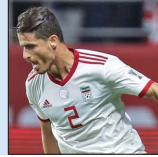




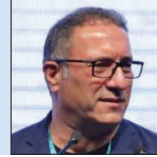
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Iran, Syria ink MOU on electricity co-op



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Senior officials ban import of goods produced at home

TEHRAN — In efforts to prop up domestic producers and increase employment opportunities, President Hassan Rouhani, Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani and Judiciary Chief Hojjatolislam Ebrahim Radei decided on Saturday to ban the import of commodities which can be produced inside the country. The heads of three branches of government made the decision during the

41th session of the Supreme Council of Economic Coordination. The officials also discussed revising structure of the tax system. In a session of the council on September 21, Rouhani said that revenues of a planned increase in fuel prices should be given to low-income people and those with fixed income. ➔ **2**

Sanctions on construction sector shows U.S. diplomatic weakness: Iran

TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi has reacted to the United States' sanctions on Iran's construction sector, saying such moves indicate Washington's "weakness" and "failure" in the domain of diplomacy. "Unfortunately, the U.S. diplomacy apparatus is incapable of presenting diplomatic and rational initiatives, and

only relies on force and economic terrorism," Mousavi said in a statement on Saturday, according to Foreign Ministry website. "The United States' arrogant diplomacy, which is also used in dealing with other countries and even international and multilateral mechanisms, has turned into a global scourge," he said. ➔ **3**

Anti-government protesters in Iraq, Lebanon torch flags of U.S., Israel

TEHRAN — Anti-government demonstrators in both Iraq and Lebanon have set fire to American and Israeli flags in a show of anger at those believed to be the main instigators of the recent unrest gripping the two Arab countries. The Lebanese news website Al-Ahed released a video on Friday showing Iraqi protesters setting Israeli and U.S. flags alight and stepping on them at

Baghdad's Tahrir Square. Waving national flags, the Iraqis also chanted slogans against Washington as well as the Israeli and Saudi regimes during the rally. At the start of October, street protests erupted in several Iraqi cities over unemployment and a lack of basic services. The rallies resumed on October 25 after a pause of about two weeks, but took a violent turn. ➔ **13**

Trump may be readier to make concessions to Iran in impeachment situation: Jenkins

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Peter Jenkins, former UK Ambassador to the IAEA and UN, says that the initiation of impeachment proceedings against President Trump has created a situation in which he may be readier to make concessions to Iran. A former associate fellow of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy adds that "From a European perspective it is hard to have sympathy for the tactic Iran has adopted of punishing Europe for the wrongdoings of the Trump administration." Following is the full text of the interview: ■ In the fourth step, Iran has stated to reduce its obligations under JCPOA, such as the level of enrichment and IAEA monitoring. What do you think will be the reactions? A: From a European perspective it is hard to have sympathy for the tactic Iran has adopted of punishing Europe for the wrongdoings of the Trump administration.



Europe has not been a willing accomplice of that administration's anti-Iranian "maximum pressure" campaign. It is U.S. gangster tactics that have resulted in European firms deciding that they cannot afford to do business with Iran. President Macron and French diplomats have devoted energy to trying to persuade President Trump to abandon or ease the campaign. European

public opinion recognises that the Trump administration's economic siege of Iran is morally and legally indefensible. Consequently, European governments will react badly to a fourth step away from full implementation of the JCPOA. They will consider it unjustified. They will urge Iranian Ministers to recall that the JCPOA was designed first and foremost to enable Iran to re-build confidence in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. Confidence will not be re-built by producing more enriched uranium than Iran needs at this stage of the programme or by denying IAEA inspectors access to nuclear-related sites. I imagine that a further step away from compliance will be equally unwelcome in Moscow and Beijing. Russia and China value the JCPOA as much as Europe does. Both want Iran to demonstrate its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation through compliance. Iranian leaders may feel that they can afford to alienate Europe. They cannot afford to alienate Russia and China. ➔ **11**

Al-Baghdadi was US 'spawn', his death is still an open question: Lavrov

TEHRAN — Russia still cannot verify Washington's claims about the elimination of the Islamic State leader, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said, adding that the U.S. facilitated the rise of the group in the first place. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the (now former) leader of the notorious terrorist group Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS) "is or was if he is really dead a spawn of the United States," the minister told the Russian Rossiya 24 broadcaster. "ISIS as such came into existence in the wake of the U.S. illegal invasion of Iraq, the collapse of the Iraqi state and the release of extremists that

Americans previously kept in prisons there..." Lavrov also said that the Russian military still do not have enough information to confirm with confidence that the self-proclaimed 'Caliph' is indeed dead. "We want to get additional information," he said. According to RT, U.S. President Donald Trump pompously announced American special forces neutralized the terrorist leader in "a daring night-time raid" in northwest Syria, yet, his statement was met with skepticism by many. While the Pentagon released drone footage of the raid, it offered little proof

regarding the terrorist leader's demise itself. His mutilated body, found under the rubble of a collapsed tunnel, was allegedly buried at sea, but evidence for this assertion, too, essentially remains classified. Earlier, Syrian President Bashar Assad also expressed his doubts about the fate of the notorious terrorist and said that Washington could recreate him "under a different name, as a different individual," also suggesting the Americans could reproduce "ISIL in its entirety," possibly "under a different name but with the same thought and the same purpose."



Sanctions are blatant violation of international law, Iran says at SCO meeting

TEHRAN — Es'haq Jahangiri, the first vice-president, said on Saturday that the U.S. bullying and "unjust" sanctions against Iranian people represent a textbook example of economic terrorism and a flagrant breach of international law and the United Nations charter. The vice president made the remarks in a meeting of the council of heads of government whose countries are member to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in the Uzbek capital Tashkent. ➔ **2**

PERSPECTIVE
Hanif Ghaffari
Head of the Tehran Times
Politics Desk

Trump's commercial defeat against Beijing

The US-China trade and economic war continues. Although White House officials are talking about a trade deal with Beijing, many analysts believe the two countries' dispute will be deep and widespread, at least until Donald Trump's presence in the White House. White House officials are not talking about their commercial defeat against China right now! However, most analysts believe that Donald Trump has failed to achieve his business and economic goals in the fight against Beijing. As CNN reported recently, The US-China trade war is rocking America's manufacturing industry. It's denting profits for major companies like Hasbro and Caterpillar. And farmers are hurting badly. Yet Peter Navarro, trade adviser to President Donald Trump, downplayed the pain from the trade war and stressed the need to stay unified against China. "We are dealing with a strategic rival -- and they are trying to buckle our knees," Navarro told CNN's Jim Sciutto at the CITIZEN by CNN conference in New York. Navarro was quick to say China's economy is "hurting" -- and it is, with growth slowing to the weakest pace since 1992 -- but refused to acknowledge the damage at home. Yet the erratic trade war between the United States and China has also exacerbated the global economic slowdown and stung America's factories. The US manufacturing sector in September suffered its worst month in a decade. Executives and economists pinned the blame on the tit-for-tat tariff battle with China. Farmers have been caught in the crossfire, with China halting its purchases of soybeans and other agricultural products in retaliation for tariffs. What has happened today between the United States and China is rooted in the behaviors of the last two years of the US president with Beijing. US-China relations continue to decline during the Trump presidency. Of course, there were disagreements between Beijing and Washington over security and cyber-security issues at the time of Barack Obama, but the emergence of trade and economic disputes in their bilateral relations should be analyzed "beyond a simple controversy." In other words, from the beginning of 2017 and Trump's presence at the top of the political and executive equations of the United States, we have witnessed the emergence of constant crises and challenges in the relations between Washington and Beijing.

PERSPECTIVE
Javad Heirannia
political analyst

Democrats take a gamble on Trump's impeachment

Despite all ups and downs, Democrats finally brought impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump to the House of Representatives, a move which made Trump's prediction come true. The House of Representatives passed a resolution on Thursday to launch an impeachment inquiry into Trump, thereby making formal investigations against him possible. The resolution was approved by a vote of 232 to 196. Accordingly, the House of Intelligence Committee carries out the investigations into the impeachment and reports its findings to the Judiciary Committee that comments on the process of impeachment. Trump has said that the House will get enough votes to impeach him, but he is certain that the Senate will acquit him of charges. Investigations into Trump's impeachment began on September 24 following the official order of Speaker of U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi. The order came after reports about Trump's telephone call with Ukrainian president for investigation into his possible rival Joe Biden. During the conversation Trump asked his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky for a "favor". He pressured Zelensky to investigate Joe Biden, his possible Democratic rival for the 2020 presidential election, and his son Hunter Biden who was on the board of a Ukrainian oil and gas factory. At the time, Trump had suspended \$400 million military aid to Ukraine as a quid pro quo. ■ **Why Nancy Pelosi risks?** It should be noted that some Democrats have called for Trump's impeachment since his first months of his presidency. The impeachment inquiry was popular among Democratic voters, with a recent poll showing that 73% of them favoring the impeachment. But Republicans are strongly opposed to impeachment, and the country generally relies on Republicans. That is why Nancy Pelosi and other leading Democrats were first reluctant to officially begin an impeachment. Their calculations have so far revealed that impeachment against Trump will not have much effect on the opinion of Republicans and his supporters, a situation which will make it more difficult to remove him from the 2020 election. ➔ **13**

Statement: Iraqi people not to remain silent toward insult against Iran in protests

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — A large Iraqi popular group, in a statement on Saturday, announced that the majority of Iraqis oppose strongly any form of insult against Iran in the ongoing protests.

The Ansar group (supporters) allied to Hashd al-Sha'abi warned against the negative impacts of divisive slogans by some protestors. "Insulting Iran is a violation of our appreciative culture, so, remaining silent in such cases is not correct," the group said in the statement.

"Such slogans (insulting Iran) is completely stranger to the Iraqi society," the statement added.

"Unity and empathy among Iranian and Iraqi Arabaeen pilgrims testified clearly the position of the Iraqi people towards their Iranian brothers and sisters," it said.

The statement further censured some Iraqi parties, officials and elites that have kept mum on such insults against Iran which has been on the side of the Iraqis, saying, "Those who take position against any minor incident, unfortunately have not responded to such ungratefulness."

In the wake of recent violent protests in Iraq, Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on Iranians to postpone traveling to the country until further notice.

In a travel advisory issued on Tuesday, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs urged Iranian travelers and pilgrims to put off their trip to Iraq in the wake of escalation of anti-government protests in the neighboring country.

Praising the Iraqi government and nation for their generous hospitality during the Arbaeen season, the ministry cited reports of unrest in Iraq for its decision to issue the travel warning.

Public anti-government protests have erupted in Iraq since early October. More than 230 Iraqis have reportedly been killed in the protests so far.

At least 74 people were killed in Iraq last week and hundreds wounded as demonstrators clashed with security forces in the second wave of protests against Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi's government.

Deputy minister urges passive defense readiness to counter possible incident

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian deputy interior minister for security and law enforcement forces on Saturday urged the entire relevant bodies of the Passive Defense Organization to be prepared to counter any possible incident nationwide.

Attending the nationwide meeting of the provinces' passive defense committees, Hossein Zolfagari said, "This issue (passive defense) is neither a theoretical matter nor a maneuver, but it is a strategy under which we must really get ready to counter any conditions."



Zolfagari, who serves as head of the Interior Ministry's passive defense committee, went on to say that "we must pay serious attention to passive defense to continue rendering services to needy people and to handle the society's affairs in any condition."

Last week, the commander of the Passive Defense Organization said that no serious military threat against Iran existed at the moment.

"As the leader of the (Islamic) Revolution said, 'the option of war is the final threat which has been thwarted by Iran's defense power'," said Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali during a press conference.

Jalali said, "A new wave of threats in non-military fields has been launched by the United States, first of which is the economic war."

"The first mission of the Passive Defense Organization is to watch out for threats, identify them and issue warnings in different fields."

"The second mission of the organization is to decrease the vulnerability of the country's infrastructure against national threats," he remarked.

The commander went on to say, "The Islamic Republic is carrying out measures to strengthen its infrastructure against any type of threats."

Senior MP: U.S.-Israel-Saudi triangle supports terrorist groups

TEHRAN (FNA) — A senior Iranian lawmaker said on Saturday that Washington and its regional allies, especially Saudi Arabia and Israel, are the main sources of terrorism in the region, adding that the U.S. is meddling in the internal affairs of Iraq and Yemen.

"Iran is aware of the fact that dirty hands of the U.S., Saudis, Zionists and the remnants of the Ba'ath regime in Iraq are sponsoring these accidents," Head of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee Mojtaba Zolnour said.

Zolnour noted that the U.S. penetration in the region will be removed only by the people of the region, and said that after being defeated in all paths Americans are trying to create tension in regional states by waging soft war.

The senior Iranian lawmaker said that the U.S. is misusing waves of dissatisfaction in Iraq and Lebanon to achieve its goals.

Zolnour pointed to the U.S. support for terrorist groups in the region, and said, "The ISIL and Takfiris were not an underground, partisan, and secret army, but in Syria and Iraq they had large territories, camps, and garrisons in Syria and Iraq."

In relevant remarks earlier this week, Iranian government spokesman Ali Rabiei took the U.S. policies responsible for the creation of terrorist groups, including the ISIL, warning that killing of ISIL ringleader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is not the end of terrorism.

Senior officials ban import of goods produced at home



Transferring government's assets, using forex reserves, selling Islamic bonds, and withdrawing 450 trillion rials (about \$10.714 billion) from the National Development Fund

I → "Revenues of increase in fuel price should be given to low-income people to make up for reduction in their purchasing power because of fluctuations in inflation," he said.

In another session on September 14, it was agreed to give more authority to the central bank to control the foreign currency market.

On August 31, the council approved regulations to implement oil projects.

In a session of the council on August 10, Rouhani said that solving problems must be the main objective of policymaking and decision-making.

Rouhani said his administration is making efforts to resolve the people's economic problems.

To counter the effects of sanctions, the government is taking compensatory measures.

During a session of the council on July 27, four strategies to compensate for budget deficit were approved.

'Trump has problem with Iran's development'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Abbasali Kadkhodaei, the spokesman for the Guardian Council, has said that U.S. President Donald Trump has problems with the economic development in Iran.

Kadkhodaei's comments came as the United States announced new round of sanctions on Iran, this time targeting Iran's construction sector.

"Inefficiency of maximum pressure has once again make Trump to show his animosity and hatred by imposing new sanctions on construction sector. These sanctions have shown that Trump has problems with Iran's development and construction, however, their failure will cause more depression for Trump," Kadkhodaei tweeted on Saturday.

The U.S. State Department issued a fact sheet on Thursday announcing imposition of sanctions on sale of software used for industrial purposes, raw and semi-finished metals, graphite and coal used in Iran's construction sector.

The State Department said Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had determined Iran's construction sector was

controlled directly or indirectly by Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), Press TV reported.

The State Department also announced a separate batch of sanctions against what it described as the sale of "strategic material" being used "in connection with Iran's nuclear, military, or ballistic missile programs."

The State Department listed the sanctioned material as "stainless steel 304L tubes, MN40 manganese brazing foil, MN70 manganese brazing foil, and stainless steel CrNi60WTi ESR + VAR."

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on his Twitter account on Friday that such moves show the "maximum failure of maximum pressure".

"Subjecting construction workers to economic terrorism only manifests maximum failure of 'maximum pressure'," Zarif wrote.

Zarif added, "The U.S. can sanction every man, woman, and child but Iranians will never submit to bullying."

The Iranian chief diplomat called on the Trump administration that instead of digging itself "deeper" in



such actions, revise its "failed policies" and rejoin the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Rather than dig itself deeper, the U.S. should abandon failed policies and return to the JCPOA," Zarif suggested.

Moscow interested in including Iran in Russia-China-U.S. format in Afghan talks: Lavrov

By staff and agency

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Friday that Moscow has an interest in including Iran in the Russia-China-U.S. format for Afghanistan talks.

"We have a dialogue with them [the United States] on Afghanistan. There is a Russia-China-U.S. format that Pakistan has joined. There is interest in connecting Iran to this format. It can be promising," Lavrov told the Rossiya 24 broadcaster, according to Urdu Point News.

In a meeting with Afghanistan's Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting in Uzbekistan on Friday, Iranian Vice President Es'hag Jahanjiri said that people in Afghanistan should decide their own fate, reaffirming Tehran's support for Afghan-Afghan peace talks.

Iran has been engaged in separate talks with the Taliban group.

In December 2018, Tehran announced that it had been holding talks with the Afghan Taliban with the knowledge of the



Afghan government.

Ali Shamkhani, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, made the announcement during a visit to Kabul on December 26.

Shamkhani said the talks between Iran and the Taliban were held "to help curb the security problems in Afghanistan."

"The Afghan government has been informed of the communications and talks carried out with the Taliban, and this process will continue," Shamkhani added.

Shamkhani broke the story just days after the Taliban attended reconciliation talks with a U.S. peace envoy in Abu Dhabi.

JCPOA promoted Iran's standing worldwide: VP

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian vice president for parliamentary affairs said on Saturday that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) signed between Iran and world powers in 2015 promoted Tehran's standing globally.

"Settling the Iran nuclear standoff was not a simple matter as several resolutions had already been approved against Iran. The nuclear deal was the most prominent success achieved by the government in 2015," Hossein Ali Amiri said.

Through the JCPOA, the official name for the 2015 nuclear agreement, Iran proved to the world that despite intensive propaganda campaigns by Israel and hardliners in Washington, Iran's nuclear program is purely peaceful.

"No one can find a country that has been able of removing itself from under the United Nations Chapter VII without engaging in a war and bloodshed. Iran, under support by the country's

Leader, management of President Hassan Rouhani and capability of the negotiating team managed to evade effects of previous resolutions by only a new resolution (2231)," Amiri went on to say.

In July 2015, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 2231 endorsed the JCPOA and annulled all the previous resolutions against Iran.

He added, "Today, except for some reactionary countries in the region and the Zionist regime of Israel, no country intends to cooperate with the U.S. which is not a minor achievement."

Since May 8, exactly one year after the United States unilaterally abandoned the JCPOA and reimposed sanctions, Tehran has started to partially remove limits on its nuclear program in compliance with paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA.

Iran says its reciprocal measures will be reversible as soon as Europe finds practical ways to shield the Iranian economy from unilateral U.S. sanctions.

Syrian constitutional committee will replace bullets with dialogue: ex-diplomat

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Ahmad Dastmalchian, Iran's former ambassador to Lebanon, has said that the Syrian constitutional committee is very important, because it will replace bullets with dialogue.

In an interview with ASTNA published on Saturday, he said, "Initiative of the Astana talks which was created by Iran, Russia and Turkey to settle the Syrian crisis shows that multilateralism can be an important basis for peace, diplomacy and dialogue."

United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres announced the formation of the constitutional committee on September 23.

The Syrian constitutional committee met on Wednesday for the first time under UN auspices to chart a political settlement to end the eight-and-a-half-year civil war.

The meeting in Geneva is being overseen by the UN special envoy for Syria Geir Pedersen.

The first meeting the committee, composed of govern-



ment and opposition members as well as civil society, is a step forward in what the United Nations says will be a long road to political rapprochement.

Mohammad Javad Zarif, Sergey Lavrov, and Mevlut Cavusoglu, respectively the foreign ministers of Iran, Russia

and Turkey, issued a joint statement on Tuesday reaffirming commitment to Syria's territorial integrity and supporting the work of the constitutional committee.

The statement was issued after a trilateral meeting with Pedersen in Geneva.

Part of the statement said Iran, Russia and Turkey "welcomed the formation the Constitutional Committee and its convening in Geneva on 30 October 2019 as a result of the decisive contribution of the Astana guarantors and the implementation of the decisions of the Syrian National Dialogue Congress in Sochi and appreciated in this regard the efforts of the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Syria."

The sides also "reaffirmed their determination to support the work of the Constitutional Committee through continuous interaction with the Syrian parties and the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Syria in order to ensure its sustainable and effective work."

Sanctions are blatant violation of international law, Iran says at SCO meeting

I → According to Fars news agency, Jahanjiri held the international community accountable to take action against the U.S. imposition of "unjust" sanctions against the Iranian nation.

In addition, he said, "the U.S. bullying and unilateral sanctions" constitute a clear example of economic terrorism.

In relevant remarks in early October, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said Washington's unilateral policies have damaged international trade and prosperity, and

called upon the world to undertake a serious measure against the U.S. destructive approach.

"We believe that the international community must confront the U.S. hostile and unilateralist approach by taking a firm decision and effective measures," Rouhani said in an address to a summit of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in the Armenian capital city of Yerevan.

Rouhani emphasized that the world order was based on multilateralism and

joint cooperation among all members of the international community, and that all countries were duty-bound to counter unilateralism in order to maintain global peace, security and stability.

The Iranian president said the U.S. has, in recent years, pursued unilateral approaches and jeopardized mutual and international agreements, including the 2015 deal on the Iranian nuclear program, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Unfortunately, as a result of the U.S. destructive measures, we are witnessing many problems in economic relations among countries, increasing poverty, insecurity and immigration as well as a decline in economic development in the world," Rouhani said, warning that the continuation of such policies would lead to irreparable damage.

He stressed the importance of strengthening multilateral and regional economic cooperation in line with multilateralism in the international system.

U.S. wars have killed 8.5 million people in last 40 years, says IRGC chief

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Chief of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Hossein Salami said on Saturday that Washington's wars have claimed the lives of 8.5 million people during the past 40 years, Mehr reported.

Major General Salami also said that the United States has been directly or indirectly involved in most of the wars in the Islamic world over the last 40 years.

He made the remarks in a ceremony to unveil the new wall paintings of the former U.S. embassy in Tehran, which is also known as the U.S. "den of espionage" in Iran.

On November 4, 1979, a group of Iranian students stormed the U.S. embassy in Tehran and took 52 Americans, including diplomats and staff, hostage. They were held hostage for 444 days.

The embassy in Tehran is now an Islamic cultural center and a museum. It stands as a symbol of the Iranian revolution.

Each year on November 4, Iranians take to the streets across the country to commemorate the anniversary of the embassy seizure. Pointing to the former U.S. embassy,



Salami said "for years, this place had been a place for attempts against the country's interests."

"The Americans speak of freedom and democracy but all dictators in the world are pawns in their game of chess," he said,

adding, "Dictators such as Iran's Shah and reactionary kings in Islamic countries have been and still are their elements."

The top general also said wherever a coup is orchestrated, Washington is behind that.

He was making a reference to the 28 Mordad coup, which saw the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh on August 19, 1953 in favor of strengthening the monarchical rule of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran.

"The U.S. measure in the coup d'état and reinstalling of Mohammad Reza Shah led to Iran's backwardness and expanded the [U.S.'s] colonial nature," said General Salami.

"Can a regime that orchestrates coup d'états in different countries be the flag-bearer of democracy in the world?" he asked rhetorically.

The IRGC chief also said the Americans have been, for a long time, failing to succeed in their plans.

"The U.S. pays the costs and its enemies emerge victorious ... In spite of Washington's efforts, others reap the benefits," he added.

'Iran better to reduce nuclear commitments than quit nuclear deal'

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — It is better for Iran to reduce commitments to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, rather than quit the agreement altogether, says Iran's former ambassador to Norway.

In an interview with ISNA published on Saturday, Abdolreza Faraji-Rad said that Iran will take the fourth step in reducing nuclear commitments if Europe fails to fulfil its obligations.



He added that Iran's actions in reducing commitments under the JCPOA are within the framework of the deal.

Mahmoud Vaezi, the presidential chief of staff, confirmed on Wednesday that Iran will take the fourth step to reduce commitments under the nuclear deal, if the remaining parties fail to honor obligations by the scheduled deadline.

The remaining parties to the JCPOA are the E3 – Britain, Germany and France – the European Union, Russia and China.

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the deal, Tehran began to partially reduce its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals.

In the first stage, Iran announced that it will not limit its stockpile of the nuclear fuel to 300 kilograms allowed under the deal. However, on that date (May 8) Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) said if the remaining parties to the JCPOA, especially Europeans, devise a mechanism to protect Iran from the sanctions' effect in the two-month deadline it will reverse its decision.

But since European parties missed the deadline, on July 7 Iran announced that it has started enriching uranium to a higher purity than the 3.67%, thereby starting the second step.

