goals in just seven games, with one every 70 minutes and a shot conversion rate of just over 39% an incredible return. Notably, an assist in the second leg against Al Nassr means Leonardo would finish above Gomis should the pair finish on nine goals apiece and the latter fails to create a goal in his remaining games.

- **Shinzo Koroki**
  - (Urawa Red Diamonds – 7 goals)

With Urawa Red Diamonds taking a two-goal lead into their second leg against

Guangzhou Evergrande, Shinzo Koroki, two behind Gomis, remains a serious threat for the top scorer prize. The diminutive Japanese forward netted four goals in his side’s victorious 2017 campaign but has hit even greater heights this time round, particularly in the knockout rounds. Three group stage goals were followed with a crucial double away at Ulsan Hyundai in the last 16 before he scored home and away in the quarter-final victory over Shanghai SIPG. Having started every game for Urawa, the 33-year-old boasts a goal every 139 minutes, while well over half of his 11 shots on target have ended up in the back of the net.

- **Anderson Talisca**
  - (Guangzhou Evergrande – 5 goals)

Had injury not struck Anderson Talisca in the group stage, the Brazilian may well have been much closer to the leading duo rather than considered a rank outsider.

The attacking midfielder scored four goals in his first three games, but sat out from Matchday Five until the first leg of the quarter-finals, returning to score the decisive goal to oust holders Kashima Antlers. However, the 25-year-old will need to perform wonders to help Guangzhou overhaul a two-goal deficit against Urawa and leave himself in with a chance of finishing as leading scorer. A goal every 122 minutes is superior to Koroki and, despite playing four fewer games, he has registered more shots (22-19) than the Urawa striker. He will, though, need to improve a shooting accuracy of just 50%.

- **Akram Afif**
  - (Al Sadd – 4 goals)

Like Talisca, for Al Sadd’s leading scorer Akram Afif to finish on top of the pile would take some doing given that the Qatari side start the second leg against Al Hilal 4-1 down. With the prolific Baghdad Bounedjah not enjoying the same fortune in front of goal as he did in 2018, Afif has stepped forward, scoring three of his four goals in the knockout rounds. The 22-year-old has played a game less than Gomis and Koroki and scored at a rate of just once every 225 minutes; however, a shooting accuracy just shy of 65% is by far the best of the five contenders. Al Sadd’s task of overhauling the deficit seems unlikely but, if they do, Afif has three games to score at least five goals. Unlikely, but the forward was part of a Qatar side that proved miracles do happen earlier in 2019.

(Source: the-afc)

## Maghsoodloo keeps clean sheet at Grand Swiss tournament 2019

**IRNA** — Iran’s young chess player Parham Maghsoodloo drew with two Russian rivals to maintain his clean sheet in FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss tournament 2019. Parham Maghsoodloo drew against top seed Sergey Karjakin and Nikita Vitiugov from Russia on Friday and Saturday to keep a draw streak in the international event. The Iranian chess player has a rating of 2664 and stands 7th with 6 out of 9 points in FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss tournament 2019. Maghsoodloo is Iran’s second best chess player and the only Iranian that has taken part in the prestigious event. FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss tournament 2019 is taking place from 10th-21st October at the Comis Hotel and Golf Resort in Isle of Man. The Winner of the FIDE Grand Swiss event qualifies for the next 2020 Candidates Tournament. The event will be played in 11 rounds, Swiss system. The time control is 100 minutes for the first 40 moves followed by 50 minutes for the next 20 moves followed by 15 minutes for the rest of the game, with an increment of 30 seconds per move starting from move 1. Total prize fund of the event is 432,500 USD, with 70,000 USD reserved for the Winner of the event. The FIDE Chess.com Grand Swiss 2019 is organized by IOM International Chess Limited.

## Chelsea’s Christian Pulisic confident ‘scoring touch’ will return

Chelsea midfielder Christian Pulisic said he is looking for his “scoring touch” but is confident it will come back as he fights for more playing time with the Blues. The United States international didn’t get on the scoreboard as a 64th minute substitute in Chelsea’s 1-0 win over Newcastle on Saturday but was involved in the buildup to Marco Alonso’s 74th-minute winner. Pulisic’s surging run into the box drew several Newcastle defenders to him, his low centering feed found Callum Hudson-Odoi, who set up Alonso’s low strike. Pulisic nearly scored himself later but instead fed it to Tammy Abraham, only for the forward’s shot to be deflected out by Newcastle defender and fellow U.S. international DeAndre Yedlin. “It was a really good game, happy for the team, had a strong performance, they defended really well, and I was happy to make an impact,” Pulisic told ESPN after the match. It was a solid performance for Pulisic, who is still searching for his first goal with Chelsea since his \$73 million summer move from Borussia Dortmund. He scored 13 goals during his three-year stint with the German club, along with 14 goals on international duty. “I was going to shoot last-second, but I saw Tammy wide open and then DeAndre made an unbelievable block, so maybe I should have shot it,” Pulisic told ESPN on the scoring chance. “I just don’t have that scoring touch but I know it will come back.” Pulisic had a forgettable international break with the U.S., who beat Cuba in CONCACAF Nations League action but then suffered a shock loss to Canada in Toronto. In the latter match, Pulisic was visibly frustrated after being subbed off early by U.S. manager Gregg Berhalter. (Source: Soccer.net)

