



U.S. must stop all kinds of pressure if it seeks talks with Iran **2**



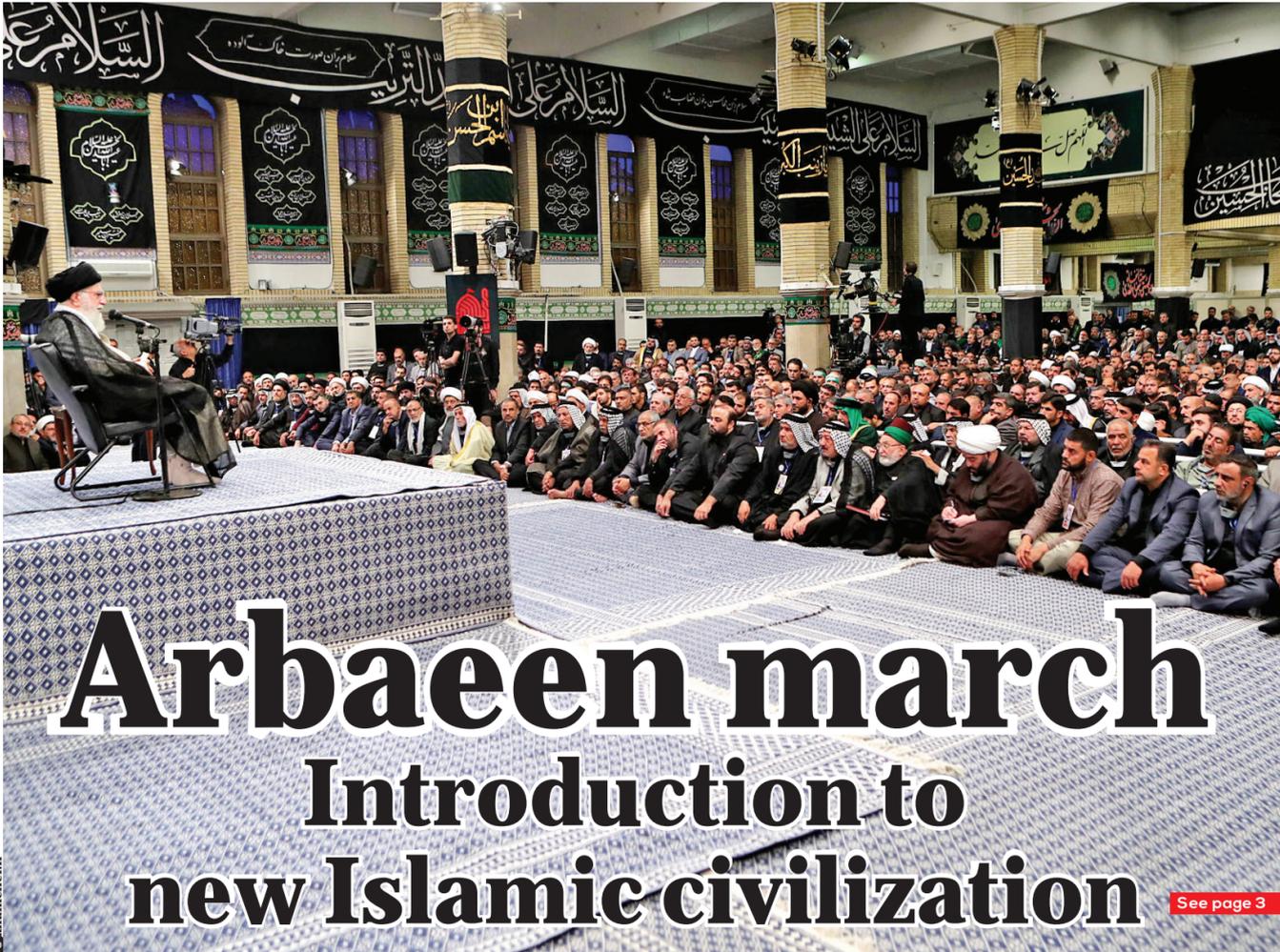
Iran favors de-escalation, but will respond strongly to aggression **3**



Iran Judo Federation suspended **15**



Tehran exhibit to display works by 2018 IBBY Honor List illustrators **16**



Arbaeen march

Introduction to new Islamic civilization

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GDP growth at 0.4% in Q1

TEHRAN— Iran's growth of gross domestic product (GDP) stood at 0.4 percent in the first three months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21), Iranian Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs Farhad Dejpasand announced on Wednesday.

The minister said that despite the U.S. sanctions the country's economy is stable and moving forward, IRIB reported.

The official also noted that the agricultural sector has also experienced an over six percent growth in the mentioned time span.

Back in June, the World Bank (WB) in its latest world economic outlook report "Global Economic Prospects" predicted a -4.5 percent growth for the country's GDP in 2019 but expected it to experience one percent of GDP growth in 2021.

Iran officially warns U.S.: Any act will face quick response

TEHRAN — Iran has officially presented a letter to the Swiss embassy in Tehran strongly warning U.S. officials against their claims that Iran had a role in the attacks on the Saudi Aramco oil facilities.

The letter was submitted to the Swiss ambassador to Tehran whose country represents the U.S. interests in Iran.

In the letter, which was presented on Monday afternoon, Iran has insisted that

it was not involved in the attack on the Saudi oil installations and that claims by U.S. Secretary of States Mike Pompeo and President Donald Trump are sheer lies and condemned them.

Iran has also insisted in the letter that if "any moves" takes place against Iran, they will face an immediate response by Iran and that the domain of the Iranian armed forces' response will not be limited to the "source of threat".

Israel election: Netanyahu's bloc fails to secure majority

TEHRAN — Benny Gantz's Kahol Lavan is ahead of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud Party, according to official election results released on Wednesday.

Exit polls released by Israeli television channels show that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has failed to secure a ruling majority in the general election.

Meanwhile, three separate exit surveys released on Tuesday showed that Netan-

yahu's right-wing Likud is projected to garner between 31 and 32 parliament seats each out of 120, while his main challenger Benny Gantz's centrist Blue and White alliance is leading with 32 Knesset seats.

In all three polls, the Joint List of Arab parties is projected to have the third most seats, while far-right Yamina party, led by Ayelet Shaked, is projected to win 6-7 seats. **→13**



EDITORIAL
Mohammad Ghaderi
Tehran Times editor-in-chief
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A good suggestion: The Alms of Century versus the Deal of Century

One of the most important goals of the Christian Zionism is to start war for eliminating great powers and dividing vast countries into smaller ones. The number of countries before the World War was less than 100, but now there are 205 countries in the world along with newly-independent ones. After the collapse of the Russian, Japanese, German, Austrian, Hungarian and Ottoman empires during WWI, the U.S., France, and Britain were victorious countries. With Sykes-Picot Agreement (1917), which was in fact a confidential agreement between France and Britain benefiting from Russian support, the Ottoman Empire became Turkey. Then Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine divided between France and Britain. According to the agreement Palestine should be governed by these countries.

While the geographical boundaries of the European countries have been identified and recognized by WWI, WWII, and tens of millions casualties, the aftermath of the war still continues to divide countries and create new borders, especially in west of Asia. The battle of Armageddon or end of the world battle, is the prediction of the Christian Zionists about the war against the Muslims, and claims that the "Promised Land" should ultimately be created.

The origin of the Promised Land is Balfour Declaration for forming a greater Israel. In 1917, British Foreign Secretary James Balfour in a letter to the British-Jewish Lord Lionel Rothschild announced the British Government's agreement for formation a Jewish state in Palestine.

Before the defeat of the Allies in WWI, the Christian Zionism in London sent the Balfour Declaration to the powerful Rockefeller in the U.S. to encourage it to enter the war in favor of the Allies. The U.S. accepted the war and subsequently the Britain forces in Egypt occupied Palestine. On 9 December 1917, General Edmund entered Quds and finished Crusades after 450 years since its beginning by defeating Ottoman Empire.

Theodor Herzl, in Basel, Switzerland, also announced the creation of "Jewish State" by completely occupying Palestine and forming a Jewish land. **→13**

'Iran neta confuses Bolton's firing with change of course in Trump's foreign policy'

By Javad Heirannia
TEHRAN — Nader Entessar, Professor Emeritus of Political Science from University of South Alabama says that Bolton's firing was due primarily to personality conflicts in the upper-echelon of Trump's foreign policy team and had very little to do with policy differences toward Iran.

He adds that "In fact, the whole foreign policy team is composed of hawks."

Entessar says "Iran should never confuse Bolton's firing with a change of course in Trump's foreign policy towards Iran."

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ What is your assessment of John Bolton's dismissal? Will the militant faction become a minority with this layoff?



A: Bolton's firing was due primarily to personality conflicts in the upper-echelon of Trump's foreign policy team and had very little

to do with policy differences toward Iran. In fact, the whole foreign policy team is composed of hawks. Iran should never confuse Bolton's firing with a change of course in Trump's foreign policy towards Iran. There has been no change in this regard, nor there will be one in the future under Mike Pompeo's management of the U.S. State Department.

■ What effect will Bolton's dismissal have on U.S. foreign policy toward Iran?

A: As I indicated in my previous answer, John Bolton's firing will have minimal or no impact on U.S. foreign policy toward Iran. Bolton was simply a bolt in the vast cog of the U.S. anti-Iran foreign policy machinery that has deep roots in various elements of the U.S. government, including the U.S. congress. **→11**

Middle East OSCE would be a major development to settle regional disputes: Logoglu

By Payman Yazdani
TEHRAN (MNA) — Turkish veteran politician says creation of a Middle East OSCE, led by Turkey, Iran and others of the region would be a major development to maintain regional security.

Saudi young prince is getting more familiar with the consequences of the illegal war he waged against Yemeni people in 2015 with the green light of the U.S. Yemenis retaliatory drone attack on Saudi Aramco oil installations cut Saudi oil production seriously which is going to be replaced by U.S. in global oil market.

Pushing the Saudi Arabia to the quagmire of Yemen by the U.S. is interpreted in

line with the U.S. long term policy to grab share of other oil producing countries by 2024 as Washington is planning to export 9 million barrel of oil a day thanks to production of Shale oil which has changed the oil consuming country to a major oil producing one.

Dr. Osman Faruk Logoglu Turkish veteran politician and a senior member of CHP was interviewed on the issue.

Touching upon the possible consequences of recent retaliatory Yemeni's attack on Saudi Aramco plants and the U.S. efforts to drive major oil producing companies out of oil market, logoglu said, "Disrupting the oil flow from the Persian Gulf and removing

Venezuela from the circle of oil suppliers will surely have terrible consequences for the global economy, heightening political tensions in the world."

Commenting on the U.S. and Russia's gains of recent tensions in Persian Gulf as two major oil producing countries, he added, "The U.S. and Russia, even if they are colluding to establish their hegemony over oil and gas, stand to make only short-lived gains, but are in the longer run poised to suffer, while I do not believe that there is such an American-Russian conspiracy at work, particularly the U.S. must be called on to ease its harsh rhetoric against Iran and Venezuela." **→13**



ARTICLE
Hana Saada
Journalist from Algeria

Would Algerian PM Bedoui resign, paving way for vote?

Algerian Prime Minister Noureddine Bedoui will soon step down paving the way for the holding of the presidential elections, postponed by the Government on July 4, citing the lack of candidates amid ongoing protests against the current government.

The resignation is a development that would mark a major win for protestors who are piling into the streets every week, calling for the departure of the remnants of the old guard, including the Prime Minister Bedoui, and the prosecution of the corrupted officials and oligarchs.

Earlier, and after weeks of demonstrations, protestors were able to force, in April, the long-time president Abdelaziz Bouteflika to step down after two decades in power, a major win that was unthinkable two months earlier.

Protests demanding an overhaul of the ruling regime are showing no sign of waning despite the April resignation of veteran leader Bouteflika and the launch of anti-corruption onslaught targeting former and current senior officials. These claims have been endorsed by Army Chief of Staff Ahmed Gaid Salah who urged magistrates and judges to act bravely while launching anti-corruption probes against politicians and businessmen who embezzled public funds.

Following Bouteflika resignation, the Upper House Speaker Abdelkader Bensalah assumed the post of Head of State in application of the provisions of the Algerian Constitution. One of his first actions was to call the country's postponed presidential election for July 4. However, this announcement failed to quell protestors, with thousands taking to the streets of the capital, Algiers, to call for a complete political overhaul and boycott of the election. Effectively, this election was latter scrapped, citing the lack of candidates.

Demonstrators have repeatedly demanded the departure of a coterie of individuals closely-linked to Bouteflika's administration, including the Prime Minister Bedoui, who was appointed by Bouteflika days before he stepped down, before the holding of any election. **→13**



Poet Shahriar commemorated in Tabriz

A man lays flowers on a statue of Mohammad-Hossein Behjat Tabrizi (1906-1988) during a gathering to commemorate the poet at his home in the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz on September 18, 2019.

Iranians pay tribute to Shahriar every year on his death anniversary, which is also Iran's National Day of Poetry and Literature.

The poet, who also composed works in Azerbaijani, was mainly influenced by the poetry of Hafez.

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End of war in Yemen is the only solution for all, Zarif says

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif reiterated his long held position on Tuesday that “ending the war in Yemen is the only solution for all”, criticizing the United States for denying the fact that Yemenis would strike back against “the worst war crimes” committed by Saudi Arabia with a logistical support by the U.S.

“The U.S. is in denial if it thinks that Yemeni victims of 4.5 years of the worst war crimes wouldn’t do all to strike back,” Zarif tweeted.

Yemenis launched drone attacks on Saudi Arabia’s Aramco oil installations on Saturday morning, causing a serious disruption to the Saudi oil production which lonely accounts for a third of the global oil supplies.

Despite being equipped with modern weaponry bought from the U.S., Saudi Arabia failed to intercept the drone attacks.

Zarif said the U.S. is angry over attacks on the Saudi oil facilities probably because the weapons that it has sold to the kingdom failed to track the drones.

“Perhaps it’s embarrassed that \$100s of blns of its arms didn’t intercept Yemeni fire,” Zarif pointed out.

Zarif added, “Blaming Iran won’t change that.”

In another tweet, Zarif said, “Just imagine: The U.S. isn’t upset when its allies mercilessly BOMB babies in Yemen for over 4 years—with its arms and its military assistance. But it is terribly upset when the victims react the only way they can—against the aggressor’s OIL refineries.”

Washington has blamed Iran for the Yemeni drone attacks on the Saudi oil installations.

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence reiterated the tone set by President Donald Trump and said that “it’s certainly looking like Iran was behind these attacks,” according to Press TV.

“As the president said, we don’t want war with anybody but the United States is prepared,” Pence said.

Zarif said on Sunday that the United States’ failed policy of maximum pressure on Iran has turned into “maximum deceit”.

“Having failed at ‘maximum pressure’, Secretary Pompeo is turning to ‘maximum deceit’,” Zarif tweeted.

Zarif said blaming Iran for the dangers ensuing the Saudi-led war on Yemen “won’t end the disaster”.

Iran’s four-point plan put forward in April 2015 is the remedy for the current situation, Zarif insisted.

“Blaming Iran won’t end disaster. Accepting our April 15 proposal to end war and begin talks may,” Zarif pointed out.

In April 2015, Zarif submitted a letter to Ban Ki-moon, then UN secretary general, outlining Iran’s four-point peace plan for Yemen.

The plan calls for an immediate ceasefire and end of all foreign military attacks, humanitarian assistance, a resumption of broad national dialogue and establishment of an inclusive national unity government.

Iran’s chief diplomat went on to say that the United States and its “clients” in the region are caught in the Yemen quagmire because they suffered from the illusion that possession of sophisticated arms would lead to victory.

“The U.S. and its clients are stuck in Yemen because of illusion that weapon superiority will lead to military victory,” Zarif stated.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi also responded to Washington’s claims, saying, “Such accusations and unfruitful remarks are meaningless within diplomatic framework.”

Mousavi said, “Even in the international relations, hostility has some logical framework which has been trespassed by the U.S. officials.”

Saudi Arabia launched military campaign against Yemen in March 2015 with the aim of eliminating the Yemeni opposition groups who had toppled the government of President Mansour Hadi.

Failing to achieve either of its goals, Riyadh has not stopped bombing Yemeni targets. Saudi Arabia has created a protracted conflict which has so far led to the killings of over 16,000 Yemeni civilians, starved 14 million people, and the destroyed the country’s infrastructure.

The United Nations has called the humanitarian crisis in Yemen the worst in recent history.

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U.S. must stop all kinds of pressure if it seeks talks with Iran: Rouhani

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said on Wednesday that the United States cannot achieve its objectives through applying policy of “maximum pressure” against Iran, suggesting Washington must stop all kinds of pressure if it seeks dialogue with Tehran.

“We announce to the United States’ officials that negotiations under maximum pressure is impossible. If you are honest and seek talks, you must stop all pressure against Iran,” Rouhani said during a cabinet meeting.

With an indirect reference to a claim by the United States that drones that struck Saudi Arabian oil facilities on Saturday morning were flown from Iran, Rouhani said the U.S. is seeking to increase pressure against Iran through leveling “unfounded” and “meaningless” accusations.

“Instead of leveling accusations, believe the people’s power. It is not the governments. It is the people who have risen,” Rouhani said in reference to the Yemeni people’s rebellion against the Saudi attacks on their country.

On the Yemeni drone attacks on Saudi’s oil facilities, Rouhani said, “Enemies of



the region should learn from the Yemenis’ response and put out fire in the region.”

“It was not the Yemenis who started the war. Saudi Arabia, the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the Zionist regime

of Israel and certain European countries started the war and destroyed Yemen,” he lamented.

Elsewhere, Rouhani said that Iran seeks to have good relations with its neighbors.

■ ‘World has launched campaign against dollar dominance’

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani said that the world has launched a campaign to counter the dominance of dollar in global economic transactions.

“Today, we are glad that Iran’s banking relations with certain countries are being done without using SWIFT [Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication]. There was a time that the Westerners imagined banking relations should be done through SWIFT... however, a replacement has been created and we cooperate with Russia and Turkey by this replacement and in future, we will have interaction with Eurasian countries with it,” he explained.

Abdolnaser Hemmati, the governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), said on Monday that CBI’s financial telecommunications system, known as SEPAM, has replaced the SWIFT in the country’s financial transactions with Russia.

Referring to Iran’s upcoming membership in the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Hemmati also noted that the system [SEPAM] can also be used for trade exchanges with the union’s member states for developing trade ties.

MP: U.S. ballyhoo against Iran is intended to dishearten Arabs

“Yemenis’ attack on Aramco was a response to Saudi crimes against civilians”

POLITICAL TEHRAN — An Iranian MP says Yemeni forces’ attack on Saudi oil installation is a result of Saudi crimes against the Yemeni people.

According to the New York Times, drone attacks by Yemen struck two key oil installations inside Saudi Arabia on Saturday, damaging facilities that process the vast majority of the country’s crude output and raising the risk of a disruption in world oil supplies.

“This was a response to Saudi crimes in Yemen and the massacre of civilians and inattention to the requests of the Yemeni people,” Assadollah Gharekhani told ISNA in an interview published on Wednesday.

However, the United States has blamed Iran for the attack, claiming intelligence indicates Iran was the staging ground for a debilitating attack on Saudi Arabia’s oil industry.

Gharekhani, who sits on the Majlis Energy Committee, said, “The United States is seeking to dishearten the Arab sheiks and introduce Iran as a threat so that under the excuse of providing security



for them to get more money from them.”

The MP was indirectly referring to tens of billions of dollars in arms purchases by certain Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, from the United States.

Congress passed legislation this year demanding an end to United States military support for the war, including arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Pentagon officials, meanwhile, have concluded on their own that the war has degenerated into

an unwinnable quagmire and have urged the Saudis for months to try to negotiate an end to the fighting. But President Trump has repeatedly vetoed legislation cutting off American support for the war.

The Iranian lawmaker called the Yemeni attack on the Aramco oil installations was a “unique act”, adding the Yemeni had already made drone attacks on Saudi airports.

On Yemenis’ capability to launch advanced drones to hit Saudi oil facilities, he said, “Today technology is not just a monopoly of the great powers.”

He added the transfer of technology has become possible and now the Yemenis, after more than four years of resistance, have succeeded to produce modern weapons and technologies.

The MP also cast doubt on the Saudis’ capability to defend themselves against drone attacks, asking, “Why Saudi Arabia which claims it has most advanced weapons did not respond in time?”

The MP said these developments show that the balance of power has changed

in the region.

By blaming Iran for the attack, the MP said, Washington wants to “strike more deals (with Arabs) and gain more money from regional Arab states”.

The MP said the reason behind attributing attacks on oil facilities to Iran is that the Trump administration’s maximum pressure campaign against Iran has failed and therefore it tries to “justify its failed policies by blaming Iran”.

“Today, Americans and the Zionists have become disappointed of ‘maximum pressure’ against Iran and they have resorted to great deceits.”

The parliamentarian went on to say that through such clamors the Trump administration is trying to bring Iran to the negotiating table “but Iran is smart enough and will not be swayed by such outcries”.

He blamed the Trump administration for the tension between Tehran and Washington, saying, “It was America that violated the JCPOA and unilaterally withdrew from it.”

Zarif: U.S. must return to nuclear deal if it wants a place at negotiating table

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Wednesday that the United States must return to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the JCPOA, and implement its commitments, if it wants to have a place at the negotiating table.

“The United States has shown that it does not value agreements and even its own signature. Today, it decides to invite someone to the White House and tomorrow it cancels the meeting or sanctions the same people. It shows the wrong politics of the United States which should be corrected. Otherwise it will be more isolated in the world,” Zarif told reporters.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said on Tuesday that there will be no negotiations between Iran and the United States at any level or any place.

“All officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran unanimously agree that there will be no negotiations with America at any level either in New York or any other place,” the Leader told his theology students.

He noted that the U.S. seeks to impose its demands through negotiations and prove that “policy of maximum pressure” against Iran has worked.

“Policy of maximum pressure against the Iranian people is quite worthless and all the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran unanimously believe that there will be no talks with the United States at any level,” he said.

However, Ayatollah Khamenei said, if the U.S. “repents” and returns to the nuclear deal that it has violated it can participate in the negotiations with Iran along with other parties to the nuclear agreement.

“If the United States backs off and repents, and implements the nuclear deal from which they withdrew, then it can also take part in and talk during negotiations between Iran and the countries that are parties to this deal. Otherwise, there will be absolutely no negotiation between the officials of the Islamic Republic and the United States at any level; neither in New York and not anywhere else,” he said.



Japan says has no intelligence Iran was involved in Saudi attacks



By staff and agency Japanese Defense Minister Taro Kono has said that Tokyo has not seen any intelligence that shows Iran was involved in the recent attacks on Saudi Arabian oil installations.

“We are not aware of any information that points to Iran. We believe the Houthis carried out the attack based on the statement claiming responsibility,” Reuters quoted him as saying on Wednesday.

Kono on Monday said Japan cannot participate in any military retaliation because of constitutional re-

straints and would instead pursue a diplomatic solution to the current crisis.

Yemeni drone attacks hit oil installations in Saudi Arabia on Saturday.

Washington has claimed Iran was behind the attacks. Iran has categorically rejected the claim.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tweeted, “The United States will work with our partners and allies to ensure that energy markets remain well supplied and Iran is held accountable for its aggression.”

U.S. Vice President Mike Pence said on Tuesday that “it’s certainly looking like Iran was behind these attacks.”

“As the president said, we don’t want war with anybody but the United States is prepared,” Pence said. U.S. Congresswoman Ilhan Omar has said that President Donald Trump administration’s information about Iran cannot be trusted.

“I think we should make sure that the American people understand that this administration that lies about weather maps or crowd sizes cannot be trusted to give us the full information we need to be able to make a decision whether we should be going to war with Iran,” she told CNN in an interview aired on Monday.

Omar was referring to Trump’s wrong claim in September that Alabama was set to be hit by Hurricane Dorian which was quickly refuted by the National Weather

Service office in Birmingham Alabama, which tweeted that Alabama would “NOT” see any effects from Dorian.

By crowd size, she was referring to Trump’s remarks in August in which he boasted about the number of people at his rally in New Hampshire

Omar added, “We are not in a position to think about another endless war and I really hope that our colleagues in Congress are going to pressure this administration to take a step back and figure out how we use diplomacy in de-escalating the situation.”

“Congress has the constitutional right to declare war. The president does not have it. Secretary of State [Mike Pompeo] does not have it,” she noted.