Again, as Europe missed the second 60-day deadline, Iran moved to take the third step, removing a ban on nuclear research and development (R&D).

The current deadline comes to an end in early November.

Envoy: Mogherini successor favors independent European foreign policy

POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — The Iranian ambassador to Spain has said that the newly-elected chief of the European Union's foreign policy has proven in his past political records that he is against unilateralism, promising that the new chief is after independency of the bloc's foreign policy approach.

Hassan Qashqavi's remarks came in an interview with the official news agency IRNA published on Saturday.

"He (Borrell), according to experts' belief, due to his opposition to the U.S. unilateralism, and his explicit criticism against Donald Trump, his support for Iran's nuclear deal (JCPOA), his approach towards Iran's Islamic Revolution and totally his empathic views towards Iran, is capable of playing effective role in future relations between Tehran and Europe," the envoy pointed out.

Josep Borrell Fontelles was elected by the heads of the EU member states as the new High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. He officially took office on Friday.

As a member of the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party, he served as Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Union



and Cooperation of the Government of Spain since 2018.

Borrell took office from the Italian politician Federica Mogherini.

He further said, "Borrell is a competent replacement for Mogherini. He will be after reviving the European Union's might and independency of its foreign policy."

Qashqavi went on to say that Borrell favors a global and European view.

Borrell, last month, criticized the U.S. unilateral move to quit the JCPOA and stressed that his country would not accept threats against Iran.

He also emphasized Tehran's commitment to its obligations under the nuclear pact.

On Wednesday, Mahmoud Vaezi, the presidential chief of staff, confirmed that Iran will take the fourth step to reduce commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, if the remaining parties to the agreement fail to honor their obligations by the scheduled deadline.

The remaining parties to the JCPOA are the E3 – Britain, Germany and France – the European Union, Russia and China.

"A committee is studying this issue. We will definitely take the fourth step if we do not achieve what we are seeing in the talks by the end of the two-month deadline," he told reporters.

U.S. President Donald Trump quit the multilateral deal in May 2018 and imposed the toughest ever sanctions on Iran.

On May 8, exactly one year after the U.S. abandoned the deal, Tehran began to partially reduce its commitments to the agreement at bi-monthly intervals.

Washington, Riyadh behind Iraq's current unrest: general



POLITICAL **TEHRAN** — Major General Mohammad Ali Jafari, former chief of the IRGC, says the United States and Saudi Arabia are the culprits behind Iraq's current riots.

"Without a doubt, Iraq's current problems is due to the extent of Americans' presence and the country's embassy in Iraq," Jafari said on Saturday, hailing the U.S. embassy takeover by Iranian students forty years ago.

"The Iraqi nation should know that as long as they do not rid themselves of the hands of Americans, they will continue to hatch plots and provoke the deceived or dissatisfied elements," he added, Mehr reported.

General Jafari also pointed out that the U.S. will not leave places wherein it has interests. "It will try its best to install elements that secure its interests," he stated. At the start of October, street protests erupted in several Iraqi cities over unemployment and a lack of basic services.

The protests resumed on October 25 after a pause of about two weeks. The

gatherings have turned violent at some points over the past days, with conflicting unofficial reports of fatalities.

Iraqi President Barham Salih said on Thursday the country's embattled Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi is ready to step down if a replacement is found, emphasizing that a snap parliamentary election will be held once a new electoral law is passed.

More than 200 have been killed and thousands of others wounded since the protests erupted, with security forces using tear gas and rubber bullets against those taking to the streets.

In a statement on Friday, Iraq's top Shia cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani urged the end of bloodshed in the Arab country, warning of a civil war and chaos.

"The innocent blood shed during the past few weeks is very valuable to us, and measures must be taken to prevent further bloodshed," the top cleric said.

"The country must be kept from slipping toward the edge of the precipice of a civil war, chaos, and destruction," Ayatollah Sistani urged.

Advisor: Referendum only solution to Palestinian crisis



TEHRAN (FNA) — Hossein Amir Abdollahian, a senior advisor to the parliament speaker, said a referendum among the indigenous population of Palestine, inclusive of decedents of Jews, Muslims and Christians inhabiting in the Arab country before 1948, is the only democratic solution to the Palestinian issue.

In a tweet on Friday, Amir Abdollahian said Palestine's democratic solution is a "referendum among genuine Christians, Muslims and Jews."

His tweet also contained praise of a theater performance of the "Seven Jewish Children", which he had just watched.

"With a novel view, the performance depicts crimes in Palestine from perspective of Jewish generations. A young and inspiring group is performing," the advisor said in praise of the performance, which is directed by Mostafa Esfandiari and currently on stage in Tehran.

The performance is based on "Seven Jewish Children: A Play for Gaza", a six-page, 10-minute play by British playwright Caryl Churchill, written in response to the

2008-2009 Israel military strike on Gaza. The conflict resulted in between 1,166 and 1,417 Palestinian death, according to reports.

In July, Secretary General of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah lauded Iran's political and democratic plan for a referendum among all historic residents of Palestine, inclusive of Muslims, Christians and Jews, as realistic and logical.

"The occupying Zionists, however, are the most irrational creatures on the earth, and do not understand anything other than the discourse of resistance," the Hezbollah chief noted.

He further termed Trump's controversial proposal for "peace" between the Israeli regime and Palestinians, dubbed "the deal of the century," as hollow, stating that the Zionists are the root cause of corruption and insecurity in the region.

Nasrallah also highlighted that Hezbollah bears no grudge against Jews, warning members of the religious community not to play in the hands of Zionists' land grab policies.

"Some 2,000 Iranian reporters will also cover the event across the country," Lotfi said.

He went on to say that people's participation in the annual rallies has increased year on year and that recent U.S. withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal and subsequent imposition of sanctions have even further encouraged people to voice their opposition to U.S. hostile policies.

"America's animosity with Iran is fundamental and strategic, not tactical; so it is not important for them who is ruling Iran, rather, they are against anti-Arrogance Islam and faithful people," he added.

"Islamic Resistance and fighting Arrogance are initiators of U.S.'s decline and collapse," Lotfi said.

November 4 is also known as the Student Day and the National Day of the Fight against Global Arrogance.

Sanctions on construction sector shows Washington's diplomatic weakness and failure, Iran says

1 → "Rather than imposing repetitive sanctions and [resorting to] alarmism, which will definitely fail to help them achieve their objectives, the U.S. had better stop getting further bogged down in its self-made illusions and begin to make good on its commitments under the JCPOA again," the spokesman added.

Writing on his Twitter page on Friday, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also called on the Trump administration that instead of digging itself "deeper" by such actions it is better to "abandon failed policies and return to the JCPOA."

Such moves show the "maximum failure of maximum pressure", Zarif remarked.

The United States said on Thursday it had imposed sanctions on the Iranian construction sector and trade in four materials used in its military or nuclear programs, Reuters reported.

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration last year pulled out of the 2015 nuclear deal in which Iran had agreed to limit its nuclear program in return for the lifting of sanctions.

The administration has since restored and tightened U.S. sanctions on Iran while at the same time calling for talks to address broader issues.

The U.S. State Department said Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had determined Iran's construction sector was controlled directly or indirectly by the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), which Washington has named a foreign terrorist organization.

As a result, the sale of raw and semi-finished metals, graphite, coal, and software for integrating industrial purposes will be sanctionable if the materials are to be used in Iran's construction sector, the department said in a fact sheet.

In a second determination, Pompeo identified four "strategic materials" as being used in connection with nuclear, military, or ballistic missile programs, making trade in them subject to sanctions.

The fact sheet identified the materials as: "stainless steel 304L tubes; MN40 manganese brazing foil; MN70 manganese brazing foil; and stainless steel CrNi60WTi ESR + VAR (chromium, nickel, 60 percent tungsten, titanium, electro-slag remelting, vacuum arc remelting)."



"Rather than imposing repetitive sanctions and [resorting to] alarmism, which will definitely fail to help them achieve their objectives, the U.S. had better stop getting further bogged down in its self-made illusions and begin to make good on its commitments under the JCPOA again," the Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi suggested.

Some 150 foreign reporters to cover "Aban 13 rallies" across Iran

TEHRAN (MNA) — the deputy head of Islamic Development Coordinating Council said on Saturday that some 150 foreign reporters and photographers along with 2,000 Iranian ones will cover this year's "Aban 13th rallies" nationwide.

"Some 150 foreign photographers and reporters have announced readiness to cover the event," Nosratollah Lotfi, said in a press conference in Tehran held for announcing programs of this year's "Aban 13th rallies" which falls on Nov. 4.

Each year, Iranians rally outside the former US embassy building, also known as the "Den of Espionage," to mark the anniversary of US embassy takeover and express their opposition to the arrogant policies and attitudes of the enemies, particularly the U.S. Similar rallies are being held in other cities and towns across the country, as well.



STOCK MARKET	
TEDPIX	308730.2
IFX	3916.65
Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir	

CURRENCIES	
USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,896 rials
GBP	54,330 rials
AED	11,437 rials
Source: cbi.ir	

COMMODITIES	
Brent	\$61.69/b
WTI	\$56.20/b
OPEC Basket	\$61.24/b
Gold	\$1,516.00/oz
Silver	\$818.20/oz
Platinum	\$953.85/oz
Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com	

TEDPIX falls 931 points in a day

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — TEDPIX, the main index of Tehran Stock Exchange (TSE), fell 931 points to 308,730 on Saturday, IRNA reported.



The report said that 3.066 billion securities worth 14.423 trillion rials (about \$343.4 million) were traded at TSE on Saturday. Also as reported, IFX, the main index of Iran’s over-the-counter (OTC) market, known as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), dropped 11 points to 3,916 on Saturday.

Brazil to stick with monetary easing, central bank says

Brazil’s Central Bank signaled it will stick with the current pace of monetary easing at its next meeting after lowering the key rate by a half point for the third straight time and forecasting inflation below target through 2021.

As per gulf-times.com, the bank’s board, led by its President Roberto Campos Neto, on Wednesday lowered the Selic rate to 5%, as expected by all 48 economists in a Bloomberg survey. In a statement published with the decision, policy makers wrote that measures of consumer prices remain at “comfortable levels” even as borrowing costs fall to all-time lows.

The central bank’s monetary policy committee “deems that the consolidation of the benign scenario for prospective inflation should permit an additional adjustment of the same magnitude,” board members wrote. They also recommended “caution when considering possible new changes in the degree of stimulus.”

Policy makers are boosting stimulus at a time when Latin America’s largest economy is weathering a period of weak growth and subdued price pressures.

Annual inflation dove below the 2.75% floor of the official target range earlier this month, and investors have also lowered estimates for cost of living increases next year. Meanwhile, an improved global outlook and stronger real further facilitate monetary easing.

The “central bank makes it clear it will cut again in December,” said Simone Pasianotto, chief economist at Reag Investimentos. “They included the reference to ‘caution’ to signal the doors are open in subsequent decisions, when they could either deepen the cycle or stop.”

Since the central bank’s previous policy meeting in September, Brazil’s real has gained roughly 3%, the second best performance among 24 emerging market currencies tracked by Bloomberg. It has been boosted by advances in U.S.-China trade talks and also by growing optimism over the domestic economy.

■ **A new set of proposals**

Last week, Brazil’s Senate gave the final go-ahead to a pension reform that will save government coffers some 800b reais (\$200b) in a decade. Economy Minister Paulo Guedes is expected to introduce a new set of proposals to boost employment and help tame public servant costs.

To be sure, the central bank also acknowledged risks associated with its easing cycle. For the first time, policy makers said the amount of stimulus represents an upside risk for inflation.

The “overall tone of the statement is undeniably dovish, but perhaps fearing that markets could overdo in their optimism, the central bank opted to caution that the effects of the ongoing easing are yet to be seen.

Taken together, we believe this indicates the central bank may be considering a pause after bringing the Selic to 4.5% at the next meeting,” says Adriana Dupita, Latin America Economist at Bloomberg Economics.

The central bank board reiterated that Brazil’s economic recovery will occur at a gradual pace.

Analysts surveyed by the monetary authority expect GDP growth of 0.9% this year and 2% in 2020, down from calls of 2.6% and 2.5%, respectively, in January. The “fundamentals show there’s room to cut,” said Pasianotto. “Inflation is under control and the economic recovery is still very slow. You need to stimulate consumption.”

Iran, Syria ink MOU on electricity co-op

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran and Syria signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Saturday for expansion of cooperation in electricity sector, IRNA reported.

The MOU was signed by Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian and Syrian Minister of Electricity Mohammad Zuheir Kharboutli in Tehran.

Speaking on the sidelines of the signing ceremony, Ardakanian said “this agreement is going to establish a general framework for the two countries’ electricity cooperation.”

Mentioning the efforts for transferring Iran’s knowledge and experience in electricity sector to Syria, Ardakanian said Iran-Syria cooperation is going to be in a variety of areas for reconstruction and development of the Syrian electricity industry.

“That includes construction of power plants, transmission lines, reduction of losses in the Syrian electricity grid, and the possibility of connecting the two countries’ power grids through Iraq,” he added.

The Syrian minister for his part referred to Iran’s support for his country, saying, “Iran will be with us in the reconstruction of Syria as well.”

“Joint committees will be held every two months to follow up and monitor the imple-



Iranian Energy Minister Reza Ardakanian (L) and Syrian Minister of Electricity Mohammad Zuheir Kharboutli during the signing ceremony of an electricity co-op MOU between the two countries in Tehran on Saturday

mentation of the joint projects,” Kharboutli added.

Zuheir Kharboutli arrived in Tehran on top of a delegation this week to visit the coun-

try’s international electricity exhibition and to pursue previous discussions made with Iranian officials on cooperation in Syria’s electricity sector.

Bank loans to economic sectors up 26% in H1

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iranian banking system has offered 3.821 quadrillion rials (about \$90.97 billion) to domestic economic sectors in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-Spentence 22), registering a 26-percent rise from the previous year’s same period, IRNA reported.

According to the data provided by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), working capital loans paid to different economic sectors was above 2.11 quadrillion rials (about \$50.26 billion) accounting for 55.3 percent of the total provided facilities in the said period.

As reported, the total working capital loans provided in the mentioned time span, increased by 250 trillion



rials (about \$5.95 billion) or 13.5 percent compared to the figure for the past year’s six-month period.

During the said period, the country’s mining and industry sectors received 862 trillion rials (nearly \$20.5 billion) in the form of working capital loans, accounting for 40.8 percent of the total such facilities.

Back in April, CBI reported that during the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019) the country’s banking system offered 7.737 quadrillion rials (about \$184.2 billion) facilities to domestic economic sectors to register a 26-percent rise from its previous year.

Working capital loans paid to different economic sectors was above 4.319 quadrillion rials (about \$102.8 billion) accounting for 55.8 percent of the total provided facilities in the said period, registering a 14-percent increase from the previous year.

Trade between Iran, EU at nearly €3.5b in 8 months

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The trade between Iran and European Union countries during the first eight months of 2019 stood at €3.471 billion, Tasnim news agency reported.

According to the latest data provided by the statistical office of the European Union, Eurostat, the trade between Iran and the EU nations has decreased by 75 percent compared to last year’s same period in which the figure stood at €14.292 billion.

As reported, EU’s exports to Iran plunged

nearly 50 percent in the mentioned period compared to the figure for last year’s same time span.

EU countries exported €2.994 billion of goods to Iran in the said time, while the figure stood at €6.198 billion in the last year’s first eight months.

EU’s imports from Iran in the mentioned eight-month period also fell by 94 percent compared to the same period in the previous year, falling to €477 million. The EU imported €8.094 billion worth of goods from Iran in

the first eight months of last year.

The significant drop in EU trade with Iran in 2019, following the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions on Iran, shows that the EU has failed to defend Iran’s interests in the context of the nuclear deal despite its promises.

According to the European Union’s statistics agency, the trade between Iran and EU stood at €2.56 billion during the first half of 2019.

The figure shows 76 percent decrease from €10.67 billion in the first half of 2018.

In May 2018, U.S. President Donald Trump formally pulled the United States out of the nuclear deal that was struck between Iran and world powers in July 2015.

Following Trump’s decision, in January 2019, France, Germany and Britain (known as the E3) introduced an Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) which was meant to facilitate legitimate trade between European economic operators and Iran in order to convince Iran to stay in the 2015 nuclear deal.

Commodities worth \$404m traded at IME in a week

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — During weekdays ending up to October 31, while 440,084 tons of commodities worth over \$404 million were traded at Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME), the trading volume and value experienced a growth of 58 percent and 18 percent, respectively.

According to the report from IME International Affairs and Public Relations Department, last week, on the domestic and export metal and mineral trading floor of IME, 57,135 tons of various products worth close to \$95 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 52,708 tons of steel, 2,295 tons of copper, 2,000 tons of aluminum, 120 tons of molybdenum concentrates, 12 tons of precious metal concentrates as well as 22 kg of gold bullion were traded by customers.

The report declares that on domestic and export oil and petrochemical trading floors of IME, 382,715 tons of different commodities with the total value of \$327 million were traded.

On this trading floor, 86,632 tons of bitumen, 206,300 tons of VB feed stock, 50,555 tons of polymer products, 13,500 tons of lube cut oil, 20,402 tons of chemical products, 666 tons of insulation, 3,013 tons of argon as well as 4,625 tons of sulfur were traded.

Furthermore, 324 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 in mid-October, 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.”

Asia’s factory pain deepens on trade war, global slowdown

Asia’s export powerhouses saw factory activity shrink further in October, as cooling global demand and trade tensions keep policymakers busy ramping up support for their fragile economies to help dodge recession.

As stated by hellenicshippingnews.com, a private sector purchasing managers’ index (PMI) showed a surprising pick-up in China’s factory activity on Friday, but this was in contrast to an official factory gauge the day before which pointed to a further deterioration.

Manufacturing activity in North Asia contracted with Japan’s sinking to a more than three-year low in October on shrinking new orders and output; activity in South Korea and Taiwan also shrank as companies bore the brunt of slumping demand across the globe.

The Caixin survey showed China’s factory activity expanded at the fastest pace in well over two years in October as new export orders rose and plants ramped up production. But the official survey suggested a weak start to the fourth quarter for big

state firms.

Overall, the soft batch of leading indicators highlights the broadening pain the bitter Sino-U.S. trade war is inflicting on business sentiment, which forced the International Monetary Fund to slash its economic growth forecast for Asia.

The “slump in exports remains the true Achilles’ heel...with headwinds coming from all directions,” said Joe Hayes, economist at IHS Markit, on South Korea’s PMI.

“As well as U.S.-Sino trade frictions, tensions with Japan and a stagnating European economy have significantly dented order book volumes at South Korean manufacturers,” he said.

Increased uncertainty from the trade war and Britain’s divorce from the European Union have prodded central banks to top up monetary support to fend off external headwinds.

The U.S. Federal Reserve slashed interest rates on Wednesday for the third time this year. South Korea’s central bank also cut rates in October and kept the door open for further easing to support a flagging

economy.

The Bank of Japan kept policy steady on Thursday but gave the strongest signal to date that it may cut rates in the near future, shrugging off concerns it has run out of tools to spur growth after years of heavy money printing.

“It’s true the two countries appear to be making some progress towards a solution, and that markets are taking this positively,” BOJ Governor Haruhiko Kuroda told a news conference on Thursday. “But I wouldn’t say risks have deteriorated.”

Fresh concerns over whether Washington and Beijing can iron out their difference resurfaced on Friday after Bloomberg reported that Chinese officials have doubts about reaching a comprehensive long-term solution to the trade war.

The nearly 16-months long trade war is placing increasing strain on the global economy and may see policymakers resort to a more aggressive mix of fiscal and monetary measures in the coming months.

Factory activity contracted in Malaysia and Indonesia, which saw PMIs hitting a



four-year low. Activity was flat in Vietnam.

Japan’s exports contracted for a 10th straight month in September, casting doubt on whether the world’s third-largest economy can sustain an expansion as households take a hit from a sales tax hike that went into effect in October.

South Korea, the world’s sixth-largest exporter, also saw economic growth slow more than expected in the third quarter due to a slump in domestic spending and global trade headwinds.

Armenia eyes expansion of electricity co-op with Iran

E N E R G Y
d e s k **TEHRAN** — Armenian minister of territorial administration and infrastructure said Iran could act as an electricity hub in the region to connect Armenia to other nations like Iraq, ILNA reported on Saturday.

Suren Papikyan made the remarks during a visit to the 19th Iran International Electricity Exhibition (IEE 2019) in Tehran.

“Just as Armenia is a gateway for Iran’s relations with Georgia and the Eurasian Union countries, naturally, Iran could also be a gateway for Armenia’s greater connection with Iraq and other countries

in the region,” Papiyan said.

Referring to the modern equipment and achievements presented by Iranian companies in the mentioned international event, he said “During the visit to the exhibition, we established very good connections with Iranian companies active in the industry, so after returning to Armenia this communication will continue in practical form.”

Noting that Armenian companies welcome participating in the 20th Iran International Electricity Exhibition, he added, “Armenia as a major importer of



energy carriers, is always looking for new ways to increase cooperation with other countries and to find new energy sources. We are looking forward to sharing experiences between the two countries by participating in this international event.”

Iran and Armenia have been cooperating for years in gas and electricity swap, and two-way economic and political ties have grown in tandem with an increase in trade.

NIOPDC to offer 20,000 tons of kerosene at IRENEX on Monday

E N E R G Y
d e s k **TEHRAN** — National Iranian Oil Products Distribution Company (NIOPDC) is going to offer 20,000 tons of kerosene at the international ring of Iran Energy Exchange (IRENEX) on Monday, ISNA reported.

As reported, the offering will be in the form of two separate 10,000-ton cargoes at the base prices of \$505 and \$510 per ton, respectively.

The first cargo is going to be offered at 12 a.m. local time, while the second cargo will be offered at 1 p.m.

As decided at IRENEX, the applicants have to initially pay 10 percent of the value of the contract in rials or other foreign currencies and in case their bidding is accepted they must pay the rest to receive the purchased cargo.

The buyer company will also be required to pay for loading and unloading costs at the source of delivery.



Since the U.S.’s withdrew from Iran’s nuclear pact in May 2018, vowing to drive Iran’s oil exports down to zero, the Islamic Republic has been taking various measures to counter U.S. actions and to lessen its economy’s reliance on oil.

In this regard, Iranian think-tanks and energy experts have been repeatedly stating that the country should increase its refining capacity in order to make up for the reductions in the crude oil sales by exporting oil products.

Therefore, in the past few months, National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and its subsidiaries have been constantly offering various oil products at IRENEX.

NIOC sold 450,000 tons of oil products worth \$160.656 million at IRENEX international ring during the week ended on September 20.

Understanding users is key to the evolution of the world’s energy systems

By Sambit Mohanty

The choices made by individuals are having a significant effect on the evolution of the global energy system. Thanks to distributed renewables, users are no longer only consuming energy – they are also producing it. Shifts in consumer behavior, such as a move toward electric vehicles, are also creating stresses and opportunities for power systems. Yet in addition to distributed renewables and electrification, one of the most significant, cross-cutting and user-centered trends transforming today’s global energy system is digitalization.

By joining together all components of the energy system via high-speed digital communications networks, digitalization provides new opportunities to accelerate the growth of low-carbon and energy efficient energy systems. For example, as the share of variable renewable generation increases, homes and businesses with electric cars and heating and cooling systems can offer flexibility services to ensure the security of our power supply. By facilitating higher levels of automation, digitalization also promises efficiency gains across the energy system: from individual appliances to buildings and power plants.

For consumers, digitalization is changing expectations of service and value. People no longer need only to be passive energy consumers; digital technologies are already supporting people to more actively participate in energy markets, and will soon allow users to produce, consume, store and trade an even wider range of energy services.

The IEA is at the forefront of research on each of these trends, tracking technology change and supporting its member governments understand how to leverage the digital revolution for greater energy efficiency, and

how infrastructure, markets and institutions can adapt to the evolving challenges of electricity security in the 21st century, amongst other topics.

One of the key takeaways from this research is that energy users are now more central to the energy system than ever before, with consumer purchasing decisions and behavior determining the pace of technological change, whether digitalization becomes a force for greater efficiency or just more energy use, and how much distributed storage and flexible load resources become available to balance variable renewables.