## Official Emblem for Qatar 2019 revealed

With just over 50 days to go until kick-off, the countdown is well and truly on for the upcoming FIFA Club World Cup Qatar 2019. The Official Emblem unveiled on Friday embodies the pinnacle of global club football while highlighting the cultural history of the host country.



The most striking element of the Official Emblem reimagines a football as a pearl, in recognition of one of Qatar’s earliest industries. The decoration of the iridescent sphere is inspired by mashrabiya, traditional architectural elements found in residences across the Middle East. Mashrabiya latticework – like pearl diving – has deep roots, with examples dating back to as early as the Middle Ages. The delicate screens are both decorative and functional, serving the dual purpose of cooling homes and providing an elegant decoration both inside and outside. The colours featured in the emblem are the burgundy that is so characteristic of the Qatari nation and the deep turquoise of Doha Bay. The striking pearl is held aloft by shapes reminiscent of sweeping desert sand and accented with diacritics, a fundamental element of the Arabic alphabet. The 16th edition of the FIFA Club World Cup will take place on December 11-21 December 2019. (Source: the-afc)



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GUIDE TO  
SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Every human being has a sweet or bitter end.  
Imam Ali (AS)

## Carthage festival picks “Once a Woman”, “Castle Of Dreams”

**A R T TEHRAN** — The Iranian films “Castle Of Dreams” by Reza Mirkarimi and “Once a Woman” by Jalil Akbari-Sehat will go on screen at the Carthage Film Festival in Tunisia.

The films will be screened in the Asian Cinema section along with films from Sri Lanka, India, China, Vietnam, Nepal, Bangladesh and Azerbaijan, the organizers have announced.

“Castle of Dreams” is about two young children whose mother has just died, and their father, Jalal, after long years of absence, returns to sort things out, but he does not want to take the children with him.

The film has been screened at several international events, including the 22nd Shanghai International Film Festival, where it won awards in three categories, including best film and best director.

A co-production of Iran, Canada and Kenya, “Once a Woman” narrates the story of several individuals who are doing investigations in life to get to know more about themselves, others and the world.

The Carthage festival will open on October 26 with a screening of Tunisian filmmaker Nouri Bouzid’s “The Scarecrows” and will wrap up on November 2 with the honoring of winners. “The Scarecrows” had its world premiere at the Venice Film Festival 2019.

## “African Violet”, “Dressage” to go on screen in Cannes

**A R T TEHRAN** — “African Violet” and “Dressage” will be screened at Espace Miramar, a major performing arts theater in Cannes, France on October 24.

The screening session will take place in a program named “Zoom Sur Le Cinema Iranien” (Focus on Iranian Cinema), the Espace Miramar has announced.

“African Violet” by Mona Zandi-Haghighi is about a woman who chooses to look after her former husband who is suffering from an illness.

“Dressage” by Puya Badkubeh is about Golsa and her friends who rob a corner shop. But while evaluating the booty, they are dismayed to realize that they forgot to take the security camera footage.

Nasrin Mirshab of Dreamlab, the France-based international distributor of the two films, is expected to attend the screenings of the movies.

## Visits to Munich on Tehran time

**1 →** One of the best parts of the book is the chapter explaining Hajvani’s visit to a Munich school, which was arranged by the IJB. He was assigned by the library to attend two classes at the school to elaborate on his writings, his family and answer any questions about Iran.

Taking advantage of an opportunity to promote Persian literature, Hajvani gained approval from a library official to tell the schoolchildren the story “Elephant in the Dark House” from Persian poet Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi’s masterpiece Masnavi-ye Manavi, which has been simplified by Firuzeh Golmohammadi.

During his classroom session, Hajvani was concerned that his presentation may have failed to impress the students, but he found some comfort in a sentence from the teacher, who wrote, “There was complete silence and the children were all ears while you were talking.”

Hajvani praises Munich for its beauty, envying those citizens who enjoy the welfare, security and freedom granted in the city. He asks his readers not to misunderstand the concept of freedom, which in Iran is defined as laxity. He is also complimentary about the water consumption pattern in Germany, advising Iranians to follow this pattern.