Wendy Sherman, the former undersecretary of state for political affairs who led the U.S. negotiating team that concluded the Iran nuclear agreement, noted on Monday that Trump has not the authority to go to war with Iran.

“The Senate is considering language, similar to House passed, affirming @realDonaldTrump does not have authority to go to war w/Iran under existing AUMF. Now would be a good time for the Senate and Congress to step up,” Sherman tweeted.

President Hassan Rouhani said on Monday that the Yemenis’ drone attacks were merely for legitimate self-defense, and no one can expect the Yemenis to remain silent when their country is destroyed.

Ayatollah Khamenei: Arbaeen march is introduction to new Islamic civilization

Leader says the Arbaeen march is unique in history

POLITICAL TEHRAN — A group of Iraqi mawkib organizers, who host and serve the pilgrims of the Imam Hussein shrine during the Arbaeen ritual, met with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday.

In the meeting, Ayatollah Khamenei thanked the sincere Iraqi people and officials who dedicate themselves to serving the pilgrims during Arbaeen.

"I express my and the Iranian nation's heartfelt gratitude to you the mawkib keepers and organizers, who manifest utmost benevolence and compassion during Arbaeen; to the great Iraqi nation; to the Iraqi officials who prepare the grounds and security; and especially to the honorable religious scholars and Marja (religious scholars) in Iraq who have prepared the ambiance of pilgrimage and brotherhood among different groups of people and the two nations," the Leader said, according to khamenei.ir.

He described the Iraqi hospitality inspired by the love for Imam Hussein as matchless in the world and said: "What we hear about your tender attitude, dear brothers, in the mawkib located on the path [of the Arbaeen march], toward the pilgrims of Imam Hussein's shrine is unique in the world; just as the walk of Arbaeen is unique throughout history."

"You manifested the Islamic and Arab benevolence in your attitude, by love of Imam Hussein. You wash the feet of pilgrims, and give them massages when they are extremely tired, and you provide them with beds. This love for Imam Hussein is an extraordinary phenomenon, with no similar example."

"The Arbaeen march is an extraordinary



"We, the Shias, are proud to follow Imam Hussein, but Imam Hussein does not exclusively belong to us. Shias, Sunnis and all the people are under the patronage of Imam Hussein. Even non-Muslims take part in this massive march, and the phenomenon will continue to grow,"

nary phenomenon not only in our era but also throughout history; we cannot find such a gathering and movement that takes place every year more enthusiastically than the previous years," he went on to underline.

He then added, "Today we need to tell the world about Imam Hussein. The rationale of Imam Hussein is the rationale of truth, resistance against oppression, and uprising against ignorance and arrogance."

Ayatollah Khamenei defined the message of Imam Hussein as a message that can save the world, adding, "The magnificent Arbaeen movement is spreading this mes-

sage, and this movement should be fortified day after day. Arbaeen went global, and it will continue to grow in the world, and this is the blood of Imam Hussein that is flowing after 1400 years and becomes more alive day after day."

"We, the Shias, are proud to follow Imam Hussein, but Imam Hussein does not exclusively belong to us. Shias, Sunnis and all the people are under the patronage of Imam Hussein. Even non-Muslims take part in this massive march, and the phenomenon will continue to grow," the Leader noted.

He urged everyone to make efforts in order to bring more vitality and productivity to the Arbaeen event. "We should do our best to organize the Arbaeen ceremony more fruitful and more spiritual than ever. The intellectual and cultural leaders should plan for the great ceremony."

Elsewhere in his remarks, the Leader said, "The goal of every Muslim must be creating the novel Islamic civilization. Islamic nations have great capacities, which if exploited, the Islamic Ummah can reach an apex. Founding the Islamic civilization is our ultimate goal."

Expressing hopes for the future of the great Iraqi nation, Ayatollah Khamenei asserted: "The honorable Iraqi people can make their country achieve utmost dignity. These potentials should develop and lead to practice. If the capacity of Islamic countries is integrated; if Iran, Iraq, and other West Asian and North African countries come together and join hands, then the Islamic Ummah will show to the societies around the world what Islamic dignity means. The Arbaeen march can be a means to this end. Let's enhance strong ties between Muslim brothers."

ASEAN Day: Zarif calls on neighbors to 'emulate successful experience'

By Mehdi Sepahvand

TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has called on neighboring countries to put aside their differences and form a coalition like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Speaking on ASEAN Day in a Wednesday ceremony in Tehran celebrating the 52th anniversary of the association's formation with ambassadors of the member states and the ASEAN organization, the Iranian minister said Tehran calls on its neighbors to start working together instead of working against each other.

Zarif started his address to the meeting by praising the ASEAN member countries as for their initiative to form the bloc, saying the ASEAN members are "people who can think for themselves, who can plan for themselves, who can think ahead and think progressively for a better future, not only for their own citizens, but for the citizens of the globe at large."

"We in Iran have a lot of respect for the countries in the ASEAN group. We respect your accomplishments. We respect your self-respect. If you want others to respect you, you need to respect yourselves. And ASEAN is an example of self-respect. And we want to have greater cooperation with the ASEAN. That is why it was an honor for me to go to Singapore and to announce the finalization of the process of Iran's accession to the treaty on amity and cooperation. It is always a good sign that we get closer to our ASEAN friends."

"ASEAN, now celebrating its 52nd anniversary, is a valuable lesson of coming together, of joining our forces, of synergizing in order to advance together," he underlined.

"ASEAN has provided a good example to the rest of us that we could be doing better, both individually and collectively, once we come together and work together instead of working against each other."

"Particularly for us in this region, where some of



us have tried to purchase security from outside, some of us have tried to put their reliance on outsiders, it is important to show that that looking inward, working with your own people, with your own neighbors is always a much better success story."

"I want to stress that the view of the Islamic Republic of Iran is cooperation and positive engagement. We continue to believe that through cooperation and constructive engagement we can build a better world. My presence here today is a tribute to the accomplishment of our friends in the ASEAN community," Zarif stated.

"And at the same time I want to ask our friends, our neighbors in this region that there is nothing that prevents us from doing the same; nothing that prevents us from establishing cooperation among ourselves. Nothing prevents us from joining together rather than working against each other. Others will never protect us. Others will never provide us security. Others will never provide us well-being. We need to have self-respect. If we want others to respect us, we need to start respecting ourselves."

"We cannot be considered as milking cows. Milking cows are never respected," Zarif said, in apparent ref-



erence to Saudi Arabia, which U.S. President Donald Trump once called milking cow for their wealth.

According to some reports, during his presidential campaign, candidate Trump chose to describe the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a "milk cow" that will be led to slaughter when its milk runs out.

Zarif reiterated his call for regional cooperation by saying, "We need to be partners with each other in order to be respected as global partners. And this is our call. This is the Islamic Republic of Iran's call to all its neighbors - all its neighbors: Let's come together! Let's put aside differences! All communities that have come together have had differences, from Europe to ASEAN. It's not that countries that come together have no differences. Differences are a fact of life. But we come together because we should believe that what binds us together is commonalities; commonalities are much greater than our differences; that the interests of our nations, the interests of our people are always better served through cooperation and through engagement. So while we salute our friends, our brothers and sisters in the ASEAN, we call on our neighbors to emulate this very successful experiment."

Trump says he is ordering new sanctions on Iran

WASHINGTON (CNN) — President Donald Trump said Wednesday he's ordered new sanctions on Iran, the latest escalation in tensions between the two countries following the attack over the weekend on Saudi oil facilities.

"I have just instructed the Secretary of the

Treasury to substantially increase sanctions on the country of Iran," Trump tweeted.

It wasn't immediately clear to whom the sanctions would apply. The U.S. has ratcheted up sanctions on the country after withdrawing from a multi-nation nuclear deal last year.

Iranian president's visit to UN meeting in New York may be canceled

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and his accompanying delegation may not be able to attend the annual UN General Assembly meeting in New York as the United States has so far failed to issue visa for the visit.

According to the plan, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif is scheduled to leave Tehran for New York on Friday and the president on Monday.

According to IRNA, if visas are not issued until several hours, the visit will likely be canceled.

Pakistan ambassador thanks Leader over Kashmir issue

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran, Riffat Masood, has praised the stances of Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei over the Kashmir issue.

In a press release sent to the Tehran Times on Tuesday, the embassy of Pakistan in Iran held an event in commemoration of Defense Day of Pakistan as Kashmir Solidarity Day under the theme of "Kashmir and Karbala", which was held at the embassy of Pakistan in Tehran.

According to the press release, the event commemorated the harsh experiences of the peoples of Jammu and Kashmir brought about by Indian Armed Forces.

Members of the diplomatic community based in Tehran, Pakistan diaspora, Iranian guests and media representatives attended the event.

During the event, messages by the president and prime

minister of Pakistan were read out and a documentary on the ongoing "grave violations of Human Rights in Kashmir" was screened, according to the press release.

Speaking at the occasion, Defense and Army Attaché Brigadier Saqib Ali Cheema highlighted the significance of the Defense Day and underlined that this year the Defense Day was observed as Kashmir Solidarity day to express solidarity with the peoples of Jammu and Kashmir "who were fighting for their right of self-determination and are being victimized by the Indian Armed Forces."

For her turn, Masood apprised the audience of the plight of Kashmiris after the revocation of the "Special Status" of Jammu and Kashmir under the presidential decree of 5 August 2019 by the Indian government.

She briefed the audience on the "illegal" measures taken by the Indian government, "in contravention of international

law and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions to suppress the popular aspiration of the people of Kashmir to exercise their right of self-determination."

She added that Prime Minister Imran Khan had urged the international community to play proactive role in defusing the situation as any conflict between the two neighbors, with nuclear capabilities, would entail grave implications for the region and the world.

The ambassador in particular underlined the kind support of the Iranian leadership, especially the Leader towards the Kashmir issue.

She said the human rights violation in Kashmir and the brutalities by the tyrannical forces can be compared to that of the tragedy of Karbala.

In fact, Kashmir reflects the Karbala tragedy in the modern times, she was quoted as saying.

Security chief: Iran favors de-escalation, but will respond strongly to aggression

POLITICAL TEHRAN — The secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) has said Tehran's strategic policy is to reduce tensions in the Middle East but the Islamic Republic will give a crushing response to any act of aggression.

"Iran's strategic policy is to reduce tensions, avoid any conflict and resolve regional crises through dialogue," Ali Shamkhani said on Wednesday, according to Mehr news agency.

"However, the country is fully prepared to monitor any intention or attempt to attack the Islamic Republic or its interests and will surprise aggressors most severely through a crushing and comprehensive response to possible evil actions," he added.

The remarks came after Saudi Arabia said it would show evidence linking Tehran to an attack on its oil industry and the United States made veiled military threats against Iran.

Iran has denied any involvement in the attack and described U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's claims that the drone attacks might have originated from Iran as "maximum deceit" after "maximum pressure" on Iran.

The United States and Saudi Arabia have been repeatedly claiming that Iran provides arms to Yemenis. However, Shamkhani said the Yemeni Army itself designs and produces its weapons and linking their weapons to other countries is intended to avoid answering questions about the waste of the country's resources for purchasing "modern but ineffective" weapons from the West.

The Yemeni forces on Saturday launched drone attacks on two plants at the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry, including the world's biggest petroleum processing facility.

Since March 2015, Saudi Arabia and some of its Arab allies have been carrying out deadly airstrikes against the Yemenis to restore power to fugitive former president Abd Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, a close ally of Riyadh.

Official UN figures say that more than 15,000 civilians have been killed in Yemen since the Saudi-led bombing campaign began.

The Saudi war has impacted over seven million children in Yemen who now face a serious threat of famine, according to UNICEF figures. Over 6,000 children have either been killed or sustained serious injuries since 2015, UN children's agency has reported. The humanitarian situation in the country has also been exacerbated by outbreaks of cholera, polio, and measles.

Shamkhani reiterated Iran's long-held policy that there is no military solution to the Yemen conflict, saying, "Only through intra-Yemeni dialogue and without intervention of third parties the war will come to an end."

Senior advisor describes KSA as sick man of Middle East

(FNA) — A senior adviser to Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, in a tweet on Wednesday, said that Saudi Arabia cannot blame other countries for the troubles of war on Yemen, describing the kingdom as the sick man of the region.

Behzad Saberi, in a post on his Twitter page on Wednesday, referred to the Saudi kingdom as the "sick man" of the region, in an allusion to the term first used in the mid-19th century Nicholas I of Russia describing the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

"After years of bloodbath in Yemen, David threw a mighty stone at Goliath, and seems to be 'locked and loaded' for more," he tweeted.

Riyadh "cannot blame others for the mess it created itself," he added, dismissing the blame game of Saudi Arabia and the U.S. which are trying to implicate Iran.

"Cure is still possible, only if the patient accepts the diagnosis," the advisor concluded, implying that the only solution for Saudi Arabia is to immediately stop its 4.5-year war on Yemen.

On Saturday, the drone raids by Yemenis, targeted Saudi Arabia's key oil facilities in Abqaiq and Khurais. The attacks shut down about 50 percent of the kingdom's crude and gas production, and cut the state oil giant's crude oil supply by around 5.7 million barrels per day. A return to normal production could take months, not days.

But, people familiar with the matter revealed that U.S. intelligence have tried to implicate Iran in the attacks on Saudi Arabia's oil industry as oil prices soared.

American officials shared with Saudi Arabia the intelligence reports and their assessment that Iran launched more than 20 drones and at least a dozen missiles at the Saudi oil facilities on Saturday, the people familiar noted, as cited by The Wall Street Journal.

Yet, after several days of accusations against Iran, Riyadh has now come out to say that they have not been presented with any definitive data or intelligence by the U.S. to prove Tehran's involvement.

Tehran, however, has dismissed the allegation since day one, saying Washington seems to be shifting from a failed campaign of "maximum pressure" to one of "maximum lying" and "deceit" against the Islamic Republic.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Seyed Abbas Mousavi blasted Pompeo for his big lies against Tehran, and categorically rejected his allegations about Iran's involvement in Yemeni attacks on Saudi Arabia.

"Such allegations and blind and fruitless remarks are meaningless and not understood in diplomatic framework," he said.

Foreign Minister Zarif also responded to Pompeo's claim, stressing that the American diplomat is now resorting to a campaign of "max deceit" against Tehran after the administration he serves failed to achieve the desired results from its anti-Iran "maximum pressure" policy — which has seen Washington impose the toughest of economic sanctions against the Iranian nation.

"US and its clients are stuck in Yemen because of illusion that weapon superiority will lead to military victory," Zarif wrote on Twitter.

On Monday, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said that the Yemeni army's drone attacks were merely for legitimate self-defense, and no one can expect the Yemenis to remain silent when their country is destroyed.

The people of Yemen "have to respond" to the foreign aggression and the influx of U.S. and European weapons into Saudi Arabia and the UAE, the Iranian president told a briefing held in Ankara on Monday after his trilateral summit with his Russian and Turkish counterparts.



STOCK MARKET

TEDPIX	294166.7
IFX	3886.55

Sources: tse.ir, Ifb.ir

CURRENCIES

USD	42,000 rials
EUR	46,478 rials
GBP	52,452 rials
AED	11,437 rials

Source: cbi.ir

COMMODITIES

Brent	\$63.24/b
WTI	\$58.87/b
OPEC Basket	\$66.43/b
Gold	\$1,502.70/oz
Silver	\$17.89/oz
Platinum	\$939.10/oz

Sources: oilprice.com, Moneymetals.com

Christine Lagarde gets European Parliament approval as next ECB chief

With 394 MEPs in favor and 206 against Christine Lagarde won the European Parliament approval to lead the European Central Bank. As reported by euronews, EU leaders will formalize her appointment at a summit in mid-October for an eight-year term. At the Economic Committee hearing she said "Primary mandate is price stability, of course. But it has to be embedded that climate change and environmental risk are mission-critical."

South Korea's fiscal boost is a model for others

How should an export-driven economy with a strong attachment to fiscal discipline, an ageing population and a bitter dispute with an island trading partner react when it is under economic pressure? As regional industrial powerhouses, South Korea and Germany both face similar challenges from the tensions in the global trading system: growth has collapsed, inflation is well below target and monetary policy has already done what it can. According to ft.com, yet there is one important difference. Despite ample space for easing in both countries, only South Korea has broken with orthodoxy and delivered a radically expansionary budget to boost its flagging economy. Germany, which is set to make a big announcement on how to tackle climate change this Friday, might take note of the speed with which South Korean leaders have been able to adapt to new economic realities.



Seoul's longstanding commitment to fiscal discipline could put even Berlin to shame. The overall budget for South Korea has been in surplus for more than 20 years. Loosening during the financial crisis was not large enough to tip the government into the red. No other major economy has such a lengthy record of prudence. Though Germany has been consistently in the black since 2014, its deficit exceeded 3 percent of national income in seven out of the 10 years from 2001 to 2010.

South Korea's smartphones

Now both countries face similar problems. German industry specializes in automobiles, South Korea's in smartphones and semiconductors. Both these sectors face structural shifts as drivers look to electric cars and phone users fail to find newer models such a draw. The two countries are likewise both at the sharp end of the trade war between the U.S. and China, as well as more localized disputes with Japan in the case of South Korea and the turmoil over Brexit for Germany.

They may avoid a recession, but both countries are certainly heading for a slowdown. Low consumer confidence and falling investment have prompted economists to forecast the slowest rate of growth in South Korea for a decade. Germany, meanwhile, is expected to register its most sluggish pace of expansion for six years because of falling export orders and a construction sector that is stagnating.

In response to the deteriorating economic outlook, Germany has begun to flirt with a more expansionary stance but is yet to commit. Last week, finance minister Olaf Scholz said that if an economic crisis breaks out "thanks to our sound finances we will be able to counter it with many, many billions". Yet the planned 1 percent increase in spending still appears lackluster compared with the action taken elsewhere.

In Seoul, fiscal conservatism has come to a decisive end. South Korea has planned increases related to job creation, welfare payments and research and development. Spending is being increased by 8 percent — on top of a supplementary budget passed in August — despite sluggish tax receipts. This means government borrowing is expected to reach a record high. An overall deficit next year, which includes the social security fund, would mark a big shift from a 2018 surplus of 2.8 percent of national income.

Fiscal easing will take longer to transmit to the real economy than monetary policy, but that does not make it any less important. The effects on business and consumer confidence may be meaningful as companies look to a new source of orders. Expectations for inflation and economic growth could improve. South Korea is right to act swiftly before the outlook deteriorates further. The global backdrop has changed: Berlin can learn from Seoul's willingness to change, too.

Privatization methods should be amended: fin. min.

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Farhad Dejpasand said the government should amend its policies and methods of setting the prices and transferring the shares in the process of privatization, IRIB reported.

Making the remarks during a ceremony on Wednesday for introducing the new head of Iranian Privatization Organization (IPO), Alireza Saleh, the minister said: "We investigated the cases of blame on the privatization processes; all transferring trends have been conducted based on the regulations and were complying the laws."

In its planned budget for the current Iranian year (ends on March 19, 2020), the Iranian government expects to earn some 106 trillion rials (about \$2.5 billion) of income from divesting shares of state-run companies to the private sector.

In Iran, implementation of privatization plan aimed at more productivity, investment



making, job creation, promotion of trade balance, more competition in domestic economy, and reducing financial and

management burden on the government has been under the spotlight over the past decade.

The law on implementation of the general policies of the Article 44 of Iran's Constitution on privatizing state-owned companies was declared in 2006 in a bid to downsize the government and promote the private sector's role in the national economy.

The government envisioned a large privatization program in the Fifth Five-Year National Development Plan (2010-2015), aiming to privatize about 20 percent of the state-owned firms each year. Under the present interpretation of the Article 44, some state-owned companies have been privatized to reduce their financial burden on the country's budget and also increase their productivity.

Downsizing the government is on the agenda, but a number of factors has been hindering privatization trend in the country, among them government's high interference in the management of the transferred companies is a challenging one.

Over 103,000 tons of aluminum ingots produced in 5 months

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's major aluminum producers produced 103,593 tons of aluminum ingots during the first five months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-August 22), IRIB reported citing the data released by Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO).

The IMIDRO data show that aluminum ingot output during the first five months of this year has fallen 32 percent compared to that of the same period of time in the past year.

As reported, 75,763 tons of the product was produced by Iranian Aluminum Company (IRALCO) during the five-month period, which indicate one percent growth from the figure of the same time span in the previous year.



Iran produced 276,575 tons of aluminum ingots in the past Iranian calendar year (ended on March 20, 2019).

IRALCO accounted for producing 53 percent of the total production in the past year.

As the world's 18th producer of aluminum, Iran plans to reach the annual production of 1.5 million tons of aluminum ingot by the Iranian calendar year 1404 (March 2025-March 2026).

Mureza Auto Company to distribute Iranian cars in South Africa

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Mureza Auto Company, an African car brand registered in Zimbabwe and South Africa, plans to assemble and distribute Iranian developed vehicles in Southern Africa through a joint venture with Iran's SAIPA Group based in Tehran.

As reported by IRNA, according to an announcement by Mureza, the company initially will have a joint venture with SAIPA Group for platform-sharing and the supply of major components but the ultimate objective is to design and manufacture vehicles in Africa for African drivers.

The business is being backed by funders in the United Arab Emirates.

"There is a void between the new vehicles and used vehicles currently sold in African countries and we propose to fill

this gap with new models priced not much above the cost of a used import, which are heavily taxed in certain markets," Tatenda Mungofa, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Mureza Auto, said.

The company has an ambitious product plan starting with a rebadged SAIPA Quick crossover/hatchback that will make its debut during Automechanika Johannesburg Exhibition which is being held at the Expo Centre, Nasrec during September 18-21.

According to Mungofa there is even a battery-electric platform for the X200 platform under development in South Africa by Energy Doctors and the next step will be the local development of a range of one-ton pick-ups and a panel van under the Tusker model name.

IMIDRO to hold mining exploration conference on Sept. 24

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) is planned to hold a conference on Iran's mining exploration development, opportunities and challenges in Tehran on September 24.

Explanations of new exploration programs, goals, and methods are also among the subjects which are going to be covered at this conference.

Back in August, head of IMIDRO announced that exploration operations have been started in 300,000 square meters of lands.

Khodadad Gharibpour said the new exploration operation will be conducted by a consortium of IMIDRO and the country's major mining companies.

The official also announced that over 11 trillion rials (about \$262 million) of investment has been made in IMIDRO projects through contribution of the private sector.

Gharibpour noted that in the framework of the country's Sixth National Five-Year Development Plan (2016-2021),



efficiency, productivity and maximum utilization of the capacities of the country's mining industry have been given

great importance and so should be considered in every step from exploration up to the production processes.

"In all areas including human resources, this [efficiency] should be taken into account. For example, we are far behind in employee education in the coal sector. Many of the work-related accidents in this sector are due to the lack of education, that is why efficiency and productivity is a priority in all the IMIDRO agreements," he said.

In late May, Gharibpour had said that the country's mining sector currently requires 18 billion euros of investment.

"The mining sector is one of the country's most profitable areas for investment so that 30 percent of the profits in the capital market is pertained to the mining and mineral sector," he said.

IMIDRO currently has \$3 billion worth of projects underway and it also intends to renovate 5,000 industrial units using 100 trillion rials (about \$2.38 billion) of investment during the current Iranian calendar year (ends on March 19, 2020).

Dutch economy 'robust' but Brexit, trade war clouds gather

The Dutch economy is set to grow by 1.5 percent next year Finance Minister Wopke Hoekstra said Tuesday, as officials warned of a slowdown blamed on Brexit and the ongoing U.S.-China trade war.

According to news.yahoo.com, speaking at the opening of the Dutch parliament, Hoekstra also announced that the Dutch government was loosening its purse strings to spend more on stimulating the economy, including the sluggish housing market, child care and defense.

"Despite all the upheaval, the Dutch economy remains robust," Hoekstra told MPs at the presentation of the 2020 budget.

For the fifth year in a row a budget surplus was expected with revenue total-

ling 305.5 billion euros (\$337 billion) as opposed to 302 billion euros in spending, official documents said.

Unemployment stood at 3.5 percent. But Hoekstra warned: "After years of booming, economic growth is declining."

Earlier Tuesday, Dutch King Willem-Alexander, in his traditional speech, also said that although the country's outlook was positive, dark clouds are gathering on the horizon.

"Our internationally-focused economy is vulnerable to disturbances on the world market, especially as a result of trade conflicts," the King said in his speech, written by Prime Minister Mark Rutte and his cabinet.