■ **Future energy transitions**

Yet paradoxically, a major unknown factor in future energy transitions is the human element. For example, research has consistently revealed mismatches between how technology providers, techno-economic models, and policy makers expect technologies to be adopted and used, and reality.

These discrepancies play out in contrasts between the expected and actual impacts of policy measures and observed uptake of technologies – through to the ‘performance gap’ between designed and in-use efficiency of vehicles and buildings.

A failure to properly understand the role of energy users in the energy transition is worrying in a world where governments have set ambitious climate goals that depend on a rapid increase in demand-side energy efficiency, alongside an acceleration in the growth of intermittent renewable generation. If the world is to succeed in this mission, it is imperative that policy makers and technology providers properly understand how and why people adopt and use new energy technologies.

With this in mind, 16 members of the IEA family and three sponsors launched a new collaboration under the IEA’s Technology



Collaboration Programme (TCP) in October 2019: User-Centered Energy Systems, or UsersTCP. This initiative brings together the world’s leading socio-technical researchers and policy makers to provide the evidence base needed to make better energy policy decisions that place energy users at the heart of the policy process.

■ **Converting energy into services**

UsersTCP was created with the recognition that people use technologies to convert energy into the services they want. To do this, technologies must be useable, and their services must satisfy user needs. This ‘socio-technical’ approach is becoming more and more central to policy making and lies at the heart of the work of the collaboration.

Announced at the All-Energy Australia Conference in Melbourne, UsersTCP has adopted a systems perspective in which people, such as technology designers, policy makers, intermediaries and end users, are as integral

as hardware and software to delivering an energy system that meets our wider social, environmental and economic goals.

As such, the work program focuses on business models, peer-to-peer energy trading, hard-to-reach energy users and the social license to automate, with new work to begin shortly on the application of behavioral insights in energy policy making, in collaboration with the IEA’s Energy Efficiency Division.

To help disseminate the outputs of the UsersTCP and connected work, the User-Centered Energy Systems Academy has begun holding monthly webinars on key topics. Building on the success of the DSM University, the first webinar looked at on the grid integration of electric vehicles.

The IEA will be working closely with this new research collaboration, and looks forward to using the results of its research to inform its modelling capacity and policy guidance.

(Source: moderndiplomacy.eu)

Russia’s Sakhalin-2 LNG plant’s expansion put on hold: sources

By Vladimir Soldatkin, Maria Grabar

Plans for the expansion of Russia’s Sakhalin-2 liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant have been put on hold, according to three sources involved in the project, a potential setback to Russia’s ambition to lift its global LNG market share.

As per Reuters.com, the main reasons for the hold-up are the lack of gas resources and international sanctions, the sources said, but plans of Russian gas giant Gazprom to boost its pipeline gas supplies to China, have also had an impact.

Equity holders in the Sakhalin Energy consortium include Gazprom which controls the project with a majority share, as well as oil major Royal Dutch Shell, Japan’s Mitsui and Mitsubishi Corp.

Russia plans to raise its global LNG market share from less than 10% now to 20% by 2035, mainly thanks to cranking up of output by non-state producer Novatek and its partners in the Arctic.

Gazprom, Russia’s sole exporter of natural gas via pipelines, has been slower in its LNG plans, focusing on pumping the fuel via pipes instead.

Sakhalin-2, off the country’s eastern shores, is Russia’s first LNG producing plant with a capacity of over 10 million tons per year. Its two production units, or trains, were launched in 2009 in strategic proximity to Japan, the world’s largest consumer of the sea-borne LNG.

The consortium, Sakhalin Energy, has plans to expand and build a third train with a capacity of 5 million tons per year. Gazprom had said the expansion could happen in 2021.



“There have been no movements on the third line,” a source from within the consortium said.

Shareholders have considered several options for the expansion: buying gas from the neighboring Sakhalin-1 project led by ExxonMobil, developing new resources or a combination.

Yet, Sakhalin-1, where the state oil company Rosneft is also a shareholder, is aiming for its own LNG plant.

The talks about usage of Sakhalin-1 gas for the Sakhalin-2 LNG plant’s expansion have dragged on for years.

■ **Gazprom to use resources**

Gazprom had initially planned to use resources from the

Yuzhno-Kirinskoye field - yet to be commercially drilled and developed - for the Sakhalin-2 expansion.

Gazprom and Sakhalin Energy have not responded to requests for comment. Shell in Russia said the company remains committed to the expansion.

The “project is very robust from the technical and commercial point of view. However we need to confirm the feed gas supply source,” it said in emailed comments.

“Only after such a source is determined, it will be possible to progress the project to FID and further construction.”

In 2015, the United States restricted exports, re-exports and transfers of technology and equipment to the Yuzhno-Kirinskoye field, making it harder to develop, in response to Russia’s annexation of Crimea from Ukraine a year earlier.

Gazprom has discovered another field, Yuzhno-Lunskoye, but the resources there are not enough for a third train at Sakhalin-2, according to a company source.

Next month, Gazprom plans to start landmark gas supplies to China via the Power of Siberia pipeline through which flows are expected to gradually rise to 38 billion cubic meters (bcm) per year during the next five years.

Other ways of pipeline gas delivery to China have been under discussion and one of the new possible routes of supplies is the existing Sakhalin - Khabarovsk - Vladivostok pipeline.

Russia wants to build a spur from the pipeline to China to the tune of 10 bcm per year but no deal has been clinched with China on that route yet.

Can India realize its ambitious renewable energy targets?

Speaking at the recently concluded UN Climate Action Summit in New York last month, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a clarion call for a “global people’s movement” to bring about a behavioral change to deal with climate change as he made a path-breaking pledge to more than double India’s non-fossil fuel power generation capacity, to 450 gigawatts (GW).

As stated by dw.com, India is the world’s third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, behind China and the United States. To curb emissions, Indian officials say they want to increase the share of renewables in the nation’s energy mix.

Renewables currently account for 22% of India’s total installed capacity of about 357 GW. And the Indian government wants to have 175 GW of renewable-based installed power capacity by 2022, and raise it further to 500 GW, or 40% of total capacity, by 2030.



“This is one of the most ambitious renewable energy targets in the world, far more than the targets set by developed countries. Overall, these targets are highly desirable, but will need major reforms in the transmission and distribution sectors and stable policies to achieve,” energy and climate change expert Chandra Bhushan told DW.

India said in July it needs \$330 billion (€295 billion) in investments over the next decade to power its renewable energy dream.

■ Market for renewable energy

The investment estimate reflects the magnitude of financial challenges facing one of the world’s most important growth markets for renewable energy, with government data indicating a growth slowdown in private and capital investments in the year ended March 2019.

Experts, however, say it will be hard for India to meet the ambitious targets, pointing out the slowdown in wind power and the dip in solar investments in recent years.

“Meeting 450 GW target may lead to significant grid stability issues in the absence of adequate investment in storage and in significantly upgrading the grid,” said Bhushan.

This view is shared by Sunjoy Joshi, chairman of the New Delhi-based Observer Research Foundation and an expert on renewable energy. He said that grids needed to be built up to scale, not just for generation, but also for storage and absorption.

“All this needs to be balanced out. We can be confident of the clean energy targets as long as the required spadework is done,” said Joshi.

In a report published last month, international rating agency Crisil cast doubts over the environment policy and the government’s ability to meet its clean energy targets.

It pointed out that India will miss its ambitious goals, falling short of the 2022 target of 175 GW by at least 42%.

But India’s Ministry of New and Renewable Energy dismissed the criticism, maintaining that the targets will not only be met, but also exceeded.

India might surpass the 175 GW target and achieve 225 GW of capacity by 2022, Power Minister RK Singh said last year, but did not provide an official figure at the time.

While many realize that tackling climate change is impossible without reducing greenhouse gas emissions and the reliance on fossil fuels, they say the transition to renewables is not going to be easy.

India’s efforts to boost economic growth and development by rapidly industrializing and transforming itself into a manufacturing hub are set to drastically increase the demand for energy in a country that is home to about a sixth of the world’s population.

People in India today also use much less energy per capita than Europeans, Americans and also Chinese. Increasing prosperity may offer these people the chance to get their households connected to the grid and lay their hands on things like refrigerators and washing machines – gadgets people in developed countries take for granted. This, in turn, will increase demand for and consumption of electricity.

But India still relies heavily on coal for its power, accounting for around 60% of its total electricity generation, and the fossil fuel remains central to its power plans.

■ Use of the fossil fuel

The South Asian country, which boasts the fifth-largest coal reserves in the world, wants to make use of the cheap and abundant fossil fuel. In 2018-19, the country’s coal use rose 9.1% to nearly a billion tons.

Thermal power plants, however, account for 80% of all industrial emissions of particulate matter, sulfur and nitrous oxides in India.

Environmentalists worry that India’s rising use of coal will hamper the global fight against climate change, despite the country’s commitment to renewable energy.

The “shift to renewable energy is not an easy transition,” Sreedhar Ramamurthi of Environics Trust, a non-profit community development outfit, told DW. “While making targets of increasing renewable energy, the government must look into the concern that it does not harm the environment,” he said.

For years, the Indian government has pointed to the country’s lower per-capita emissions and stressed that it bears little responsibility for the enormous rise in GHG emissions since the industrial revolution.

New Delhi has also been a vocal proponent of “climate justice” – the notion that historical responsibilities as well as present-day capabilities matter greatly in shaping the climate governance regime.

But on World Environment Day this year, Modi tweeted appealing to people to “live in harmony with nature.”

“We have been brought up in a tradition, where nature is equal to God. Where sanctity of nature is meaningful and where nature’s protection has been put at par with humans,” Modi said.

Experts say India’s progress in expanding its renewable energy generation capacity will go a long way in determining how much the country’s living in harmony with nature.

By Hu Weijia

GLOBALTIMES — China, the world’s biggest oil importer, should follow the lead of Russia and switch to the euro from the US dollar for its oil and natural gas contracts. Rosneft, Russia’s top crude oil producer, has reportedly set the euro as the default currency for its oil product sales. Rosneft’s move can be seen as a strong signal that the US dollar is losing its dominant role.

About 90 percent of global oil-product trade reportedly involves the US dollar, but the situation is gradually changing, partly due to US economic policies. According to the Russia Today news channel, the US has not ruled out imposing sanctions on Rosneft because of its trade with Venezuela. The switch from the dollar to the euro is a cost the US must pay as Rosneft shields its transactions from potential fresh US sanctions. We support the efforts of Russia to break the dollar’s dominance as the principal currency for the world’s oil-product trade. Measures should also be taken by Chinese enterprises to promote the use of the euro and other major currencies, notably the yuan, in oil trading settlements.

Global business groups have generally expressed anxiety about unilateral actions taken by the US against Iran, which holds large proven crude oil reserves. Ending dollar dominance in energy trading is a good choice to oppose unilateral actions by the US. More importantly, US President Donald Trump is a big fan of a weaker US dollar, repeatedly calling on the Fed to cut interest rates.

A rapid depreciation will probably make the US dollar completely lose its dominant role. At this critical moment, the increased use of the euro in oil trade tends to eclipse the US dollar. China and Russia are important players in the global energy market. China surpassed the US in annual gross crude oil imports in 2017, said the US Energy Information Administration. Russia is one of the world’s largest oil and natural gas producers, and China’s largest crude oil supplier.

If China and Russia join hands to switch to other currencies for their oil and gas contracts, their combined share of the market will be large enough to break the dominance of the US dollar in global oil trade. A diversified world currency system cannot be built overnight. But it is undeniable that US financial hegemony is breaking down. At the beginning of the year, some European countries announced a new transaction channel called INSTEX to facilitate legitimate trade with Iran. Hopefully Rosneft’s moves can set an example so European nations and other countries in the world can switch away from dollar for their oil contracts.

■ **Media may fall into pit it digs for China**
More and more information indicates that there are likely to be many Vietnamese among the 39 stowaways who died in the container in Grays, Essex. According to the latest media reports, more than 100 migrants sneaked into the United Kingdom in three container trucks, among which only one had been found and the whereabouts of the other two are still unknown.

When the tragedy was first exposed, the victims were regarded as Chinese nationals due to lack of information, which was understandable as there was once a wave of smuggling to Europe from some places along the southeastern coast of China. The phenomenon of human trafficking in those areas, however, gradually subsided with decades of rapid development in China, and this problem has been progressively resolved to a large extent. This is also a fact.

It is unacceptable that the UK and other Western media pointed all the criticism at China after the tragedy, but they did not question or blame the UK or Europe, where the incident happened. In a briefing of China’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Friday, CNN even used this serious humanitarian disaster to ridicule the achievements summarized during the recent ceremony marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China. This was an unbelievable act that links specific events with obsessive values instead of analytical thinking. The Western media also asserted that criminal gangs from East China traffic people to the UK, intending to deepen the impression of

East Asia at a glance

The bell to end the oil dollar hegemony is ringing



China being responsible for this tragedy.

However, regardless of where the organized crime gangs responsible for people trafficking came from, the main locations where they committed crimes were in Europe. Every link in the chain of international human smuggling needs to be smashed, but the UK and other European countries involved should take the major responsibility for the crackdown. Needless to say the UK arrested five suspects, all British, in recent days.

It can be said that the Western media is really keen to turn such an incident into gimmicks to attack and smear China. We do not know whether the CNN reporter who asked the question or the Western journalists who have written articles jeering at China’s achievements in construction are feeling upset over their rash behavior and assumptions. They might not care as they have done too many similar things that will not be investigated by their institutions and be soon forgotten by their audiences.

Nonetheless, the tragic death of 39 people shocked Chinese society. To further manage illegal immigration, China should specifically narrow the welfare gap between domestic and Western societies to steadily eradicate human smuggling in China. This is the belief China must establish.

Some Chinese public intellectuals voiced similar concerns as Western media outlets over the tragedy. They are living in China, have witnessed and benefited from the remarkable changes of the country. However, they stand with the West in slandering China due to their personal dissatisfaction over the country in some aspects. Such wrong actions in turn misled foreign journalists in China. Western media persons should pay high attention to the imbalance of development between the West and other countries and encourage the reduction of such unevenness rather than help solidify the development gap and hand the responsibility for 39 lives over to the developing countries.

■ **China-South Pacific ties maintain ‘sense of justice,’ friendship**

The third China-Pacific Island Countries Economic Development and Cooperation Forum was held on October 21 in Apia, the capital city of

Samoa. The two sides explored more cooperation opportunities in a variety of fields including infrastructure, trade, environmental protection, agriculture and tourism.

Unsurprisingly, some Western media and observers attempted to hype up “debt-trap diplomacy”. Lowy Institute, an independent think tank based in Sydney, issued a report entitled “Ocean of debt? Belt and Road and debt diplomacy in the Pacific” on the same day the forum was held, saying “important questions about the risk of debt problems in less-developed countries” has been raised because of their cooperation with China, adding “the risks are especially acute for the small and fragile economies of the Pacific.” This reflects Australia’s vigilance against China as well as its consistent condescending arrogant attitude towards Pacific island countries.

In November 2018, Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Papua New Guinea (PNG), met with Pacific island leaders and promoted bilateral relations with PNG to a new comprehensive strategic partnership featuring mutual respect and common development. Under the guidance, ties between China and Pacific island countries have reached substantial progress in 2019.

On April 1, the 2019 Year of Tourism for China and Pacific Island Countries was launched in Apia. In September, the Solomon Islands and Kiribati ended their “diplomatic” relations with Taiwan and respectively established and restored ties with the Chinese mainland. China and Pacific island countries have maintained close communication and cooperation on issues such as climate change and sustainable development. It is no exaggeration to say that 2019 is the year of China-South Pacific ties in terms of China’s diplomacy. Pacific island countries are small but smart. They are fully capable of exploring and finding a development path that suits them. The cooperative concept of mutual respect and common development is in line with their wish when it comes to foreign relations.

Over the past decade, China has become the largest export destination for many of the Pacific island countries given their economic complementarities. Take the Solomon Islands. “According to the World Bank, in 2017, the Solomon Islands exported \$554.8 million worth

of commodities, or two-thirds of its total exports, to China,” reported The Diplomat on October 18. The establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries will undoubtedly further boost their bilateral trade and the Chinese market is apparently attractive to island countries, which are seeking independent development.

Under the framework of South-South cooperation and the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has provided development assistance within its power to the islands as well as experiences including “to get rich, build roads first.” In addition of infrastructural collaboration, China has also strengthened cooperation with the island countries in agricultural technologies, introducing the techniques of planting fungus, bamboo and other vegetables. The China scholarship program, Confucius Institutes and medical services in the region have further improved people-to-people connections between China and these Pacific island countries.

Improving friendly ties with China is the choice of people from Pacific island countries. China has made its efforts to win those countries’ respect. For instance, on issues of climate change and sustainable development, China has taken effective actions, which echo the concerns of the island countries.

When facing Western countries, including Australia’s hype that China is a geostrategic competitor, leaders from Pacific island countries have spoken out from a sense of justice. In August, Samoan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Malielegaoi said that island countries won’t line up with Australia and the US against China, declaring “their enemies are not our enemies.” The Australian reported. Malielegaoi added that “[The Pacific’s] only interest is to provide the kind of modern living, decent kind of modern living, of our people,” and if countries “against China” did not approve of Beijing’s influence in the region “they should come in and provide the assistance that China is providing.”

When PNG’s Prime Minister James Marape visited Australia in July and was asked questions about China, Marape articulated that PNG’s overall position on foreign policy is being “friends to all and enemies to none.” Fiji’s Parliament

Speaker Ratu Epeli Nailatikau hailed the BRI in March, saying that many countries will benefit from this great initiative.

Australia has been the largest donor in the Pacific islands region. It is geographically close to them with wide and deep social connections. Other countries are no match for these advantages. However, Australia should respect the countries’ own choices, instead of being arrogant on their decisions and moves. Canberra should accept and be happy about the fact that Pacific island countries will have a wider development path and more opportunities, rather than completely depending on Australia’s assistance. Australia should not keep holding the countries as its own backyard.

■ **Western hypocrisy worsens human trafficking problem**

Although no official statement has been made, it is widely believed that the 39 bodies found dead in Essex, the United Kingdom, were stowaways involved in human trafficking. No matter which countries they were from - Vietnam, China, or any other country - this tragedy is a warning to the entire world. It is time for all countries to address human trafficking and crack down on smugglers. In particular, some Western countries should abandon their double standards and shoulder their responsibilities. Human trafficking is already a mature industry on a global scale. Criminal groups with an elaborate division of labor have created something like an industrial chain. Smugglers from different countries collude with each other, and bring a considerable number of emigrants to foreign lands through illegal means.

Deutsche Welle reported, for example, that in July 2015 alone, 107,500 migrants crossed the European Union’s outer borders, and most of these people used the services of smugglers at some point on their journey. The business of smuggling people into Europe is worth 150 million euros (\$166 million) per year or even higher, according to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. And 130,000 undocumented Mexican migrants crossed into the US in May this year. Traffickers must have contributed to this number.

Immigrants are often charged hefty fees but treated as commodities. Sulaiha Ali, a British solicitor, said that many stowaways are “lured” to the UK and other European destinations “on the promise of a legitimate job,” but only get “subjected to forced labor or sex work on arrival.” Their trip, however, may cost between £7,000 and £14,000 (\$8,974-\$17,949) a person.

These examples from different parts of the world are enough to demonstrate the rampancy of such crime, although they are only the tip of the iceberg. Such crime not only leads to social disorder, but also hurts individual interests and security. Many countries, including China, have already shown their resolution to tackle this problem.

As early as 2002, China’s Ministry of Public Security called for national actions against human smugglers. In 2016, 2,943 illegal migrants were arrested, including 142 smugglers. Some Asian countries have also taken action. In 2015, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) adopted the ASEAN Trafficking Convention and the ASEAN Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

But efforts from a few members in the international community are far from enough. The crime is conducted based on a global network. It should be dealt with by global cooperation.

Therefore, Western countries, the main destination for people traffickers, need to take some responsibilities. Some, however, not only always point an accusing finger at developing countries, but even support certain smugglers in the name of protecting human rights. In 2015, for example, Thailand encountered obstacles from the West when repatriating over 100 Uyghur emigrants who originally came from China’s Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. They were not curbing crime, but defending it. The West should see clearly how this crime impairs global security. The world needs a multilateral mechanism to address this problem, where the West should play a more positive role.

Gordon Duff: Trump unlikely to learn how to deal even with Bolton gone

TEHRAN (FNA) — Gordon Duff, a US veteran and journalist, says Donald Trump, the US President, was elected without knowledge of international affairs, and has only tried to appease Netanyahu since his rise to power.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with FNA, Duff said, “Bolton’s extremist views pushed Netanyahu to errors in judgement that has led Israel to a series of disasters [...] With Bolton gone the ‘little Boltons’ around Trump, Pence and Pompeo, will keep the pot stirring for Israel.”

Gordon Duff is a Marine combat veteran of the Vietnam War. He is a disabled veteran and has worked on veterans and POW issues. He is the Senior Editor of Veterans Today.

Below is the complete text of the interview:

■ Three years of Trump’s presidency have witnessed three different National Security Advisers. What is it indicative of in terms of Trump’s policy consistency?

A: There has been much analysis of Trump’s foreign policy, mostly critical particularly from his own appointees. We have to begin where Trump is correct. Within his own party, the Republicans, all potential appointees would inexorably be hopelessly flawed. Flynn, who has much in common with Trump, a bad temper, greed and narcissism, had been trolling Washington for cash before Trump latched onto him. All the big money, arms, oil and the Israel lobby were picked clean. He went for Russia, who held him at arm’s length then went to work for Turkey,

promising that he would have Gulen sent home to be executed.

Of the entire group, Flynn is the one he understood best. Trump, as an outsider, came to Washington without the normal knowledge of international affairs one would expect of a business executive with interests around the world. Instead, it was “give Netanyahu anything he wants” and with everyone else, play ‘the art of the deal’.

Trump is what we call a “one trick pony”. He threatens war, wars the US not only cannot win, wars they cannot even fight in countries the US simply cannot get to. You just cannot invade Venezuela or Iran, it is geographically impossible. We did invade North Korea once and China reacted negatively, chasing our armies South at break-neck speed in a famous retreat that America still claims was a great victory.

No, Trump is going to threaten, then move on, then threaten someone else as though he were throwing “bread upon the waters,” which he is. He is fishing, not for peace, or for submission but most probably for a personal payoff of some kind, an examination of his history thus far supports this hypothesis.

■ How do you find Trump’s Administration after Bolton’s dismissal?

A: With Bolton gone, the “little Boltons” around Trump, Pence and Pompeo, will keep the pot stirring for Israel.

What is of significance is the rift between the largest Republican donors, Sheldon and Miriam Adelson, casino owners, and Netanyahu. In a recent Haaretz article, Miriam Adelson claimed Sara Netanyahu is mentally unstable but really runs Israel. The Adelson’s are very powerful people.

It is possible that Trump may be looking for a way out of the mess with Iran, particularly with Germany under Merkel utterly unsupportive of Trump’s moves. Bolton understood the issues better than Trump but is known to have held irrefutable views advocating war on Iran that eventually led Trump to seeing him not just as an Israeli stooge but not quite as intelligent as he might be. The consensus has always been that Bolton was an inferior intellect whose rise to power was based on toadying.

■ Did John Bolton hold the closest views to those of Israel in the US Administration? If so, is his dismissal a blow to Tel Aviv?

A: With Bolton gone, Israel is freer to exercise more balanced domestic politics. Bolton’s extremist views pushed Netanyahu to errors in judgement that has led Israel to a series of disasters, particularly in their August 2018 confrontation with Hezbollah. Israel is vulnerable, the Iron Dome simply does not work, the IDF is an occupation army of conscripts and advances made by Israel’s potential adversaries which may well now include a nuclear armed Turkey and even their recent closest friend, Saudi Arabia,



overshadow Israel’s alleged military prowess.

Perhaps the loss of Bolton will lead to regional stability and moderation but until Trump finds advisors who are more balanced than his son in law, Jared Kushner or Mike Pompeo, he is unlikely to learn the real art of the deal, the game that has always been called “diplomacy”.