While Hajvani, of course, was an Iranian, he lived like a perfect German citizen over his multi-month stay in Munich. During the trip, he learned how to live and think like German, with rigorous daily work schedules, and not wasting any spare time. He went to the theater and made excursions to Germany’s natural attractions such as Garmisch Partenkirchen and Zugspitze, and was respectful of the law and other people living around him.

Nevertheless, he still had his Iranian heart during those trips. There is an ambience of nostalgia for Iran that permeates the whole book. He makes numerous allusions to his personal life in his homeland, sharing bittersweet memories of childhood and youth, which are reasonably interesting. This nostalgic thread that binds the book together is what led the author to choose the poignantly metaphorical title for his book.

Those scholars who win a scholarship to the IJB appear to serve as ambassadors of the library. The center also publishes articles by the scholars and makes the materials accessible to everyone.

It is my own wish that cultural officials in Iran would recognize that our country also has the potential to offer scholarships such as these.

# Warsaw Film Festival honors Iran’s “A Hairy Tale”

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian director Homayun Ghanizadeh’s directorial debut “A Hairy Tale” received the special jury award at the 35th Warsaw Film Festival in the Polish capital on Saturday.

The film is a black comedy about three barbers: Danesh, who is in love with Homa, a well-known actress; Khan, who is mad about the movie “Casablanca”; and Shapur, who is a fan of tinned tuna and politics.

Finding the dead bodies of women with shaved heads near their barbershop leads Inspector Kiani to the barbers to sort out the messy situation.

The Georgian film “Shindisi” won the grand prize while Dito Tsintsadze was named best director for the movie.

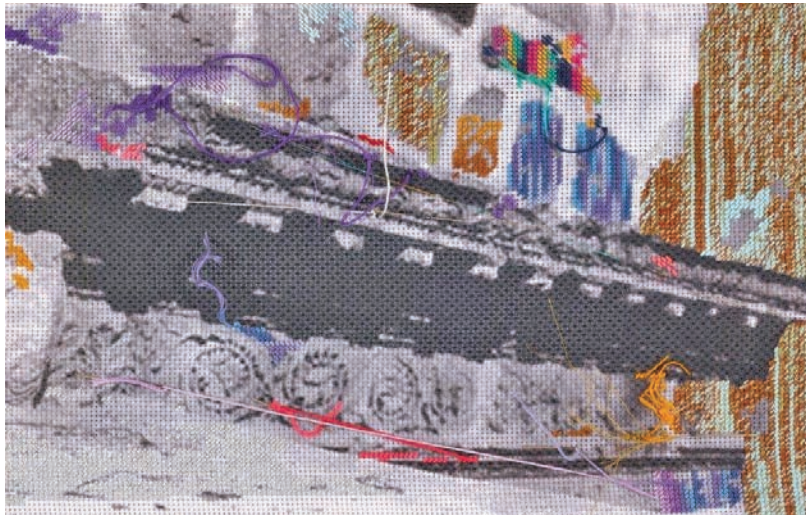
“Overseas”, a co-production between Belgium and France by Sung-A Yoon, won the best documentary award, while “Sororelle” by Frederic Even and Louise Mercadier from France received the grand prize in the short film competition.

“Just 6.5” by Iranian director Saeid Rustai was also screened in Discoveries, a non-competitive section of the festival, which was held from October 11 to 20.



A scene from “A Hairy Tale” by Iranian director Homayun Ghanizadeh.

## Farhad Ahrarnia displays artworks in Beirut



No. 11, a handmade embroidery from Iranian artist Farhad Ahrarnia’s series “A woman in Arabia”.

**A R T TEHRAN** — A selection of works by the UK-based Iranian artist Farhad Ahrarnia is on display in an exhibition at the Janine Rubeiz Gallery in the Lebanese capital of Beirut.

Ahrarnia is presenting four bodies of his works from silver to inlaid mosaic works and embroidery at the exhibit entitled “Art in Another Language”.

For his first solo exhibition in Beirut, Ahrarnia translates historical events, images, monuments and ideas into a visual language, beautifully expressing the complexities of the intercultural dialogue.

In his series, “A Woman from Arabia”, Ahrarnia uses embroidery to embellish and cross-stitch photographs taken by English archaeologist and writer Gertrude Bell.

Bell explored, mapped and influenced British colonial policymaking in the Middle

East during the early 20th century.

Ahrarnia traces and highlights her role as a colonial surveyor who used rulers and pencils to cut the Middle East, stitching her photographs with needles and leaving “loose threads” to hint at other readings of history.

Ahrarnia was born in the southern Iranian city of Shiraz. In 1997, he graduated with a degree in experimental and documentary film theory and practice from the Northern Media School, Sheffield Hallam University. He has lived in Sheffield ever since.

“Art in Another Language” has been organized in collaboration with Rose Issa, an independent curator from London, and will be running until October 24.