However he did not refer directly to

the current bruising trade war between the United States and China.

"Besides, Brexit is throwing its shadow over things," the royal added.

The Dutch government was set to capitalize on low interest rates to borrow billions of euros to invest in "sustainable economic growth," Finance Minister Hoekstra said.

The government is to present a project in early 2020 to create a national investment fund worth 50 billion euros to boost the economy in less prosperous times by pumping money into innovation, research and infrastructure, Hoekstra said.

Its decision to relax fiscal discipline comes days after European Central Bank chief Mario Draghi urged eurozone gov-



Wopke Hoekstra

ernments to spend more to boost Europe's economy.

Norway embraces weak krone as PM points to competition boost

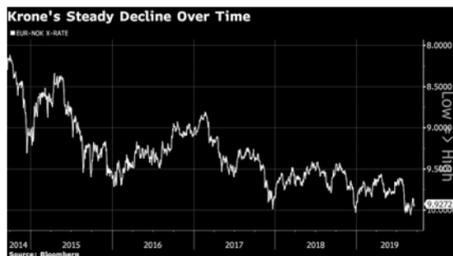
The prime minister of Norway has signaled that her government is happy having a weak currency, which she says is supporting the country's export industry.

As per news.yahoo.com, Erna Solberg, who leads a center-right government in Western Europe's biggest oil producer, said Norway's competitiveness in global trade has been "greatly improved" by the krone's steady decline over time.

"There's lower growth in a lot of other countries at the moment," Solberg said in an interview in Oslo on Friday. The "krone is also developing rather weakly, which benefits everyone except those that are traveling abroad."

The krone rallied at the beginning of the week thanks to a surge in the price of oil, which boosted demand for the currencies of crude-producing nations. But in recent years, it has been hammered as investors have responded to global risks by avoiding peripheral currencies and favoring the dollar.

Trading in the global foreign-exchange market has jumped to the highest-ever level at \$6.6 trillion, according to the



Bank for International Settlements.

The average daily trading in April was up 29% from \$5.1 trillion in the same month in 2016, the BIS reported Monday in a triennial survey on the industry.

The growth of FX derivatives trading, primarily swaps, outpaced the spot market and now accounts for almost

half of global FX turnover. But in Norway, trading declined by 25%.

The krone has remained weak despite interest-rate hikes by the central bank as Norway's economy expands faster than much of the rest of Europe, keeping inflation close to the target.

"There's much that indicates we will be able to maintain good competitiveness," Solberg said.

The weak currency is giving Norway's central bank more scope to raise rates, with the next meeting of policy makers set to take place on Thursday. Economists expect the bank to raise the rate to 1.5% by the end of this year, marking a fourth hike in just over 12 months.

The prime minister's comments come as she prepares to present next year's budget on Oct. 7. Her government has dialed up spending of the nation's oil wealth to about 8% of the economy, or \$26.5 billion this year, to fill a budget shortfall amid tax cuts and big jump in spending on infrastructure.

Oil not to be used as a weapon to achieve political goals: Zanganeh

ENERGY TEHRAN – Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said oil should not be used as a weapon for achieving political agendas, IRIB reported.

Referring to concerns about the security of oil supply in the market, Zanganeh said “This has also been our concern, we believe that oil should not be used as a weapon to achieve political agendas because it is a requirement of all human societies. And it must be allowed to flow freely in the marketplace.”

Speaking to the press after a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, the official mentioned the impact of Aramco attack on the global markets, saying “It [the attacks] will have a short-term impact on the oil market, but it will affect everyone.”

Drone attacks claimed by Yemen's armed forces on September 14, struck two of Saudi Aramco's major oil facilities in Khurais and Abqaiq - the world's largest oil processing facility and crude oil stabilization plant. Following the attacks, Brent crude posted its biggest ever



intraday surge to reach \$71 per barrel. Zanganeh further underlined the increase in the country's gas production, noting that since last year the country's gas output has

been increasing on a daily basis.

According to the official, the upward trend of gas production will continue in the future since National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) is following plans to stabilize production in new offshore fields.

In early August, National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Dispatching Director Mehdi Jamshidi Dana had announced that the country's daily gas production reached 810 million cubic meters (mcm).

According to Jamshidi Dana, currently with over 39,000 kilometers of high pressure gas pipelines, 82 gas pressure boosting stations, 296 turbo-compressors and other gas facilities, Iranian gas network is Asia's biggest and the world's fourth largest network in terms of facilities.

According to the official, currently 93.6 percent of Iran's population enjoy natural gas. Gas is supplied to 97 percent of people in the urban areas and 82 percent of people in the rural regions.

EOGPC to boost oil production in northeastern Iran

ENERGY TEHRAN – Managing Director of East Oil and Gas Production Company (EOGPC), a subsidiary of Iranian Central Oil Fields Company (ICOFC) in eastern Iran, said with two new wells being drilled, over 2.5 million cubic meters will be added to the company's gas production in the region by the end of autumn (December 21).

Speaking to Shana, Abolhassan Mohammadi noted that his company's production goals for the first half the current calendar year (March 22-Spetember 22) have completely been realized and preparation plans like gas injection and overhauls for maximum production during the cold season are also being pursued seriously.

EOGPC is in charge of developing two gas fields namely Khangiran and the jointly owned Gonbadly field in Sarakhs

in northeastern Iran.

EOGPC supplies gas to Khorasan Razavi, North Khorasan and South Khorasan, Golestan, Mazandaran and partly Semnan provinces. By providing gas to these provinces, the company is playing a prominent role in the economic blossoming of the country in the energy sector.

The top priority of this company is production, particularly in cold seasons of the year, because the EOGPC operating area is among cold areas in the country and therefore planning must be such that before cold seasons of the year start all maintenance, overhaul, and preventive activities must have been finished.

According to the managing director, the reservoirs operating under EOGPC administration are in the second half of their lifecycle.



Wind energy in Brazil: Piauí has largest wind farm under construction in South America

The wind farm will have the capacity to generate 3.3 TWh per year and will prevent the emission of over 1.6 million tons of CO2 into the atmosphere. Piauí is among the largest clean energy producers in Brazil, ranking fifth among the largest wind energy producers in the country. Just as the state produces energy, it also generates jobs in several areas and life improvement opportunities for the people of Piauí. The good winds from the northeast region, considered constant and stable, have contributed to the excellent performance: Piauí produces 1638.10 megawatts (MW) of wind power.

According to ewind.es, to make all this energy production possible, thousands of workers working in both wind farms and factories of wind turbines that supply equipment are responsible for moving the productive sector, generating economic growth in the municipalities where the companies are located, with Nordex / Triggers.

Inaugurated in 2018, the Nordex / Acciona wind tower factory is located in Lagoa do Barro municipality, 540 km from Teresina, manufactures concrete towers and supplies equipment for use in Piauí wind farms. More than 400

jobs were created with the company's installation in the region. For Atlantic company, which owns the structure of the Lagoa do Barro Wind Complex, it has already manufactured 65 towers, which has eight parks and an installed capacity of 195 MW (megawatts), spread over an area of 2,854 hectares.

The prosperity of wind power in the state has been changing the lives of Bruno Amorim, a resident of Queimada Nova, neighboring Lagoa do Barro, who is now a quality assistant at the factory. He says he had only worked informally before and was the first opportunity to work with a formal contract. “This wind project here in the region was my first opportunity to work in a signed portfolio. I'm really enjoying working here, learning new things that I wouldn't learn, because informal jobs often prevail in the city. From now on, I hope to finish this project and continue on others,” says Bruno.

Nordex / Acciona has been installed for over a year in the city of Lagoa do Barro and, in addition to producing equipment for the Atlantic company, also manufactures inputs for the other state parks, which will not need to import the 120m towers that support the propellers. and the wind generator.

Global renewables giant born says RWE's CEO Martin Schmitz

RWE will take ownership of fellow German utility E.ON's project pipeline, building on its already-huge installed base.

According to greentechmedia.com, “this makes us one of the world's leading renewable energy companies,” says RWE CEO Rolf Martin Schmitz.

Officials in Brussels have approved RWE's deal for fellow German utility E.ON's global renewable energy project pipeline. The €40 billion (\$44.1 billion) asset swap has been under scrutiny by the European Commission's competition watchdog.

To simplify what is a very complex deal, RWE has passed the customer distribution business of its subsidiary Innogy to E.ON in exchange for the development assets. The “new RWE” will focus on renewable power generation.

“Today, Brussels paved the way for the ‘new RWE.’ This makes us one of the world's leading renewable energy companies,” said Rolf Martin Schmitz, CEO of RWE. “We intend annual net investments of €1.5 billion to consolidate and further strengthen this position. Now we are putting all our energy into tackling this task.”

RWE already has 9 gigawatts of renewable energy assets up and running. According to the firm's 2018 annual

report (PDF), the E.ON deal includes a 17-gigawatt portfolio of largely wind projects, though it's unlikely all of that will end up getting built.

Offshore wind in Germany

The development portfolio includes the 325-megawatt Kaskasi offshore wind project in Germany, which has been awarded state subsidies at auction. A construction decision on that is due next year. It also includes a 440-megawatt portfolio of U.S. solar projects taken to various stages of progress by the developer Birdseye.

Speaking in an interview within RWE's own annual report, Schmitz said projects in the 17-gigawatt pipeline would still have to meet RWE's criteria if they are to progress.

“Of course, we can't make this decision until we have operational control. However, we probably won't implement a fair share of the projects in the pipeline,” Schmitz said.

“Only those that meet our return requirements will be considered. Under no circumstances will we make investment decisions ‘no matter what the cost.’ This should really go without saying, but it probably isn't a bad idea to come out and reiterate it.”

Bangladesh solar power: lessons from Hawaii

By Rashed Chowdhury

The state of Hawaii, an archipelago in the central Pacific Ocean southwest of the continental United States and southeast of Japan, was admitted to the American union on August 21, 1959, making it the 50th state of the U.S. Its capital is Honolulu, on the island of Oahu. The most recent census (2018) puts the state's population at 1.42 million.

Hawaii, with lots of sun but no oil, has already stepped ahead of other U.S. states in the race toward clean energy.

Legislation requiring all new homes to have solar water heaters has been passed. The legislation goes beyond the rebates and tax credits that other states and cities are offering.

Some conservatives say it is a heavy-handed government mandate to go green, but it will save people money – cutting about \$1,000 a year from the electricity bill of an average home in Hawaii. For a state that has the nation's highest electricity rates and an abundance of sunlight, this move seems natural.

Given the state's environmental and political problems, many people in Hawaii feel that the initiative for clean energy is encouraging, as the per capita consumption of oil in Hawaii is more than in any other U.S. state.

There are other reasons for which the Hawaiians are happy – the use of solar panels minimizes their dependence on fossil fuels imported from other countries. The fossil-fuel supplies on which the U.S. relies for its energy are dwindling, and becoming increasingly expensive and politically costly.

Other fossil fuels

According to the Hawaiian legislature, the U.S. desperately needs to reduce its dependence on oil and other fossil fuels and move toward clean, renewable energy. Hawaii is the best-suited state in the U.S. to lead the change. The state ranks third in annual sunlight, pays the highest electricity rates in the nation and relies primarily on imported and highly polluting



energy sources.

As energy prices increase and the world becomes more aware of the problems of global warming, rising sea levels and air pollution, locations such as the islands of Hawaii with a good and free source of solar energy have an excellent solution to reduce the environmental effects of fossil fuels with residential solar panels and solar power systems. Solar panels are mounted on a building or can be free-standing for any location where a reduction in power bills are needed. Hawaii's solar-power incentives are excellent compared with many states, with improving energy efficiency and reducing dependence on imported oil firmly on the state government agenda.

Emissions from power plants that run on fossil fuels are a major contributor to global warming. Scientists tell us that a failure to respond to the climate crisis will lead to rising sea levels, more severe weather patterns and increased rates of communicable diseases. The time for debate is over. Investing in renewable energy now will yield big dividends to our world's well-being in the future.

The sooner our transition toward renewable energy happens,

the better off we'll all be. Solar energy is a particularly promising technology. Clean, quiet, reliable and requiring virtually no maintenance, solar energy produces electricity during the time of day when it is most needed. And unlike most energy technologies, it has the advantage of producing power in the same place it's consumed.

Bangladesh is a perfect environment for solar power, as the sun shines most of the time. Its local utility supports the purchase and installation of solar systems with generous rebates and solar tax credits from the government, as is done in Hawaii.

Solar panels

Solar panels in the past used to be made of silicon but as silicon is becoming more expensive, research has turned to other materials. Lately, a whole new type of solar panel is being produced. They are made of plastic and the price is comparatively low. These plastic panels work just as well to power just about any appliance that is used in a home out in a remote location.

Solar panels are mostly placed on the roof. The power generated is transmitted to a battery for storage and household power needs are drawn from this storage. Solar energy is also most suitable for heating water for household use, swimming pools and hot tubs.

The best thing about solar power is that it does not release harmful emissions or effluents leading to global warming, acid rain and smog. The utility of solar panels is great. Having solar panels installed in the home, people can live anywhere, even in rural areas, without forgoing the conveniences of the city and without having to install expensive electrical-line extensions from noisy generators.

Bangladesh can therefore benefit from the experience of Hawaii's solar systems – where a solar system has been proved to be the environmentally and economically sound choice for power generation and heating water in residential complexes.

(Source: asiatictimes.com)

The biggest winner in the Saudi oil supply crisis

By Tsvetana Paraskova

The weekend attacks on vital oil infrastructure in OPEC's largest producer and the world's top oil exporter Saudi Arabia could be a boon to Brazil, a non-OPEC producer which is not part of the OPEC+ production cut deal and which is set to boost its oil production and access to some of its prized oil exploration areas.

With security risks in the Middle East now higher than many – if not all – analysts thought possible just a week ago, investors and oil buyers could turn to oil producing nations far from the tensions in the Persian Gulf, analysts and emerging markets investors say.

“I think people are beginning to think well maybe we should be looking to Brazil, for example, for their oil supply, to Mexico, to other countries in terms of where oil can come from,” veteran investor Mark Mobius of Mobius Capital Partners told CNBC on Monday, the first trading day after the attacks in Saudi Arabia left 5.7 million bpd of its production offline.

“If you look at the reserves that Brazil has, you'll see that they can produce quite a lot of oil,” Mobius told CNBC.

After some delays in projects and heavy maintenance at the start of the summer, Brazil has boosted its oil and liquids production in the past two months and is set to be the second-largest contributor to non-OPEC oil supply growth this year and next, after the number-one growth driver, the United States.

The attacks in Saudi Arabia could also spur more interest in Brazil's upcoming oil auctions slated to be held in the next few months, analysts say.

The oil price hike

On the downside, the oil price spike at the start of the week could put additional inflationary pressure on the Latin American countries, while Brazil's state-owned oil firm Petrobras may have to carefully consider if, when, and how to potentially pass the oil price surge on to consumers at the pump, analysts and energy experts told BNAmericas this week.

Petrobras will not be raising fuel prices immediately, the company said on Monday, adding that it would continue to monitor the market and “make timely decisions on future price adjustments.”

Although the rise in global oil prices will be positive for Petrobras' share price, the Brazilian company should be careful how it will manage a fuel price increase, in order to avoid another crippling strike of truck drivers who are highly sensitive to diesel prices, BB Investimentos' equity team says, as carried by BNAmericas.

For future auctions offshore Brazil, slated for later this year, the attacks in Saudi Arabia could be ‘positive’ for Brazil in the sense that oil companies “will want access to oil production far from the tensions and will then start paying more attention to the pre-salt area,” Edmilson Moutinho, a teacher at the energy institute of São Paulo University USP, told BNAmericas.

New exploration acreage

New exploration acreage and new discoveries will be vital for Brazil's oil supply, which could potentially grow by 70 percent, to 4.4 million bpd in 2035, compared to 2018, McKinsey & Company said in a report in April this year.

The “outlook for Brazil's oil production to 2035 will depend heavily on whether the country is able to open up for additional exploration and development in new fields and blocks. Companies other than Petrobras are poised to have a big role in making these investments happen,” McKinsey said.

Brazil's oil production is set to grow in the near term, organizations and analysts say.

According to OPEC's Monthly Oil Market Report for September, Brazil will see an 180,000-bpd annual rise in production this year, and another 290,000 bpd annual supply growth in 2020.

Crude oil output is expected to increase by between 320,000 bpd and 360,000 bpd in the second half this year compared to the first half of 2019, when delays and maintenance led to production declines.

More than 80 percent of the estimated additional production from new projects in 2020 is expected to come from the Búzios (x-Franco), Lara, and Lula fields, OPEC said.

Regardless of the developments in the Middle East, Brazil has a chance to significantly boost its oil production if its own regulatory and investment climate is attractive enough for major investments.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Oil steadies after Saudi pledges to restore output lost in attacks

Oil prices were little changed on Wednesday, steadying after Saudi Arabia said it will restore by the end of the month production lost in weekend attacks on its facilities.

Prices plummeted 6% on Tuesday after Saudi Arabia's energy minister said the country had managed to restore oil supplies to customers to where they stood before the attacks on its facilities that shut 5% of global oil output by drawing from its huge inventories.

Brent crude oil futures LCOc1 were flat at \$64.55 a barrel by 0732 GMT. U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude CLc1 futures were down 15 cents, or 0.1%, to \$59.19 a barrel, after sinking 5.7% on Tuesday.

“Considering limited spare (production) capacity outside Saudi Arabia and a risk premium is likely to stay on oil prices in the foreseeable future,” analysts said in a note.

Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman said on Tuesday that average oil production in September and October would be 9.89 million barrels per day and that the world's top oil exporter would ensure full oil supply commitments to its customers this month.

Saudi Aramco has informed some Asian refiners that it will supply full allocated volumes of crude oil in October, albeit with some changes.

Relations between the United States and Iran have deteriorated since U.S. President Donald Trump pulled out of the Iran nuclear accord last year and reimposed sanctions on its oil exports.

Tehran on Tuesday ruled out talks with Trump.

The oil market is facing challenging times. Oil price spikes are possible at any time,” an analyst said.

Still, fundamental supply and demand balances in the oil market are deteriorating, the analyst added, forecasting Brent oil prices of \$60 a barrel next year.

“Demand growth is weakening, oil supply outside OPEC is rising significantly and OPEC+'s production discipline has recently faded,” he said.

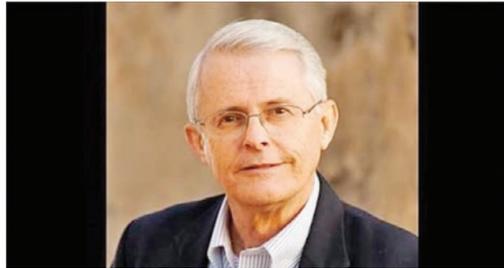
The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and a number of other producing nations including Russia agreed last year to cut output by 1.2 million bpd to reduce global stocks and prop up prices.

U.S. crude inventories rose by 592,000 barrels in the week ended Sept. 13 to 422.5 million, data from industry group the American Petroleum Institute showed on Tuesday. Analysts had expected a decrease of 2.5 million barrels.

U.S. state senator: No evidence of Iran's involvement in Saudi oil attack

TEHRAN (Tasnim) — A US Republican state senator said there is no reliable evidence that Iran was involved in the recent drone attack on Saudi oil installations, which he described as an enormous loss of prestige for Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

In an interview with Tasnim, Virginia Senator Richard H. Black likened Saudi Arabia to a "school bully who cries when a small girl punches him and gives him a bloody nose," saying the neocons always accuse Iran of involvement in attacks on Saudi targets because they cling to the dream of starting a new war in the Middle East.



What follows is the full text of the interview:

Q: The over 4-year-old Saudi war on Yemen has claimed the lives of more than 10,000 civilians. The Yemeni Armed Forces on Saturday carried out retaliatory drone attacks against Saudi Arabia, hitting the kingdom's oil heartland, Aramco. What is your take on the devastating strikes?

A: Saudis used cruel bombardment and attacks by paid Sudanese mercenaries to force the people of Yemen to accept a puppet regime. They thought they could muscle the poor Houthi tribesmen into bowing to their will, but they were wrong. The drone attack knocked out half of Saudi oil production. This was a huge victory for the Houthis and an enormous loss of prestige for Saudi Arabia's Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Q: Later in the day, the spokesman of the Yemeni army warned that more similar strikes will be conducted unless the Saudi regime stops its aggression against the impoverished Arab country. Do you think Yemen's military has the right to defend the country's soil and sovereignty in the face of Riyadh?

A: Saudi Arabia is outraged that Yemen is fighting back against Arabia's war of aggression. The Saudis are like a school bully who cries when a small girl punches him and gives him a bloody nose. Saudi Arabia has murdered Yemen's Houthis for years. Using American weapons and Sudanese mercenaries, they have done so without suffering consequences. Now, they're getting some of their own medicine and they just can't take it. Suddenly they are experiencing some of the suffering that they have been inflicting on their neighbors.

Q: In a phone call, US President Trump told Saudi crown prince that the US was ready to help protect the regime security following the attack. Secretary of State Pompeo blamed Iran for the attack. But Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, denounced Pompeo's characterization of the actors involved in the attack. "This is such irresponsible simplification and it's how we get into dumb wars of choice. The Saudis and Houthis are at war. The Saudis attack the Houthis and the Houthis attack back..." he wrote. What do you think? Why does White House not rein in the kingdom to stop killing innocent people?

A: As soon as Saudi Arabia and the UAE leave Yemen, the war will end. The Houthis have no reason to pursue the war beyond their own borders once the war against them ends. The Saudis and Emiratis attacked Yemen in order to install Abdrabbuh Mansur Hadi as the president. But Hadi is a mere Quisling—a hated puppet who lacks any popular support. He doesn't even live in Yemen.

Saudis and Emiratis live in opulent splendor while they bomb water purification plants to spread disease and death among the Yemenis. They are notorious for using US-built "smart bombs" to launch precise attacks on weddings, funerals, and children's school buses. Their war against the Houthis is widely viewed as a litany of war crimes against the people. Reuters reports that the "US, France, Britain may be complicit in Yemen war crimes," according to the UN.

There's no reliable evidence that Iran was involved in the attacks. But neocons always blame Iran because they cling to the dream of starting a new war there. However, the American people are sick of propping up the brutal Saudi regime and they are tired of wars in the Middle East.

Q: Why has the West remained silent on the issue of human rights in Saudi Arabia and its deadly war on Yemen?

A: The West relies on Saudi Arabia to help the US control world currency through the petrodollar. In the 1970s, Saudi Arabia agreed that all of their oil sales would be settled in US dollars. In exchange, the US backs the Saudis militarily. The petrodollar system makes the US dollar the world's reserve currency. It allows the United States to run persistent trade deficits, while exerting global economic hegemony.

Despite this important petrodollar arrangement, US congressmen have become increasingly hostile toward Saudi Arabia. There is growing awareness of Saudi Arabia's role in carrying out the nightmarish 9-11 attacks that killed 3,000 Americans in the Twin Towers and Pentagon in 2001.

In 2016, Congress overrode a presidential veto to enable the families of 9-11 victims to sue Saudi Arabia in US courts for participating in that bloody horror. Enactment of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, or JASTA, demonstrates that congress concluded that Saudi Arabia is probably complicit in the 9-11 attacks against the US. This June, the US Senate also voted against selling arms to the Saudis. Although the senators could not override the president's veto, most of them were troubled by the Saudi and Emirati war against the people of Yemen. Others were aghast at the grisly murder and dismemberment of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

The Washington Post reported on November 16, 2018, that, "The CIA has concluded (with a high level of confidence) that Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman ordered the assassination of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul last month... according to people familiar with the matter." Khashoggi's murder did enormous damage to the reputation of the crown prince. The royal family's reputation was not helped when the crown prince's half-sister, Princess Hessa bint Salman, was found guilty of armed violence and complicity in holding a man against his will. She received a 10-month probated sentence by a French court in September for ordering a bodyguard to detain and strike a plumber for taking photos at the Saudi royal family's apartment in the French capital. According to the French news magazine Le Point, the workman reported that the princess shouted "Kill him, the dog, he doesn't deserve to live." Her bodyguard then bound the workman and forced him to kiss the woman's feet at gunpoint. The cumulative effect of 9-11 revelations, the atrocities in Yemen, the funneling of arms to Syrian terror groups, and the atrocious misbehavior of the royal family have created a negative impression of Saudi Arabia in the West.

France's mission in new round of talks over JCPOA

By Ali Hassan Heidari

The world is currently experiencing multiple political and security developments, the fate of which can affect the political and security equation in whole or in part.