Great risk to the British Prime Minister

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has taken a huge political risk. He knows well that his victory or defeat in the parliamentary elections will have a huge cost to both him and the Conservative Party. Here's a look at the latest political news and developments in Britain:

As Guardian reported, Since Boris Johnson became prime minister there's been a quiet dread on the left, and a less quiet excitement on the right, that the Tories have found a new magic formula — one that will renew their nine-year-old government. A cartoonishly charismatic leader, a shameless softening of austerity, populist attacks on liberals and the nationalist adventure of Brexit: all this has been carefully calculated, the fear goes, so that the Conservatives can sweep out of their southern English heartlands and into the electorally decisive north and Midlands.

Predictions of an imminent Tory breakthrough and new ascendancy are familiar in British politics — it's arguably the commentariat's default analysis. Only two years ago, Theresa May's combination of tut-tutting provincial conservatism and disapproval of the worst aspects of capitalism briefly persuaded many observers, from the editor of the Daily Mail, Paul Dacre, to the usually reliable political scientist David Runciman, that she could dominate politics for years to come.

With May, and again with Johnson, this assumption of a coming Tory supremacy has relied heavily on the polls. Since Johnson became leader, almost all of them, despite different methodologies, have revealed widening leads over Labour. The polling website Britain Elects has interpreted these as showing a current Tory vote share of about 35%, roughly 10 points ahead of Labour; and the analytical website Electoral Calculus has extrapolated a Tory majority on 12 December of about 70. That would be by far the party's largest since Margaret Thatcher's third election victory in 1987.

There are obvious flaws to this suggestion that Johnson will win decisively. In 2017, May had an even bigger initial poll lead, but it shrank to almost nothing by election day. And this year's contest is potentially more volatile still. Yet Johnson's poll advantage has been one of the few certainties clearly driving events during this chaotic autumn: it largely explains his determination to have an election, and Labour's debate on delaying it.

But even if the forecast margin of Tory victory does turn out to be accurate, such a win may not be quite as conclusive as it seems. Election results don't tell you everything about the long-term health of a political party. Getting a majority of 70 with only a little over a third of the total vote would put the Conservatives among the most unpopular victors of a modern British general election. And on flimsy mandates strong governments are rarely built. Since the second world war only one party has achieved such an ambiguous electoral victory: New Labour in 2005. What happened next is a cautionary tale.

Like the Conservatives now, New Labour had been in power for almost a decade. They were associated above all with one, immensely divisive policy — instead of Brexit, the war in Iraq — and they faced a resurgent Liberal Democratic party that was opposed to that policy. And like the Tories now, New Labour also faced an official opposition with an unpopular leader, Michael Howard, who was portrayed by the ruling party as an extremist, and was considered by many voters not to be a plausible prime minister.

In the election the anti-government vote split, and New Labour scraped together 35% of the vote: enough to give the party a majority of 66. It was "a minor miracle", Tony Blair wrote in his memoirs. But at the time the result was widely seen as a sign of New Labour's enduring hegemony, and of the Conservatives' continuing impotence. The day after the election, Howard announced he would step down as leader — just as many of Jeremy Corbyn's enemies are eagerly assuming he will do if Labour loses next month.

Yet in fact 2005 was the beginning of the end for New Labour. Ground



down by growing public hostility, accumulating scandals and internal enemies, Blair lasted just two more years as premier: "the worst" of his tenure, he wrote afterwards. Meanwhile the Conservatives chose a leader, David Cameron, who was younger and fresher than Howard and than Blair himself. At his first prime minister's questions, Cameron cockily but lethally told Blair: "You were the future once."

Politics never precisely repeats itself, but it has cycles of decay and renewal. Johnson's sporadic efforts to present himself as a new sort of Conservative — less cosy with the business establishment, more interested in northern England — show some awareness of the risks facing any party after a decade in power. And unlike Blair in 2005, he hasn't been prime minister for long.

But if he is still in the job next year, he will be a politician in his mid-50s who has been playing the naughty schoolboy of British public life for more than three decades. He will be faced with the very grown-up task of negotiating and then administering Brexit — a much more intractable problem than the much more able Blair ever faced. And it's likely Johnson will also be facing a new Labour leader with none of Corbyn's personal baggage but with similar, popular leftwing policies.

The social, political and economic challenge of actually "getting Brexit done" should not be underestimated. This week the independent National Institute of Economic and Social Research estimated that "in the long run the UK economy would be 3.5% smaller ... compared to continued EU membership" if the UK secures a free trade deal with the EU by 2021 — a timetable many authorities on trade deals consider optimistic. In the UK's already mean and sluggish economy, a shrinkage of 3.5% may make Johnson's airy promises about a post-Brexit, deregulated capitalism — in essence, a pretty tired and traditional Conservative worldview — impossible to sell to many voters.

Then there is the Tories' lack of serious engagement with the climate crisis, with young voters, with multiculturalism and Britain's growing cities — and their preoccupation, instead, with Britain's shrinking proportion of elderly white voters, and with gaming the constitution and the electoral system. All long-running governments become complacent and incurious in the end — even the most dynamic ones, as the recently published final volume of Charles Moore's Thatcher biography shows in unsparing detail.

The drama of Brexit, and of all the Tory leadership battles and U-turns since 2010, has obscured how much this Conservative government has aged over the past nine years. It may not be tottering quite yet, but it will soon enough.

Boris Johnson's election gamble could cost him everything — including Brexit.

CNN also reported that On December 12, the UK will finally have a general election. In all honesty, it's needed one since June 9, 2017.

That was the morning Theresa May learned her gamble to hold a snap general election had backfired. May's plan was to increase her tiny majority in Parliament to over 100 seats. Instead, she lost the small upper hand she had which made the delivery of any kind of Brexit impossible.

Boris Johnson is learning this the hard way. Having inherited May's minority government, Johnson discovered early on that his optimism wasn't enough to get Brexit done.

Despite doing the seemingly impossible and getting a new deal from the EU, he simply doesn't have the numbers in Parliament to pass the legislation required to deliver Brexit. Holding an election in which he secures a fresh majority was his only real option.

It's a gamble. Having promised to exit the EU by the end of October, Johnson risks not only further delays, but the prospect of losing Brexit altogether. Though he enjoys healthy poll leads right now, a lot can happen during an election campaign.

"A 15% lead sounds a lot, but voters can come back home or change their mind," explains Will Jennings, a Professor of Political Science and Public Policy at the University of Southampton. "The thing to note with Johnson is he doesn't start even with the level of support Theresa May had in 2017."

Johnson's first big problem is the main opposition Labour Party. As May discovered, Jeremy Corbyn, Labour's leader, is a very effective campaigner. Corbyn surprised everyone in 2017 by picking up far more seats than expected. He did this despite being an underdog and with May looking like a strong, popular leader who had a plan to deliver Brexit and get on with an ambitious domestic agenda.

This time around, his job is arguably far easier. Johnson's aggressive political strategy since taking office has allowed Corbyn to paint himself as the anti-Johnson. Corbyn is making a lot of noise about the fact that Johnson is on friendly terms with the President Donald Trump, a man who is very unpopular with the British public.

Corbyn says that Johnson's myopic obsession with securing a trade deal with America would mean selling out the UK's National Health Service (NHS) to US drug companies. And Trump handed Corbyn a priceless soundbite earlier this week, when he called the London-based talk radio station LBC to heap praise on Johnson and say that the opposition leader would take the UK "into such bad places."

The NHS is the closest thing that the UK has to a religion and it will no doubt feature heavily in this election. And as Jennings points out, this could prove tricky for Johnson's Conservatives "if they end up getting sucked into winter NHS crisis" in the middle of a campaign.

Also in Corbyn's favour this time is the fact that he has a very clear path to office, something no one believed could happen in 2017.

If the UK ends up with another hung parliament and Corbyn is the most successful loser, he could credibly make

the case he should head some kind of coalition or minority government. The price for doing so would almost certainly be a commitment to some kind of second Brexit referendum.

This would be terrible for the Conservative party. Right now, the party is reluctantly united around Johnson and his Brexit deal. However, if another referendum were to happen, the party would tie itself in knots over exactly what position to back.

Losing Brexit isn't the only thing spooking Conservatives. Corbyn is, in the eyes of Conservatives, a danger to the nation. They believe he is a threat to



national security and that his hard-left agenda would wreck prosperity. In the words of a senior government advisor, "people need to know that Corbyn will take their houses, nationalise their jobs and tax them to death. It should terrify anyone involved in this election. There is a real chance that Corbyn could end up in Downing Street."

A Labour spokesperson refuted this, telling CNN that "Labour will put wealth and power in the hands of the many. Boris Johnson's Conservatives, who think they're born to rule, will only look after the privileged few."

Conservatives also fear that Corbyn's dream of stepping inside Downing Street would come at the cost of getting Scottish nationalists on his side. And the price for this would be giving Scotland another Independence referendum. After three years of Brexit chaos, many Scots now believe that the best path is to go independent and rejoin the EU as a full member state. Experts are split on exactly how that vote would go, but for a party formally known as the Conservative and Unionist Party, it's a terrifying prospect that would forever be blamed on Johnson's administration.

Conservative aides are privately concerned that Johnson has not learned the lessons of 2017 and are worried that his hubris will come to bite them. Talking to senior staffers, their most optimistic predictions are that Johnson will win a small majority and get his Brexit deal through Parliament, only for the party to fall apart over the UK's future relationship with Europe. They point out that even if the deal passes, the UK only has 11 months to get the rest of Brexit sorted.

And that will result in extending the transition period.

They are also well aware of the real prospect that the election will result in another hung parliament. That effectively kills the Johnson government, something which has not gone unnoticed in Brussels. EU officials are pleased that an election is happening, hoping that it will finally provide some answers to this seemingly impossible question. But they also think that a hung Parliament is the most likely outcome. "To be honest, there is already chatter about the next extension," an EU official told CNN.

If that happens, the deadlock continues. "If there's no majority then there's a question of whether he (Johnson) resigns. I am not even sure we get to a second referendum ... before we even get there we could be looking at a February election," says Professor Will Jennings.

Johnson's Brexit gamble was a table-flip moment. It's the last option for a Prime Minister who's been on the back foot since day one. But in flipping that table over, he could soon discover that there was far more on it than Brexit. Johnson might live to regret wanting to have a crack at this leadership business.

Boris Johnson faces threat of Brexit party battle in every seat

As Guardian reported, Boris Johnson faces the threat of battling against the Brexit party for leave votes in every seat across Britain, after Nigel Farage gave the prime minister a two-week deadline to drop his Brexit deal.

After a rocky 48 hours, which saw Johnson booed during a hospital visit and urged by Donald Trump to join forces with Farage, the Brexit party leader urged him to strike a "leave alliance".

Launching the Brexit party's campaign in Westminster, the former

taking 31.6% of the vote against the Tories' 9.1%.

Elections analyst Chris Hanretty, professor of politics at Royal Holloway, University of London, said: "It's really quite straightforward — where the Brexit party stand they hurt the Conservatives much more than they hurt Labour."

Farage castigated politicians' "broken promises" at his campaign launch — including the prime minister's "do or die" pledge to leave the EU on 31 October.

His speech followed Trump's intervention on Thursday, with the US president suggesting to Farage on his LBC radio show that he and Johnson could form an "unstoppable force".

Trump also claimed Corbyn would be "so bad for your country" — and suggested the US "can't make a trade deal with the UK" under "certain aspects of the [Brexit] deal", despite Johnson's claims it would enable the UK to have an independent trade policy.

Farage said his party wanted a "clean Brexit", essentially a form of no deal whereby the country would move on to World Trade Organization terms until it negotiated a free-trade agreement with the EU.

He said he was preparing to put up candidates across Britain, but was open to negotiation — and gave Johnson until 14 November to take up his offer.

Farage said there were 150 seats that the Brexit party want to target in northern England, Wales, the Midlands and potentially east London — areas the Tories traditionally cannot reach. He said informal conversations about cooperating were already happening at a grassroots level in constituencies — and claimed he had discussed the possibility of a pact with officials in Downing Street, and at least one minister.

Ukip leader claimed the deal agreed by Johnson in Brussels last month was "not Brexit".

Farage said his message for the prime minister was: "Drop the deal because as these weeks go by and people realise what you've signed up to ... people will not like it."

"Simply, it is not Brexit. What we're doing here is kicking the can down the road."

He suggested the Brexit party would be prepared to stand aside in a swath of seats — but only if Johnson axes his own withdrawal agreement. In response the prime minister flatly rejected the idea of any electoral pact on Friday evening, saying a vote for any other party risked a Labour victory on 12 December. "The advantage of our deal is it's oven-ready, it's there to go, you put it in, come back in the middle of December, and we get it done and Brexit is over the line," he told the BBC.

Pressed about whether he would be prepared to strike any kind of deal with Farage, he said: "Now the difficulty about doing deals with any other party is that any other party, I'm afraid, simply risks putting Jeremy Corbyn into No 10."

Johnson's strategy for winning five more years in Downing Street is based on reuniting the leave vote that splintered between the Tories and the Brexit party in the European elections in May, by showing that he's the man to "get Brexit done".

However, that task could become significantly more difficult amid a Farage tour of the country saying Johnson's deal is "not Brexit". In May, Farage's party topped the poll

"Of course I'm open and flexible to local exceptions and already we are in communication with a number of MPs who are prepared to renounce the withdrawal agreement, to renounce the deal, and they themselves to stand on a ticket of a genuine free trade agreement or leave on WTO terms," he said.

However, most analysts suggest the impact of cutting tariffs would be likely to be outweighed by the costs of losing frictionless access to EU markets.

Much of Farage's campaign launch speech argued that Johnson's deal was not a "true Brexit" because of what he claimed was the continued regulatory alignment with the EU, three further years of negotiation and abiding by terms set out by Michel Barnier, the EU's chief negotiator.

A delay to Brexit was also preferable over Johnson's deal, Farage suggested, saying the prime minister should decide to back a genuine free-trade deal such as the Canadian model, with no political ties, and give a 1 July deadline to the EU for this to be accepted. Farage reserved some of his most stinging criticism for Corbyn's party, in a sign the Brexit party is ramping up its campaign against Labour's remain-backing MPs in leave-voting areas.

Asked how Labour voters would benefit from WTO terms and free-trade deals and the deregulation that comes with it, he said: "Cheaper food, cheaper bras, cheaper shows, cheaper everything — 12,500 everyday household goods that we buy — everything from underwear to shoes to food that are tarified because of the common external tariff and our membership of the European Union."

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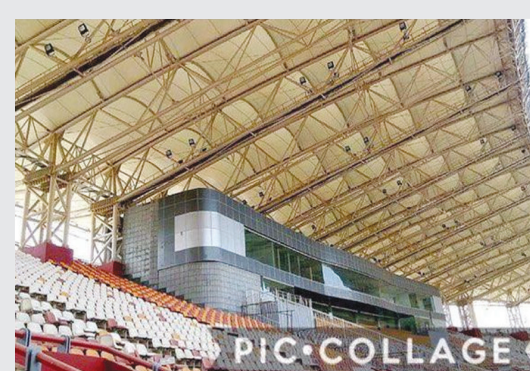
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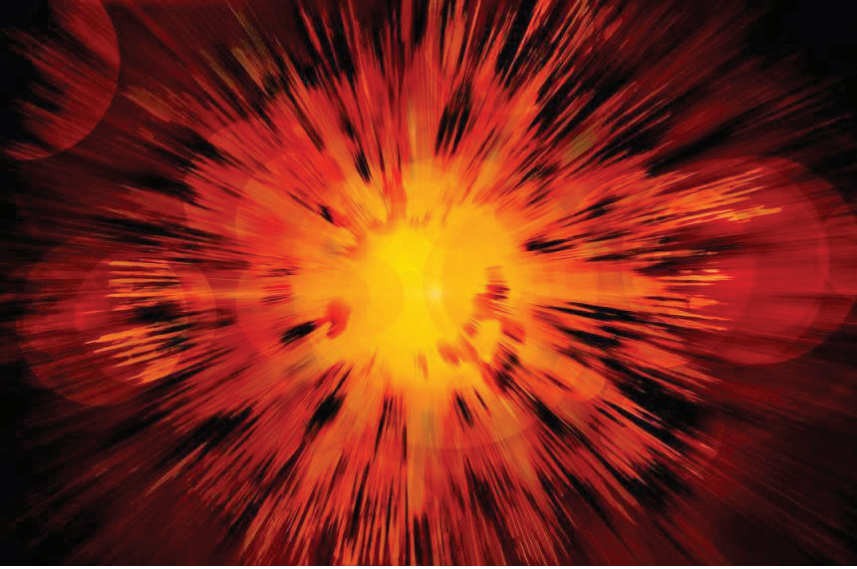
Physicists offer theory for how the Big Bang explosion was ignited

By Brooks Hays

Most models of the Big Bang take the ignition for granted. Researchers at the University of Central Florida wanted to explore how the birth of the cosmos was set in motion.

After analyzing supernova explosions and considering the constraints of an unborn universe, a team of engineers and astrophysicists at UCF developed a new theory for the mechanisms that could trigger a Big Bang explosion. They published their theory Friday in the journal Science.

“We defined the critical criteria where we can drive a flame to self-generate its own turbulence, spontaneously accelerate and transition into detonation,” study co-author Kareem Ahmed, an assistant professor in UCF’s department of mechanical and aerospace engineering, said in a news release. “We’re using the turbulence to enhance the mixing of the reactions to the point where it transitions into this violent reaction and essentially leads to supernovas, which is exploding stars in simple terms. We’re taking a simplified



flame to where it’s reacting at five times the speed of sound.” Ahmed and his colleagues first happened upon a novel mechanism for ignition while analyzing supernova reactions and looking for new methods for hypersonic jet propulsion.

“When we started to dig deeper, we realized that this is relatable to something as profound as the origin of the universe,” he said.

With enough turbulence, the scientists found an unconfined flame can become self-perpetuating. Once the flame is self-perpetuating, it starts to consume the energy it has ingested and a Mach 5 hypersonic supernova explosion is triggered.

The researchers tested the new ignition mechanics inside a turbulent shock tube in the labs at UCF.

“Thermonuclear combustion waves in [type Ia supernovae] are qualitatively similar to chemical combustion waves on Earth because they are controlled by the same physical mechanisms,” researchers wrote in their paper.

Authors of the new study suggest their ignition theory could be used to develop more powerful and efficient engines for faster air and space travel. Ahmed and his researcher partners hope the theory will eventually inspire a zero-emissions engine, in which all the combustion components are converted into energy.

Astronomers have found an exoplanet somewhere it really shouldn’t have survived

NASA scientists have found an exoplanet located somewhere no exoplanet should be able to survive.

The space agency’s exoplanet-hunting Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) has found some pretty neat things in its time on the job so far, including exocomets, a rocky exoplanet with three Suns, and a black hole devouring a star. This new discovery is a real head-scratcher though - they’ve shown that a known exoplanet is actually located in a position where it should have long ago been burned up by its star.

The planet is a gas giant around 8.2 times the mass of Jupiter (which is pretty large), orbiting the red giant star HD 203949.

The problem is that, according to asteroseismological observations taken by astronomers at the Instituto de Astrofísica e Ciências do Espaço (IA) in Portugal, the star is at the end of its life.

This means it’s at a point where it has already started throwing off its outer material, expanding to much larger than its current size before shrinking back down. And the exoplanet’s orbit - 184.2 days - is well inside that larger atmospheric diameter it ballooned out to. So how the heck did it survive?

Asteroseismology is a fascinating field that analyses the oscillations on the surfaces of stars to study their internal structures. Just as earthquakes can reveal what’s happening inside Earth, oscillation modes detectable on the surface of a star reveal how sound waves are moving inside it.

This data can then help reveal key information about a star, such as its size, mass and age. TESS is equipped with the tools for asteroseismology, but this is the first time the observatory has been used the technique on stars known



to have exoplanets.

The observations were conducted on two stars: HD 203949 and its planet HD 203949 b; and a yellow subgiant star called HD 212771, orbited by a gas giant about 2.3 times the mass of Jupiter.

“TESS observations are precise enough to allow measuring the gentle pulsations at the surfaces of stars,” explained IA astronomer Tiago Campante. “These two fairly evolved stars also host planets, providing the ideal testbed for studies of the evolution of planetary systems.”

So, the team used the asteroseismological data to calculate the size, mass and age of the stars. And, according to that data, HD 203949 has much lower mass than initially thought. That means it’s already lost much of it - suggesting it should

be far too evolved to have a planet as close as HD 203949 b.

But, if you look beyond the HD 203949 system, there’s a giant clue. Many systems have gas giants close to their stars; too close, in fact, to have formed there, because gravity, winds and radiation from the star should have blown and burned away all the gas before it could accrete into a planet.

However, modelling suggests that these gas giants could snuggle up to their stars if they form farther out in their planetary systems and migrate inwards on a slow spiral; evidence suggests Jupiter is doing just this.

So, it’s possible that HD 203949b formed much farther out, and only migrated in close to its star after it had already expanded to its maximum size, and shrunk back down again.

“The solution to this scientific dilemma is hidden in the ‘simple fact’ that stars and their planets not only form but also evolve together,” said IA astronomer Vardan Adibekyan.

“In this particular case, the planet managed to avoid engulfment.”

The research has not just shown us a really fascinating planet - it has demonstrated TESS’s potential for characterizing stars using asteroseismology.

This, in turn, could help us better understand planets and their evolution, the researchers said - the accurate radius of a star, for instance, is essential for measuring the accurate radius of a transiting planet.

And, of course, learning the age of HD 203949 has helped infer the orbital history of its unusual planet.

“This study,” Adibekyan said, “is a perfect demonstration of how stellar and exoplanetary astrophysics are linked together.”

(Source: sciencealert.com)

Scientists explain how to spot a wormhole



By Andrew Griffin

Scientists have revealed how to spot a wormhole to another universe.

Wormholes serve as a tunnel between two parts of spacetime, potentially connecting up two different times or places within the universe – or another universe entirely.

They might still not actually exist. Despite occupying such an important place in science fiction, as well as being the subject of feverish research by scientists, they are yet to be confirmed.

But if they do exist, astronomers have proposed a way that we might be able to see them.

Researchers hope that they might be able to spot a wormhole around the supermassive black hole at the middle of our Milky Way galaxy, which is known as Sagittarius A*. There is no specific reason to think the black hole has one – but researchers think that the extreme and turbulent gravitational conditions of a supermassive black hole should be a good place to find one.

If there is one lurking at the heart of our galaxy, the stars in our galaxy should be influenced by the gravity of stars at the other end of the wormhole,

the researchers suggest. That should make it possible to see one, if indirectly, by looking for the slight deviations in the orbits of the nearby stars.

“If you have two stars, one on each side of the wormhole, the star on our side should feel the gravitational influence of the star that’s on the other side. The gravitational flux will go through the wormhole,” said Dejan Stojkovic, cosmologist and professor of physics in the University at Buffalo College of Arts and Sciences. “So if you map the expected orbit of a star around Sagittarius A*, you should see deviations from that orbit if there is a wormhole there with a star on the other side.”

Sadly, even if there is a wormhole relatively nearby it will not be possible to travel through it and find yourself elsewhere in the universe, scientists say.

“Even if a wormhole is traversable, people and spaceships most likely aren’t going to be passing through,” said Dr. Stojkovic. “Realistically, you would need a source of negative energy to keep the wormhole open, and we don’t know how to do that. To create a huge wormhole that’s stable, you need some magic.”

Perovskites discovery promises better, cheaper solar cell



By Brooks Hays

Scientists have gained new insights into the properties of perovskites, the crystalline materials used to make solar cells. The breakthrough promises the development of more efficient, stronger and cheaper solar panels.

In the labs of McGill University in Canada, scientists used a special instrument called the multi-dimensional electronic spectrometer to observe the movements of electrons inside cesium lead iodide perovskite nanocrystals.

The instrument, designed by engineers at McGill, can track the behavior of electrons across extremely small timescales -- as short as 10 femtoseconds, or 10 millionths of a billionth of a second.

The observations made using the MDES instrument suggest the difference between liquids and solids isn’t all that clear cut.