“Stage on Fire” (2014), “Canary in a Coal Mine” (2012) and “Stitched” (2008), all of which were in London, are among Ahrarnia’s other solo exhibits.

## Hoomehr stages performances on Ashura tragedy in Lublin



A poster for Hoomehr’s program “Manifestation of Divine Truth”.

**A R T TEHRAN** — The Iranian theater troupe Hoomehr went on stage in the Polish city of Lublin on Saturday, giving a performance on the Ashura tragedy.

The tragedy befell Imam Hussein (AS) and his loyal companions who were martyred in Karbala on the 10th day of Muharram in 680 CE as a result of their valiant stand against the injustices of the oppressive Umayyad dynasty.

Hoomehr performed “The Perfect Love” at the Dominican Abbey. The performance is about the meeting of a monk with Khawli ibn Yazid al-Asbahi, a member of Umar ibn Sad’s army, when he was taking the head of the Imam to Yazid ibn Muawiya, the second caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, after the Ashura event.

“Due to the fact that Polish people are Catholic, this play was performed using symbols that are common between Islam and Christianity,” Mehdi Jalali, the director of the troupe, said in a press release published on Saturday.

The group also staged a performance named “The Sun of Kindness” in the form of tazieh, the Iranian passion play. Mourning for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein (AS) in Bushehri style was also featured during the performance.

The Municipality of Lublin, the Asia and Pacific Museum in Warsaw, a cultural center in the Praga District of Warsaw, and several other centers in the country will host the troupe for their weeklong program “Manifestation of Divine Truth”, which opened on Saturday.

## Jean Anouilh’s “Romeo and Jeannette” on stage at Tehran theater

**A R T TEHRAN** — An Iranian troupe led by director Puyan Ahmadi is performing French writer Jean Anouilh’s play “Romeo and Jeannette” at Tehran’s Mehregan Theater.

Written in 1945, the play is about Julia, whose upper-class fiancé Frederic brings his mother to meet Julia’s lower-class family. Julia is ashamed of her family, which consists of a hedonist father, a drunken son whose wife has left him, and another daughter, Jeannette, who has a bad reputation in the neighborhood.

Frederic and Jeannette fall passionately in love and run away together. To prove her suffering love for Frederic, Jeannette cuts her wrists, while her sister Julia, the abandoned fiancée, has taken poison.

Azar Ebrahimi, Mahmud Khodaverdi, Afra Navai, Faezeh Qadami and Taraneh Yusefi are the members of the cast for the play, which will be on stage until November 1.



A poster for Jean Anouilh’s play “Romeo and Jeannette” on stage by Iranian director Puyan Ahmadi at Mehregan Theater Hall in Tehran.

## “Looking for Alibrandi” published in Persian

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — Australian writer Melina Marchetta’s debut novel “Looking for Alibrandi” has recently been published in Persian by Khazeh Publications in Tehran.

Translated by Ali Shahmoradi, the 1992 book is about a 17-year-old Italian-Australian girl, Josephine Alibrandi, who is in her final year at a wealthy Catholic girls’ school.

Living with her mother and grandmother, and caught between the old-world values of her Italian grandmother, her serious mother and strict nuns at school, Josephine tries to gain control of her life.

She meets her estranged father who is in Sydney on a business trip, while she has just started a romantic relationship with a young man with a bad reputation.

The book received several awards including CBCA Children’s Book of the Year Award in 1993 and Books I Love Best Yearly: Older Readers Award in 1995.

A film adaptation with the same name was made by Australian director Kate Woods in 2000.



Front cover of Persian version of Australian writer Melina Marchetta novel “Looking for Alibrandi”.

## WarnerMedia’s HBO Max to stream films of “Spirited Away” producer

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — HBO Max, the forthcoming streaming service from AT&T Inc’s WarnerMedia, will screen films from Studio Ghibli, the Japanese animation producer behind the Academy Award-winning movie “Spirited Away”.

This is the first time a streaming provider has obtained rights to Ghibli’s films, WarnerMedia said on Thursday. Co-founded by master animator Hayao Miyazaki,

the studio is known for its intricate, hand-drawn animation and imaginative coming-of-age story lines that made films like 1988’s “My Neighbor Totoro” into an international hit.

HBO Max will offer more than a dozen original shows and movies from stars including Reese Witherspoon and Anna Kendrick, as it prepares to go head-to-head with rival services from Netflix Inc, Walt Disney Co

and Apple Inc.

Slated to launch in the spring of 2020, HBO Max will also have programs from AT&T-owned networks such as HBO and TBS and classics from the Warner Bros film and TV library.

Earlier this year, WarnerMedia said U.S. reruns of the popular television sitcom “Friends” will move in 2020 from Netflix to HBO Max.