Each of these developments is in fact a unique one involving major actors and their allies:

Yemen developments, political and security developments between the so-called resistance movements with aggressive and opposing actors, tensions created by regional and international powers in the Persian Gulf, trade war between China and the US, tensions between the US and North Korea, and finally tensions between Iran and the West over the 2015 nuclear deal, officially known as the JCPOA.

Among the issues mentioned, the most important one is the negotiations of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the Western countries and the United States over the fulfillment of mutual obligations under the JCPOA. Part of this important and influential issue, which is Iran's commitments under the deal, has been fulfilled. Iran has reduced enrichment from 20 percent to three and a half percent, loaded the Arak heavy water reactor with concrete and actually shut it down, removed centrifuges in Fordow and changed the facility from an enrichment centre to a research centre.

In sum, Iran has fulfilled all its commitments, and international inspectors and observers have confirmed it, but the US and European powers have not only failed to fulfil their obligations, but the Trump administration withdrew from this international agreement and actually violated it. Notable among the reactions was the reaction of the European countries. Not only did they not condemn the US' unlawful action, they also implicitly accompanied Trump in setting forth new issues and his bid to redefine the JCPOA. The Islamic Republic of Iran, after several years of strategic patience and observing its legal and ethical commitments under the deal, has taken two steps to return to the pre-deal situation.

Iran's actions and its threat to take a third step prompted Western nations, which had violated all of the provisions of the JCPOA, to launch new efforts to persuade Iran. We will elaborate on the



reasons and the contents of the new negotiations in the future, but in this brief review we will discuss why France came forward to negotiate with Iran after Britain, Oman and Japan. The key question in this regard is why France should assume the role of mediator between Iran and the United States in the new situation. Is France in the position of an independent actor in this period, or is it an actor which is following the US policies and recommendations and has entered the game on behalf of the US?

In response to the question of why France has accepted the role of mediator in the negotiations at this juncture and is trying to force Iran to renegotiate the deal, it should be noted that France is a member of the European Union which has always played the role of a US ally. France has always entered the game on behalf of the US when it comes to common interests and threats. France used to play the role of bad cop during previous negotiations that led to the JCPOA, but in the new circumstances, it is trying to portray itself as a good cop. A number of important factors have made Paris prefer the role of a mediator rather than the bad cop and enter the game after numerous mediations.

Most of the regional developments designed within the context of the West-

ern and Arab scenarios have either come to an end or are at their final stages; scenarios such as the crisis in Syria, Iraq, etc. Of course, none of these developments resulted in the objectives that Western and Arab countries were pursuing. All of these crises ended as Iran and its regional allies wanted. It means that the costly and damaging strategies of the anti-Iran front totally failed. This failure means the collapse of a US-led regional and global front against Iran. In fact, in the war of strategies, it was Iran's strategy that showed its power to the world.

Tehran has adopted a revolutionary and aggressive counter-strategy on the issue of nuclear deal after years of strategic patience in face of the failure of the US and European countries in fulfilling their JCPOA commitments. In fact, the Islamic Republic showed a balance of pressure by adopting a revolutionary approach in its diplomacy backed by its regional victories. The world saw the apex of this political authority during the meeting of Iran's leader with the Japanese Prime Minister. The steps taken by Iran to return to the pre-JCPOA situation also completed this balance. This was an important factor in destroying the assumptions of the countries that were against Iran.

Another important issue that prompt-

ed the US to choose France for the new negotiations was the demonstration of Iran's power in the physical confrontations that took place in the strategic waterway of Persian Gulf. The West understood that Iran is not a country like Gaddafi's Libya or Saddam's Iraq. They realised that Iran will not easily give in to political and economic pressure and cannot be defeated by a Trojan horse. Iran's authority at sea and air forces France to play the role of a good cop. France, in fact, is a soldier working for the United States and its mission is to make up for the strategic failures.

In scenarios designed by the US-led Western front and supported by some Arab countries, destabilisation of Iran was on the agenda. This front accepted to pay a heavy political price, especially after it was disclosed that certain media outlets had been tasked with carrying out anti-Iran media operations. That is why in the atmosphere of psychological and media operations, there was always talk of a "hot summer" in Iran, and they expected a nationwide uprising to happen, but the summer came to an end and nothing happened. Just like all the other political, security and military assumptions, this one also failed and their chain of failures completed. Therefore, they found the solution in approaching Iran, because they realised that the only way to choke Iran is to get closer to it. So, negotiation was the best way to get closer to Iran. For Westerners, it is important to bring Iran back to the negotiating table after playing with Iran for years. They think if they can get Iran back to the negotiating table, Tehran will no longer be able to manage the talks, because they (Westerners) have learned in the first round that Iran can be managed once it is dragged into the negotiating table, and in the light of some similar JCPOA commitments the West can control Iran's movements.

The final point is that the Iranians could not benefit from the nuclear deal or even force the other party to fulfill its obligations. In the new circumstances, Iran has chosen a path that is not different from the negotiations held for the JCPOA. The West is trying to stop Iran's return to pre-deal situation in the new round of talks. It means that by talking of returning Washington to the agreement they want to lead Iran into a new cycle of giving more concessions.

On Washington's fake concerns about Hong Kong protests

TEHRAN (FNA) — The violent protest leaders and masked rioters in Hong Kong continue to show themselves as a popular pro-democracy movement to the outside world. However, they cannot change the fact that they have close ties to American think tanks like the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, the National Endowment for Democracy, and the National Democratic Institute.

Together with soft-power outfits, the flamethrowers are trying to influence the violence and the xenophobic protests in a direction that will only benefit US interests in the region. That explains why the motives and aims of the protesters are vague; why right-wing media tycoons with close ties to hardliners in Washington are backing their «democratic cause»; why although leader of Hong Kong, Chief Executive Carrie Lam, formally withdrew the fugitive bill to allay public concerns, the political crisis refuses to go away; and why the protests are now driven by a host of other objections.

This is not out of the ordinary. Of all the various twists and turns of the unrests in Hong Kong in the past three months or so, the effort by Washington to marginalize and stigmatize Beijing is among the more preposterous:

- US lawmakers have already sponsored the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 to back the anti-government rioters. Sponsors and other advocates say the foreign-backed riots that have intermittently paralyzed transport links, shut street-level commerce, and slashed local tourism revenue will soon prompt a «yes» vote.

- US senators have also signed onto an identical bill aimed at supporting the rioters in Hong Kong. Little wonder their cronies keep marching in front of the US and British consulates in the city with American and UK flags to call for support



from their governments. US policymakers and officials have even nominated Hong Kong protest leaders for peace prizes and pumped their organizations with money to «promote democracy».

- The policy of the Trump administration is not officially to call for protests, but top officials have often made that clear in public too. Outlining his approach in May, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met with Hong Kong's so-called pro-democracy leader Martin Lee, during which he expressed concern about the fugitive bill. This is while Hong Kong's matters are purely an internal affair for China and the central government in Beijing. Pompeo had no right to incite chaos there.

- The notion that part of the people in Hong Kong are clamouring for the fall of the one country and two systems, or welcome American assistance in precipitating that fall is the same kind of «we will be greeted as liberators»

nonsense the Bush administration believed in the lead-up to the Iraq War in 2003. People may want change and a better life in Hong Kong, but the Iraq-style collapse of their economy and system is surely not the kind of change they have in mind. Many peaceful protesters have already distanced themselves from violent protest leaders that are linked to outside powers.

- The fact that American think tanks and local media tycoons are influencing the Trump administration's anti-China strategy is further evidence that Washington is not acting alone in supporting the rioters. The aim of their plan is not for China to pursue internal reform and external dialogue, but for the one country and two systems to collapse entirely so that it can no longer undermine their illicit interests and geostrategic designs in the South China Sea.

The flamethrowers should take note:

This is an internal matter and the people of Hong Kong don't want their sympathy. They have been paying a heavy price for Washington's meddling in Hong Kong's internal affairs for too long. The last thing they want is for American think tanks and cronies to take to the Twitter to support their peaceful demands. The «sympathy» coming from Washington is only designed to agitate for instability in Hong Kong from soft-power outfits that are pretending to care about people, their human rights, and their welfare.

Unlike what the flamethrowers would like to suggest, criticism is not same as violence or inflicting damage on public property, and certainly it cannot and shouldn't be allowed to undermine lives and security in the territory. They are in no position to sympathize with people through outrageous and insulting comments and bills. People attach no value to their opportunistic remarks and symbolic gestures.

To be sure, people know better than anyone else that a handful of those who destroy public property in Hong Kong are not peaceful protesters demanding a better life for themselves and others. They are anti-establishment and hostile individuals or groups directed and funded by external think tanks and soft-power outfits to undermine China's national security and territorial integrity. With all of this in mind, the people of Hong Kong know just too well where they are headed, where they are in the region, what they should be doing to protect themselves, and what they should never expect from violent protest leaders that are photographed meeting with US officials in Hong Kong, or for that matter, from American think tanks, lobbying groups, and soft-power outfits eager to benefit from the carnage. It's a formula for catastrophe, as in all catastrophic situations.

Reflection on Bolton's expulsion from the White House

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — The expulsion of U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton from the White House has sent a clear message to the world: that Trump has failed in his pursuit of extremist policies in the world. There has been a lot of analysis in recent days, some of which we will review here:

As Maj. Danny Sjrnsen wrote in *Antiwar*, All wars require *casus belli*, ostensible justifications. After all, despite humanity's long history of vicious warfare, interstate combat often requires a government distant from its working class and esoteric ideologies. That said, Washington doesn't exactly have a strong track record of honesty regarding its rationales for war. Few Americans know or care much for their own history, of course, but consider just a few incidents (in reverse order) spanning 207 years.

Many probably remember the ill-fated, illegal, and immoral 2003 invasion of Iraq, with its euphemistic (and Orwellian) military mission title: Operation Iraqi Freedom. Oft-forgotten is the scale of government failure and deception that led to a costly regime change operation. Similarly, the Gulf of Tonkin incident — whereby North Vietnamese ships ostensibly fired on U.S. Navy vessels — turned out to have questionable evidence and context. In 1898, a purported Spanish attack on the USS *Maine* in Havana harbor stirred up national war fever and created the conditions for the Spanish-American War. Before a serious investigation was completed, Uncle Sam fought a "splendid little war" which gobbled up most of Spain's overseas colonies. Only it turns out that Spain was not behind the explosion, which was very likely accidental.

In one of the more openly aggressive wars in US History, President Polk brazenly lied to the American people in 1846, claiming falsely that a bloody skirmish with Mexican troops had unfolded on U.S. soil. As a result, Washington seized one-third of Mexico and occupied its capital. What's more, after spending this past weekend in San Antonio, Texas, it struck me that even the justification for the mythologized defense of the Alamo was motivated as much by the perpetuation of black slavery — which Mexico had already banned — as some yearning for "democracy." Finally, but far from comprehensively, the War of 1812 — rationalized as a response to the British seizure of US sailors on the high seas — was declared after London had already agreed to cease the practice. This was further evidenced when Washington — rather than wage war on the oceans — opened the war with an immediate invasion of British Canada meant to conquer (again) the province.

Why, then, should the people buy the government's lies next time the war drums begin "a beatin'." After all, false pretenses are the norm in American war-making. And it's a fully bipartisan phenomena, as the shady wars named above were kicked off by commanders-in-chief from the Democratic-Republican, Democratic, and Republican parties. Americans should keep that in mind regarding the now years' long era of war scares with Iran, and most certainly in the wake of recent devastating attacks on the U.S.-backed Saudi oil industry. With US intelligence — the same folks who lied, deceived, and misanalyzed regarding Iraqi WMD — now having informed the public that Iran was behind the attacks, and that the "West" is now weighing a "response," war seems more likely than ever.

All this unfolds just weeks after Trump fired former National Security Adviser John Bolton, the gold standard in a Washington chock full of Iran hawks. Some speculated after Bolton's departure that war with Iran might finally become less likely. Then Tehran was accused of temporarily crippling the Saudi oil industry — crude being the one "red line" resource it's unacceptable to attack — the sort of event Bolton could only dream of. Indeed, he'd tried just about everything else to trigger such a war: penning a New York Times OP-ED titled, "To Stop Iran's Bomb, Bomb Iran;" speaking before gatherings of the fringe Iranian dissident group, MEK, a veritable Islamist terror cult; and, finally, (for now, unsuccessfully) whispering sweet nothings of bellicosity into President Trump's ear.

Still, Bolton's life's work and dream had yet to come to fruition, despite the suffering and death wielded upon the Iranian people by U.S. sanctions that always ultimately target the poorest citizens. When, in June, a US drone was allegedly shot down by Iran, Bolton undoubtedly hoped



that'd be the miniature Pearl Harbor needed to bomb and invade the Islamic Republic. He must've then been heartbroken by Trump's subsequent (and sensible) decision for restraint. Three months later, Bolton was out.

Which leads me to this author's prediction (always, admittedly, a tricky matter) that this event, an attack on Saudi liquid gold, is more likely to lead to war than previous alleged attacks on US equipment or military personnel. Destruction of a multimillion dollar spy/assassination drone didn't do it; nor did alleged (if questionable) Iranian-sponsored Iraqi militia attacks on US troops, which killed more than 600 service members. See, the over-adulated troops are a political prop, and a few million dollars is chump change for the Pentagon. What Washington does care about is economic control, and U.S.-benefiting economic "stability," which — even in the age of fracking — is inextricably linked with Saudi and other States oil.

Rational analysis and historical precedent clearly demonstrate that neither the Yemeni Houthis nor Iran pose any serious — nor certainly existential — threat to the US homeland. Not that that's ever stopped America from going to war before. What has always mattered to Washington is even minor assaults on its empire, or on its primary imperial collaborators Israel and Saudi Arabia. Which is exactly what makes this latest attack seriously distressing.

So, wherever Bolton was when the Saudi oil strike occurred — whether binge watching Fox News, shuffling through the corridors of some neoconservative think tank, or counting cruise missiles to drift off to sleep — he most certainly cheered. That's because Bolton knows a discomfiting truth that most Americans don't: that attacks on Riyadh or Tel Aviv are just as likely (if not more so) as assaults on New York, to trigger a military response from the US war machine. Consequences be damned.

Also Guardian reported that Our long international nightmare of John Bolton is over. For now. Did Bolton resign? Was he fired? It doesn't matter. John Bolton is now no longer in charge of US national security policy and thus, we can all breathe a little easier.

Indeed, Bolton's top priority has always been to go to war with Iran. One of the biggest concerns among those of us who understand that going to war with Iran is a bad idea was that Bolton, an experienced bureaucrat, would take advantage of a naive commander-in-chief and use innocuous enough policy decisions to slow-walk Donald Trump into a corner where war was the only way out.

Bolton — who has made a career of scuttling arms control agreements — also had his sights on cancelling the Obama-era New Start Treaty, an agreement between the US and Russia that placed limits on the number of deployed nuclear warheads, missiles, bombers and launchers.

Bolton has spent the better part of his tenure in the Trump administration disparaging the treaty, repeatedly signaling that the US wouldn't put much effort toward renewing it before it expires in February 2021. But while our collective outlook going forward is promising without Bolton anywhere near the

levers of power, the trail of flames he has left behind will have lasting damage.

Yes he wasn't successful in convincing Trump to attack Iran, but Bolton helped create the conditions for war by pushing Trump to finally withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal mere weeks after assuming the top national security job. As predicted (even by the CIA), that policy has turned out to be a complete disaster, with the US isolated from its European allies, Iran's nuclear program less constrained, and the Trump administration failing miserably in its quest to rein in Iran's nefarious regional behavior or to spark internal strife toward the regime.

And even though Bolton's departure gives New Start a new lease on life, he convinced Trump to ditch diplomatic efforts at saving the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty with Russia and instead shepherded a US withdrawal, which officially went into effect last month. Experts are already citing the move as the catalyst for a renewed cold war-esque arms race.

More months before joining the Trump administration, Bolton attempted to make a legal argument for an unprovoked first strike on North Korea, and he made sure to preserve that option by standing in the way of Trump's diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions (Trump himself created) with Kim Jong-un. Bolton's efforts became so intrusive that Trump apparently banished him to Mongolia when he decided to pay a visit to Kim at the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea.

It's unclear whether we will be able to reverse Bolton's path of destruction, as it probably also depends on whether Trump wins the presidential election again. But the tragic subplot to the Trump-era Bolton debacle is the persistence of the constant revolving door of failure in Washington that is fueled by deep pockets and an insider media environment that is incapable of holding anyone to account.

Bolton's disastrous ideas have been thoroughly discredited and his political and policy career should have been cast aside long ago, perhaps even after the Senate declined to bless his nomination as US ambassador to the United Nations back in 2005 because of his extremist views. But instead, his post-Bush administration career flourished, presiding over a grotesquely anti-Muslim "thinktank"; landing a lucrative gig as a Fox News contributor; regularly calling for war on the op-ed pages of, for example, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*; generally hanging around Washington undeterred from, as *Media Matters* put it, establishing "a record of warmongering, bigotry and pushing conspiracy theories"; and then ultimately becoming one of the most powerful national security officials in the US government. It's likely then that we have not heard the last of John Bolton. He will probably return to Fox News or the rightwing machine will give him piles of cash to continue his quest to kill American diplomacy, and perhaps even run for president.

Give international peace efforts a chance in Afghanistan

TEHRAN (FNA) — The international civil society is once again calling for an all-inclusive, resilient, and sustainable peace deal in Afghanistan.

This comes after the United States and the Taliban reached a near-finalized agreement in principle. President Donald Trump even agreed to a secret meeting at Camp David with the Taliban and the Afghan government. He, however, backed out of the peace deal over a car bombing last week that killed an American. Still, peace in Afghanistan is not dead as far as the international civil society is concerned. The only acceptable course of action is a total end to the US-led war and occupation in Afghanistan, as more war and more troops on the ground would cause further destabilization in a distinctly bloody fashion.

The first escalation failed to yield the desired results. There is no reason to think the second one won't go poorly. America's occupation and doubling down on a doomed obsession must be dreaded. The policymakers at the UN should initiate a new search for broader diplomatic solutions at the United Nations. That means the UN building a true coalition aimed at using diplomatic and financial measures at the international level in Afghanistan. The policymakers in Washington must realize that there is no military solution to America's "longest war." One way or another, in all

likelihood, multilateralism must prevail, and that means engagement with Russia, China, Iran, Pakistan, and other players in peace efforts. They should organize a real diplomatic partnership to erode support for war and violence in Afghanistan, and promote the benefits of regional dialogue and security cooperation without bombs and troops on the ground. In the absence of foreign intervention and bombs, a real coalition as such could provide the best hope of restoring peace and security to the war-torn country.

Instead of coming up with corny excuses "to stay the course" for "real soldiering" and reshuffling of military priorities, the US government should take a good look in the mirror, because all they are trying to do is white-mask their never-ending war in that anguished land. This is not about forcing the US government to apologize and make condolence payments to Afghan people; the US government often claims adherence to international law that are really tragic lies. The US should call it quits in Afghanistan as the campaign undermines the right to life and security.

The argument by those in favor of increasing the American troops is largely the same throughout the war, that the Afghan government isn't capable of beating the Taliban on their own, and that a US pullout would add pressure to that struggling mil-



itary. From experience, the military build-up will only ensure more violence, attract more armed opposition, and postpone the day of reckoning among political factions in Afghanistan. It won't fare well and that shouldn't be a shock. The United Nations and the international civil society should wisely turn against such a destructive policy that will only cost the US many more lives and hundreds of billions of dollars, while only making a desperate situation worse for the Afghans. The world community has the power to stop this folly they know is irresponsible and unpopular. It falls to them to demand diplomacy and not an escalation. They could start doing so by making an all-inclusive peace deal in Afghanistan a top priority at the UN.

The foremost priority when it comes to the Taliban should not be just Afghanistan but the whole region too.

If the message isn't already clear enough, let's summarize: The war in Afghanistan has always been open-ended, but it seems to be getting even more in recent weeks. On the 18th anniversary of the 11/9 attacks, that's bad news for international efforts to kick-start peace talks in the war-ravaged country. President Trump — just like his predecessors — has defined the objectives, variously, as "eliminating Al-Qaeda and other extremist networks so they cannot come and attack us, reverse Taliban gains, and promote a more capable and accountable Afghan government." He has even talked about further training the Afghan army so he could get the U.S. troops out safely and quickly. None of these objectives have materialized and the likelihood of mission accomplishment is still nil.

Now that Trump has canceled peace talks with the Taliban, he should do the next best thing: Calculate the moral responsibility of the US for its actions, extricate the US from Afghanistan, and give international peace efforts a chance. Doing so would help more than a new military surge. It would help Trump settle a restive public at home and save many American lives in Afghanistan. This is a safe option for the Pentagon planners and their NATO allies.

Ditching the Dollar

TEHRAN (FNA) — The US has employed economic sanctions on Russia and Iran in hopes of crippling them financially, making it more difficult for them to compete for trade in the region.

However, Russia and Iran are working together to ditch the dollar to weaken the effects of US sanctions. The two are working to develop a new financial transfer system to replace the US-controlled SWIFT. This system would circumvent third country sanctions. According to Russian presidential adviser for international affairs Yuri Ushakov, "In order to protect bilateral trade and economic ties from third country sanctions, measures are taken on the expansion of direct payments, the use of national currencies, the improvement interactions between the Russian financial transfers system and the Iranian Sepam, as an alternative for payments to SWIFT."

The international SWIFT interbank communication system, used by more than 10,800 organizations in more than 200 countries, said in October 2014 that it was under pressure from several states which had sanctions against Russia, but did not plan to capitulate to their demands. However, the Bank of Russia created its own transaction system as an alternative to ensure financial services go on in the event SWIFT decides to end its working relationship with Russia. In conjunction with moving away from SWIFT, the Russian Ministry of Finance reported that the country will not borrow in US dollars anymore until at least 2021.

Earlier this year, it was also revealed that Moscow and Beijing are working on a way to reduce US dollar dependency as Russia plans to issue its first yuan-denominated bond. These are aimed at helping Russian and Iranian economies deal with US tariffs and sanctions, and also help Russia expand its list of foreign lenders. Russia was sanctioned by the US following the country's alleged involvement in the Ukrainian conflict and its annexation of Crimea. Iran meanwhile is sanctioned because of its pursuit of nuclear energy and support for anti-Israel resistance groups like Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad.

Because the US dollar is the de facto currency of the world, sanctions can have a devastating effect on a country. However, as sanctions are being increasingly placed on states that resist US economic hegemony, they can collaborate to counter the effects of such sanctions. One solution to end the dollar dominance would be to use a global cryptocurrency. Iranian Minister of Communication Technology and Information Azari Jahromi in 2018 called a meeting with the board of the main banks of Iran and several state institutions, to discuss the creation of a "digital currency based on Blockchain".

Meanwhile, the CryptoRuble is a digital currency currently in development and commissioned by Russian President Vladimir Putin, demonstrating that the Eurasian giant is prioritizing de-dollarization. Although getting rid of the dollar is not a simple task, Russia and Iran have already taken some measures to move away from the greenback, and more importantly, replacing SWIFT together.

With Russia and Iran occupying a shared space in the Caucasus, Caspian Sea and Central Asia, they are natural partners. Moreover, as they are both sanctioned by the US, their relationship has only intensified so they can work in a partnership to overcome the effects of the economic attack. It is for this reason that they have no other choice but to cooperate together to circumvent the US-led sanctions. And as things are developing, they are most likely to be joined by China, Venezuela, Cuba, North Korea and many others.

Iran and CPEC

TEHRAN (FNA) — Iranian Ambassador to India, Ali Chegeni, was reported by India's *Hindu* newspaper on September 10 as telling members of the Indian Association of Foreign Affairs Correspondents that "Iran is now discussing a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) pipeline to China along the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), as India is not expected to retain its prior interest in LNG imports from Iran".

This remark hasn't received the attention that it deserves, however, despite it being a visionary proposal for strengthening regional integration. First things first, it's important to explain the context in which it was made. Ambassador Chegeni was talking about the consequences of India's decision to comply with the US unilateral sanctions against his country's energy industry, which he was understandably displeased with. Still, he remained very professional when addressing this issue, even saying that "We love the Indian people. But we cannot force somebody to love us. The government of India has to decide according to its national interest. Just as the Chinese have".