“Since childhood we have learned to discern solids from liquids based on intuition: we know solids have a fixed shape, whereas liquids take the shape of their container,” lead researcher Hélène Seiler, a former doctoral student in McGill’s chemistry department, said in a news release.

“But when we look at what the electrons

in this material are actually doing in response to light, we see that they behave like they typically do in a liquid,” said Seiler, now a researcher at the Fritz-Haber-Institut at the Max-Planck Institute. “Clearly, they are not in a liquid -- they are in a crystal -- but their response to light is really liquid-like.”

The new research, published this week in the journal Nature Communications, allowed scientists to investigate the impacts of material defects on electron behavior in perovskites.

The findings suggest the material defects and liquid-solid duality in cesium lead iodide perovskite nanocrystals are essential to, not a hindrance of, the material’s unique optoelectrical properties.

“It’s the most exciting result that I have been a part of since starting in science in 1995,” said senior author Patanjali Kambhampati, a chemistry professor at McGill. “Instead of searching for perfection in defect-free silicon microelectronics, here we have a defective thing that’s defect-tolerant. And now we know a bit more about why that is.”

Scientists expect further exploration of the material’s defects and duality will help engineers design more effective perovskite materials, inspiring better, cheaper solar cells.

Conditions that trigger supernovae explosions

Understanding the thermonuclear explosion of Type Ia supernovae – powerful and luminous stellar explosions – is only possible through theoretical models, which previously were not able to account for the mechanism that detonated the explosion.

One of the key pieces of this explosion, present virtually in all models, is the formation of a supersonic reaction wave called detonation, which can travel faster than the speed of sound and is capable of burning up all of the material of a star before it gets dispersed into the vacuum of space.

But, the physics of the mechanisms that create a detonation in a star has been elusive.

Now, a team of researchers from the University of Connecticut, Texas A&M University, University of Central Florida, Naval Research Laboratory, and Air Force Research Laboratory has developed a theory that sheds light on the enigmatic process of detonation formation at the heart of these remarkable astronomical events.

The research, published Nov. 1 in Science, offers a critical understanding of this physical process both in stars and also in chemical systems on Earth. It was led by Alexei Poludnenko, UConn School of Engineering and Texas A&M University; in collaboration with Jessica Chambers and Kareem Ahmed, the University of Central Florida; Vadim Gamezo, the Naval Research Laboratory; and Brian Taylor, the Air Force Research Laboratory.

For the first time, researchers were able to demonstrate the process of detonation formation from a slow subsonic flame using both experiments and numerical simulations carried out on some of the largest supercomputers in the nation. They also successfully applied the results to predict the conditions of detonation formation in one of the classical theoretical scenarios of Type Ia supernova explosion.

Type Ia supernovae explosions happen when carbon and oxygen packed to a density of around 1,000 tons per cubic centimeter in the stellar core burn in quick, thermonuclear reactions. The resulting explosion disrupts a star in a matter of seconds and ejects most of its mass while emitting an amount of energy equal to the energy emitted by the star over its entire lifetime.

Typically, in order to form a detonation, burning must occur in a confined setting with walls, obstacles, or boundaries, which can confine pressure waves being released by burning.

As pressure rises, shock waves form, which can grow in strength to the point when they can compress the reacting mixture igniting it and producing a self-sustaining supersonic front. Stars do not have walls or obstacles, which makes the formation of a detonation enigmatic.

In this study, the team developed a unified theory of turbulence-induced deflagration-to-detonation that describes the mechanism and conditions for initiating detonation both in unconfined chemical and thermonuclear explosions.

According to the theory, if one takes reactive mixture, which burns and releases energy, and stirs it up to create intense turbulence, a catastrophic instability can result and would rapidly increase pressure in the system producing strong shocks and igniting a detonation. Remarkably this theory predicts the conditions for detonation formation in Type Ia supernovae.

Researchers were able to gain insight into the fundamental aspects of the physical processes that control supernovae explosions because thermonuclear combustion waves are similar to chemical combustion waves on Earth in that they are controlled by the same physical mechanisms.

Because of the similarities, the findings may be applied to various terrestrial combustion systems in which detonations can form, such as the context of industrial accidents involving gaseous explosions, as well as novel propulsion and energy conversion applications, such as detonation-based engines.

(Source: Science Daily)

Humankind’s ancestral “homeland” pinpointed in Botswana

A large ancient wetlands region spanning northern Botswana - once teeming with life but now dominated by desert and salt flats - may represent the ancestral homeland of all of the 7.7 billion people on Earth today, researchers said on Monday.

Their study, guided by maternal DNA data from more than 1,200 people indigenous to southern Africa, proposed a central role for this region in the early history of humankind starting 200,000 years ago, nurturing our species for 70,000 years before climate changes paved the way for the first migrations.

A lake that at the time was Africa’s largest - twice the area of today’s Lake Victoria - gave rise to the ancient wetlands covering the Greater Zambezi River Basin that includes northern Botswana into Namibia to the west and Zimbabwe to the east, the researchers said.

It has been long established that Homo sapiens originated somewhere in Africa before later spreading worldwide.

“But what we hadn’t known until this study was where exactly this homeland was,” said geneticist Vanessa Hayes of the Garvan Institute of Medical Research and University of Sydney, who led the study published in the journal Nature.

The oldest-known Homo sapiens fossil evidence dates back more than 300,000 years from Morocco. The new study suggests that early members of our species as represented by the Morocco remains may not have left any ancestors living today, the researchers said.

“There is no contradiction between the presence of an early Homo sapiens-like skull in northern Africa, which may be from an extinct lineage, and the proposed southern African origin of the Homo sapiens lineages that are still alive,” added study co-author Axel Timmermann, a climate physicist at Pusan National University in South Korea.

The ancient lake Makgadikgadi began to break up about 200,000 years ago, giving rise to a sprawling wetland region inhabited by human hunter-gatherers, the researchers said.

“It can be viewed as a massive extension of today’s Okavango Delta wetland area,” Timmermann said.

Changes in Earth’s axis and orbit caused climate, rainfall and vegetation shifts that set the stage for early migrations of this ancestral group of people away from the homeland region, first toward the northeast 130,000 years ago, then toward the southwest 110,000 years ago, Timmermann added.

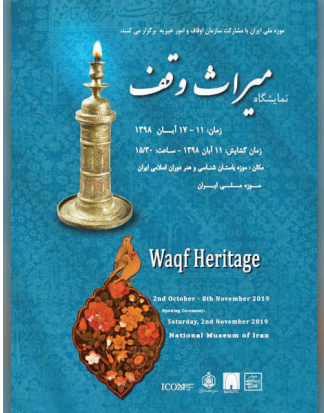
“Our study provides the first quantitative and well-dated evidence that astronomically driven climate changes in the past caused major human migration events, which then led to the development of genetic diversity and eventually cultural, ethnic and linguistic identity,” Timmermann added.

(Source: Reuters)

Religious endowment relics on show at Tehran museum

HERITAGE d e s k TEHRAN — An exhibition of religious endowment (waqf) relics on Saturday opened to the public at the National Museum of Iran, according to the museum’s website.

Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan and Charity Affairs Organization



Director Mehdi Khamoushi cut the ribbon on the exhibit, which puts on display Quranic and other rare manuscripts, documents, porcelains, metalwork objects, rugs and carpets.

A waqf or mortmain property, is an inalienable charitable endowment under Islamic law, which typically involves donating a building, plot of land or other assets for Muslim religious or charitable purposes with no intention of reclaiming the assets.

Titled “Waqf Heritage”, the exhibit will be running through November 8.

Located in downtown Tehran, the National Museum of Iran is somewhat chock-full of priceless relics that represent various eras of the country’s rich history. Massive and tiny statutes, ceramics, potteries, stone figures, bas-relief carvings, metal objects, textile remains, rare books and coins are amongst objects that build up the innumerable collections inside.

Japanese theme park opening Godzilla experience in 2020

If Godzilla movies aren’t scary enough for you, head to Japan next year and you can get eaten by the fearsome lizard himself.

The Nijigen no Mori theme park on Awaji Island in Hyogo prefecture will debut a Godzilla-themed area in 2020, complete with a massive lizard measuring 20 meters (65 feet) high, 25 meters (82 feet) wide and 55 meters (180 feet) long -- the exact size of the one in the movies.

That means that that Nijigen no Mori will be the first place to have a permanent, full-size replica of the famed movie monster.

“Godzilla Interception Operation” will feature several activities, including a zipline that will feed you right into the monster’s mouth and a shooting game where, presumably, you’re aiming at Godzilla himself.

The activities are called “missions,” and visitors will be asked for their help in capturing or defeating Godzilla. And, of course, there will be a gift shop.

As for the location, it was very intentional.

“The legendary figure of Godzilla was first confirmed at the beginning of the Meiji era when a typhoon hit Awaji Island,” reads a blog post on the theme park’s website. “Godzilla, who appeared with the high waves, roamed the island, causing tremendous damage.”

(Source: CNN)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Historic Quarter of Colonia del Sacramento

Founded by the Portuguese in 1680, Colonia del Sacramento is located at the tip of a short peninsula with a strategic position on the north shore of the Rio de la Plata, facing Buenos Aires.



In the region, the Historic Quarter of Colonia is the only example of an urban plan that does not conform to the rigid “checkerboard” grid imposed by Spain under the “Laws of the Indies.” Instead, this city has a free plan adapted to the topographical features of the site, although strongly influenced by its military function.

Throughout the successive destructions and occupations of its territory, the Historic Quarter acquired the urban and architectural heterogeneity that characterizes it: to the contributions of the Portuguese and Spanish, were added those of the artisans who emigrated there during the second half of the 19th century.

All of its modest buildings, in regard both to their dimensions and their appearance, are a particularly interesting testimony to the singular fusion of the Portuguese and Spanish traditions that is evident in the construction methods used.

The civil and religious buildings with long stone walls, wooden trellis and tiled roofs reveal an excellent knowledge of traditional construction systems and contribute to the architectural unity specific to the Historic Quarter.

(Source: UNESCO)

Austrian traveler tells of cycling adventures in Iran

TOURISM d e s k

TEHRAN — A quick online search for memories and travelogues by foreign nationals so far visited Iran easily shows that it is one of the most misinterpreted countries on Earth. A strong reason is that almost every outsider who has the opportunity to visit Iran falls in love with the ancient land, its warm and generous people!

Many visitors to Iran have shared their experiences to make it clear for other potential travelers, including cyclists, how their perceptions have changed from those they assumed prior to their arrivals in the Islamic Republic.

Alison Lovell is one of those. She is an Austrian writer, teacher, and artist who decided to move to Tehran after falling in love with the country during a 14 day holiday in 2016.

In an article released in June by 1st Quest, she tells of adventures in Iran with an accentuation on cycling. Excerpts of the article are given below:

“In the age of carbon-neutral travel and the ever continuing quest to traverse the path less traveled, cycle travel has become a worldwide trend. Therein begs the question, is it possible to cycle in Iran? Absolutely, yes! And it is more common than you think. But before you decide to bike across one of the world’s most misunderstood countries, there are some things you should know.”

Iranian hospitality

A quick Google search will show you story after story of cyclists who’ve traveled across Iran. These stories share one consistent theme: disbelief about the friendliness and generosity of the Iranian people. This is very true – Iranian people are extremely friendly. Persian hospitality is unrivaled and most travelers won’t have experienced anything like it before.

As a foreign cyclist, you will be of extreme interest to locals, especially in rural areas. Be prepared to embrace regular invitations of refreshments, dinner and even a place to stay for the night. For some tourists, this will be a culture shock.

I’m biking solo

You might be wondering, is it okay to cycle across Iran alone? The answer is, yes, and many before you have done so.

Personally myself, I wouldn’t want to cycle alone through Iran. Unaccompanied women will receive unwanted attention, simply because Iranian’s will find your journey unusual. With that said, a couple of years ago Swedish woman Kristina Paltén made headlines across the globe as she ran across Iran, completely solo. She made this journey to raise awareness about Iranian culture, and to quash anti-Islamic rhetoric in western countries.

Is it safe?

The official line of many governments is to exercise caution when traveling to Iran and to avoid border areas. Caution is usually advised due to potential civil unrest and the threat of terrorism, especially near the borders. As these warnings are subject to change, it is advisable to



File photo depicts international cyclists stopping for a break during their Iran adventures.



This file photo depicts a foreign female cyclist in a mountainous road, Iran.

As a foreign cyclist, you will be of extreme interest to locals, especially in rural areas. Be prepared to embrace regular invitations of refreshments, dinner and even a place to stay for the night. For some tourists, this will be a culture shock.

check with your own country’s guidelines before making your travel arrangements.

Unlike other countries in the region, thankfully Iran has sustained very few terrorist attacks in recent decades. Also, crime rates are the same, if not lower, than most European countries and violent crimes against foreigners are almost unheard of.

Overall, foreign governments and the Iranian government alike advise tourists to respect Iranian culture and Islamic traditions when traveling to Iran. Iranians are highly educated and are not easily offended by foreign tourists, so don’t stress about the occasional faux pa.

Female cyclists

There has been a lot in the media lately about the Iranian government banning women from cycling. I cannot say whether this is fake news or otherwise, all I know is that it is not enforced. Iranian people often say, “everything yet nothing is illegal in Iran”, and in my experience, this is very true.

The municipality of Tehran has recently installed bike share stations across the city. Both women and men ride these bikes daily. Further, my neighbor, a 60-year-old woman, goes cycling around our neighborhood in Tehran with her grandson every afternoon.

All women, foreigners and Iranians alike, are required by law to wear Islamic hijab in public. For cyclists, this means a headscarf, ankle length pants (leggings are fine) and a loose shirt to the elbow or longer that covers your bum.

Traffic jam ahead

Tehran is notorious for its heavy traffic jams and crazy drivers however, outside the big cities, cyclists will practically have the roads to themselves.

Most roads across the country are sealed with bitumen or asphalt. As cyclists are not particularly common in Iran, it is recommended you use a light and have a rear-view mirror.

Buying a bike in Iran

Most travelers will bring their own bike but there are options to buy good quality bikes and gear once you arrive.

I would recommend buying your gear in Tehran (Iran’s capital). Gomrok is a neighborhood in downtown Tehran and is home to the bicycle bazaar. Once upon a time, Gomrok was home to Tehran’s red light district, but nowadays the brothels have been replaced with 100s of bicycle stores. Just a word of warning, if you are looking for a particular brand, beware of fakes.

Where to sleep

Iran offers tourists a range of accommodation options. From hostels, homestays to five-star hotels, travelers are sure to find something to suit their needs. Cyclists might be keen to camp, but beware that there aren’t many typical campsites with kitchen facilities or hot showers in Iran.

The lay of the land

Okay, so I’ll be brutally honest, Iran is really mountainous. Cyclists should be 100% prepared to be riding up and down hills, like, all the time!

Many people assume Iran is a big desert. Central Iran is quite dry and desert-like but also very mountainous and rich with agricultural lands. The northern crescent of Iran is covered with thick forests, rice and tea plantations whereas the south is quite tropical with palms and yes, more mountains.

How hot?

Although Iran’s climate is quite varied, most of the country experiences hot, dry summers, short spring and autumn periods and cool winters.

If you are planning to cycle in central and southern Iran the best time is from November to April. Although possible all year round, summer days will be over 30 degrees and can even exceed 60 degrees in some parts of the country. Shady roads are scant.

Best destinations

Most tourists decide to take a route through central Iran from Tehran and head south to Kashan, Isfahan, Shiraz then loop back to Yazd. But there are plenty of other destinations a little off the beaten track. Lar National Park just a couple of hours northeast of Tehran is home to Mount Damavand and is a popular cycling spot for Tehranis.

environments that respect their beliefs and cater to their requirements. Such concerns range from providing halal food at restaurants and hotels, to more diverse offerings, such as accommodation that includes prayer rooms, and resorts that have segregated as well as family-friendly facilities at swimming pools and beaches.

In line with the growth of other Islamic economy sectors, Muslims are also hoping for Islamic-themed entertainment, healthcare, shopping and Islamic financing options.

Muslim spend on travel was valued at US\$177 billion in 2017, and is forecast to grow to US\$274 billion by 2023, the report suggests.

Iran ranks 6th in Halal travel revenues

TOURISM d e s k

TEHRAN — Fetching \$8 billion, Iran is ranked 6th in terms of Halal travel revenues based on the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2018/19.

Saudi Arabia with \$21 billion, UAE with \$16 billion and Qatar with \$13 billion were ranked first to third while Malaysia and Russia, each grossing about \$7 billion, gained 7th and 8th positions.

A subcategory of traveling, Halal tourism is geared toward the specific needs of Muslim individuals who seek to abide by the Islamic rules.

Muslims across the planet want to vacation in



Strong winds: Scaffolding collapses and travel disruption

Cars have been damaged in a street in Dorset after scaffolding collapsed in strong winds.

The structure was blown over in Dorset Street, Blandford Forum, during the early hours, closing the road.

It comes as the Met Office predicted further strong winds for parts of southern and eastern England and heavy rain for Wales and eastern Scotland.

The National Coastwatch Institution at The Needles on the Isle of Wight said a winds of 109.4mph had been recorded.

It said the station had been shut and plans to “safely evacuate the watch-keeping team” were under way.

The Met Office said winds of 83mph were recorded in Plymouth and 82mph in Culdrose in Cornwall.

It has advised those attending or organizing bonfire events to be mindful of the strength of the wind before

setting off fireworks.

A yellow weather warning for strong winds, with gusts of up to 80mph, is in place across the south and east of England until 18:00 GMT.

Flood warnings have also been issued by the Environment Agency for Preston Beach in Weymouth and Chiswell, West Bay, Lyme Regis and Christchurch.

The agency has also issued 22 flood alerts for rivers across Devon.

In West Bay, Dorset, strong winds ripped the roof off a seafront kiosk.

Dorset and Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service said the seafront had now been closed “in case any further part of the structure should fail”.

Western Power Distribution said more than 1,500 prop-

erties in Somerset and 3,700 properties across Devon and Cornwall were without power after high winds caused faults.

On the south coast Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) said more than 3,000 homes and businesses, including parts of the New Forest and the Isle of Wight, were suffering power cuts.

The companies said engineers were working to restore supplies as soon as possible.

South Western Railway said services between Bournemouth, Hampshire, and Weymouth had been cancelled or delayed due to fallen trees on the line.

Southern Railway said high winds were having an impact across the network, with a reduced service running on the Brighton mainline due to a “National Grid power blip”.

(Source: BBC)

Fear of aging getting the better of young generation

By Yan Yunming

GLOBALTIMES — “Are you haunted by the fear of getting old?” my 25-year-old friend asked me yesterday, out of the blue. I could feel the trepidation in his voice.

As a computer engineer, he has been working beyond normal office hours for days. He said, “I finally realized that I’m an adult.” Clutching a jar of newly purchased calcium tablets in hand, he sermonized, “We must start paying extra attention to our health. After all, we are no longer teenagers.”

We knew each other at college. Back then we frequently pulled an all-nighter for exams as a semester was drawing close, or for movies and parties during weekends, but seldom felt worn out. We ate junk food more often, but never got a stomachache. Time and health seemed inexhaustible. But all of a sudden, we are becoming a group of tired “adults” and health experts.

My roommate, when in 1990, decided to wean herself off sugar last year. “Sugar makes people age faster,” she believes, “and you should quit it, too!” Since she made up her mind, the anxious lady has bought plenty of expensive sugar-free drinks and foods. Another old classmate of mine - I call her a “shopaholic” - treated me as a “purchasing agent” when I was studying abroad: She loved luxury bags and makeup. But surprisingly, during this year’s National Day holidays when I was visiting the US, she sent me a message, “Bags no more! Buy me some anti-aging healthcare and skincare products, please!”

It seems that health issues have become a shared anxiety of the young generation.

According to a report released by a popular medical knowledge sharing portal dxy.cn in 2019, among all age groups, people in the 20s unexpectedly scored the lowest in self-evaluation regarding health in China. And not long ago, a topic called “young people dare not read their medical examination reports” was one of the top trends on China’s Twitter-like Weibo. Under this topic, tens of thousands of young people are stating their fears: losing hair, losing sleep, heart diseases caused by staying up late, and so on.

The anxiety of our generation comes mostly from the identity transformation from students to employees, and for some of us from “children” to parents. Health and youth are already too unaffordable for us to squander. We have to shoulder more responsibilities to ourselves, to our family and to society. Besides, most people of this generation were born when China was following the one-child policy. With parents getting older, as the only one taking care of them, we cannot allow ourselves to be knocked down first.

It is such anxiety that makes many companies sense business opportunities. The healthcare industry has begun to develop products aimed at young people. It was reported in 2015 that young women were the main consumers of many health products, including enzymes, dietary fiber, and grape seed extract. And China Health Care Association predicts that the market size of China’s dietary supplements will continue to grow annually at an average rate of 10 percent in the next decade. That people start taking care of their health at an early age is in fact a good sign. But we should also think about these: Should we only count on health products? Are these products reliable?

As a popular online phrase goes, the young are eating health products while drinking beer, and applying facial masks while burning the midnight oil. Young people are sometimes too dependent on these products to ignore the truly effective ways to stay healthy. Furthermore, overuse of such products might even be harmful. For example, melatonin, an anti-aging product popular among the young, has its side effects. Overuse for a long term may lead to infertility. Melatonin is also used for



dealing with sleep disruption due to jet lag as it is a hormone that helps regulate the sleep cycle. Healthcare products are not panaceas. It is balanced diet, exercises, abstaining from tobacco and alcohol, maintaining a work and rest balance that can truly keep us young.

This year’s Double Eleven shopping festival is around the corner. I think the first thing I will do, after finishing this article, is to delete those health products from my online shopping cart and buy a gym membership.

■ New thinking needed for ROK-China-Japan trilateral cooperation

Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi (C) poses for a group photo with the Republic of Korea (ROK) Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha (L) and Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kono in Beijing, capital of China, Aug 21, 2019. The ninth meeting of foreign ministers of China, Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) is held in China and Chinese State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi chaired the meeting.

The trilateral relations between the South Korea, China and Japan are composed of three bilateral relationships, which have rarely been in positive shape at the same time. A total of 50 diplomats and experts from three countries met over the past weekend in Changsha, Hunan Province, China, with three different bilateral levels: relatively easy-going relations between China and Japan, recovering South Korea and China relations, and suffering South Korea and Japan relations. In the end, at least seven points and one conclusion could be derived from the 4th International Symposium on China-Japan-ROK Security Cooperation, organized by the China Institute for International Studies and the Trilateral Cooperation Secretariat.

First, the current US-led international order has been shaken up, and concerns have grown over the US leadership. Changes in the US leadership will inevitably affect US-China relations as well as foreign policy for the ROK, China, and Japan, though the extent might differ. The pressure from the US on its alliances is changing the nature of the relationship between the US and its allies, and the US’ promotion of new security policies has alienated some of its allies.

Second, not only China’s ability but also its willingness to contribute has grown. With the rise of China, the regional order in Northeast Asia is now undergoing structural changes. Currently, the Northeast Asian order is divided into a dual structure between the US and China in terms of economy and security. China is willing to show its positive and constructive image by expressing its 1) economic contribution through the Belt and Road Initiative, 2) diplomatic contribution through establishing a new type of international relations, and 3) military contribution through pursuing defense policies in line with a community of a shared future for mankind.

Third, the competitive aspects of the

international order, whether at the global or regional level, are becoming more prominent. As protectionism expands due to the intensifying competition between the US and China, we are standing at a critical juncture regarding whether to maintain openness in the current order or not. As the US’s Indo-Pacific Strategy, which came out as a response to the Belt and Road Initiative, focuses more on security and military issues, the pessimism about competition is surpassing the optimism over US-China relations.

Fourth, the significance of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula is being emphasized again. Despite the continued sanctions, North Korea is sticking with its current denuclearization stance and the related countries have wide differences over the definition of complete denuclearization. In this sense, the future of the Korean Peninsula is not smooth. However, peace is the basic premise for denuclearization negotiations, and there is no disagreement that peace and stability will be positive in any case.