It's here where one can better understand why the diplomat decided to reveal the existence of hitherto unreported discussions between his country and China over the proposal to build an LNG pipeline to the latter via CPEC. China, unlike India, only complies with international law and not the dictates of any individual country like the US whose demands run contrary to the aforesaid, which is rightly respected by Iran. Furthermore, there has previously been news about connecting the Iranian port of Chabahar with CPEC's terminal one of Gwadar. It therefore makes sense for Iran to consider how it could take ties with China to the next level by including an energy dimension into its plans to integrate with CPEC, which is the flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), as India is no longer regarded as a reliable customer of its energy supplies. A CPEC-parallel pipeline (E-CPEC+, with the "E" referring to "energy") would be the natural outcome of the unfortunate situation that Iran has found itself forced into and thus help turn a regrettable situation into a positive one for all.

Strengthening regional integration is the embodiment of the win-win outlook on international relations, yet doing so in the manner proposed by the Iranian Ambassador to India might cause some concern among his hosts who remain opposed to CPEC because of their claims to the Kashmir disputed territory that have resulted in them holding the official position that the project transits through disputed territory that they consider to be their own. Being aware of this backdrop, it's more newsworthy that it was Ambassador Chegeni who revealed the existence of these pipeline discussions and not any other Iranian official because it shows how seriously the country is considering this, but also that it cares about not offending India's sensitivities too. That's why it was Iran's top representative to India who broke the news and explained why his country was pursuing that possible course of action, chiefly in response to India's voluntary compliance with the US sanctions regime.

In the event that the negotiations are a success and eventually lead to E-CPEC+ entering into activity sometime in the future, then it would represent a pragmatically reliable form of indefinite sanctions relief for Iran, the strengthening of regional integration processes, and ultimately an exemplary form of South-South cooperation among the three countries involved. In addition, these positive outcomes might convince India to moderate its uncompromising position against both CPEC and BRI and therefore accept that both of them are here to stay.

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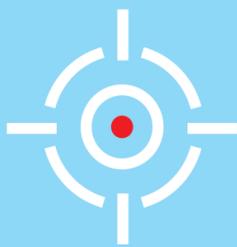
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Astrophysicists say one space elevator concept is possible with today's technology

By David Nield

Getting spacecraft into orbit is incredibly costly and difficult, and so scientists keep returning to the idea of a space elevator that can lift people and equipment out of Earth's atmosphere more easily. Now researchers have come up with a twist on the concept that - in theory at least - is doable with today's technology.

Rather than building a space elevator up from Earth, build a 'spaceline' down from the Moon, say astrophysicists Zephyr Penoyre from the University of Cambridge in the UK, and Emily Sandford from Columbia University in New York.

Based on their calculations, the researchers say such a construction is technically and economically feasible with the tools and materials we have today - something that can't be said for the space elevator concept.

The benefit of a spaceline over a space elevator is that it would orbit Earth just once a month - because it would be attached to the Moon, not Earth - and that means less of a strain coming from centrifugal forces.

It wouldn't actually touch our planet, but dangle down to geostationary orbit - some 42,164 kilometers (26,199 miles) above the surface - ready to transport whatever was



needed up into the further regions of space.

"By extending a line, anchored on the moon, to deep within Earth's gravity well, we can construct a stable, traversable cable allowing free movement from the vicinity of Earth to the Moon's surface," write Penoyre and Sandford in their paper.

"It would reduce the fuel needed to reach the surface of the moon to a third of the current value."

Crucially, super-strong materials that we already have, including the Zylon carbon

polymer, would work in this scenario.

By hitting what's known as the Lagrange point - where the gravitational forces of the Earth and Moon would come close to balancing each other out - the researchers think enough stability for operations can be achieved.

There would be some kind of 'base camp' here, the researchers say:

"Such a base camp would allow construction and maintenance of a new generation of space-based experiments - one

could imagine telescopes, particle accelerators, gravitational wave detectors, vivariums, power generation and launch points for missions to the rest of the Solar System."

The counter weight of a base camp would also help keep the long cable anchored and stable - it will need to stretch more than 300,000 kilometers (186,411 miles), after all.

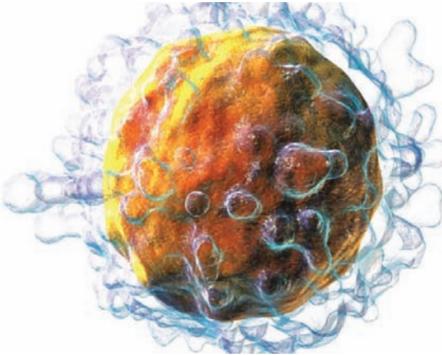
As an added bonus the risk of getting hit by space objects (like meteors) is low, and the cable could be manufactured to withstand small hits, the researchers suggest.

The idea of a lunar spaceline isn't brand new, but this latest study shows that it's now feasible in terms of cost and practicality. It's worth bearing in mind that this is only a proof-of-concept though, and the work has yet to appear in a peer-reviewed journal.

In other words, work on a spaceline isn't going to get underway anytime soon, unfortunately. But it might give us a more viable alternative for low-cost space exploration than the space elevator - and at least the maths checks out.

"We have calculated the tension and stresses on the spaceline, and showed that with modern materials it could be constructed within the fundamental limits of the materials," conclude the researchers.

Immune response depends on mathematics of narrow escapes



The way immune cells pick friends from foes can be described by a classic maths puzzle known as the "narrow escape problem".

That's a key finding arising from an international collaboration between biologists, immunologists and mathematicians, published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

The narrow escape problem is a framework often applied in cellular biology. It posits randomly moving particles trapped in a space with only a tiny exit, and calculates the average time required for each one to escape.

"This is a new application for some familiar equations," says co-author Justin Tzou from Macquarie University's Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

Tzou worked with colleagues at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the UK, the University of British Columbia in Canada, and the University of Skövde in Sweden to analyze how potential pathogens are probed by T cells, which identify and attack invaders. The researchers discovered that the equations used in the narrow escape problem play a key role in determining whether an immune response is triggered.

"The narrow escape problem turns out to be a close cousin of the situation with T cell receptors," Justin says. "It is about determining how long a diffusing particle remains in a certain region before escaping."

The unique shape of T cells creates what has been termed a "close-contact zone" for triggering molecules called T

cell receptors. Unlike most cells, which have relatively smooth surfaces, T cells are covered in ruffles, bumps and other protrusions.

Scientists have known for a long time that T cell receptor molecules sit on the surface of the cells to recognize enemies and trigger a hostile response.

The receptors contain molecular patterns that mirror those found on the surfaces of bacteria, tumors, and other dangerous interlopers. But exactly how the process of recognition and triggering works - and particularly how it works so quickly and accurately - has been a mystery.

The researchers believe the unusually lumpy shape of the T cell plays a vital role.

The protrusions on the surface mean that its area of contact with a potential enemy cell is very small - only a couple of hundred nanometers across, or a thousand times smaller than the width of a human hair.

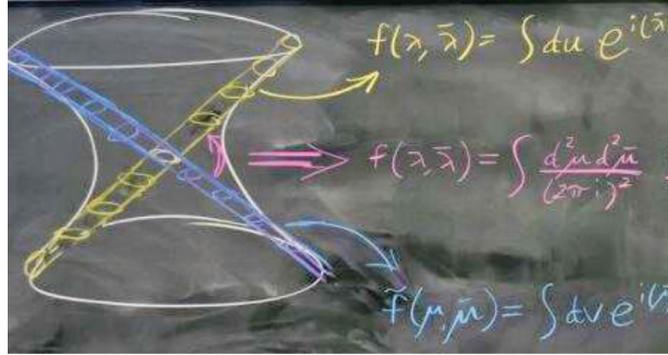
And according to the new theory, T cell receptors follow a two-second rule: if they spend more than two seconds in the small contact zone, a chemical process begins to sound the alarm and trigger an attack.

The size of the contact zone depends on the size of the bumps on the surface of the T cell.

"The smaller the zone, the less likely the T cell receptor is able to stay in that zone by chance, triggering an attack," Justin says. "It looks like the size of these protrusions keeps the process sensitive to the presence of the invader."

(Source: eurekaalert.org)

Hello, world! A new approach for physics in de sitter space



For decades, physicists have been attempting to reconcile quantum mechanics, the physics of the very small, with gravity, the physics of the very large. While many academics are working on quantum gravity, they often use models that don't consider certain aspects of our own universe, like its accelerated expansion. A team at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University (OIST) reports a new approach to quantum gravity using a model that more closely matches our reality.

Writing in *Physical Review D*, the team reports their progress on the scattering matrix for massless fields, or S-matrix, an expression that predicts what will happen when particles at infinitely far distances come together, interact, and go about their business. In other words, the S-matrix uses starting points to predict outcomes. Importantly, this concept can apply to a de Sitter space, a universe that is expanding at an accelerating rate - just like our own.

In this paper, the team calculates the S-matrix in de Sitter space for the simplest scenario, involving free, non-interacting particles. This expression is known as the free S-matrix.

"The free S-matrix is more than just elegant math -- it has the potential to explain more realistic scenarios," says Adrian David, one of the authors of the study. "We will now start thinking about such scenarios, moving beyond individual

fields to explore what happens when those fields interact."

A "Hello, World!" is a computer program that displays this simple message as an output. It is a test used by software developers to confirm that the underlying programming language is properly working. Developers usually perform this sanity check before using the language in more complex settings with useful outputs. The free S-matrix is like a "Hello, World!" program used to the math in a simple context.

"Like a sanity test in computer programming, the output 'Hello, World!' message is less interesting than the underlying language used to create it," says David. "Likewise, the free S-matrix is less interesting by itself, but more in the questions it might allow us to answer."

"We are in a universe that is expanding at an accelerating rate, a de Sitter space, and it appears that these conditions are now permanent," says Professor Yasha Neiman, head of the Quantum Gravity Group. "This information must be incorporated as a cornerstone in our description of reality."

For now, the team will work on the next step of the problem applying the free S-matrix to more complicated scenarios that echo reality. Then, they might gain a better understanding of this simply gorgeous math, or more than just a pretty face?

(Source: Science Daily)

Antibiotic resistance in Florida dolphins increases, study says

By Paul Brinkmann

Dolphins in Florida waters are carrying potentially deadly bacteria that show increased resistance to antibiotics, according to new research published this weekend.

The presence of the resistant germs in the Indian River Lagoon, which stretches from central to south Florida along the Atlantic Coast, means human waste or antibiotics, or both, are entering the waterways and are potentially harmful to marine life and humans.

Eating fish from the area could become more risky, according to the study, which said the bacteria that causes seafood poisoning, *Vibrio alginolyticus*, showed a significant increase in resistance.

"If humans are swimming in the same area, they could be acquiring a resistant bacteria that would be difficult to treat," said Adam Schaefer, epidemiologist at Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute in Fort Pierce, Fla.

He said antibiotics should never be disposed flushed down a toilet or sink. "Our sewage treatment plants do not break down antibiotics," Schaefer said.

Some antibiotics listed in the study also are used in agriculture and veterinary medicine.

The new data on pathogens in the lagoon comes as the area sees growing problems with toxic cyanobacteria, known as blue-green algae blooms, and massive fish kills in recent years.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



says antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest public health challenges of our time. At least 2 million people develop antibiotic-resistant infections each year, and at least 23,000 people die from them, the agency says.

Antibiotic-resistant pathogens were reported in 2009 after a similar shorter study. Schaefer said the findings were a big surprise at the time. The new study, published in the journal *Aquatic Mammals*, builds on 13 years of data.

Teams of researchers were able to sample 171 dolphins over the years and isolated 733 bacteria cultures from them. A great majority of those bacteria, 88.2 percent, showed resistance to at least one antibiotic.

Resistance was highest to erythromycin at 91.6 percent, which the U.S. National Library of Medicine says is used to treat bronchitis, pneumonia, certain skin and infections.

Other antibiotics noted in the study included ampicillin, to

which 77.3 percent of bacteria were resistant, and cephalothin, 61.7 percent. Ampicillin is used to treat illnesses such as meningitis or infections of the lung, throat and sinuses, while cephalothin is used frequently in surgeries to treat various infections of the blood, bone and other tissue.

Resistance to ciprofloxacin among *E. coli* found in the dolphins had more than doubled since 2009. According to the report, that mirrors human trends.

"One of the things we found so interesting was how some resistance patterns we were seeing are very similar or the same to what we're seeing in humans," Schaefer said. "What it tells us is these animals are impacted by the same things affecting us."

The bacterium with highest resistance was one that causes respiratory or urinary tract infections, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*.

All bacteria showed significant increased resistance to cefotaxime, ceftazidime and gentamicin.

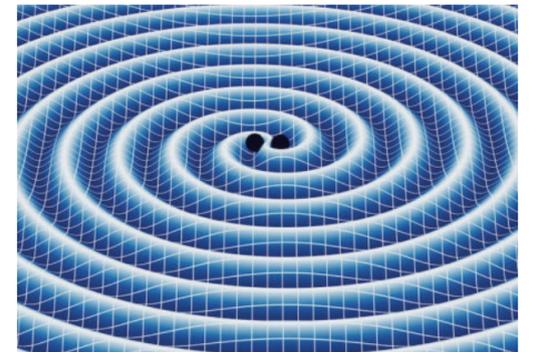
The study's results were published in the September 2019 issue of the journal, *Aquatic Mammals*. The journal says it is the oldest peer-reviewed journal publishing papers on marine mammal science. It is sponsored by the European Association for Aquatic Mammals, the Alliance of Marine Mammal Parks and Aquariums, and the International Marine Animal Trainers' Association.

Research was done by taking swabs from dolphin mouths, blowholes and feces in the lagoon. Collaborators on the study include Georgia Aquarium, the Medical University of South Carolina and Colorado State University.

Deepest optical image of first neutron star merger

The final chapter of the historic detection of the powerful merger of two neutron stars in 2017 officially has been written. After the extremely bright burst finally faded to black, an international team led by Northwestern University painstakingly constructed its afterglow -- the last bit of the famed event's life cycle.

Not only is the resulting image the deepest picture of the neutron star collision's afterglow to date, it also reveals secrets about the origins of the merger, the jet it created and the nature of shorter gamma ray bursts.



"This is the deepest exposure we have ever taken of this event in visible light," said Northwestern's Wen-fai Fong, who led the research. "The deeper the image, the more information we can obtain."

The study will be published this month in *The Astrophysical Journal Letters*. Fong is an assistant professor of physics and astronomy in Northwestern's Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences and a member of CIERA (Center for Interdisciplinary Exploration and Research in Astrophysics), an endowed research center at Northwestern focused on advancing studies with an emphasis on interdisciplinary connections.

Many scientists consider the 2017 neutron-star merger, dubbed GW170817, as LIGO's (Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory) most important discovery to date. It was the first time that astrophysicists captured two neutron stars colliding. Detected in both gravitational waves and electromagnetic light, it also was the first-ever multi-messenger observation between these two forms of radiation.

The light from GW170817 was detected, partly, because it was nearby, making it very bright and relatively easy to find. When the neutron stars collided, they emitted a kilonova -- light 1,000 times brighter than a classical nova, resulting from the formation of heavy elements after the merger. But it was exactly this brightness that made its afterglow -- formed from a jet travelling near light-speed, pummeling the surrounding environment -- so difficult to measure.

"For us to see the afterglow, the kilonova had to move out of the way," Fong said. "Surely enough, about 100 days after the merger, the kilonova had faded into oblivion, and the afterglow took over. The afterglow was so faint, however, leaving it to the most sensitive telescopes to capture it."

Starting in December 2017, NASA's Hubble Space Telescope detected the visible light afterglow from the merger and revisited the merger's location 10 more times over the course of a year and a half.

At the end of March 2019, Fong's team used the Hubble to obtain the final image and the deepest observation to date. Over the course of seven-and-a-half hours, the telescope recorded an image of the sky from where the neutron-star collision occurred. The resulting image showed -- 584 days after the neutron-star merger -- that the visible light emanating from the merger was finally gone.

Next, Fong's team needed to remove the brightness of the surrounding galaxy, in order to isolate the event's extremely faint afterglow.

"To accurately measure the light from the afterglow, you have to take all the other light away," said Peter Blanchard, a postdoctoral fellow in CIERA and the study's second author. "The biggest culprit is light contamination from the galaxy, which is extremely complicated in structure."

Fong, Blanchard and their collaborators approached the challenge by using all 10 images, in which the kilonova was gone and the afterglow remained as well as the final, deep Hubble image without traces of the collision. The team overlaid their deep Hubble image on each of the 10 afterglow images. Then, using an algorithm, they meticulously subtracted -- pixel by pixel all light from the Hubble image from the earlier afterglow images.

The result: a final time-series of images, showing the faint afterglow without light contamination from the background galaxy. Completely aligned with model predictions, it is the most accurate imaging time-series of GW170817's visible-light afterglow produced to date.

"The brightness evolution perfectly matches our theoretical models of jets," Fong said. "It also agrees perfectly with what the radio and X-rays are telling us."

With the Hubble's deep space image, Fong and her collaborators gleaned new insights about GW170817's home galaxy. Perhaps most striking, they noticed that the area around the merger was not densely populated with star clusters.

"Previous studies have suggested that neutron star pairs can form and merge within the dense environment of a globular cluster," Fong said. "Our observations show that's definitely not the case for this neutron star merger."

According to the new image, Fong also believes that distant, cosmic explosions known as short gamma ray bursts are actually neutron star mergers -- just viewed from a different angle. Both produce relativistic jets, which are like a fire hose of material that travels near the speed of light. Astrophysicists typically see jets from gamma ray bursts when they are aimed directly, like staring directly into the fire hose. But GW170817 was viewed from a 30-degree angle, which had never before been done in the optical wavelength.

"GW170817 is the first time we have been able to see the jet 'off-axis,'" Fong said. "The new time-series indicates that the main difference between GW170817 and distant short gamma-ray bursts is the viewing angle."

The study was primarily supported by the National Science Foundation (award numbers AST-1814782 and AST-1909358) and NASA (award numbers HST-GO-15606.001-A and SAO-GO9-20058A).

(Source: Science Daily)

Relics relating to Kingdom of Urartu found in northwest Iran

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Archaeological relics relating to Kingdom of Urartu (860 BC – 590 BC) has recently been found in Anaqizli mount, Chaypareh county, northwest Iran.



A local official on Monday announced that a team of Iranian and foreign archaeologists has discovered some architectural and other remains, which are associated with the Kingdom of Urartu in a trench they had dug on Anaqizli mount of Chaypareh, CHTN reported.

The official added that pieces of potteries and bones have also been discovered during the survey. "The excavated layers have been carefully documented," he said, adding that the surface of excavated trench was fully covered with plastic [shields] for further protection."

The kingdom rose to power in the mid-9th century BC, but it went into gradual decline and was eventually conquered by the Iranian Medes in the early 6th century BC. The Urartians were succeeded in the area in the 6th century BC by the Armenians.

Urartu, ancient country of southwest Asia centred in the mountainous region southeast of the Black Sea and southwest of the Caspian Sea. Today the region is divided among Armenia, eastern Turkey, and northwestern Iran. Mentioned in Assyrian sources from the early 13th century BC, Urartu enjoyed considerable political power in the Middle East in the 9th and 8th centuries BC.

Thai tourism takes hit, Chinese visitor numbers drop

Thais are indeed facing tough times, as recently released figures show that the economy grew by just 2.3% in the year ending in June. Its slowest rate in almost five years, last year the economy expanded by 4.1%, the Chiang Rai Times reported.

Exports are limp because of the U.S.-China trade war and the strength of the baht, the local currency. It has risen by more than 5% against the U.S. dollar this year, making it the best-performing currency in Southeast Asia. Farmers, meanwhile, are cursing the feeblest monsoon in a decade despite flooding in northeastern Thailand.

On top of all that, tourism in Thailand is another source of concern, the report said.

The industry, which has grown by leaps and bounds in recent years, generates more than a fifth of gross domestic product. But China's slowdown and the weakness of its currency seem to be discouraging its citizens to visit Thailand.

Chinese tourists made up more than a quarter of the 38 million foreign visitors to Thailand last year, yet the number of Chinese holidaymakers dropped by nearly 5% in the first six months of this year, a trend that seems to be worsening, the report said.

"I think we are still holding our own," maintained Yuthasak Supasorn, the governor of the Tourism Authority of Thailand. But the strong baht means Thailand isn't as cheap as it used to be.

Not all the industry's problems are external. Last year the sinking of a boat off Phuket killed 47 Chinese tourists, horrifying prospective holidaymakers.

(Source: Asia Times)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Historic center of Salvador de Bahia

Founded in 1549 on a small peninsula that separates Todos os Santos Bay from the Atlantic Ocean on the northeast coast of Brazil, Salvador de Bahia became Portuguese America's first capital and remained so until 1763.



Founding and historic role of Salvador de Bahia as colonial capital associate it with the theme of world exploration. Salvador de Bahia's historic center – an eminent example of Renaissance urban structuring adapted to a colonial site – is the Cidade Alta (Upper Town), a defensive, administrative and residential neighborhood perched atop an 85-m-high escarpment.

This densely built colonial city par excellence of the Brazilian northeast is distinguished by its religious, civil and military colonial architecture dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries. Salvador de Bahia is also notable as one of the major points of convergence of European, African and American Indian cultures of the 16th to 18th centuries.

The settlement of Salvador de Bahia, strategically situated overlooking an immense bay on the Brazilian coast, was aimed at centralizing the activities of the metropolis in Portuguese America and facilitating trade with Africa and the Far East.

The city grew quickly, becoming Brazil's main seaport and an important center of the sugar industry and the slave trade.

There are many streets lined with brightly colored houses, often decorated with fine stucco-work, that are characteristic of the colonial city. Salvador de Bahia was also, from 1558, the first slave market in the New World, with slaves arriving to work on the sugar plantations.

(Source: UNESCO)

20 attractions you must see in Iran

TOURISM TEHRAN — Iran, globally renowned for having warm and hospitable people, is an amazing destination for cultural travelers who bring only themselves and their desires to become part of the culture during their stay. Such a journey salutes transformation in way of life!

Earlier this year, the New York Times included Iran in its 2019 edition of Places to Go list, noting the country takes "the top spot." The inclusion came, however, among escalating tensions between Iran and the United States as President Donald Trump pulled America out of the Iran nuclear deal in May 2017 and restored sanctions against the Islamic Republic.

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

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

Here is a list of 20 must-see attractions selected by Culture Trip, a global startup operating in travel, media and entertainment: "Steeped in history, culture, and nature, Iran is home to a wealth of attractions and things to do and see. It might be difficult to figure out which places should be your priority," the startup wrote.

Persepolis

Once the capital of the first Persian Empire and birthplace of Persian civilization, it's vital that you visit Persepolis. In fact, you haven't seen Iran unless you've walked in the footsteps of the ancient kings.

Valley of the Stars

Qeshm offers pristine nature and a world of mystery, but if there's one attraction not to miss, it's the Valley of the Stars. Marl and sandstone make up the other-worldly rock formations, and with a little imagination, you can see animals, faces, and hands among other things.

Chogha Zanbil (Tchogha Zanbil)

The first Iranian site registered with UNESCO, Chogha Zanbil is a 13th-century BC ziggurat in the Khuzestan province. Baked bricks with cuneiform inscriptions are layered in the structure, and a centuries-old footprint of a child in the stone is roped off towards the back.

Babak Castle

A bit of athleticism and no fear are required to reach Babak Castle. Once the stronghold of

a Khurramite leader who fought the Abbasid Caliphate, this citadel, surrounded by deep gorges, sits at the height of 2,300–2,600 meters (7,546–8,530 feet). Those with a strong case of acrophobia might choose to admire it from afar.

Nasir ol-Molk Mosque

Walking inside Nasir ol-Molk is like walking inside a kaleidoscope. Nicknamed "the Pink Mosque" for its rosy-hued tiles, you'll love discovering the hidden nooks of arguably Iran's most beautiful mosque.

Anzali Lagoon

Located in the northern port city of Bandar Anzali, a boat ride on Anzali Lagoon is a must to witness the houses built on stilts, various bird species, and, of course, the water lotuses emerging to blossom through the dark waters.

Chalus Road

Are you traveling to the north? Then definitely take the famous Chalus Road. Steep roads snaking down the mountainside, tunnels carved in solid rock, and natural springs and bodies of water make this one of the most scenic routes in Iran.

Naqsh-e Jahan Square

Once a royal polo field, Naqsh-e Jahan Square in Isfahan holds Ali Qapu Palace, Imam Mosque, Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, and the Imperial Bazaar. You'll need the better portion of a day to see it all properly.

Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System

A feat of engineering, the Shushtar Historical Hydraulic System, an ancient irrigation system dating back to the 5th century BC, is sure to leave you awe-struck. Climb the hill behind it to marvel at the view from above before exploring the details of the mechanism and the many bird species living here.

Bridges of Isfahan

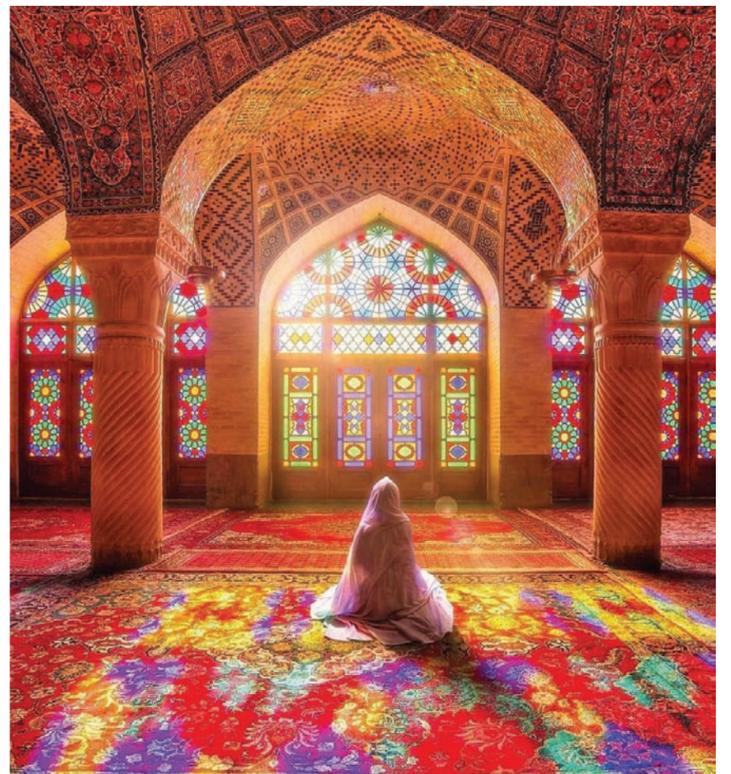
Whether it's Si-o-seh Pol, the Khaju, or one of the other nine bridges, a romantic stroll along the marvelous architecture of Isfahan's bridges on the Zayandeh River is a must. The Persian poetry often recited in these locales echo through the arched chambers and will seem like Scheherazade's 1001 Nights.

Kashan's historical homes

Exquisite ceilings, magnificent frescoes, and grand courtyards filled with pomegranate trees are what you'll get in one of the breathtaking historical homes in the desert city of Kashan. This city is best seen in the spring before it's too hot and while you can catch the rosewater festival.

Sheikh Safi al-din Khanegah and Shrine

Located in Ardabil, this shrine is the tomb of Sufi mystic leader Sheikh Safi al-din. Differ-



A woman sits in the prayer hall of the Nasir ol-Molk Mosque, which is nicknamed "the Pink Mosque" for its rosy-hued tiles, in Shiraz, southern Iran.

ent areas such as a library, mosque, school, and mausoleum make up this site, and the architecture is in keeping with the principles of Sufi mysticism.

Pigeon Towers

While people usually see pigeons as mere nuisances, especially for city dwellers, they were quite valuable in Iran about five centuries ago, namely for their droppings. These towers were built as pigeon homes, each holding as many as 14,000, where the droppings could be collected and used as fertilizer.

Chak Chak

Literally "drip-drip," Chak Chak is a Zoroastrian temple located just outside of Yazd. The most important Zoroastrian pilgrimage site in Iran, many Zoroastrians visit the temple every year. Once you've seen the similar sites in Yazd, a visit here gives further insight into this religion.

Rudkhan Castle

This military complex was initially built on two mounts during the Sassanid era and rebuilt a few centuries later. Known as the "castle of a thousand steps" because that's how many you have to climb to get to the top, Rudkhan Castle is worth the effort.

Katale-khor Cave

Discovered less than a century ago, the formations in Katale-khor Cave are said to date back to the Jurassic period. This cave sits outside of Zanzan, and though it is less visited than Ali Sadr Cave, the two are thought to be connected.

Hafez Tomb

If you're going to visit one Persian poet,

it must be Hafez. Stroll around the garden and tomb in the evening as tourists and locals come to pay their respects and recite a few lines of his poems. You can even have your fortune read to see what the great poet predicts for you.

Hurmuz Island

For such a small island, Hurmuz is brimming with dreamy nature and tranquility. Shades of red, yellow, and orange color the land area, which contrasts beautifully with the Persian Gulf's blue water. A dream for geology and nature enthusiasts, this island is also home to deer and other fauna.

Lut Desert

Iran's first natural UNESCO site and hottest place on earth for seven years, the barren Lut Desert offers an unusual tranquility. The sand ridges, known as yardangs, continuously change their shape, so if you visit the same spot at a later time, it might look completely different!

Bisotun and Taq-e Bostan

Bisotun and Taq-e Bostan are two historical sites located near each other in the Kermanshah province. Rock reliefs and the statue of Hercules are fascinating remnants of Bisotun, as is the prehistoric "hunter's cave" said to have been inhabited 40,000 years ago.

Rock reliefs are also under the archway of Taq-e Bostan, the most notable image of which depicts the last king of the Sassanid Empire with Ahura Mazda (the creator in Zoroastrianism) and Anahita (a Zoroastrian deity).

Dar ul-Funun: Iran's first modern university



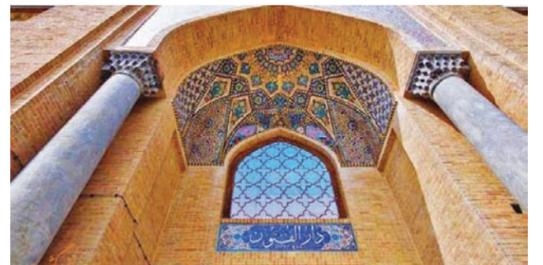
HERITAGE TEHRAN — Photos depict Dar ul-Funun, a mid-19th century scholastic center in downtown Tehran, which marks the start of modern education in Iran.

Established in 1851, Dar ul-Funun is renowned as Iran's first modern university. Parts of the property have recently been handsomely restored with the aim of making it into a museum on education.

Its courtyard houses an atmospheric garden that is hemmed by walls featuring Persian poetry inscribed on decorative tiles.

According to Encyclopedia Iranica, the number of students in its first year reflected an immediate popularity of Dar ul-Funun, with about 105 students enrolling in seven main subjects.

The center was opened by Mirza Taqi Khan Farahani (1807-1852), who was nicknamed 'Amir Kabir' who was chancellor under Naser al-Din Shah Qajar, appearing to be one of the most capable and innovative figures in the whole Qajar period.



Revealed: The most stressful aspects of airport travel

Going on vacation is, by its very nature, supposed to be a relaxing, recuperating experience. But inevitably in life, to get to the good stuff there has to be some stress first – namely, traveling to reach that sun-drenched beach or metropolis of urban and cultural cool.

Airport travel in particular can induce astronomical stress levels, from simply getting there to navigating the maze of passport control and security, duty free, restaurants, shops, bars and of course the often lengthy walk to get to the far flung airport gate in good time. Not to mention the waiting.

With this in mind, airport lounge access specialist Priority Pass has taken a look into the most stressful parts of the airport experience to uncover the black spots and help us navigate our travels with a little more serenity.

A survey of more than 1,700 Brits found that almost half (49%) agree that baggage collection is the most stressful part of airport travel, closely followed by passing through

security and waiting for transfers with 47% of the vote each.

Interestingly, any actual of fear of the flying itself appeared further down the results with one in three saying during the flight was when they were most stressed and 35% citing the landing as their moment of greatest stress. Boarding and finding a seat were seen as largely stress-free experiences (not I'd have to say something I entirely agree with, considering the usual chaos I see with people fighting to stuff oversized cases into undersized compartments directly above where they're sitting!)

The single thing that worries 63% of travelers the most is simply getting to the airport – with traffic and public transport significant factors. At 57%, three in five people actively worry about losing their passport or missing the plane altogether. And while 61% are concerned about somehow losing their luggage, only 41% worry about losing a child!

Convert those stresses into reality and the most com-

mon problem is actually overweight luggage, with 19% of travelers admitting they've been caught out in the past. Just one in ten say they've actually missed a flight with 16-24 year olds being the most common culprits.

Men are more than twice as likely to forget their passport as women – 8% compared to 3.78%, while business travelers, male or female, are the worst with 16% having left that vital document behind at least once.

The average Brit gives themselves one hour 14 minutes in the departure area, with 65% of families quoting anything from 30 minutes to two hours. Despite this, one in five families ends up having to sprint to the gate to catch their plane.

On the bright side, at least there's a relaxing vacation to look forward to on the other end – once you've navigated that foreign airport, collected your luggage and made it to your final destination.

(Source: Forbes)

Why American political, media class are bent on associating Yemeni oil attacks with Iran?

By Alireza Hashemi

TEHRAN – “Iran has launched an unprecedented attack on the world’s energy supply.”

The words above, made by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, were the opening salvo in an intensive propaganda campaign by Washington and the US-aligned mainstream media to implicate Iran in drones attack against two major Saudi oil installations on Saturday.

From that day onwards, the warmongers in Washington D.C. and mainstream media have went to great lengths to portray Iran as the one to blame.

Look at this uncritical headline from MSNBC, based on three anonymous sources: “U.S. intelligence shows Saudi oil attack was launched from Iran.”

Washington and its allies have stepped up their rhetoric against Tehran and Republican Senator Sen. Lindsey Graham is already urging an attack on Iran’s oil refineries to “break the regime’s back.”

The western-run Persian-language outlets like the Voice of America and BBC televisions have also been emphasizing the allegations, providing rolling coverage of reactions to the attacks with the Iranian role taken for granted.

This is while there are plausible reasons to believe Iran was highly unlikely to be where the attacks were orchestrated, and there are almost no public evidence of any Iranian involvement.

The US officials have published vague images as proof to further bolster their narrative fitting into their agenda of confronting Iran.

The evidence, in the form of satellite pictures the U.S. government claimed would establish Iran as the direct culprit, has not convinced many people.

The direction of the assault, it is claimed by US sources, was from the north or northwest, suggesting the direction of Iran or Iraq.

But even the New York Times has suggested the evidence “did not appear



as clear cut as officials suggested.”

■ US toning down rhetoric

The US officials seem to have backed off from initial threats, with Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, saying on Thursday that the attack was not aimed at the US so no steps were being taken to beef up the US military presence in the region.

He was echoing remarks by US President Donald Trump on Monday, who toned down his administration’s rhetoric by saying the US “would certainly like to avoid” war with Iran.

Trump does seem hesitant to go to war, as he is heading into an election year.

Interestingly, the Wall Street Journal reported that “Saudi officials said they haven’t yet reached the same conclusion that Iran was the staging ground for the attacks, and indicated that the

information shared by the Americans wasn’t definitive.”

The remarks suggests the Saudis, too, are reluctant to have a direct military clash with Iran.

So, the accusations made by Pompeo and others are increasingly seen as assertions in place of substantiated claims.

■ Why so serious?

The course of developments lefts one wondering why the US officials rushed into judgment in the first place, blaming Iran despite they lacked definitive evidence.

Several reasons comes to mind. The top reason might be that the US seeks to save face. The US has to scapegoat Iran for the latest assault on Saudi Arabia because to admit the tribal Yemeni forces were behind the attack would be a confession of American inadequacy.

Acknowledging the fact that the Yemeni

forces have managed to orchestrate a pinpoint accurate attack into the Saudi oil heartland from hundreds of miles away is militarily embarrassing for the US.

It is also a shame for the Saudi government, who initially planned to end the Yemen war in three months.

Another reason for levelling accusations against Iran is convincing the world Iran has become just too dangerous and it needs to be stopped.

Israeli forces have long been willing to attack Iran, with WikiLeaks files showing the Israeli planes were to hit Iran in 2010.

Besides, Saudi Arabia has for years been agitating for military actions against Iran, with the former Saudi king Abdullah arguing for attack against Iran in a meeting with the US general David Petraeus in April 2008.

Even If it doesn’t result in a pretext for American attack, at least Europeans and other governments pursuing a softer line on Iran could be bounced into toeing the line for increased economic warfare on Iran.

This could in turn push Iran to the negotiating table, allowing the US to extract more and more concessions from Tehran.

There are also a number of other reasons, such as containing Iraq’s popular mobilization forces. The US and Saudi officials have raised the possibility the attacks might have come from “Iranian-backed” groups operating in the Iraqi soil. Although the Iraqi government has vehemently rejected the accusations, raising such allegations alone could allow for further pressure on Iraq to dismantle the PMF.

Anyway, the machinery behind a military strike on Iran is apparently once again in motion, one that was already being readied with allegations of Iranian assaults on maritime shipping in the Persian Gulf and the shooting down of an innocent US drone.

Apparently, criminal regimes are doing all in their capacity to lie the globe into a potentially disastrous war in the region.

Let’s hope the world is smart enough to be deceived.

Acknowledging the fact that the Yemeni forces have managed to orchestrate a pinpoint accurate attack into the Saudi oil heartland from hundreds of miles away is militarily embarrassing for the US.

Agreement with Iran increases Trump’s chance to win 2020 presidency: Shireen Hunter

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Shireen Tahmaasb Hunter, a professor of political science at Georgetown University, tells the Tehran Times that “Europe shares U.S. concerns about aspects of Iran’s foreign policy, especially regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and its relations with groups such as Hamas and Hizbollah.”

“If there is no prior agreement on the most contentious issues then talk between President Rouhani and Trump would not able to solve U.S.-Iran problems,” Hunter says.

She adds “Clearly, if Trump manages to reach an agreement with Iran, its electoral chances to win the presidency in 2020 would be enhanced.”

Following is the text of the interview:

■ What objectives does French President Emanuel Macron pursue in mediation between Iran and the U.S.? Are these efforts made in coordination with Washington?

A: Macron pursues several goals through his mediation efforts. First, his role in reducing Iran-U.S. tensions, if successful, would enhance his prestige domestically and internationally, including within the European Union. France wants to play a leadership role in Europe and this enhanced prestige would enable it to achieve its goals. Second, Macron is genuinely concerned about a potential conflict in the Persian Gulf resulting from U.S.-Iran tensions. Thirdly, France, too, is concerned about what it sees as the shortcomings of the JCPOA in ensuring that Iran sometime in the future would not pursue a nuclear weapons program. Finally, he wants to portray the image of a seasoned and responsible leader in contrast to Trump’s erratic and impulsive behavior.

■ Iranian Foreign Minister Zarif surprise visit to Biarritz (G7 summit) raised the speculation over Iran-U.S. talks. Macron even hoped a meeting between the Iranian President Rouhani and his American counterpart Trump could occur on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. Was it Macron’s personal idea or promoted as a result of his meeting with Zarif?

A: It is hard to say who, Macron or Zarif, suggested the possibility of a meeting between President Rouhani and Trump at the margins of the UN general assembly. But the United Nations’ annual session offers the most logical opportunity for such a meeting should it occur. Therefore, both men might have thought of



the possibility simultaneously.

■ In a Joint press conference with his American counterpart, Macron hoped for a new deal with Iran in exchange for more economic benefits. It seems that French President agrees with Trump on a new deal which includes Iran’s missile program as well as sunset provisions and greater access for IAEA inspectors. As these issues are among the Iran red lines, how do you evaluate the prospect of any potential talks between Iran and the U.S.?

A: By and large, Europe shares U.S. concerns about aspects of Iran’s foreign policy, especially regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and its relations with groups such as Hamas and Hizbollah. Anxiety regarding Iran’s weapons programs derives from the fact that Europe --and U.S.--fear that Iran might use these weapons to

In general, as long as Iran and the U.S. disagree on basic regional matters, agreements on narrow and specific issues will always be rather fragile.

pursue what they consider destabilizing activities in the Middle East. Dispute over Iran’s weapons programs have always been more a symptom of these deeper disagreements about regional politics. By contrast, Iran sees its weapons program as defensive and for the purpose of deterrence. If there is no prior agreement on the most contentious issues then talk between President Rouhani and Trump would not able to solve U.S.-Iran problems.

■ The direct talk with Iran seems to be beneficial for Trump’s reelection campaign. But Rouhani backed off the idea of direct talks, saying Washington must first lift sanctions. What kind of concessions may he offer to convince Iran?

A: Clearly, if Trump manages to reach an agreement with Iran, its electoral chances to win the presidency in 2020 would be enhanced. However, historically with few exceptions, the role of foreign policy in American presidential elections has always been relatively insignificant. Economic concerns and security issues are more important to the so that American people. Therefore, I doubt that Trump would be willing to offer significant concessions to Iran so that he could meet with Rouhani, especially that many in his own government and in congress are against reducing pressure on Iran. Therefore, Iran should not count on the forthcoming presidential elections to obtain concessions from Trump.

■ Since Trump has a really bad reputation in pulling the U.S. out of international deals, will any potential deal have an executive guarantee? Trump dropped JCPOA despite the fact that it is part of resolution 2231 voted by every member of the UN Security Council.

A: Iran is right in doubting Trump’s, or any other U.S. administration’s reliability. In general, most states when it comes to their interests ignore their contractual commitments. Lenin’s famous saying that “treaties are made to be broken” applies to nearly all states. In the case of the U.S., those agreements that do not pass through the process of ratification by the Senate are the most vulnerable. In general, as long as Iran and the U.S. disagree on basic regional matters, agreements on narrow and specific issues will always be rather fragile. However, as Macron suggested, perhaps a compromise such as Iran returning to enrichment levels mandated by the JCPOA in exchange for America’s easing Iran’s oil related and some banking restrictions could be both possible and useful.

Iran never confuses Bolton’s firing with change of course in Trump’s foreign policy towards Iran: Entessar

➔ With Bolton fired, it was speculated that Trump would be on a diplomatic course with Iran. On the other hand, Yemeni attacks on Aramco have prompted Washington to declare that it is ready to fight Iran. What is your assessment of this situation?

A: This incident clearly demonstrates that Bolton’s dismissal didn’t make a dent

in the Trump administration’s Iran policy and that the pro-war hawks in the U.S. are still very much in charge.

■ Since Pompeo has a Bolton-like approach, can Trump change Pompeo as well?

A: As Trump has demonstrated throughout the course of his presidency, nobody in his administration is immune

from being fired. The only exception to this rule is the case of his immediate relatives, like his daughter Ivanka and his son-in-law Jared Kushner. So far, Mike Pompeo has been an obedient soldier and has not challenged any of Trump’s major foreign policy moves. AS long he continues to play this role, Pompeo is probably safe.

■ Given the change of personality like Bolton, are Israeli policies in the U.S. State Department going to fade or shift?

A: No. Israel has a staunch and unflinching supporter in Mike Pompeo and his entire U.S. State Department’s upper echelon. Pompeo is the most loyal Likud supporter who has headed the State Department in many years.

Media bias is OK – if it’s honest

By Nathan Robinson

Most people distrust the media, and most people are right. It’s healthy to question what you’re being told – that’s the mark of an intelligent and independent populace. And the media in the United States are, in fact, “biased” in many ways. Not always toward the left or right, but frequently toward reaffirming the worldview of an insular establishment, as Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky pointed out years ago in *Manufacturing Consent*.

It should be obvious that there can’t be such a thing as a neutral journalist. We all have moral instincts and points of view. Those points of view will color our interpretations of the facts. The best course of action is to acknowledge where we’re coming from. If we show an awareness of our own political leanings, it actually makes us more trustworthy than if we’re in denial about them.

Two recent controversies show how supposedly neutral journalists deny their biases. The Washington Post’s factchecker gave Bernie Sanders a “mostly false” rating for claiming that there are half a million medical-related bankruptcies a year. It was quite obvious that Sanders was relying on published research, and the claim was not in fact “mostly false”. But the Post has a history of these sorts of fact-free “factchecks” – when Sanders claimed that “millions of Americans” work multiple jobs, Glenn Kessler labeled the statement “misleading”, even though it was completely true. Ryan Grim has compiled a list of the appalling record of the Post’s unfair attacks on claims from the political left. Whatever this is, it isn’t factchecking.



It’s not just an anti-Sanders bias. Donald Trump has some legitimate complaints about the press, too. Because he tells whopping lies all the time, journalists are predisposed to believe the worst about him and his administration. Recently, a Bloomberg Law reporter accused a labor department official of antisemitic Facebook posts. It was obvious the posts were sarcastic, and the reporter’s work was heavily criticized and the coverage amended. Because of past stories involving administration ties to antisemites, and Trump’s own use of language about Jewish people that would be considered scandalous if it came from Ilhan Omar, the reporter was inclined to think the worst.

But if we automatically assume that Trump is the one in the wrong, we may end up with egg on our faces. For example, when Trump claimed that millions of non-citizens voted illegally in the 2016 election, the Washington Post called him out in a “factcheck”. But it turned out the Washington Post itself had published an article making this very same claim. The factcheckers were so sure Trump invented the lie that they didn’t notice they had spread it themselves.

I’m not inclined to defend Trump – I wrote a whole book about him called *Anatomy of a Monstrosity* that accused him of being one of the worst people in the world. But I also know that if my feelings about Trump lead to my making factual misstatements about him, his supporters will pounce, and claim that my bias destroys my credibility. If I state my prejudices up front, people will see me as more honest than if I pretend to be a mere “fact checker” when I’m clearly an opinion writer.

My personal experience is that conservatives are far more open to leftwing arguments when they come from people who are honest about their politics, and don’t pretend not to have a point of view. I run a small magazine called *Current Affairs*, which operates from an unabashedly leftwing perspective. The letters we get from conservative readers indicate that many of them find the honesty refreshing, and it makes them more likely to hear us out.

One reason conservatives hate the “mainstream media” is that it pretends to be something it isn’t. Conservatives think the press has a “liberal” bias; I tend to agree with Herman and Chomsky that it would be better described as a “corporate” bias reflecting the elitist centrism that has come to dominate the Democratic party. But few at MSNBC or CNN would admit that they’re partisan networks.

■ Rebuilding trust requires embracing bias

That’s what they do in Great Britain, though – the major newspapers are open about having a political leaning. The *Guardian*, for example, is an explicitly left-leaning paper and everybody knows it. By contrast, the *New York Times* is clearly inclined toward Democratic centrism, but it won’t admit it. The editor of the op-ed page says that they strive for “viewpoint diversity”, but it’s clear that he doesn’t mean it. After all, they don’t have columnists from the far right, and they don’t have Marxist columnists. At least Fox News has been honest enough drop its old “Fair and Balanced” motto. If your paper is liberal, just embrace it – and then you can fire “viewpoint diversity” conservatives like Bret Stephens.

Paradoxically, rebuilding trust requires embracing bias. Not embracing untruthfulness, but admitting your politics so that both writer and audience can be critical. I think the hope for media is in outlets like the *Intercept*, *Jacobin* and my own little magazine, because readers like transparency. (This is also one reason why people respect Bernie Sanders even when they disagree with him: they don’t think he’s trying to appear to be something he isn’t.) The salesman who tells you what he wants you to buy is more trustworthy than the one who insists he isn’t trying to sell you anything at all.

It’s a perilous time for journalism, and small outlets need all the help we can get in order to survive. Corporate owners are shuttering great outlets all the time, and the only way we’re going to have viable media institutions is through an outpouring of popular support.

Unfortunately, the public doesn’t trust us, and we need to think about how to slowly get people to see journalists as their allies instead of as duplicitous, faux-neutral propagandists. The first step is to be up front about where we’re coming from and how we see things. We’ve got to acknowledge that everyone is biased, and that it’s OK.

(Source: *theguardian.com*)

Flood emergency response maneuver performed in Tehran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The flood emergency response maneuver held in the most flood-prone areas of the capital on Tuesday, Tehran Disaster Mitigation and Management Organization director has announced.



Reza Karami-Mohammadi said the aim of the maneuvers is to evaluate the organization's actions, roles and responsibilities in response to a flood as well as improving its ability to withstand possible flooding due to the beginning of the rainy season.

The maneuver identifies strengths and weaknesses, along with empowering the forces to deal with the unexpected events, he added, Fars reported.

Initially, the public relations unit of the organization informed the citizens about the performance to be aware of the details and prepared for the real situation, said Karami-Mohammadi.

Then we trained the residents on how to identify the fake news or misinformation in such incidents and reach accurate information through the press releases, he further highlighted.