Fifth, signs of change are emerging in the Korean Peninsula. The North Korean issue is an example that shows cooperation between the US and China is still possible. Although there is a possibility of a new Cold War between the two countries, the uncertain leadership of the US, whether it is Trump’s personal factor or the “America First” approach, will bring changes in the Korean Peninsula somehow. Meanwhile, there is now a wave of change on the Korean Peninsula, as controversy over the transfer of wartime operational control and the function of UN Command has not happened before. Sixth, cooperation between the ROK, China and Japan can be tried in various areas, including security. There were various suggestions regarding cooperation from the participating scholars, such as preventing North Korea from making further provocations by cooperation not only in the cultural industry, but also with the new form of maritime cooperation, and cooperation on partial regional borders, as well as establishing a new regional security framework in Northeast Asia.

Seventh, we need a “new normal” in terms of trilateral relations. The three countries are historically and culturally very close and have formed love and hatred in numerous contexts. Even now, the three countries are still intertwined with territorial, historical and other pending issues. A new normal could put an end to the excessive expectations of each other among the three countries along with efforts “to seek truth based on concrete evidence.” While minimizing the cost of conflict, the three countries should at least respect each other. It is necessary to manage and prevent conflict factors in advance.

In conclusion, many of the ROK, China and Japan meetings are held either bilaterally or within the international conferences with a number of countries participating. Therefore, such a meeting of new think

tanks can play a role in establishing new international relations. Most of all, there was a consensus at the meeting on the need for new thinking and new approaches for cooperation between the ROK, China and Japan. To walk toward a better future, the three will have to establish a new trilateral relationship.

■ Pence speech delivers old gripes with room for optimism

US Vice President Mike Pence on Thursday delivered a major policy speech on China. Initial impressions were that his take on China relied on clichés he used in last year’s speech. However, Pence did express a more positive attitude toward improving China-US relations. He emphasized the US does not want to “decouple” and repeated how US President Donald Trump is willing to start a new future with China.

The speech repeated criticisms made last year that included accusations of intellectual property theft, militarizing the South China Sea, religious persecution, and silencing freedom of speech. Pence also slandered China over Hong Kong, Taiwan and Xinjiang. Pence did not hesitate to praise the White House administration’s China policy, emphasizing its effectiveness and wisdom, which once again touched on familiar rhetoric.

It was almost exactly this time last year when Pence delivered a speech while the US was preparing for the mid-term elections. It’s clear that Pence’s speech was aimed at generating Republican votes for the 2020 US presidential election. In his speech, Pence offered a positive attitude in reaching a trade deal with China and improving relations.

Pence said the US does not seek confrontation or to “decouple” from China. He also underlined the friendship between Chinese President Xi and his US counterpart Donald Trump. The Vice President expressed the hope that the US-China relationship will bring more benefits to the two peoples and evolve for a brighter future.

Pence said the US would not allow challenges to impede China-US relations. He stressed that President Donald Trump is positive for reaching a trade deal between China and US. US would continue economic and cultural exchanges with China. He also said China and the US will cooperate on issues such as the Korean Peninsula denuclearization and Middle East. Many experts on Sino-US studies believe Pence’s latest speech is different from his last year’s in many aspects.

Chinese scholar Li Haidong, who specializes in US studies, told the Global Times that despite how last year’s rhetoric was considered a new “Cold War” declaration, this year’s address is calmer and sounds more like a call for “re-engagement” with China.

Due to past diversity and the mutability of US statements on China, it remains unknown which path Washington will take on the China issue. The growing tensions and the escalating trade war have undermined interests of the two countries. China won’t be overwhelmed by US’ headline policies, which has been fully proved in the past one and a half years. US political elites should recognize the fact and make true efforts to promote China-US relations. As Pence has said in his speech that improving China-US relations requires more practical actions, then the US side should also learn something from his remarks. China and the US have different political systems. It means that it is impossible to change political foundation of China. However, China and the US have many reasons to stick with peaceful co-existence and win-win cooperation.

Different civilizations should be able to co-exist harmoniously in the 21st century to make the world more diversified. This is a universal truth. It is hoped the US won’t refuse to have a truly great try with China and other countries, to contribute American strength and wisdom for a peaceful 21st century.

Political apartheid at the United Nations: The right of veto or vetoing the right

By Adam Dentor

ILFAROSULMONDO — The United Nation started its work with 300 people in the early 1946 with the aim of connecting nations and bringing security, peace, human rights and human development. At the present time, the UN with about 44,000 expert personnel, has a budget of 5.5 billion dollars a year.

The organization has been derailed by U.S. and Russia’s in-human interventions for years. It also has become a place for political apartheid to protect the interests of permanent members of the Security Council by using “the right of veto”.

Over the past few decades, “the right of veto” has changed to “vetoing the right”. The permanent members of the Security Council, who were supposed to prevent war and establish peace, have fueled wars as they enjoy the right of veto.

The UN has pursued 63 peace missions around the world. However, the missions failed in many cases because of the right of veto by the Security Council permanent members.

The first veto was used by the former Soviet Union for the withdrawing British and French troops from the territories of Syria and Lebanon in 1946, and vetoing resolutions concerning the Palestinian issue has been continuing for 70 years.

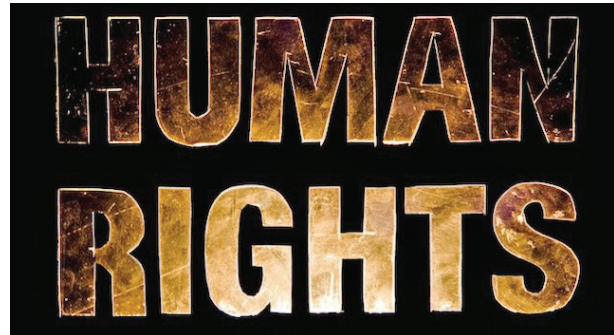
By 1968, a total of 84 resolutions were vetoed at the UN, 80 of which were exercised by the Soviet Union. All the cases that faced with the country’s veto, were in fact the scene of competition between Eastern and Western blocs. By vetoing the Security Council’s decisions, the Soviet Union tried to challenge the U.S. and protect its dominance and interests.

Many wars and killings in some countries, including the Czechoslovak coup, the Greek civil war, the Korean War, and War on Water between Syria and Israel, were triggered because the Soviets used their vetoes. On the other hand, the United States, Britain, and France used their right of veto to preserve their control over colonies.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S., Russia and China have been the only countries that have used their right of veto to prolong wars in the Middle East.

For the first time, the U.S. and Britain exercised their veto regarding the independence of Rhodesia, one of countries that was under British colonization.

Since 1970, the U.S. has vetoed 81 resolutions, 44 of which have been in support of Israel which have led to an exacerbation of tensions between the Israelis and Palestinians. It also prompted Israel’s non-compliance with international standards and norms.



The Obama administration abstained to veto UN resolution 2334 against Israel that considered settlements in the occupied territories as illegal and condemned it. But Trump, with his “deal of the century” project proved that, unlike Obama, he did not believe in a two-state solution to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

On the 70th anniversary of the Israel foundation, Trump decided to relocate U.S. embassy to Jerusalem. Then 15 members of the Security Council voted on two proposed draft resolutions after Israel killed 58 Palestinians following protests in Gaza on May 14, 2018. One draft resolution was proposed by 14 members of the UN Security Council and one by the U.S.

The second draft proposed by the U.S., which blamed Hamas for violence in the Gaza Strip near the border with Israel, ended in failure as only the U.S. voted for it. That a permanent member of the Security Council propose a draft resolution and only itself vote for it was recorded as a rare and unprecedented event at the UN.

A resolution backed by 14 members of the Security Council denouncing recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel failed to be passed due to the U.S. veto. The countries did not hesitate and called for the issue to be discussed at the UN General Assembly. Nikki Haley, Washington’s ambassador to the UN, had earlier warned that she would tell Trump the names of countries that vote against the United States. Trump also threatened that if any country vote for the resolution, the U.S. would cut financial support for it.

But 128 nations at the UN General Assembly voted against Trump’s decision on Jerusalem, insisting that any decision that would lead to a change in Jerusalem’s identity, status or population is rejected. The votes were not bought by intimidation and dollar. In the procedure of the changes, Nikki Haley offered a confession about Israel that was more like a prayer worse than a curse. She asked the international community not to see Israel as a temporary entity. This means that in in view of Haley the international community looks at Israel as a temporary country.

In the course of developments in the Middle East, Russia has so far exercised its veto right 12 times in favor of Syria concerning the civil war in the country and Assad’s use of chemical weapons, moves which have resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of Syrians and the displacement of 12 million citizens.

Following the terrorist attacks in Paris, the Security Council voted on a resolution proposed by France, regarding the fight against the Islamic State group, and France’s president declared war against them. But such terrorist attacks that have been continuing in other countries for years, have not been brought to the UN agenda.

Regarding protests in Venezuela, Russia and China prevented the adoption of a U.S. resolution on early election in Venezuela, thereby pushing the hard-hit people of Venezuela into a much deeper conflict in a clash of interests with the United States.

Contrary to the NPT, the race for producing advanced nuclear weapons is continuing and Russia and the U.S. are competing for military superiority. In their new policies, they are also mulling possible atomic war confrontation.

Following the recent Russian military maneuvers and showcasing an advanced weapon, which is capable to challenge the U.S. naval and missile power, the U.S. continues to fuel the arms race. It is reviving the old Star War project known as Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) which threatens the security of the Earth and sky.

In the silence of the UN and the political apartheid dominating the world body, the NPT has become irrelevant. Also, by leaving the INF, the U.S. and Russia have divided the world into two destructive nuclear poles.

May be Trump readier to make concessions to Iran in impeachment situation: Jenkins

➡ ■ What can the other side do to prevent Iran from taking other steps and endangering JCPOA?

A: Sanctions has tried to mitigate the effect of U.S. sanctions by setting up INSTEX. Russia and Iran have just agreed interbank payment arrangements that can boost Iranian trade with the Eurasian Economic Union. China is trying to persuade the Trump administration to issue waivers for Chinese purchases of Iranian oil. France continues to engage both the United States and Iran with a view to enabling trade between Iran and Europe to resume.

In recognition of these initiatives and other factors, it would be reasonable for Iran to declare a six-month or one-year moratorium on steps away from the JCPOA.

Other factors include the following. The initiation of impeachment proceedings against President Trump has created a situation in which he may be readier to make concessions. John Bolton, architect of the maximum pressure campaign, is no longer at Trump’s elbow. Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel, a fervent supporter of the campaign, now has his mind on staying out of jail by staying in power. Saudi Arabia, another fervent supporter, has at last showed signs of wanting to find a basis for peaceful coexistence with Iran. The next U.S. Presidential elections, which may herald a more enlightened U.S. policy towards Iran, are just over a year away.

■ Why has Europe not taken appropriate action so far to prevent Iran from reducing

its commitments?

A: I think it would be fairer to ask why Europe’s attempted actions have failed. The most promising of these actions has been President Macron’s, to which I have already referred. So, let me focus on that.

President Macron’s idea was to link President Trump’s craving for a meeting with President Rouhani to a lifting of the economic siege of Iran ordered by President Trump. President Macron had in mind a meeting in New York in September when President Rouhani was attending the UN General Assembly. It appears that the meeting failed to take place because President Rouhani did not wish to gratify President Trump’s hunger for a “photo opportunity”. I cannot judge whether this refusal to meet was sensible.

I can suggest that it is unjust to continue punishing Europe through non-performance of JCPOA commitments when it is Iran that has thwarted a European attempt to ease the maximum pressure campaign.

■ How would you assess the future of the JCPOA given the current situation?

A: The agreement’s future depends on Iranian readiness to recognise that the situation has evolved since April, when so-called “strategic patience” ran out, and to adjust policy accordingly. There is now a strong case for allowing time for various initiatives to bear fruit and for American politics to produce changes in U.S. policy. I am confident that Iran’s leaders have the wisdom to understand this. In that case the JCPOA will survive.

Flood hits 5 provinces, leaving 2 dead

ENVIRONMENT **TEHRAN** — Torrential rain has triggered flooding in 5 provinces of the country, claiming two lives so far, head of Rescue and Relief Organization Morteza Salimi said.



Provinces of Semnan, North Khorasan, South Khorasan, Khorasan Razavi, and Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari have been affected by the incident for the past three days, Salimi regretted.

So far, 175 people have received relief and rescue services in 14 cities and villages, he said, Mehr reported on Saturday.

Additionally, water was pumped out of 39 flooded houses, he concluded.

Fishery collapse ‘confirms Silent Spring pesticide prophecy’

The Silent Spring prophecy that pesticides could “still the leaping of fish” has been confirmed, according to scientists investigating the collapse of fisheries in Japan. They say similar impacts are likely to have occurred around the world.

The long-term study showed an immediate plunge in insect and plankton numbers in a large lake after the introduction of neonicotinoid pesticides to rice paddies. This was rapidly followed by the collapse of smelt and eel populations, which had been stable for decades but rely on the tiny creatures for food.

The analysis shows a strong correlation but cannot prove a causal link between the insecticides and the collapse. However, independent scientists said other possibilities had been ruled out and that the work provided “compelling evidence”.

The research is the first to reveal the knock-on effects of insecticides on fish. Harm to bees is well known, but previous studies in Europe have linked neonicotinoids to die-offs in other freshwater species including mayflies, dragonflies and snails and also to falling populations of farmland bird that feed on insects, including starlings and swallows. The insecticide has also been shown to make migrating songbirds lose their way.

Rachel Carson wrote Silent Spring, her seminal book on the dangers of pesticides in 1962. In their report, the Japanese researchers said: “She wrote: ‘These sprays, dusts and aerosols are now applied almost universally to farms, gardens, forests and homes – non-selective chemicals that have the power to kill every insect, the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’, to still the song of birds and the leaping of fish in the streams.’ The ecological and economic impact of neonicotinoids on the inland waters of Japan confirms Carson’s prophecy.”

“This disruption likely also occurs elsewhere, as neonicotinoids are currently the most widely used class of insecticides globally,” worth more than \$3bn year, they said.

Prof Olaf Jensen, at Rutgers University in the US and not part of the research team, said: “This study, although observational, presents compelling evidence. A fishery that was sustainable for decades collapsed within a year after farmers began using neonicotinoids. This is a large and astoundingly fast response.”

The research, published in the journal Science, looked at data from Lake Shinji spanning the decade before and the period after the introduction of neonicotinoids in 1993, from which point the pesticides started running off into the lake. They found neonicotinoid concentrations in the water frequently exceeded levels that are toxic to aquatic invertebrates.

(Source: The Guardian)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Afghan defence minister visits Moscow

(February 13, 2002)

The trial of Slobodan Milosevic, the former Yugoslav president, has opened in the Hague. But in Serbia, there has been a muted reaction to the trial. This report from Paul Anderson:

Belgrade was like a **ghost town** at Slobodan Milosevic’s **appointed hour**. The streets were empty. Here and across the country millions of people were **glued to television sets** for the live coverage of what the international community calls the biggest war crimes trial since Nuremberg and what’s being called here the big bill to be paid. But within an hour or two people started **trickling** back, reflecting the fact that the trial of Mr Milosevic has become a **distant curiosity** for most people. On the streets the anger at having been **robbed of the chance** to try him in Serbia was still **present**. There was some interest in Carla del Ponte’s **opening remarks** that one man and not one nation is on trial in The Hague. This point is critical to the Serbs. If the people as a nation are somehow legally implicated, Serbs fear they will have to pay massive **reparations** to Bosnians, Croatsians and Kosovo Albanians.

Otherwise, the interest is less in **squaring up** to the crimes of the past, more in who will be appearing as witnesses, particularly those under special protection. People are also acutely focused on the question of the handover of further suspects, including three of the four men charged with Mr Milosevic with war crimes in Kosovo.

Words

ghost town: a deserted town

appointed hour: the pre-arranged time when something, usually unpleasant, has to happen

glued to television sets: unable to stop watching television

trickling: moving gradually

distant curiosity: something that is happening a long way away and therefore of only limited interest

robbed of the chance to: not allowed to

present: in existence

opening remarks: introduction, first comments

reparations: money paid after wars by defeated countries for damages and injuries caused

squaring up to: dealing with

(Source: BBC)

Lake Urmia water level rises by 1 meter

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — The level of water at Lake Urmia has increased by 1 meter in the current water year (began on September 23) compared to the same period last year.

Shared between West Azarbaijan and East Azarbaijan provinces in northwestern Iran, Lake Urmia, was once the largest salt-water lake in the Middle East.

However, decades of long-standing drought spells and elevated hot summer temperatures that speed up evaporation as well as increased water demands in agriculture sector shrank the lake drastically. In 1999 the volume of water which was at 30 billion cubic meters drastically decreased to half a billion cubic meters in 2013. Moreover, the lake’s surface area of 5,000 square kilometers in 1997 shrunk to one tenth of that to 500 square kilometers in 2013.

With declining temperature and increasing autumnal rainfall, as well as evaporation reduction, Lake Urmia’s water level has reached 1271.23 meters, Mehr quoted Hojjat Jabbari, deputy director of West Azarbaijan province’s department of environment, as saying on Saturday.

He went on to say that the lake’s water level has increased by 1.01 meters compared to the corresponding period last year.

The volume of water is estimated at 3.24 billion cubic meters, and also water is now covering some 2,780 square kilometers of the lakebed, he noted.

During the last water year, the lake’s water level raised by 174 centimeters which means 1271.96 meters above the sea level, however, it decreased by 73 centimeters during the summer due to evaporation and lack of water in the rivers, he explained.

Referring to West Azarbaijan province as one of the most important provinces of the country due to having over 60 wetlands, Jabbari concluded that this year, none of the wetlands faced a serious problem and the onset of autumn rains has improved the wetlands’ condition.



In order to maintain the Lake Urmia ecological balance of 14 billion cubic meters over the next 10 years, an annual amount of 3.3 billion cubic meters of water is required.

Alireza Shari’at, head of monitoring and supervision department of the Lake Urmia restoration program said in September 2018, that in order to maintain the Lake Urmia ecological balance of 14 billion cubic meters over the next 10 years, an annual amount of 3.3 billion cubic meters of water is required.

The sharp rise in precipitations rates over the past crop year since now has raised hopes for total restoration of the

once glorious Lake Urmia.

Based on the latest data published by the National Drought Warning and Monitoring Center, since the current crop year, province of West Azarbaijan received 14.4 millimeters of rain which demonstrates a 56.2 percent rise compared to that of last year, while facing a slight shortage of 0.4 millimeters in comparison to the long term means.

This is while, deputy environment chief

Masoud Tajrishi told Khabaronline in July that rainfall is not the only reason behind Urmia Lake coming back to life, thus restoration measures turned out to be effective, unlike the previous years of high rainfall poured over the lake but did not raise the lake level.

The effort put into properly dredging and clearing of weed and vegetation in river beds as a way came efficient in the lake conservation, he added.

Climate impact from loss of tropical forests 600% higher than thought

The amount of carbon released from the loss of intact tropical forests is 626 per cent higher than previously thought, a new study has found.

Generally, when scientists measure carbon emissions released by forests they look at deforestation.

However, this is only part of the story, according to the latest paper published in the Science Advances journal, which shows that forests are being damaged in ways previously unaccounted for.

Selective logging which damages the overall health of forests and wildlife losses from hunting are among the things harming them.

Scientists also took into account the amount of carbon which would have been sequestered if degraded forest had stayed intact.

“We’re looking at forest areas that we think are being missed when people look at forests in terms of climate change,” researcher Dr Tom Evans from the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) told The Independent.

“I had a hunch it was bad but I didn’t expect it to be this dramatic,” he added.

Scientists looked at the 549 million hectares of intact tropical forests in the world between 2000 and 2013, during which time 48 million hectares was destroyed. The three main blocks are in the Amazon, Congo basin and in the island of New Guinea.

Intact forests refer to areas free from significant human pressure. Only 20 per cent of tropical forests are “intact” but they store 40 per cent of carbon found in all tropical forests.

One thing researchers looked at was the edge effect: When forests are fragmented, more trees become exposed to the edge where there is less protection from strong winds, drought, invasive species and fires from neighbouring farmland.

These “edges” can be hundreds of metres wide and are significantly less healthy than areas further in.

“A bunch of pressures diffuse in through the edges. That is well understood to reduce the amount of carbon the forest can hold and eventually you end up with only three-quarters of the carbon you had before,” said Dr Evans.



Another significant pressure is the loss of wildlife from hunting.

“Lots of carbon-rich tree species depend animals for seed dispersal – they have big seeds so they need big animals to disperse them,” said Dr Evans. “However, hunters specifically take big animals and in fragmented areas, populations of elephants, tapirs, toucans and monkeys all get hunted out.”

This results in a loss of large trees which means less carbon can be held under the canopy.

The last key pressure the study looked at was selective logging which is when high value wood is removed from a forest without the area being deforested.

Once tracks have been made people go in to take out cheaper wood and eventually – when the path is well trodden – people take out low-value trees to use as firewood or charcoal.

Scientists did their study by looking at maps showing changes in the world’s forests, reviewing literature about these changes and examining the carbon impact it had.

Researchers often ignore these processes to make sure their research is on the safe side. Dr Evans said “90 per per cent of this information was in the public domain but was

never put together properly.”

Lead researcher Sean Maxwell of WCS and the University of Queensland said: “Our results revealed that continued destruction of intact tropical forests is a ticking time bomb for carbon emissions. There is an urgent need to safeguard these landscapes because they play an indispensable role in stabilizing the climate.”

This study is the latest to show emissions need to be rapidly reduced globally if climate goals are going to be reached.

“Our research reveals that additional sources of carbon emissions are currently not being accounted for by national governments, because they’re not legally required to consider them,” said co-author Dr Alexandra Morel from the Zoological Society of London.

“Monitoring of these intact forests over the last decade has shown an acceleration in their loss, which would suggest that without more attention this unaccounted source of emissions will continue to grow.”

The United Nations runs a programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) which enables developing countries to receive financial incentives for enhancing carbon stocks.

REDD+ covers support for conservation of forests not under immediate threat. However, recently financial support and implementation has focused on areas with high rates of deforestation.

Dr Evans said: “The relative value of retaining intact tropical forest areas increases if one takes a longer-term view and considers the likely state of the world’s forests by mid-century – a milestone date in the Paris Agreement. Agricultural expansion, logging, infrastructure and fires reduced the global extent of intact forests by 7.2 percent between 2000 and 2013 alone, yet the eventual carbon emissions locked in by these losses have not been comprehensively estimated.”

Researchers want to look at the amount of carbon lost in intact forests outside of the tropics such as the vast boreal forests of Canada and Russia.

(Source: The Independent)

ENGLISH IN USE

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A ← → ع

Recent rainfalls not to fully address prolonged droughts: expert

Despite above normal rainfalls the country has received, it cannot be claimed that the long-term droughts are set right, director for flood control and aquifer at Forests, Range and Watershed Management Organization has said.

That’s why water management policies must be still drawn up with regard to water scarcity, ISNA news agency quoted Abolqasem Hosseinpour as saying on Saturday.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“dextro-, dextero-, dextr-”

■ **Meaning:** right

■ **For example:** A good handyman is skillful, *dexterous* and proficient in whatever it is he is doing.

PHRASAL VERB

Nod off

■ **Meaning:** to begin to sleep, usually when you do not intend to and are sitting somewhere

■ **For example:** I missed the movie because I kept nodding off.

IDIOM

Crest of a wave

■ **Explanation:** If you are on the crest of a wave, you are very successful in what you are doing

■ **For example:** Our company is going from success to success. We’re on the crest of a wave right now.

Russia: U.S. smuggling Syrian oil worth \$30 million a month

TEHRAN— Russia has slammed President Donald Trump's plan to deploy troops into Syrian oil fields as "criminal activity," accusing the U.S. of seeking to smuggle out oil worth over "\$30 million" per month.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the U.S. was "pumping oil out of northeastern Syria" while masking "its criminal activity by some pretexts of a struggle against the Daesh terrorist group."

According to Press TV, the remarks come after Washington reversed an earlier decision to pull out all troops from northeastern Syria, announcing last week the deployment of about 500 troops to the oil fields controlled by U.S.-backed Kurdish forces.

Speaking earlier this week, Pentagon chief Mark Esper said the deployment will seek to secure oil resources from Daesh. Washington, he said, will use "overwhelming" force against any other actor challenging the U.S., including Syria's own government.