The maneuver performed in 2, 5, 9 and 18 Districts of Tehran which are located along the river bed.

70% of Britons back single-use plastic ban, poll claims

Seven in 10 people polled for a new survey think there should be a complete ban on single-use plastic items such as water bottles and straws.

An overwhelming majority of respondents believed retailers should no longer stock or supply these items due to the devastating effect they have on the environment.

One in 10 respondents said it was "too hard" to buy products made from recycled materials and refillable beauty products.

The poll also found two thirds of its 18-24 age group were more concerned about climate change and sustainability issues compared to a year ago.

Half of the 2,000 adults polled said they would be put off buying from a shop or business that was not environmentally friendly or stocked brands that were such.

"This survey data supports our understanding of our youngest adult fashion shoppers, for whom there is no compromise when it comes to seeking out style that doesn't harm the planet," said Daniella Vega, head of sustainability for Selfridges which commissioned the research as part of its wider sustainability program, found.

"We are committed to buying better and inspiring change so that our customers can do the same."

Choosing second-hand fashion is most popular with 18-24 year olds, with more than half shopping for second-hand and vintage clothing - far more than those aged 45 or older, the poll found.

(Source: The Independent)

WORDS IN THE NEWS

Berlusconi apologizes

(October 3, 2001)

Italy's Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, has met ambassadors from Muslim countries at his office in Rome to try to calm relations after they had protested strongly over his controversial remarks last week claiming that western civilization is superior to Islamic culture. This report from David Willey.

Last week the Italian Prime Minister apologized to parliament in Rome for his **alleged remarks** about the superiority of western culture over that of Islam, claiming his words had been **taken out of context**. On Tuesday night he faced an even more hostile and critical audience - a **delegation** of ambassadors from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Palestinian Authority. The three-hour meeting ended with a statement in which the Italian Prime Minister **expressed** his **profound** respect for the Islamic religion, which he said preaches tolerance and respect for human rights.

For their part, the ambassadors expressed appreciation for the Italian Prime Minister's efforts to make it clear that terrorism is **absolutely** separate from Islam. Sources who attended the unusually long three-hour meeting said that Mr Berlusconi claimed he had been misquoted by the left-wing press. The incident now appears **to be closed** but it has left **a sour taste** among senior Italian diplomats responsible for relations with the Arab world.

Words
alleged remarks: comments were apparently made
taken out of context: interpreted incorrectly
a delegation: a group of people representing an organization
expressed: spoke of
profound: deep, sincere
for their part: their point of view or opinion
absolutely: totally
appears to be closed: seems to have come to an end
a sour taste: an unpleasant feeling

(Source: BBC)



Without water, everything withers

Flocks of migratory birds came to winter in northern Iran

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — The first group of migratory birds landed in northern Mazandaran province to spend the winter, director for the provincial department of environment (DOE) has said.

Eurasian teal, herons and sandpipers are birds which have started their migration to warmer areas of the country as temperatures drastically dropped in their main habitats, Kooros Rabi'ei told IRNA on Wednesday.

These migratory birds inhabiting in western parts of the country come to northern areas every year before autumn (starting on September 23), Rabi'ei added.

Although these are the first group of winter-spending birds which fly their ways to northern provinces, this year started their migration two weeks earlier due to good condition of wetlands and food availability, he highlighted.

Flocks of migratory birds from Siberia, Russia also take flight to spend the cold season in Iran which will enter the country by Late-October, said Rabi'ei.

He went on to note that with increased rainfall averages, accordingly, bird migration reaches its peak, and it is expected that the number of aquatic birds wintering in the country grow substantially this year.

Mazandaran province hosting a population of 699,130 migratory birds



consisting of 150 species; is the first province with the highest sufficient resources, as movement of migratory birds is closely linked to seasonal availability of resources.

Majid Kharrazian-Moqaddam, head of aquatic animals and wildlife affairs at the DOE said in December 2018 that in Iranian calendar year 1396 (March 2017-March 2018), some 914,914 migratory birds of 161 species have been located

in 483 sites across the country, which demonstrates a 26.5 percent rise compared to the same period a year earlier (March 2016- March 2017).

"Among the various groups of migratory birds wintering in Iran, the largest population belongs to the group of geese, swans and ducks amounting to 781,499 and the smallest population of 7 are the long-tailed ducks or oldsquaw.

Migratory birds on the International

Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List have also headed to the country last year with an enhancing population of 17.4 percent compared to past two years, the highest number of which was common pochard and the two species of Siberian crane and red-breasted goose had the lowest proportion," Kharrazian-Moqaddam explained.

What pushes migratory birds toward disappearance?

Bird migration is the regular seasonal movement, often north and south along a flyway, between breeding and wintering grounds. Many species of bird migrate. Migration carries high costs in predation and mortality, including from hunting by humans, and is driven primarily by availability of food.

Unsustainable development in Iran has resulted in habitat fragmentation posing a serious threat to the migratory birds; also anthropogenic disturbance such as agricultural expansion has resulted in dramatic global habitat loss and fragmentation.

Moreover, poaching, overgrazing, and long-standing drought spells have also impacted habitat destruction which ultimately results in birds' total extinction.

Dalmatian pelican, Siberian crane, lesser white-fronted goose, and white-headed duck are among the endangered migratory birds which migrate to Iran.

20,000 traffic police forces on duty during Arbaeen pilgrimage

SOCIETY TEHRAN — During the Arbaeen pilgrimage, some 20,000 traffic police forces will stand guard to ensure the pilgrims' safety, traffic police chief Seyed Kamal Hadianfar has announced.

Volunteer teams of police forces stand guard in Kermanshah, Ilam, and Khuzestan provinces as the pilgrims mainly cross these provinces to reach four borders, said Hadianfar, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

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

According to the latest official data, some 373,000 Iranians have so far registered to participate in the pilgrimage.

Arbaeen pilgrimage, also known as Arbaeen trek, is a rituals participated by hundreds of thousands of Shia and Sunni Muslims as well as Christians and Zoroastrians, etc. every year to mark



the end of the 40-day mourning period of Imam Hossein (AS).

Every year pilgrims start their walk from various cities to the holy shrine of Imam Hossein (AS) in Karbala days or even weeks before Arbaeen- 40th day of Imam Hossein (AS) martyrdom- to grieve the doleful passing of the Imam and his loyal companions at the Battle of Karbala on Muharram 10 in the year 61 AH (680 CE).

According to Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization more than 1.8 million Iranians have applied for visa to attend Arbaeen pilgrimage 2018.

Crimean-Congo fever claims 10 lives in Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — At least 10 persons have died of Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic fever (CCHF) in the country since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21), Mohammad-Mehdi Gooya, an official with the Ministry of Health has announced.

The highest rate of death toll was reported in the southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan, said Gooya.

He went on to say that 106 people have been diagnosed with the disease but survived death undergoing treatment, IRNA news agency reported on Wednesday.

The disease also put 10 individuals to death, last year, according to Fars news agency.

Behzad Amiri, head of zoonotic diseases department at the ministry of health said in July that over the last 20 years, 851 cases of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever have been reported in Sistan-Baluchestan province alone.

Mohammad Nabavi, deputy director for communicable diseases department of the



Ministry of Health said that some 10 percent of the people who are diagnosed with Crimean-Congo fever and receive proper medical care may die, while this number increases to 50 percent for the people who do not get any treatments.

According to Health Ministry, some 100 to 150 cases of Crimean-Congo fever are annually reported in Iran.

According to World Health Organization, the Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever virus causes severe viral hemorrhagic fever outbreaks.

CCHF outbreaks have a case fatality rate of up to 40%.

Antibiotic resistance rising among dolphins, study reveals

Antibiotic resistance is rising in dolphins, researchers have said, mirroring the trend seen in humans.

Scientists examined disease-causing organisms, or pathogens, found in samples from the blowholes, gastric fluid and faeces of bottlenose dolphins from the Indian River Lagoon in Florida. The samples were collected between 2003 and 2015.

The area has a large human population on the coast and significant environmental problems. "They include septic tanks, runoff from the land, freshwater discharge from canals, to name a few," said Adam Schaefer of Florida Atlantic University, the study's lead author.

Of the 733 samples from 171 dolphins analysed, 88% contained a pathogen resistant to at least one antibiotic. The antibiotic to which the pathogens were most commonly resistant was erythromycin, which is commonly used to treat chest infections, acne and sexually transmitted infections including chlamydia and syphilis.

Resistance to the antibiotic ciprofloxacin among E coli pathogens more than doubled over the period studied, mir-



roring trends in human infections.

"Antibiotic resistance is one of the most significant risks to public health," said Gregory Bossart, the chief veterinary officer at Georgia Aquarium and a co-author of the study. "As resistance increases, the probability of successfully treating infections caused by common pathogens decreases." At

least 2 million people get an antibiotic-resistant infection in the US each year, and at least 23,000 people die as a result.

"In 2009, we reported a high prevalence of antibiotic resistance in wild dolphins, which was unexpected," Schaefer said. "Since then, we have been tracking changes over time and have found a significant increase in antibiotic resistance in isolates from these animals."

"This trend mirrors reports from human healthcare settings. Based on our findings, it is likely that these isolates from dolphins originated from a source where antibiotics were regularly used."

Schaefer said the resistant bacteria enter the lagoon from terrestrial sources including sewage discharge. "Once in the lagoon, the antibiotics create selective pressure on the normal bacteria that are present."

"The bacteria that are not resistant die, and resistant bacteria remain and proliferate, essentially creating a population of resistant pathogens that dolphins are exposed to."

The study was published in the journal Aquatic Mammals. (Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

90,000 clunker taxis are plying the roads

Some 90,000 clunker taxis are plying the roads in Iran, an official with traffic police has said.

The old taxis are being used 8 times more than private cars, YJC quoted Mohammad Tarahhomi as saying on Monday.

There are 1.5 million clunker vehicles and 9 million clunker motorcycles in Iran, he regretted, adding that unfortunately scrapping of old, high-emission vehicles is linked with importation of vehicles which is now banned.

۹۰ هزار تاکسی فرسوده در جاده‌های کشور تردد می کنند

رئیس اداره حقوقی پلیس راه گفت: ۹۰ هزار تاکسی فرسوده در ایران وجود دارد. به گزارش باشگاه خبرنگاران جوان سرهنگ محمد ترحمی گفت: میزان تردد این تاکسی‌ها هشت برابر خودروهای عادی است. وی افزود: یک میلیون و ۵۰۰ هزار خودروی فرسوده و ۹ میلیون موتورسیکلت فرسوده در کشور وجود دارد. متأسفانه حیات اسقاط به واردات گره خورده است و از آنجا که واردات ممنوع شده است، اسقاط نیز صورت نمی‌گیرد.

PREFIX/SUFFIX

“dia-”

■ **Meaning**: through or across

■ **For example**: This lesson is designed to help students identify and measure the **diameter** of a circle.

PHRASAL VERB

Tell of somebody/something

■ **Meaning**: to describe an event or person

■ **For example**: The poem tells of the deeds of a famous warrior.

IDIOM

Find (one's) feet

■ **Explanation**: to reach a level of comfort in a new situation

■ **For example**: It took a while, but I've finally found my feet in my job.

Saudi, allies must pay the price for spilling Yemenis' blood: Ansarullah

TEHRAN — Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement has censured support for the Saudi-led coalition of aggressors in the wake of Yemeni retaliatory drone attacks on Aramco oil facilities in eastern Saudi Arabia, stressing that those who have no reservations at all about the bloodletting in the war-ravaged country must bear the consequences of their actions.

"Peace in the region can be restored only through dialogue and understanding, and away from the clatter of weapons. Yemeni people hope to see security and peace prevail across the Arabian Peninsula. They will never surrender to oppression and others' domination," Mohammed Abdul-Salam, spokesman for the Houthi movement, said in a string of tweets on Tuesday.

He added, "Those condemning the September 14 operation have indeed denounced themselves as they have exposed their blatant bias in favor of the aggressor. In fact, their condemnation would embolden the criminal regime to continue its criminal acts against our people."

The senior Houthi official noted that "Saudi oil is not more precious than Yemeni blood," emphasizing that those who have no respect whatsoever for the Yemeni people's lives must embrace all consequences of their actions.



He pointed out that those who wish stability in international crude oil markets, must compel the Saudi-led military alliance to stop its aggression and blockade on Yemen. "Yemeni people will spare no effort to relentlessly confront aggression and siege by all legitimate means. The next defensive operations will be harsher and more painful if aggression and siege continue,"

Abdul-Salam said.

He underlined that members of the coalition of aggression, Saudi Arabia in particular, must realize that their bet on the United States for protection is a losing one, adding that Yemenis will not remain silent in the face of injustice.

Yemeni army forces and allied fighters from Popular Committees deployed as many

as 10 drones to bomb Abqaiq and Khurais oil facilities run by the Saudi state-owned oil company Aramco before dawn Saturday.

The unprecedented attack knocked out more than half of Saudi crude output, or 5% of global supply, prompting Saudi and U.S. officials to claim without any evidence that it probably originated from Iraq or Iran.

Two sources briefed on Aramco's operations told Reuters it might take months for Saudi oil production to return to normal. Earlier estimates had suggested it could take weeks.

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

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

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

Middle East OSCE would be a major development to settle regional disputes: Logoglu

➔ Raising a way out of regional problems, Turkish politician said, "In this vein, I believe if there is the opportunity for the proposed meeting to take place, President Rouhani would do well to meet President Trump at New York and reveal bare the facts of American policy for the whole world to see. On the other hand, if there is a chance to move forward after such an encounter, then Iran and the region would all stand to benefit."

He added, "On a wider scale, the situation calls for a more coordinated effort on the part of the regional states to address the problems of their region and to reduce the intervention and interference of outside powers in their affairs. Regional ownership is the step to take. To this end, the creation of a Middle East OSCE, led by Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and others of the region would be a major development, an idea now being publicly floated by the main opposition party CHP in Turkey."

Israel election: Netanyahu's bloc fails to secure majority

➔ Former minister of military affairs Avigdor Lieberman's Yisrael Beiteinu party is expected to receive between eight and nine seats, according to the polls.

With neither Netanyahu nor Gantz appear to have gained a 61-seat majority, the two are likely to head to deliberations with President Reuven Rivlin, who will determine which of them gets the mandate to try and form a governing coalition.

Speaking to a half-empty hall at the Likud campaign headquarters in Tel Aviv, Netanyahu vowed to form a "strong and Zionist" administration, warning his supporters of a "dangerous and anti-Zionist" regime.

The Israeli prime minister added he already began negotiations with Likud's potential coalition partners on the right wing. "They all committed to pursue our goals together. This election has been one of the toughest we'd known," he said.

Gantz said Tuesday overnight he would work to establish a unity administration.

"We stuck to our mission and to our path," Gantz said at his party's headquarters in Tel Aviv, hours after exit polls show his party has secured a lead over Likud.

Gantz went on to say that exit polls show Netanyahu failed in his reelection bid. "This is the start of the journey to mend the Israeli society," he commented.

Lieberman, for his part, called for a unity administration with his party, Likud and Blue and White as he addressed supporters, saying Israel was facing an "emergency".

"There is only one option for us," he said, adding the administration should exclude the country's ultra-Orthodox religious parties, which he accuses of having undue influence on politics

■ Hamas condemns Israel's general election

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Islamic resistance movement, Hamas, has strongly slammed Israel's snap polls, stating that the election guarantees further expropriation of occupied Palestinian lands.

The movement said those contesting in the vote have been encouraging the Israeli regime to intensify its attacks on the besieged Gaza Strip, and violate the rights of Palestinians.

It also described Israeli voters as alien settlers, who have stolen Palestinian territories.

The Palestinian resistance movement finally denounced Israel as a usurper entity which owes its existence to the illegal occupation of Palestinian territories.

Israeli forces kill Palestinian woman

TEHRAN — Israeli forces have killed a Palestinian woman following what they alleged was a stabbing attack at a checkpoint in the occupied territories.

The victim, whose identity was not immediately known, was killed at the Qalandia checkpoint between Jerusalem al-Quds and the north of the West Bank on Wednesday.

An Israeli official claimed the Palestinian woman had approached forces at the vehicle passage of the checkpoint, ignoring calls to stop and pulling out a knife before being shot in the leg.

Medics allegedly treated her at the scene and then evacuated her to Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem al-Quds for further treatment, a police statement said.

She was later pronounced dead, however.

The cause of her death was not clear.

The Israeli military regularly opens fatal fire on Palestinians, accusing them of attempting to carry out stabbing attacks against its forces.

According to Press TV, human rights groups have repeatedly criticized the Tel Aviv regime for its shoot-to-kill policy as a large number of the Palestinians killed at the scene of the alleged attacks did not pose serious threats to Israelis.

Israeli troops have on numerous occasions been caught on camera brutally killing Palestinians, with the videos going viral online and sparking international condemnation.

Trump names Robert C. O'Brien as national security advisor

TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump said he'll appoint Robert O'Brien to replace John Bolton as his White House national security adviser.

O'Brien is the special envoy for hostage affairs at the State Department, Bloomberg News reports. Trump announced his appointment in a tweet on Wednesday.

Robert C. O'Brien is an American lawyer who has worked privately and with the United States government. He is currently serving as the United States National Security Advisor and is an ambassador with the U.S. Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, as well as a partner at Larson O'Brien LLP, a Los Angeles-based boutique law firm.

U.S. consular staffer to stay in Turkey jail on spy charges

TEHRAN — A Turkish court ruled Wednesday that a US consular staffer would remain in jail while his espionage trial continued, in a case that has added to tensions with Washington.

Metin Topuz, a Turkish citizen and liaison for the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), was arrested in 2017.

He was accused of ties to U.S.-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gulen, who Ankara says ordered an attempted coup in 2016.

In court Wednesday, Topuz again begged the court for his release.

"What is my crime? Being an employee of the US consulate?" he said.

But the court said he would stay in jail until the next hearing on December 11, while they tried to locate a witness. Defense lawyers said he gave a fake address in Milan.

"I cannot understand the court extending the jail sentence to wait for an individual who is currently abroad," lawyer Halit Akalp told reporters.

Topuz said he had 3,000 meetings in his 25 years with the DEA, and that prosecutors had simply cherry-picked those with members of Gulen's movement.

Gulen had sympathizers across all branches of Turkish society and government until the coup triggered a massive purge, AFP reported.

Pakistan PM to urge Trump to restart Afghan peace talks

TEHRAN — Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Wednesday that he would urge U.S. President Donald Trump next week to revive Afghanistan peace talks with the Taliban militant group.

Trump abruptly canceled secret talks with the Taliban at his Camp David retreat that were planned for Sept. 8 and has since said the talks are "dead".

"It will be a big tragedy if these talks don't make headway," Khan said at a ceremony at Pakistan's Torkham border crossing with Afghanistan.

Khan said he would meet Trump in New York on Monday, and would emphasize that there had been "destruction and chaos in

Afghanistan for the last 40 years".

"We will put our best (effort) that these talks are resumed again," he said.

Khan said Pakistan had directed Taliban leaders to participate in earlier peace talks in Qatar and only discovered too late that talks had broken down. He said his next role would have been to convince the Taliban to open talks with the Afghan government.

Khan is scheduled to address the United Nations General Assembly while in New York.

The PM also said there was "no chance of talks" with India about its clampdown on the disputed territory of Kashmir until it lifted a curfew for people there, Reuters reported.

A good suggestion: The Alms of Century versus the Deal of Century

➔ In the world order after WWI that was followed by the Allied victory, the Balfour Declaration applied and the Zionists occupied Palestine with the help of Britain in 1948.

Trump's hidden intention is also to recognize the Jewish land, which is spreading from Nile to Euphrates. The transfer of the U.S. embassy to Quds and the presentation of the Deal of the Century project is the beginning of the complete occupation of Palestine and other Islamic countries to create the Promised Land. Recently, the Zionist Regime passed the "nation-state" law at the Knesset, which introduced the whole Palestine and Golan Heights as part of the "Jewish land".

In the Deal of the Century, Trump changed the conditions for Arabs in the Deal of the Century. At first Arabs were supposed to make peace with the Zionist regime by taking their lands, and it was assumed that after solving Palestine's problem, Arabs relations with the Zionists would be normal. Now, these countries must normalize their relations with The Zionist regime, and also offer Palestine to Israel to solve the country's problem. The difference is that this time there are no Palestinian citizens in this country.

In 2018, Trump cut funding to UNRWA (the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) from \$ 360 million to \$ 60 million, after moving the U.S. embassy to Quds, closing the PLO office in Washington, and blocking their bank accounts. In Trump's view, gradual cutting of facilities or torturing should make the Palestinians to abandon their country considering work incentives.

Trump's actions violate Resolution 242 and Arab League resolutions in 1983 and 2002, which claim that there should not be any relations with countries that recognize Quds as the capital of Israel.

Trump's peace plan known as the Deal of the Century for ending Israel-Palestine conflict, is similar to "Con-

tainment" plan of the U.S. diplomat George Kennan against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Saudi Arabia and the UAE, with \$ 100 billion investment, should establish a security belt to counter Iran's influence against Israel and to meet the U.S. interests. In the process of implementing the plan, Palestine should gradually disappear in the future development of the Middle East, and its territory would be handed over to foreign investors affiliated with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. These organizations are supposed to bring prosperity to the Palestinians who are now entering the labor market as cheap workers of multinational companies.

Kushner represented the Deal of the Century project in Manama in line with Trump's restrictive actions. He believes that by financially supporting of investors and strengthening economic and commercial infrastructures around Palestine, this political and security dispute can find an economic solution to Palestinian youth welfare projects.

Kushner said, "Our discussion in the Deal of the Century was not about politics. We aim to create a great business and tourist center in Gaza and West Bank where the entrepreneurs, engineers, scientists, and CEOs of multinational companies can work. At the same time, the region's economy would be more integrated and people would be more advanced."

He even avoid saying the Palestinian economy would be more integrated and the Palestinian people would be more advanced. Kushner referred to Palestinians as fool and uncultured people. He emphasized that in recent years, instead of innovating, the Palestinians have received greatest financial support in the world, with no plans and no goals.

In the first project of the Deal of Century, He also underlined that the problem of Palestinian refugees could be solved by settling the West Bank displaced Palestin-

ian population in Jordan. To this end, a vast area on the south of Amman is considered to be a new capital. This area is supposed to be a large economic and commercial area supported by investors of multinational companies. Israel, in contrast, has promised Jordan to create a channel between Al-Bahr al-Mayyit and Gulf of Aqaba and make it a tourism hub in the region.

The second project is carrying out in the Sinai Peninsula. Kushner plans to create a free industrial zone near Gaza, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE investments. He aims to move the Gaza strip population to this area, which currently has the highest unemployment rate in the world. President of Egypt Sisi has also launched the project, and transferred the Egyptian population of the northern Sinai Peninsula with the excuse of fighting with ISIL.

The third project is about Neom, Saudi Arabia, which lies along the Red Sea coast and near Jordan's borders. Neom will be the first smart city in the Middle East. It will have various tourist facilities along with the Red Sea tourism zone project, and will attract lots of Palestinian youth who are looking for a job. With this \$ 50 billion project, we can push the boundaries.

Despite all the discussion about the Deal of the Century, and given Mahmoud Abbas's absence from the Manama summit, it is not clear that who or which groups should negotiate with the U.S. about Palestine. The project will certainly increase the complexity of Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

The most effortless way for solving Palestine's problem is to give \$104 billion to the U.S., Brazil and their allies to make the Zionists emigration possible to the U.S. or any countries that recognize Quds as the capital of Israel, within 10 years. This amount of money can be raised by collecting alms from Muslims during this period of time. Surely the Zionist emigration brings peace to the region and the world.

Would Algerian PM Bedoui resign, paving way for vote?

➔ This claim is advocated by the Mediation and Dialogue Panel set by the interim president Bensalah to oversee a national dialogue, consult, communicate and hold talks with civil society actors, political parties, national figures, young people and activists from all over the country in order to develop a clear vision of ways to end the country's months of political crisis and enable it to hold Presidential Elections as soon as possible.

The Panel, in its final report submitted to the Head of State, following consultation with 5670 associations of different categories within two months, during which they met with various spectrums and components of society, called for the formation of a high electoral commission and amendments to the election law in an attempt to distance

the authorities from the organization of the elections. It called, also, for the departure of Prime Minister Bedoui as the only solution to convince protesters to return to the poll ballot.