Speaking last week, however, U.S. President Donald Trump suggested that Washington sought economic interests by controlling the oil fields.



"We want to keep the oil, and we'll work something out with the Kurds so that they have some money, have some cashflow. Maybe we'll have one of our big oil companies to go in and do it properly," said Trump.

The developments come as Damascus is in great need of its major oil deposits in order to gain revenue and address its energy needs amid crippling unilateral Western sanctions targeting the war-ravaged country.

Due to the sanctions and war, Syria is currently extracting only 10 percent of its pre-war oil production capacity.

Zakharova said the U.S. was effectively "bypassing its own sanctions" against Syria by seizing the country's oil.

She added that Washington was hypocritically declaring "commitment to some democratic values and international law" while flagrantly violating the country's sovereignty.

The spokeswoman stressed that it was within the rights of the international community to question America's activities, warning that U.S. troops were "not going to leave the areas in the near future".

Syria, along with Iran and Turkey, have already denounced Washington's illegal appropriation of Syrian oil.

Speaking on Tuesday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif sarcastically praised Trump for admitting that he intends to "secure" the Syrian oil.

"At least President Trump is honest to say what the United States intends to do," Zarif quipped.

Pakistan army says supports elected government amid major protest



TEHRAN— Pakistan's powerful military said it supported the country's elected government and the constitution, as tens of thousands of opposition protesters gathered in the capital demanding that Prime Minister Imran Khan's year-old government quits by Sunday.

"We believe in the law and the constitution and our support is with the democratically elected government, not with any party," military spokesman Major General Asif Ghafoor said in comments to a television news channel late on Friday.

Earlier on Friday, the opposition had demanded that cricket star-turned-politician Khan and his administration resign within two days, raising the stakes in a protest campaign that the government has denounced as a threat to democracy.

The opposition says Khan's government is illegitimate and is being propped up by the military, which has ruled Pakistan for about half of its history and sets security and foreign policy.

The military denies meddling in politics and Khan has dismissed the calls to step down.

The leader of the protest, religious party chief Fazl-ur-Rehman, told a rally of tens of thousands of supporters that he did not want a "collision with institutions", a thinly veiled reference to the military, and called

on them to be impartial.

Ghafoor said Rehman should know the military was impartial and it should not be dragged into politics.

Rehman, leader of the conservative Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl party, is a veteran politician who can mobilize significant support in religious schools across the country.

He was joined at the Friday rally, which police estimated was attended by 35,000 people, by leaders of the two main opposition parties.

Protesters were camped out at the rally site on Saturday, cooking food and resting.

Rehman had earlier warned of chaos if the government did not step down, but on Friday he told the crowd they would decide what action to take if their two-day sit-in at the rally site failed.

Security is tight in Islamabad with the government and diplomatic sector - just a few kilometres from the rally - sealed off, with shipping containers used to block roads.

Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Friday urged the government to handle the protest peacefully.

The government, struggling to get the economy on track, has denounced the protests as a threat to the constitution and to democracy and has said it will not be allowed to paralyze the capital.

France, Israel wanted a 'terrorist state' in Syria: Turkey



TEHRAN — Turkey has accused France and Israel of seeking to establish "a terrorist state" within Syria where they are reportedly assisting Kurdish separatists in the Arab country's north.

"They wanted to establish a terror state there," Turkey's Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Friday. "And this was spearheaded by France and Israel. I speak very clearly. This is the reason behind the breaking out."

France has said it is imposing an immediate halt to arms exports to Turkey over Ankara's operations in northern Syria, while Israel is considering sending arms to Kurdish militants.

France's parliament on Wednesday unanimously approved a resolution, reiterating "unwavering support" for the Kurds who are the target of of Turkish attacks in northern Syria.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry on Thursday summoned the French ambassador and condemned the resolution.

"It is obvious that France took this decision after its plan to establish a terrorist state in Syria failed," the ministry said.

Last month, Turkish troops launched a cross-border offensive into northeastern Syria in a declared attempt to clear YPG Kurdish militants from border areas and establish a "safe zone" there.

Ankara views the U.S.-backed YPG as

a terrorist organization tied to the home-grown Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has been seeking an autonomous Kurdish region in Turkey since 1984.

The YPG constitutes the backbone of the SDF, an anti-Damascus alliance of predominantly Kurdish militants who maintains close ties with the United States as well.

The Turkish military operation came after the U.S. abruptly pulled out its forces of the region, clearing the path for Ankara to go ahead with an offensive against Washington's longtime Kurdish allies.

Ankara says it aims to create the 32km (20-mile) deep "safe zone" along the Syrian side of the border where up to two million Syrian refugees can be resettled.

Cavusoglu said some 365,000 Syrian refugees residing in Turkey have already returned to settlements within what Ankara insists is a safe zone. When the White House announced on October 6 that the U.S. would be withdrawing its forces from northeastern Syria, far-left and far-right parties in Israel rushed to express their overt support and sympathy for the abandoned Kurds.

Israel has long been backing militants operating against the Syrian government. The regime has, on several occasions, criticized Turkey for its operations against Kurdish militants.

Israel in emergency situation, most vulnerable to threats: Lieberman

TEHRAN — Former Israeli minister of military affairs Avigdor Lieberman says the regime is in an "emergency situation" amid heightened tensions in the Middle East means that it is now vulnerable more than ever.

"When IAF Commander Maj.-Gen. Amikam Norkin warns that the challenge of aerial defense is becoming more complex and the threat of missiles and rockets is now being joined by drones and cruise missiles..., it means we are in an emergency situation," Lieberman wrote on his Facebook page.

Lieberman was referring to comments made by Israeli air force chief Amikam Norkin who said the military's multi-tiered network of air defense systems were "on alert" amid a general threat of coming under attack.

"The challenge of air defense has become more complicated. Joining the threat of missiles and rockets are now attack drones and cruise missiles," he said. "Even as we speak, Arrow, Patriot, David's Sling and Iron Dome batteries are on alert."

According to Press TV, Israeli experts have warned that America's recent decision to pull troops out of Syria and abandon Kurdish allies in the wake of a military incursion by Turkey meant that President Donald Trump's White House

is not willing to engage militarily in the Middle East region.

This means Israel can no longer count on Washington's unconditional support in case it traps itself in a new military conflict, the Times of Israel wrote.

The warning by Lieberman follows similar statements by Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has a long record of using Iran to stir security concern for political gains.

Earlier this week, Netanyahu claimed that "Iran wants to develop precision-guided missiles that can hit any target in Israel within five to ten meters."

"Iran hopes to use Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen as bases to attack Israel with statistical missiles and precision-guided missiles. That is a great, great danger," the Israeli prime minister claimed.

Yemen's Houthi movement strongly dismissed Netanyahu's allegations that Iran is seeking the means to launch precision-guided missiles at the Israeli-occupied territories from Yemen, stressing that such remarks are meant to prolong the Saudi-led military campaign against the Yemeni nation.

Iran has on occasions rejected accusations that it is providing missiles to Yemen's Ansarullah movement, saying



such claims are merely aimed at diverting attention from atrocities that Saudi Arabia and its allies are perpetrating in Yemen.

Israel has also used such claims by its officials to pound Syrian armed forces in an attempt to boost anti-government militant forces in the country a boost amid their major defeats.

Netanyahu has also accused Iraq and Lebanon of housing Iranian missiles, a claim both countries have denied.

Anti-government protesters in Iraq, Lebanon torch flags of U.S., Israel

➔ In Lebanon on Thursday, demonstrators burned Israeli flags in Beirut's Riad al-Solh Square, shouting 'Death to Israel'.

■ **Iraqi protesters block major port near Basra**

Meanwhile, Thousands of Iraqi protesters are blocking roads leading to Iraq's main Gulf port, according to security sources, as mass demonstrations calling for economic reform and an overhaul of the political system continue for a ninth consecutive day.

Protesters on Saturday burned tyres and set up concrete blocks around the Umm Qasr port, south of the city of Basra, after security forces moved in overnight to try and disperse a sit-in.

■ **Mass protests**

Saturday's developments came after thousands gathered in Baghdad and across several southern cities on Friday in a bid to keep up the pressure on the country's political elite amid widespread calls for major reforms and fresh elections.

The rallies are part of a movement that initially erupted in early October, when a previous bout of anti-government demonstrations rocked the country.

President Barham Salih said this week he would approve a snap parliamentary vote once a new electoral law is passed, adding that Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi is willing to resign once political leaders agree on a replacement.

The pledges, however, have seemingly failed to quell the unrest.

Protesters' ire is focused on Iraq's entire political establishment, which many say has failed to improve the lives of the country's citizens despite a period of relative calm ushered in following the defeat of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL or ISIS) armed group two years ago.

Despite Iraq's vast oil wealth, nearly 60 percent of the country's 40 million people live on less than \$6 a day, World Bank figures show.

Millions lack access to adequate healthcare, education, clean water and electricity, with much of the country's infrastructure in tatters.

Democrats take a gamble on Trump's impeachment

➔ Trump has described the impeachment as "fake". Pelosi said that Trump has affirmed that he had asked the Ukrainian president to take actions in favor of his political position, claiming the measures of Trump's administration were undermining U.S. national security.

"The release of the notes of the call by the White House confirms that the president engaged in behavior that undermines the integrity of our elections, the dignity of the office he holds and our national security," Pelosi said in a statement.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff also said that the president should prioritize national interests rather than his personal interests. Schiff added that they will study whether Trump has exploited military aid to Ukraine to meet his demands.

■ **Consequences of Trump's impeachment**

Experts argue that Trump's impeachment and lack of a decisive leader will make the U.S. more vulnerable to other countries' plots. As Robert W. Merry recently said in The National Interest magazine, "When the president is weakened at home, then America is weakened abroad."

However, Washington's friends and enemies consider U.S. foreign policy insignificant due to political infighting at home. Instead, the great power players are seeking to limit the influence of the country rather than cooperating with it.

The recent accusations against Trump can be easily stated as a national security issue, which needs to be reformed immediately. Theoretically, military aid will be provided only if U.S. officials become convinced that they can achieve main security objectives of Washington. Therefore refusing to provide aid because of political reasons is a serious wrongdoing, showing that the personal interests of the president is superior to U.S. national interests.

■ **Will the impeachment inquiry get the necessary vote?**

Now that the House has launched an impeachment inquiry into the president, the Senate will play an important role in the process. In this case, the Senate will act as a court that decides on Trump's dismissal or survival.

To oust Trump, the votes of 67 members of the Senate is needed, which would be two-thirds of their population. Currently, there are 53 Republicans and 47 Democrats in the Senate. Therefore, Democrats need the support of 20 Republican senators.

Since the Republicans have not supported Trump's impeachment, it is highly unlikely that Trump's impeachment leads to his dismissal.

■ **Impact of the impeachment on the 2020 presidential election**

The impact of Trump's impeachment on the presidential election depends on his defense and the credibility of accusations against him. Democrats are well aware that accusing Trump of corruption and incompetence will not affect American voters. Democrats probably knew that those allegations were not strong enough to undermine Trump, but on the contrary they would undermine their positions.

By stating an issue related to U.S. national security, Democrats took the risk of impeachment. To make the impeachment strategy successful, Democrats should prove that the president has endangered U.S. national security and he may do the same in future. This claim can go beyond party politics and put unbearable pressure on Trump, Republicans and uncertain voters.

Turkey says will send ISIL prisoners to home countries

TEHRAN — Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said on Saturday Turkey would send captured ISIL (Daesh) terrorist group's members back to their home countries, and he complained about European inaction on the matter.

"That is not acceptable to us. It's also irresponsible," he said of Europe leaving Turkey to deal with the prisoners alone. "We will send the captured Daesh members to their countries," he told reporters, using another name for Islamic State.

According to Reuters, Turkey has captured some escaped ISIL members in northeastern Syria over the last month after it launched a military incursion there.

Six bombs go off near mosque in capital of eastern Afghanistan's Logar province

TEHRAN — Six bombs went off near a mosque in the capital of Logar province, eastern Afghanistan, on Saturday, a source said.

The explosions broke out in front of the gate of the Abdullah ibn Masood Comprehensive Mosque at around 1 p.m. (08:30 GMT).

According to Sputnik, no casualties have been reported so far, with the nearby area

cordoned off by the National Directorate of Security and the police, according to sources.

This comes as an explosion ripped through Afghanistan's northeastern province of Takhar, resulting in deaths of at least nine students. According to the Pajhwok news agency, the blast rocked the Darqad district when the children were heading to school.

In a separate development, a bomb blast near the police station compound in the northern Afghan province of Baghlan wounded eleven people, including civilians. Provincial police spokesman Jawed Basharat said that the explosive device was planted by the water canal in close proximity to the police headquarters.

The situation in Afghanistan has been tense for decades amid the insurgency of the radical Taliban movement and the Daesh terrorist group (banned in Russia). Even though the United States and the Taliban started negotiating foreign troop withdrawal last year, the peace talks broke down this September, prompting more bloodshed.

Motorcycling: Indonesia’s Munandar dies after crash at Sepang

Indonesian rider Afridza Munandar died after a crash in the Idemitsu Asia Talent Cup (IATC) race at the Sepang International Circuit on Saturday.

The incident occurred when Munandar went down at turn 10 on the first lap, before the race was stopped immediately with a red flag and then cancelled.

After receiving medical attention by the side of the track, the 20-year-old was transferred to the Kuala Lumpur Hospital where he succumbed to his injuries.

“The FIM (International Motorcycling Federation), FIM Asia, Dorna Sports, and all those in the Idemitsu Asia Talent Cup pass on our deepest condolences to the family, friends and loved ones of Munandar,” the race organizers said in a statement.

Munandar was one of the championship contenders heading into this weekend’s finale of the 2019 IATC, having recorded two wins and four podium finishes this season.

(Source: Reuters)

Warriors’ woes continue as Green injures finger

Golden State Warriors forward Draymond Green injured his left index finger during Friday night’s 127-110 loss to the San Antonio Spurs, and his status for Saturday’s home game against the Charlotte Hornets is unclear.

Green was wearing a wrap over both his wrist and left index finger when he met with reporters following Friday’s game and said he was dealing with a “ligament” issue. Officially, the Warriors called the injury a sprained left index finger. It remains to be determined whether Green will need an MRI.

“I hurt my finger,” Green said. “Ligament action. But it is what it is. ... I don’t know [about Saturday]; we’ll see. It’s pretty sore. I couldn’t grip the ball the whole entire [game], probably since the second quarter. Which is why I was making a lot of one-handed, right-handed passes and dribbling left with my right hand. I couldn’t really grip the ball, so we’ll see. Hopefully, it will calm down a little bit overnight, but who knows?”

Green’s injury comes just two nights after Warriors superstar Stephen Curry broke his left hand following a collision with Phoenix Suns big man Aron Baynes. The Warriors announced prior to Friday’s game that Curry will be out at least three months after undergoing surgery.

With Curry out of the lineup, Green acknowledged that the atmosphere was much different inside a subdued Chase Center on Friday night.

“There were definitely less fans there tonight, which is to be expected,” Green, 29, said after Golden State fell to 1-4. “It’s a different vibe, for sure. When you’re not winning as much, that’s usually the case. The hope is that people ride with you through the thick and the thin, but that’s just not the reality of this world that we live in, so it is what it is. We got each other and we’re going to rock with that, and that’s all that matters.”

(Source: ESPN)

LeBron and Doncic post stunning numbers in epic duel

When Luka Doncic played against LeBron James for the first time as an NBA rookie last season, he asked for the Los Angeles Lakers star’s jersey after the game. On Friday, in far less ceremonial fashion, James came into Doncic’s building and took a win away from the Dallas Mavericks’ rising phenom.

James outdueled Doncic with 39 points, 12 rebounds and 16 assists to Doncic’s 31 points, 13 rebounds and 15 assists in a thrilling 119-110 overtime win for the Lakers as L.A. surged back from a 10-point fourth-quarter deficit.

Doncic, 20, and James, 34, became the youngest and oldest players in NBA history, respectively, to record a 30-10-15 game, and James became the first player to have his stat line combined with four steals (since steals became an official stat in 1973-74).

“I don’t really get into the one-on-one battle,” James said. “Obviously he’s a great young talent, I love his game, his ability to not only create shots for himself, but you guys know I love the fact that he can get great looks for his teammates. That’s what I thrive on, that’s what I’ve always believed in and he just plays the game the right way.”

Not only did James get the team victory, but in the handful of instances when he found Doncic guarding him on a switch, he won that, too. James shot 5 for 7 from the field (4 for 4 from 3) for 15 points with Doncic positioned as his primary defender in the half court, according to ESPN Stats & Information research. Doncic, conversely, was 1 for 1 (a 3-pointer) with James guarding him.

Kyle Kuzma, who made his season debut, said the Lakers were hunting that matchup on offense.

(Source: Mirror)

Real Madrid set to allow Braham and Mariano to leave in January

As the January transfer window approaches, Real Madrid are planning to make space in their squad by parting ways with a couple of players.

Los Blancos have already put Mariano Diaz on the market, while they are willing to loan out Braham Diaz in January.

The former hasn’t played a single minute so far this season as Zinedine Zidane has no place for him in his plans.

Braham, however, is a player who won over the French coach at the end of last season and the only issue is that there is congestion in his position, especially after the emergence of Rodrygo Goes.

Real Madrid prompted the 20-year-old to seek playing time elsewhere last summer, but he insisted that he wanted to get an opportunity to feature for Los Blancos.

Neither Mariano nor Braham were willing to depart in the previous transfer window, but at the club they are confident that both will reconsider their futures come January.

(Source: Marca)

Powerpacked South Africa dominate ragged England to win third World Cup

South Africa laid the groundwork with traditional Springbok rugby and finished off an out-gunned England side with two superbly-taken late tries to win the World Cup for the third time courtesy of a convincing 32-12 victory on Saturday.

Wingers Makazole Mapimpi and Cheslin Kolbe crossed in the last 15 minutes for South Africa’s first ever tries in a World Cup final but six penalties from the boot of Handre Pollard had already put the Springboks firmly in charge.

Superb game management, set piece dominance, brutal defence and almost flawless place-kicking had been enough to see off an England side that had dismantled the double defending champion All Blacks in the semi-finals last week.

While the tactics were as traditional as the dark green Springbok shirt, the team was far more representative of a multi-racial nation than those of 1995 and 2007 and Siya Kolisi became the first black captain to lift the Webb Ellis Cup.

“Since I have been alive I have not seen South Africa like this,” Kolisi said before receiving the trophy from Japan’s Crown Prince Akishino.

“It was like in ‘95. So many challenges we have (in South Africa). The coach told us we are not playing for ourselves, we are playing for the people back home.

“We appreciate all the support, we love you, South Africa, and we can achieve anything if we work together.”



England came into the match with huge expectations after the New Zealand win but were as outplayed in all departments by the South Africans, just as the All Blacks were last week.

Eddie Jones, who was in charge of Australia when England won their only World Cup in 2003, became the first head coach to lose two finals.

“We just struggled to get in the game,” said Jones. “The effort from players was outstanding but we struggled to get on the

front foot today.

“I can’t fault the preparation of the players. They worked hard for the whole of the World Cup, played with a lot of passion, but we just weren’t good enough today.”

Flyhalf Farrell kicked four penalties for England but they were chasing the match all evening and hanging on doggedly trying to contain the rampant Springboks by the end.

The English had suffered a huge blow when prop Kyle Sinckler went off with concussion in the third minute leaving

their scrum all but uncompetitive against the Springbok pack.

South Africa made the most of the weakness, winning a string of scrum penalties and taking a 12-6 lead into halftime whilst building a foundation that enabled their wingers to seal the victory in the last 15 minutes.

■ Prolific form

Mapimpi has been in prolific form this year and he showed South African wingers can play a bit with ball in hand when he chipped-through, collected an offload from Lukhanyo Am and touched down for his sixth try of the tournament in the 66th minute.

The elusive Kolbe added the second try, his third of the tournament, eight minutes later, skipping past the tackle of Owen Farrell on the wing and racing away to the delight of the South Africans in the crowd of 70,103.

Pollard, who ran the game with livewire scrumhalf Faf de Klerk, coolly landed both conversions to take his match tally to 22 points.

The Springboks became the first team to lose a pool match at a World Cup and go on to win it, having gone down to the All Blacks in their tournament opener at the same Yokohama International Stadium.

They join the New Zealanders with three World Cup triumphs and England remain the only team from the northern hemisphere to have won the title in nine editions.

(Source: Reuters)

Warriors’ Stephen Curry undergoes surgery, out at least three months



Golden State Warriors star Stephen Curry underwent surgery on his broken left hand/second metacarpal Friday and will miss at least three months, the team announced.

The two-time MVP had surgery at Cedars-Sinai Kerlan-Jobe Institute in Los Angeles. It was done by Dr. Steven Shin, who also performed surgery on Drew Brees’ thumb in September.

The Warriors said Curry, 31, is expected to make a full recovery, and the team will update his status in three months.

Curry was hurt in Wednesday’s loss to the Suns when he drove to the rim and collided with Phoenix big man Aron Baynes, who attempted to take a charge and ended up falling on top of the star guard’s hand. The Warriors said Thursday that Curry had a CT scan on the hand and would have specialists look at it before deciding how to proceed.

Ultimately, they decided surgery was the best course of action.

It’s a significant loss for a Warriors team that fell to 1-4 with Friday night’s 127-110 defeat to the visiting San Antonio Spurs. Curry, a six-time All-Star, was expected to carry the offensive load for a Warriors team without Klay Thompson and Kevin Durant. He was averaging 23.5 points per game this season.

“The objectives don’t change,” coach

Steve Kerr said said before the Spurs game. “The object is still to win. It’s still to prepare. It’s still to compete.

“The expectations change. I think there is an awareness of where we are. What we have to do is go compete and go play. We have a bunch of young, hungry guys who are ready to play. There is no reason why we shouldn’t be the team on the floor, the first team there for the loose ball. There’s no reason why we can’t be the team who plays the hardest every night. We may not have enough talent but we should be competitive as hell, and that is what we’re going to preach. That’s how we’re going to prepare the guys.”

The Warriors will play 45 games over the next three months; they have 51 more games before the All-Star break.

“I mean, it sucks,” teammate Draymond Green said Friday of the Curry loss. “It’s tough, you know, a lot of people care about the basketball side of it. And you know, the team will be without Steph. Obviously, it gets way harder without Steph.

“I worry about the Steph that can’t pick up Canon [his son]. You know, the Steph that can’t toss Riley and Ryan [his daughters] around. The Steph that can’t pass Ayesha [his wife] a pot because she asks.

(Source: ESPN)

‘Too passive’ PSG stunned by rock-bottom Dijon in Ligue 1



Paris Saint-Germain suffered a shock 2-1 defeat at the hands of rock-bottom Dijon on Friday with coach Thomas Tuchel accusing his expensively-assembled team of “being too passive and not playing together”.

It was the third loss of the Ligue 1 season for the French champions who could also see their lead at the top trimmed to just five points by the end of the weekend.

Dijon, who started the day at the foot of the table with just nine points, fell behind to Kylian Mbappe’s fifth goal in seven games.

However, Mounir Chouair levelled in the sixth minute of stoppage time in the first half before Venezuelan international Jhonder Cadiz hit the winner in the 47th minute.

“We were too passive in the first half, not only in defence but also in attack because we did not play together,” said Tuchel.

“We lacked precision and rhythm. It was much better in the second half because we had three shots before half-time and 17 after the break. Maybe we didn’t deserve to have success or luck with us today.”

PSG were without the injured Neymar but looked more than capable of blowing away a Dijon team who had managed to score just six goals in 11 games before Friday’s match which was played out in torrential rain.

Dijon had previously never defeated PSG in the top flight in 2011, conceding

31 goals in eight meetings.

Mbappe gave PSG the lead in the 19th minute after a terrible mix-up in the Dijon defence allowed Angel Di Maria to steal possession and feed Mbappe.

The French World Cup winner finished with a delightful chip over Alfred Gomis in the Dijon goal.

After the match was held up due to a nasty blow suffered by Fouad Chafik who collided with Gomis, Dijon were on level terms.

Didier Ndong crossed from the right with PSG keeper Keylor Navas clearing the ball only as far as Chouair who hit the target.

Two minutes into the second period, Cadiz shrugged off the attentions of Marquinhos and Idrissa Gueye before tucking away a left foot shot between the legs of Navas.

“We hate to lose,” added Tuchel. “It could have been possible to win given the number of chances we created. We always say that we are in another league. We must accept defeat and improve but I retain confidence in my players.”

The three points lifted Dijon into third from bottom in the Ligue 1 table while PSG will now need to regroup before facing Club Brugge in the Champions League at home on Wednesday.

(Source: AFP)

Olympics: Raised-fist Olympian Carlos has no regrets over 1968 protest

More than 50 years after they were kicked off the U.S. team and sent home from the 1968 Mexico City Olympics for their raised-fist protest, Tommie Smith and John Carlos received a long-awaited moment of redemption on Friday.

The former sprinters, once rebuked as unpatriotic for using the Olympic platform to make a political statement, received the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee’s (USOPC) highest honor as they were inducted onto the organisation’s Hall of Fame.

After walking the red carpet ahead of the induction ceremony in Colorado Springs, Colorado, Carlos discussed how his day of recognition from the USOPC finally came to pass.

“We realized that after 51 years the greatest invention was not the plane, not the TV, not the telephone but the eraser,” Carlos, 74, told Reuters in a telephone interview. “To realise that we can make mistakes in life and there should be no shame.

“I think the (USOPC) has come to that point.”

Smith and Carlos finished first and third, respectively, in the 200 meters final and then launched an unprecedented protest on behalf of oppressed American blacks when they stood on the podium with heads bowed and black-gloved fists raised skyward.

Long before U.S. President Donald Trump called kneeling NFL players “sons of bitches” Smith and Carlos bore the brunt



of the backlash for taking a stand against racial discrimination and that decision meant jeopardizing their careers and reputations.

But Carlos was crystal clear when asked if he would change anything if he could go back in time.

“Let me say this loud and clear: No regrets whatsoever. No regrets whatsoever,” said Carlos. “One more time: no regrets whatsoever.”

The protest, which occurred amid the civil rights movement in the United States and not long after the assassination

of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr, cost Carlos and Smith dearly.

At home they were heroes to their contemporaries, and pariahs to the establishment.

Both were suspended from the U.S. Olympic team and sent home, where they received death threats and hate mail. Carlos’s wife committed suicide, Smith’s first marriage collapsed and both men struggled for years to make a living.

“We sacrificed our careers but we helped so many others,” said Carlos.

For decades the former sprinters were left on the sidelines of the official U.S. Olympic movement. Their 2016 visit to the White House, along with U.S. Olympic committee leaders, marked the first official event they’d been part of since their ouster in 1968.

Carlos said his induction into the USOPC Hall of Fame sent a clear message to the world.

“If you’ve done the right thing and haven’t disrespected anyone and you believe that you can make a significant change for society for the better you should take the initiative to do that,” said Carlos.

“In the 51 years that have passed I think we’ve come to the realization that hey man we have to be a lot more open eyed.”

(Source: Eurosport)

Iranian delegation visits Basra ahead of Iraq match

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — A delegation from Iran visited Basra Stadium to investigate the possibility of playing in the 2022 World Cup qualifier.

Iraq are supposed to host Iran on Nov. 14 at the Basra Stadium but the media reports suggest that the venue will be changed.

Al Jazeera TV has already reported that the match will likely be held in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Region but the football federations of Iraq and Iran have not yet confirmed that.

The Iranian delegation visited the stadium and hotel in Basra on Friday.

On Sunday, FIFA will make a decision on whether or not it is safe to play the crucial Group C game at the Basra Stadium.

At the start of October, street protests erupted in several Iraqi cities over unemployment and poor public services. The demonstrations resumed on Friday after a pause of about two weeks.

The first round of the protests left more than 150 people dead in Iraq, according to the Interior Ministry.

The match between Iraq's Al-Quwa Al-Jawiya and MC Alger of Algeria at the Arab Club Championship in Basra has been canceled for security reasons.

Iran are third in Group C with six points. Iraq lead the table with seven points and Bahrain sit second on goal difference.



Iran's women will compete in Olympic 3x3 basketball qualifiers

S P O R T S **TEHRAN** — Iran's women's team will be slotted in Pool B of the FIBA 3x3 Olympic Qualifying Tournament (OQT) that will have three tickets to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics at stake.

The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) has confirmed the four men's and women's teams to have directly qualified for the 3x3 basketball competitions at Tokyo 2020.

The top four teams in the FIBA 3x3 Federation Ranking in the women's category (Russia, China, Mongolia and Romania) earned a trip to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, where 3x3 will make its first appearance on July 25-29.

The top three teams in the FIBA 3x3 Ranking in the men's category (Serbia, Russia and China) together with the Japanese hosts will join them in the Aomi Urban Sports Park in the waterfront Aomi district for the much-anticipated event.

With Japan's men's team having earned the direct spot, the women's team can qualify via either the Olympic qualification tournament or at the last-chance universality qualification competition.

Pool A of the women's Olympic qual-

FIBA 3x3 OLYMPIC QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT			
INDIA, MARCH 2020			
MEN	POOL A	POOL B	POOL C
	MONGOLIA	USA	SLOVENIA
	POLAND	LITHUANIA	FRANCE
	BRAZIL	BELGIUM	QATAR
	TURKEY	SOUTH KOREA	PHILIPPINES
WOMEN	POOL A	POOL B	POOL C
	FRANCE	IRAN	NETHERLANDS
	USA	JAPAN	ESTONIA
	GERMANY	UKRAINE	BELARUS
	URUGUAY	TURKMENISTAN	HUNGARY

ifier will feature France, United States, Germany, Uruguay and Indonesia, while Iran, Japan, Ukraine, Turkmenistan and Australia contest Pool B.

The Netherlands, Estonia, Belarus, Hungary and Sri Lanka were drawn in Pool C, with Pool D seeing hosts India take on Italy, Chinese Taipei, Czech Republic and Switzerland.

The men's competition sees Mongolia, Poland, Brazil, Turkey and Spain participate in Pool A, while the United States headline Pool B against Lithuania, Belgium, South Korea and New Zealand.

Slovenia, France, Qatar, the Philippines and the Dominican Republic are drawn in Pool C, with the Netherlands, Latvia, Canada, Croatia and India in Pool D.

A total of 20 teams per gender can still make it to Tokyo after qualifying for the FIBA 3x3 Olympic Qualifying Tournament (OQT), which will grant 3 tickets to the Olympics by gender and take place in India on March 2020.

The teams made it to the OQT due to being hosts (India and Japan's women), thanks to their medal at the FIBA 3x3 World Cup 2019 or because they were the highest-ranked teams in the FIBA 3x3 Federation Ranking not yet qualified, FIBA.com reported.

One of 3x3's missions is to bring basketball to new countries, which are not traditional basketball powerhouses and FIBA has put in place a series of universality rules. A maximum of 10 teams per continent and a minimum of 30 different countries must take part at the Olympic Qualifying Tournament. In other words, only the top six teams qualified for the OQT based on ranking could have a team both in men and women (like France, the Netherlands, and USA). The last 10 berths in each gender were allocated following the Federation Ranking list only if the respective country didn't already have a team in any gender qualified.

First female match commissioner appointed for AFC Cup final

Kanya Keomany of Laos will join the history books following her appointment by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) as the first female match commissioner to take charge of the AFC Cup final between DPR Korea's 4.25 SC and Al Ahed from Lebanon on Monday in Kuala Lumpur.

It will be another feather in the cap for the AFC Executive Committee Member and Lao Football Federation (LFF) General Secretary who was also selected by FIFA as one of four female match commissioners for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 Joint Qualifiers.

After successfully managing the Asian Qualifiers match between Singapore and Uzbekistan on October 15, Keomany will now turn her attention to the AFC Cup final where 4.25 SC and Al Ahed are aiming to lift the trophy for the first time.

"It is an honour to be appointed in the AFC Cup final as a match commissioner from Laos. This clearly shows that the AFC gives everyone an opportunity regardless of gender as long as you are capable of delivering the



best results," said Keomany.

"I'm proud to be part of this generation of women who continue to break the barriers in Asian football, which has seen several women match officials and commissioners being appointed in men's football competitions this year. This is definitely a step in the right direction for all women working in the sport."

Keomany, who has been an AFC match commissioner in AFC club competitions and women's age group matches

since 2008, attributes her rapid rise in her football career to the experience of working closely with the AFC and FIFA.

"I have received many good opportunities in the last few years and I have learned so much by working with people from the AFC and FIFA. I really value the experience and I must thank the AFC for believing, supporting and giving me these great opportunities," said Keomany.

The AFC remains committed in its support for women in the football workforce. In May, the trio of Japanese referees Yoshimi Yamashita alongside assistant referees Makoto Bozono and Naomi Teshirogi became the first all-female cast to officiate an AFC Cup match between Myanmar's Yangon United FC and Naga World of Cambodia.

The AFC also nominated four female match commissioners - Korea Republic's Kim Se-in, Nguyen Thanh Ha of Vietnam, Lau Cheuk Chi of Hong Kong and Keomany - before their appointments by FIFA to take charge of the Asian Qualifiers.

(Source: the-afc)

Man United slip to defeat at Bournemouth

Manchester United's improved run of form ended on Saturday as Bournemouth defeated Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side 1-0 in a rain-drenched Premier League encounter at the Vitality Stadium.

United, who were unchanged from their 3-1 win against Norwich despite apparent injury concerns throughout the week, fell behind on the stroke of half-time as Bournemouth's Josh King netted with a fine finish from eight yards out.

The striker chested down the ball in the visitors' box before flicking it over the head of United defender Aaron Wan-Bissaka and volleying under goalkeeper David De Gea.

Manchester United manager Solskjaer speaking to BT Sport after the game, said: "We are disappointed but when you come to places like this you have to take control of the game. We did not and we could not get the goal. We were missing some quality at times. Maybe I should have started something others. I think we started the game well though so maybe that was not the case. We have to win games like this.



We are disappointed. We have to look forward now though.

"The first goal was always going to be important. Every time you concede a goal

it is bad but we are disappointed with this. We had time to tackle on a couple of occasions. You have to say it was a bit of magic that won the game."

(Source: ESPN)

Sardar Azmoun could join Real Madrid: report

Zenit St. Petersburg forward Sardar Azmoun is one step closer to seeing his dream come true: Joining Real Madrid.

According to the Russian site, the 24-year-old player can join the Galacticos for a transfer fee of 35 million euros in the summer window, because Eden Hazard and Luka Jovic have scored just one goal in three months.

The Iranian international striker has already stated he is a supporter of Spanish club Real Madrid and wants to play in the team in the future.

(Source: Versiya.info)

Iran ready for Intercontinental Beach Soccer Cup: coach

TASNIM — Iran national beach soccer team coach Abbas Hashempour says that they are well-prepared for the 2019 Beach Soccer Intercontinental Cup.

Team Melli have been drawn in Group B of the competition along with three-time winner Russia, Mexico and Egypt.

The UAE has been pitted with powerhouses Italy and Spain and Asian champion Japan in Group A.

"We will participate in the competition with a combination of young and experienced players. Iran will start the campaign with Mexico and we know the team very well," Hashempour said.

"The world's top-level teams will participate in the competition and we have a difficult task to defend our title but will do our best," he added.

"Our team has recently played at the ANOC World Beach Games and our players are tired. But it will not be a big problem for the team in the competition," Hashempour stated.

The prestigious competition will be held at the Kite Beach in Dubai from November 5 to 9.

The Beach Soccer Intercontinental Cup is an international beach soccer tournament which is held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates every November as the finale of the competitive international beach soccer season.

Dordoi secure back to back Kyrgyz Premier League titles

FC Dordoi completed their bid for a second successive Kyrgyz Premier League title in dominant style, sealing the championship win with a 5-0 success over Abdissh-Ata Kant on Saturday.

Mustafa Iusuopov scored a double for Alexander Krestinin's side, with Vahyt Orazsahedov, Miran Murzaev and Mamatzia Zholdoshev all finding the net as Alexander Krestinin's side retained the title with a match to spare.



The Bishkek club were as many as eight points behind fellow contenders FC Alay Osh earlier in the season, but a consistent run of results and a league-leading 17 goals from Orazsahedov ensured Dordoi became champions for an 11th time.

Dordoi had endured a frustrating week coming into the match, having lost the Kyrgyzstan Cup Final to Neftchi Kochkor-Ata last weekend before missing a chance to claim the title against the same opponents on Wednesday.

But those missteps were forgotten as early as four minutes into Saturday's clash, as Turkmenistan star Orazsahedov opened the scoring for Dordoi, before Kyrgyz Republic Murzaev international continued his strong recent form with a second goal five minutes before half-time.

With second-placed Alay 2-0 behind in their simultaneous match against Neftchi, it now appeared certain that Dordoi would wrap up the title and the Bishkek-based removed any doubt by adding three more goals in the latter stages.

Mustafa Iusuopov made it 3-0 in the 79th minute, with substitute Mamatzia Zholdoshev adding a fourth eight minutes later before Iusuopov completed his brace and a comprehensive 5-0 win for the newly crowned champions.

Alay pulled off a remarkable recovery in their match, scoring three goals in the final 30 minutes to beat Neftchi 3-2, but it wasn't enough to stop Dordoi - four points clear on top of the table - from winning a fifth title in nine years.

The 2019 Kyrgyz Premier League season will come to a close on Tuesday, with Dordoi away to Kara-Balta, while Alay will look to sign off with a home win against FC Ilbirs Bishkek.

(Source: the-afc)

Johor Darul Ta'zim lift Malaysia Cup

Johor Darul Ta'zim have been crowned Malaysia Cup champions of 2019 after cruising to a 3-0 win over Kedah in Saturday's final at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium.

JDT broke the deadlock in the 27th minute when Syafiq Ahmad, a minute after coming on for the injured Diogo, released Gonzalo Cabrera down the left.

Cabrera played a clever cutback into the area and it was met by Leandro Velazquez, who had time his run to perfection as he latched onto the ball and coolly finished into the bottom corner.

Four minutes after the half-hour mark, Safawi Rasid doubled his side's advantage when he lined up a freekick from the left and went for goal despite being faced with a tough angle, proceeding an outstanding strike that Ifwat Akmal was unable to prevent from creeping in at the near post.

And, in the 58th minute, JDT put the result beyond doubt when Afiq Fazail found space down the left and hung an excellent ball up in the area, where it was met by Syafiq with a thumping header into the back of the net.

(Source: Fox Sports Asia)

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The greatest source of despair is that same wealth that you see in people's hands.

Imam Ali (AS)

Cineastes urge meeting with Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Iranian House of Cinema, which is the official guild of Iranian cineastes, has asked for an urgent meeting with Judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi. In a letter sent to Raisi on Saturday, the Iranian House of Cinema wrote, “We urge a meeting with your excellency to emphasize the honor of Iranian cinema in a fair atmosphere.”



A logo for the Iranian House of Cinema.

“Are you aware of what difficulties the Iranian cinema as a medium is facing in order to reflect the people's voice and image? “The recent actions of your colleagues have challenged the welfare and, above all, the job security among the cineastes.

“We face the unanswered questions of who behind the scenes is trying to prevent the art and culture community, especially filmmakers, from feeling relief, and who is seeking to extend a variance in the cultural authority.

“We urge the rule of law without any one-sided interpretation.” This letter is in response to the Tehran Public and Revolutionary Court's decision last week to remove director Kianush Ayyari's controversial movie “The Paternal House” from theaters across the country, while the movie had obtained all necessary licensing for screening from the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

In a statement the court had declared, “The film contains scenes insulting the Iranian people's religious beliefs, promoting violence against women, undermining the perfect Iranian-Islamic traditions and culture, and representing a false and distorted image of the Iranian family.”

The culture ministry previously had banned “The Paternal House” ten years ago due to allegedly violent scenes, but the movie was released about ten days ago after Ayyari made some modifications to it.

However, the court claimed that no modifications had been made to the movie and “all the culprits will be prosecuted.”

Athelas String Quartet to perform in Tehran

A R T **TEHRAN** — The Athelas String Quartet from Denmark is scheduled to give a concert at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center on November 21.

The ensemble will be performing a repertoire of pieces by Danish composer Carl Nielsen, Danish-Iranian musician Amir-Mahyar Tafreshipur and Iranian musicians Fuzieh Majd and Amir Bakan.

In addition, Majd and Tafreshipur will join Athelas to unveil their joint album “In Absentia” during the concert.

Earlier in February, the ensemble gave a concert during the 34th Fajr Music Festival at Tehran's Vahdat Hall.

HBO orders new “Game of Thrones” series as it scraps another

BURBANK, Calif. (Reuters) — HBO ordered 10 episodes of a “Game of Thrones” spinoff called “House of the Dragon,” the network said on Tuesday, shortly after reports emerged that the premium cable channel had nixed another series set in the world created by author George R.R. Martin.

“House of the Dragon” will take place 300 years before the events of “Game of Thrones,” a medieval fantasy series that became a global phenomenon before it ended its eight-season run in May.

The new series will be based on Martin's book “Fire & Blood” and will tell the story of House Targaryen, HBO said.

The network announced “House of the Dragon” at an event intended to stir enthusiasm for HBO Max, a streaming service that will launch in May 2020 at \$15 per month to compete with Netflix Inc and Walt Disney Co.

HBO did not say when “House of the Dragon” would become available. Earlier on Tuesday, Hollywood publications reported that HBO had scrapped plans for a “Game of Thrones” prequel starring Naomi Watts. A source familiar with the decision confirmed the reports were accurate.

“Castle of Dreams” wins awards at Antalya film festival

A R T **TEHRAN** — **d e s k** The Iranian movie “Castle of Dreams” won Reza Mirkarimi the award for best director at the 56th edition of the Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival while its star, Hamed Behdad, was picked as best actor at the Turkish event on Friday.

“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.

“They Say Nothing Stays the Same” by Joe Odagiri from Japan won the best film award and Regina Casé received best actress award for her role in the Brazilian movie “Three Summers” by Sandra Kogut.

Film producers Jay Jeon from Korea, Ewa Puszczyńska from Poland and Remi Burah from France, actress Johanna ter Steege from the Netherlands and screenwriter Rúnar Rúnarsson from Iceland were the members of the international jury.



Reza Mirkarimi speaks after accepting the award for best director for the Iranian drama “Castle of Dreams” during the closing ceremony of the 56th Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival in Turkey on November 1, 2019. Jury members Johanna ter Steege and Remi Burah are also seen in the photo.

Tehran Intl. Sculpture Symposium kicks off



Sculptors create works during the Tehran International Sculpture Symposium.

A R T **TEHRAN** — The 9th edition of the Tehran International Sculpture Symposium opened with five Iranian and 10 foreign sculptors in the Abbasabad district on Saturday.

Laura Marcos from Argentina, Olga Nechay from Belarus, Arijel Strukelj from Slovenia, Georgi Minchev from Bulgaria, Jiang Chu from China and Sangam Vankhade from India are among the participating sculptors at the symposium, the Beautification Organization of the Tehran Municipality announced on Saturday.

Also included are Ulises Jiménez Obregon from Costa Rica, Victor Arturo Guadalupe Tineo from Peru, Yeh Chuan Hsien from Taiwan and Alex Labejof from France.

The Iranian sculptors are Hedayat Sahrai, Hossein Molai Fumani, Mohammad-Mehdi

Ashuri, Reza Qarebaghi and Mehdi Seifi.

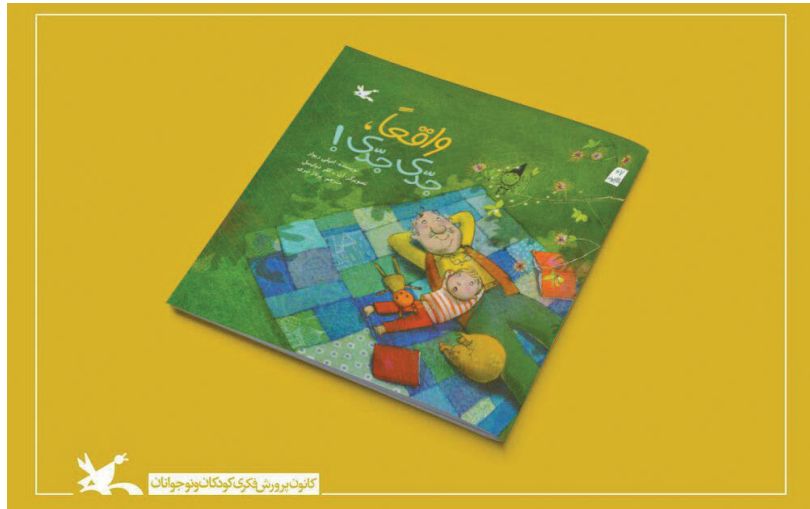
A number of students are also attending the event and will be creating their works beside the participating sculptors on the sidelines of the event.

“No specific topic has been selected for this year's symposium, and we are expecting a wide range of artworks to be created with travertine,” the deputy director of the organization, Mojtaba Musavi, has previously said.

Winners will be announced during a special ceremony on November 26, just one day after the end of the symposium.

Organized annually by the Beautification Organization, the symposium seeks to help beautify the urban environment of the city and familiarize the citizens with the process of making new designs.

“Really and Truly” published in Persian



Front cover of the Persian version of “Really and Truly” by Canadian author Emilie Rivard.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — **d e s k** Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA) announced on Saturday that it has published Canadian writer Emilie Rivard's “Really and Truly” in Persian.

The IIDCYA has previously acquired the copyright to the book from Bayard Canada Livres, a Montreal-based publisher of children's books.

Translated by Parnaz Nayyeri, the book tells the story of a young boy named Charlie and his family.

Charlie is very close to his grandfather, who loves to tell fanciful stories about pirates, witches and gnomes that amuse Charlie to no end. But lately, Charlie's grandpa doesn't have any new stories to

tell. In fact, some days grandpa doesn't even recognize Charlie. A disease has stolen grandpa's memories, his appetite and even his smile.

Charlie wants to make his grandpa smile again, so he comes up with a plan to tell him stories, the same ones that grandpa used to tell Charlie to make him laugh.

The book explores the effect that dementia has on young members of families and tries to teach children to remain optimistic during troubling times.

“Really and Truly”, which has been released with its original illustrations by Canadian illustrator Anne-Claire Delisle, is appropriate for children age 7 and over.

Iranian troupe to perform “Swan Lake” in Tehran



Iranian director Reza Saberi's troupe perform “Swan Lake” at the City Theater Complex in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad on August 25, 2018. (Borna/Ahmad Hadi)

A R T **TEHRAN** — **d e s k** A troupe from Iran will be performing Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's ballet and opera “Swan Lake” in Tehran.

Reza Saberi will direct the ballet and opera at the Nazerzadeh Kermani Hall of the Iranshahr Theater Complex, which will host the first performance on November 18.

The scenario, initially in two acts, was fashioned from Russian and German folk tales and tells the story of Odette, a princess turned into a swan by an evil

sorcerer's curse.

“Swan Lake” will remain on stage for one month.

Saberi also staged “Swan Lake” at the 37th Fajr International Theater Festival in Tehran during February.

The ballet and opera received ten nominations at the festival and won awards in eight categories, including best director, best composer and best actress.

Earlier in summer 2018, the play was performed at the City Theater Complex in the northeastern Iranian city of Mashhad.

Thessaloniki Intl. Film Festival to screen “Just 6.5”, “The Warden”



A scene from “The Warden” by Nima Javidi.

CULTURE **TEHRAN** — **d e s k** Iranian movies “Just 6.5” and “The Warden” are competing in the Thessaloniki International Film Festival, which is currently underway in the Greek port city.

The two films will be screened in the Open Horizons section of the festival, the organizers have announced.

Directed by Saeid Rustai, “Just 6.5” will go on screen on November 5. The film shows a police group under the leadership of Samad who was assigned to arrest Nasser

Khakzad, a major drug trafficker in Tehran. The film was a big winner at the 19th Hafez Awards as it was honored in several categories, including best film and best director.

“The Warden” by Nima Javidi tells the story of an Iranian prison warden who is assigned to transfer prisoners to a new building during the 1960s. The film will be screened on November 6.

This year's festival, which opened on October 31, will be running until November 10.