The handover of the Panel's proposals comes days after Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Ahmad Qaid Saleh called for presidential elections before the end of 2019. A call adhered by the Head of State who inked, this week, a decree convening the electorate on September 15 so that elections could be held within 90 days (on December 12), in addition to two Organic Laws; the first one on the Independent National Authority in Charge of Elections and the second one amending and supplementing Organic Law 16-10 dated August 25, 2016 on the electoral system.

"Today, based on our mission, mandate and respect for the constitution and the laws of the Republic, we find it best to summon the Electoral Commission on 15 September," Salah said, as reported by the official news agency APS.

"I have decided... that the date of the presidential election will be Thursday, December 12," said Bensalah, following army chief of staff Lieutenant General Ahmed Gaid Salah announcement.

Opposition parties, for their part, are still calling for deep political reforms to avoid electing a new president with the same mechanisms that allowed Bouteflika to remain in power for 20 years, stressing on the need to dismiss the current government of Prime Minister Nouredine Bedoui, appointed by Bouteflika before his departure, seen as

a continuity with the old system.

In this sense, Talaie El Houriet party considered that the institutional and legal conditions for the organization of an inclusive and transparent presidential election were brought together; however, the Government must resign and be replaced by a Government of national competences. This dismissal, according to them, would create the appropriate environment to guarantee a strong participation during the next presidential election to give the next president sufficient legitimacy to launch political, economic and social reforms.

The resignation of Nouredine Bedoui would ease the political deadlock, speed up the election process and calm down protesters determined to achieve their claims at any costs.

I deserve more Ballon d'Or awards than Messi, says Ronaldo

Juventus forward Cristiano Ronaldo said he deserves to end his soccer career with more Ballon d'Or awards than Barcelona counterpart Lionel Messi and hopes to establish himself as the greatest player of all time.

Ronaldo, 34, has won the renowned France Football magazine trophy for the world's best player five times - as many as Messi - but is eager for more as he moves into the twilight of his career.

"Messi's in the history of football," Ronaldo told broadcaster Piers Morgan in an interview with Britain's ITV on Tuesday. "But I think I have to have six or seven or eight to be above him," he said, referring to the Ballon d'Or awards.

The Portugal captain said he was no friend of the Argentine but credited his rival for helping push him further in his own career.

"My relationship with him is, we are not friends, but we have shared this stage for 15 years," Ronaldo said. "I know that he has pushed me to be a better player and I have pushed him to be a better player as well."

Ronaldo, who also played for Manchester United and Real Madrid, has five UEFA Champions League winners' medals and led Portugal to victory at the 2016 UEFA European Championship and 2019 UEFA Nations League tournaments.

"I don't follow the records, the records follow me. I'm addicted to the success, and I don't think it's something bad, I think it's good," Ronaldo said.

"It motivates me. If you're not motivated, it's better to stop."
(Source: Goal)

Police across Europe raid illegal streaming service platforms

Police forces across Europe are carrying out raids against illegal video streaming service platforms, the Italian postal police said in a statement on Wednesday.

Coordinated by European Union agencies Europol and Eurojust, the raids are taking place in France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Greece and Bulgaria, in a joint effort to curb an illegal market that threatens media groups' subscription businesses such as pay-TV and video-on-demand.

The Italian postal police said it had located hubs across Europe that had pirated and illegally distributed pay-TV content through web-streaming platforms.

In a separate statement, the Italian tax police said it had shut down an illegal platform, dubbed Xstream Codes, which had more than 700,000 users.

(Source: Reuters)

Barca defender Alba sidelined with hamstring injury

Barcelona defender Jordi Alba injured his hamstring in the 0-0 draw at Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League, his team said in a statement on Wednesday, with Spanish media reporting that the Spain international will be out for around two weeks.

The left back was forced off in the 40th minute of Tuesday's Group F game and replaced by Sergi Roberto.

Barca's statement did not say how long Alba would be out, but newspaper AS said he would be sidelined for two weeks, ruling him out of Barca's La Liga games at Granada, at home to Villarreal and away to Getafe.

He is expected to return in time for Barca's next Champions League game at home to Inter Milan on Oct. 2.

Alba's injury hands an opportunity to Junior Firpo, the left back who joined Barca from Real Betis for 18 million euros (15.9 million pounds) in the close season but who has only played nine minutes of first team football so far.

Barca are fifth in the La Liga standings on seven points after four games.

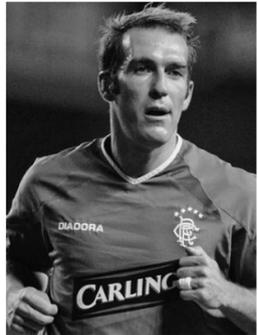
(Source: Mirror)

Ex-Rangers player Rickson dies after motor neurone battle

Former Netherlands and Rangers player Fernando Rickson died at the age of 43 following a battle with motor neurone disease, the Scottish Premiership club announced on Wednesday.

Rickson, who spent six years at Rangers until 2006, announced he was suffering from the disease in October 2013.

"Rangers is deeply saddened to announce that former player Fernando Rickson passed away this morning following his battle with motor neurone disease," the Scottish club said on their official website.



"Fernando spent six trophy-laden seasons at Ibrox, having initially joined a number of other Dutch players under manager Dick Advocaat in the summer of 2000."

Rickson, who won 12 caps for the Netherlands and was signed by Rangers from AZ Alkmaar for £3.75 million (\$4.7m) in 2000, raised awareness and funds to help other sufferers of motor neurone disease through the Fernando Rickson Foundation.

A benefit match for the Dutchman, held at Ibrox in January 2015, saw more than 41,000 fans attend Ibrox and raised £320,000 with the proceeds split between Fernando, his daughter Isabella, MND Scotland and the Rangers Charity Foundation.

Rickson left Rangers to join Zenit St Petersburg on a permanent deal in 2007 before returning to the Netherlands to join Fortuna Sittard.

Peter Lovenkrands, who also joined Rangers in 2000 and spent six years with the Scottish club, paid tribute to his former teammate on social media.

The 39-year-old posted on Instagram: "You looked after me when we signed at Rangers together, taking me back and forward to training because I didn't have a car, great memories on and off the pitch! A true warrior and leader on the pitch! You'll be truly missed. RIP my friend."

Fortuna, currently second bottom in Eredivisie, and Zenit, second in the Russian top flight, both paid tribute on Twitter.

(Source: AFP)

Schools, airports closed as Indonesia fires spark fears for Singapore F1

Toxic haze from Indonesian forest fires closed schools and airports across the country and in neighbouring Malaysia Wednesday, while air quality worsened in Singapore just days before the city's Formula One motor race.

Illegal fires to clear land for agriculture are blazing out of control on Sumatra and Borneo islands, with Jakarta deploying thousands of security forces and water-bombing aircraft to tackle them.

Indonesian blazes belch smog across South-east Asia annually, but this year's are the worst since 2015 and have added to concerns about wildfire outbreaks worldwide exacerbating global warming.

On Wednesday, air quality deteriorated to "very unhealthy" levels on an official index in many parts of peninsular Malaysia, to the east of Sumatra, with the Kuala Lumpur skyline shrouded by dense smog.

Nearly 1,500 schools were closed across Malaysia due to the air pollution, with over one million pupils affected, according to the education ministry.

A growing number of Malaysians were suffering health problems due to the haze, with authorities saying there had been a sharp increase in outpatients at government hospitals -- many suffering dry and itchy eyes.

Indonesian authorities said hundreds of schools in hard-hit Riau province on Sumatra were shut, without providing a precise number, while about 1,300 were closed in Central Kalimantan province on Borneo.



Borneo is shared between Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

Poor visibility closed seven airports in the Indonesian part of Borneo, the transport ministry in Jakarta said. Scores of flights have already been diverted and cancelled in the region in recent days due to the smog.

■ Singapore smog race?

Air quality in Singapore worsened to unhealthy levels and a white smog obscured the striking waterfront skyline, featuring the Marina Bay Sands casino resort with its three

towers and boat-shaped top level.

The worsening pollution increased fears that this weekend's Formula One race may be affected. Organisers say the possibility of haze is one of the issues in their contingency plan for Sunday's showpiece night race, but have not given further details.

The city-state's tourism board said spectators would be able to buy masks as protection from the haze if conditions did not improve and assistance would be provided for those who feel unwell, the Today news portal reported.

The fires have sparked tensions between Indonesia and Malaysia.

Indonesia's environment minister initially suggested the haze was from Malaysian fires despite satellite data showing hundreds of blazes in Indonesia and only a handful in its neighbour, prompting anger from her Malaysian counterpart.

Indonesia later sealed off dozens of plantations where it said fires were blazing, including some owned by Malaysia-based firms, deepening the row.

But Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, who has struck a diplomatic tone throughout the crisis, said Malaysia may pass legislation forcing its companies to tackle fires on plantations abroad.

Malaysia wants its firms with sites overseas to put out blazes contributing to the haze, he said, adding: "Of course, if we find they are unwilling to take action, we may have to pass a law to make them responsible."

The Indonesian government has insisted it is doing all it can to fight the blazes. But this year's fires have been worsened by dry weather and experts believe there is little chance of them being extinguished until the onset of the rainy season in October.

Indonesia's meteorology, climate and geophysics agency said Wednesday that over 1,000 hotspots -- areas of intense heat detected by satellite that indicate a likely fire -- had been sighted, most of them on Sumatra.

(Source: AFP)

Russian anti-doping chief attacks his own athletics federation



Russia's anti-doping agency chief on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on Russian athletics bosses ahead of this month's world championships in Doha, accusing them of obstructing testing.

"I'm calling on all the federation's directors to resign," RUSADA director general Yuri Gantus told France's L'Equipe sports daily. Russia was barred from international competition in 2015 over a vast state-run doping conspiracy.

While Russia's anti-doping agency RUSADA is now under new leadership, Gantus claims that the old guard at the country's athletics federation (RUSAF) is hindering progress in cleaning up the sport.

"We (RUSADA) are cooperating with the IAAF, we are conducting investigations," he told L'Equipe.

"The scale of the backlog is crazy. It's the problem of the system, because there is proof of intervention from a higher body."

"There are those who are against my work, for example the Sports Minister (Pavel Kolobkov) has defended and continues to support (RUSAF chief Dmitry) Shlyakhtin at the head of the athletics' federation."

Since the initial ban, the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) has rejected Russia's efforts to be reinstated

no fewer than 11 times.

The IAAF will consider the Russian federation's latest request when its top officials meet in Doha on Monday.

Despite the ban, athletes subsequently deemed clean have been allowed to compete as neutrals and if Russia is rejected for a 12th time then -- just as at the London 2017 world championships -- Russian athletes who have met the criteria will be allowed to take part as so-called Authorised Neutral Athletes.

In June RUSAF was rocked by fresh allegations, with reports that Russian coaches suspended for involvement in doping were continuing to train athletes.

British newspaper The Sunday Times ran a story alleging that RUSAF officials had fabricated documents to show that Danil Lysenko, the 2017 world silver high jump medallist, was too ill to provide his whereabouts after failing to make himself available for out-of-competition drug testing.

Gantus said: "As long as we're not honest with ourselves, the international community cannot lift the ban on Russia."

"We will end this disaster only when we admit that punishment is inevitable and that nobody can escape their responsibilities."
(Source: AFP)

Three killed in Venice offshore racing accident



Three people have been killed in Venice after a powerboat attempting to break an offshore record slammed into an artificial spit of land in the dark, Italian firefighters and media reports said Wednesday.

Italian champion Fabio Buzzi and two British racers died in the crash late Tuesday while another Italian racer survived, the reports said citing Giampaolo Montavoci, president of the national offshore and endurance commission.

The accident happened as the vessel, some 20 metres (65 feet) long and able to travel up to 130 kilometres (80 miles) an hour, tried to break the Monte Carlo to Venice record.

Firefighters said they pulled three bodies from the submerged boat while the survivor had been thrown clear.

The vessel was nearly at the finishing line when it hit the Punta Sabbioni spit, built to protect the city's "Mose" flood barrier, reports said.

Large boulders piled up on one another from the sea floor run the length of the spit.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site is slowly sinking -- something the "Mose" (Moses) system is designed to combat.

The crash was the latest in a string of accidents in the floating city, which

sees everything from tiny gondolas to speedboats and vast cruise ships cross its waterways.

In June, the giant 13-deck MSC Opera rammed into a dockside in Venice and knocked into a small tourist boat, injuring four people and sending others on the pier running for safety.

A month later, the 12-deck Costa Deliziosa, nearly 300 metres long, narrowly missed a yacht while being towed out of Venice in stormy conditions.

But the hugely costly array of mobile barriers at the mouth of Venice's lagoon has suffered years of delays, and is now only expected to be finished in 2021, local daily La Nuova di Venezia said.

According to Il Corriere, Maurizio Darai, who witnessed the crash alongside timekeepers and race officials, said: "We saw them arrive and they were heading slightly towards land."

Speedboat racer Mr Buzzi has won 10 world championships over a 40-year career and set the world speed record for diesel-powered boats in 1978.

The boat which crashed in Venice is understood to have been capable of reaching 80mph.

(Source: Independent)

Teenager emerges as soccer's next potential superstar

Erling Braut Håland received a standing ovation from the Red Bull Salzburg fans after scoring a first-half hat-trick on his UEFA Champions League debut Tuesday, where he became the third youngest player to score a Champions League treble -- behind only Raul and Wayne Rooney.

The 19-year-old's heroics helped Salzburg thrash Belgian side Genk 6-2 in their group-stage opener and sees his electrifying start to the new season continue.

Prior to Tuesday's match, Håland had scored 17 times in nine appearances for the Austrian side and his latest hat-trick is his fourth treble of the season.

It comes after a summer in which he scored nine goals in a single game for Norway, as his national side beat Honduras 12-0 at the Fifa Under-20 World Cup in Poland.

It appears such form has Håland's teammates buying into the hype surrounding the youngster who has emerged as a potential superstar for the future.

"He is phenomenal. With his height, to be so nimble and have such command of the ball," Maximilian Wöber said after the 6-2 victory.

"It's really hard to play against him in training, you just have to foul him."

"Once again, he proved why he's definitely going to become one of the best strikers in the world."

■ Runs in the family

There's a good reason you might recognize the surname



'Håland' -- he is the son of former Nottingham Forest, Leeds and Manchester City defender Alf-Inge Håland, who played soccer in England for over a decade.

The Salzburg striker was born in Leeds during his father's spell with the Yorkshire club but spent his early footballing career at Norwegian side Bryne before moving to Molde, where he was managed by current Manchester United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjær.

He moved to Salzburg in Austria in January 2019, and started the new season in red hot form, scoring a hat-trick in his first game of the season -- a 7-1 Austrian Cup win against SC-ESV Parndorf -- and in his fourth game -- a 5-2 Austrian

league win against Wolfsberger.

Håland became the first teenager to score more than once on his Champions League debut since Rooney scored a hat-trick against Fenerbahce in September 2004 and his ability to consistently raise his game has impressed his teammates.

"His goalscoring run is incredible," Salzburg midfielder Zlatko Junuzovic said after the win over Genk.

"I'm so happy he scored three today. People said: 'okay he's scoring for fun in the league but wait until he comes to the big stage'. Then he goes and scores another hat-trick!"

■ A new superstar?

When asked to describe Håland in three words, Salzburg's American coach Kesse Marsch said: "Positive, energetic, electrifying. Or maybe electrifying!"

Although the Norwegian is 1.94m-tall and possesses all the physical attributes to take him to the top of the game, it is his character that suggests Håland is destined for great things.

"He works hard and takes nothing for granted," Marsch told UEFA.com. "Of course, he's talented, but when you combine it with his personality, that's what makes him really special. He's only going to get better."

As for Håland himself -- who became the eighth player to score a hat-trick on his Champions League debut -- he is hoping Salzburg can emulate Ajax's remarkable run to the Champions League semifinals last season.

(Source: AFP)

Iran Judo Federation suspended

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Following **d e s k** what happened during the last World Judo Championships Tokyo 2019, the International Judo Federation suspended Iran Judo Federation from all competitions, administrative and social activities organized or authorized by International Judo Federation and its Unions.

The International Judo Federation (IJF) has been informed that the August 28th 2019, during the last 2019 World Championships in Tokyo, a judoka from Iran Saeid Mollaei (-81kg) lost to his Belgian rival to avoid a potential contest against an Israeli athlete, ijf.org reported.

These facts and actions are in gross contradiction with the content of the letter sent to the IJF on May 8th, 2019 under the signature of Presidents Seyed Reza Salehi amiri, President of the I.R. Iran National Olympic Committee and Arash Miresmaeili, President, I.R. Iran Judo Federation, which categorically confirms that "...by means of this letter, we would like to confirm that the I.R. Iran NOC shall fully respect the Olympic Charter and its non-discrimination principle and the I.R. Iran Federation shall fully comply with the Olympic Charter and the IJF Statutes..."

Mollaei will fight under a refugee flag at Tokyo 2020.

The Iran Judo Federation can submit an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against the decision taken by IJF. The time limit for appeal shall be twenty-one days from the receipt of the decision appealed against.



Iran Greco-Roman team come 4th at World Championships



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran Greco-Roman team finished in fourth place at the 2019 World Wrestling Championships in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

Iran won three bronze medals in the competition. Saeid Abdvali bagged a bronze medal in the 82kg weight class in the first day.

Alireza Nejati and Mohammad Ali Geraei also won two bronze medals in the 60kg and 77kg respectively.

In the team standings, Russia was unable to match its six golds from Budapest 2018, but still comfortably topped the standings with 132 points after capturing two golds

and three silvers.

Uzbekistan, with a silver, two bronzes and two fifth places, finished second at 90. Georgia, which had two champions and a bronze medalist, was third with 79, just edging Iran with 75.

Iran national team coach Aziz Naghousi said he was neither happy nor sad at missing out on the top three, noting it was quite an improvement from the 11th-place finish in Budapest. He also pointed out that nine of the team members were competing at their first world championships, and six of them are under 23.

Asian Volleyball Championship: Iran ease past India



S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran defeated India in straight sets (25-16, 25-21, 25-21) at the 2019 Asian Men's Volleyball Championship at the 12,000-seater Azadi Sports Complex here on Wednesday.

Iran had already defeated China 3-0 in Pool E.

"I am very satisfied with our team's performance against India. The Indian team played well but we could beat them in front of our fans. I hope we can continue our good run in the competition," Iran coach Igor Kolakovic said

after the match.

The event is a biennial international volleyball tournament organized by the Asian volleyball governing body, the Asian Volleyball Federation (AVC). The tournament is being held from Sept. 13 to 21.

Top eight teams of this tournament will qualify for the 2020 Asian Olympic Qualification Tournament, which will be held in Jiangmen, China from 7 to 12 January 2020, where the winners will qualify to the 2020 men's Olympic volleyball tournament.

Guangzhou Evergrande end Kashima Antlers' reign

Kashima Antlers' reign as Asian champions came to end on Wednesday as last year's winners exited the 2019 AFC Champions League on the away goals rule at the hands of Guangzhou Evergrande after being held to a 1-1 draw by the Chinese Super League leaders at Kashima Soccer Stadium.

With the first leg in Guangzhou having ended scoreless last month, Anderson Talisca's 40th minute goal proved to be decisive despite Serinho's equaliser six minutes into the second half as Fabio Cannavaro's side progressed to the semi-finals.

There they will meet fellow two-time champions Urawa Red Diamonds next month, with the winners meeting either Al Sadd from Qatar or Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal in November's two-legged final.

Wei Shihao started on the bench for Guangzhou Evergrande while Zhang Linpeng did not make Cannavaro's matchday squad as neither Ryohei Shirasaki nor Kento Misao were considered fit enough to be selected by Kashima coach Go Oiwa for his 18-man squad.

Guangzhou adopted a robust approach in the opening exchanges and, in addition to taking the lead late in the first half, the former winners racked up four bookings, with Huang Bowen, Zheng Zhi, Talisca and Deng Hanwen all entering referee Ahmed Al Kaf's notebook.



But while the Chinese Super League leaders were making their presence known, Kashima were the team looking more likely to score.

Sho Ito steered his header off target just after the three minute mark while Leo Silva's deflected attempt from the edge of the area forced Zeng Cheng into a fine flying save, the goalkeeper pushing the ball wide for a corner.

Serginho went close two minutes after the half hour mark, almost capitalising on the Guangzhou defence's inability

to clear Ryota Nagaki's free-kick with an overhead attempt that flew narrowly past Zeng's right post.

Evergrande, however, gained the upper hand five minutes before the break when the Kashima defence was unable to keep Talisca at bay as he stormed through the penalty area to power home Huang's corner.

That goal sparked a response from Kashima and, within six minutes of the restart, the champions were level. Leo Silva's curling strike from inside the area was destined to go to the left of Zeng, only for Serginho to divert the ball to the other side of the goalkeeper as the Brazilian gave Kashima a lifeline.

But with Guangzhou holding an away goal, Oiwa's team needed to score again, forcing the holders to continue to push. Zeng did well to block Jung Seung-hyun at close range while Serginho went closer still to adding a second, only to see his left foot strike from outside the area crash against the crossbar.

Try as they might, though, Kashima were unable to find a way past a resolute Guangzhou defence and the seven-time Chinese Super League winners held on to advance to the semi-finals at the expense of the champions and keep their hopes of a record third title alive.

(Source: the-afc)

Barca teenage sensation Ansu set for Spain call



Barcelona forward Ansu Fati wants to represent Spain and will do so in next month's Under-17 World Cup provided the paperwork arrives on time, coach David Gordo has said.

Ansu, 16, who became Barca's youngest player to feature in a UEFA competition when he started in Tuesday's goalless draw at Borussia Dortmund, was born in Bissau-Guinea but is in the process of obtaining Spanish nationality.

"Ansu has the possibility of representing another national team but he has chosen Spain," U17 Spain manager Gordo told Spanish radio Cadena Ser. "We are doing everything possible for that to happen and we are eager to have him available as soon as possible." The federation has been working for a while on having Ansu play at the [U17]

World Cup. Although I have not spoken to him personally, because he is not a player we can select yet, I am told he really wants to play for Spain and go with his Barca teammates to the national team."

Ansu has enjoyed an extraordinary rise since making his Barca debut on Aug. 25. He marked his first senior start with a second-minute goal as Barca cruised past Valencia on Saturday.

Spain's interest in the teenage forward, however, is not new. "We have followed him in recent seasons," Gordo said. "We like him. His profile fits in perfectly with the Spanish national team. I believe he not only has a future in this [U17] national team but also in the U19, U21 and of course, the senior team when the time comes."

Gordo said he wouldn't be surprised if there are calls for Ansu to feature next year for Spain's senior team but the youngster must be protected from the hype.

"He's had such a spectacular and brilliant start that it may cross people's minds that that possibility [of Ansu being selected for senior team] could exist," he said.

"But we have to be calm and let Ansu cover all the stages that correspond him. Tuesday's game was another experience to add [to his career] and a very positive one. He is quickly covering stages. We have to assimilate what he is achieving."

Gordo will give a pre-selection of 50 players for next month's U17 World Cup on Sept. 25 with Ansu expected to be included. (Source: espn)

Bonyadifar to referee Tehran derby

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Mooud Bonyadifar has been chosen to officiate Tehran derby between

Esteghlal and Persepolis football teams.

The match will take place in Tehran's Azadi Stadium on Sunday.

Bonyadifar, 34, has been officiating in Iran Professional League (IPL) for five seasons and has been on the international list since 2013.

He will be assisted by Mohammad Reza Mansouri and Hassan Zahiri in this match.

Persepolis sit at the fourth place in the table with six points from three matches and Esteghlal are 11th with two points.

Tehran derby is arguably the most important derby in Asia.



Sardar Azmoun scores first goal of UEFA Champions League Season

The honor of scoring the first goal of the 2019-20 UEFA Champions League season went to Russia's Zenit St. Petersburg and its Iranian striker Sardar Azmoun.

Azmoun handed his team the lead at Lyon in the 41st minute of its Group G clash, playing a lovely one-two with strike partner Artem Dzyuba on the edge of the box before slotting past Anthony Lopes with the outside of his boot.

The goal from the 24-year-old Iranian international meant Russian champion Zenit headed in 1-0 to the good at half-time at Parc Olympique Lyonnais.

The second half started badly for Zenit and Azmoun, however, as he was forced off injured shortly after the break.

His replacement Magomed Ozdov then fouled Lyon winger Memphis Depay to concede a penalty just three minutes after coming on, with the Dutchman converting the spot-kick to level the scores.

But Zenit weathered some late Lyon pressure to earn a creditable draw, in what was its first game back in Europe's premier club competition after a three-year break, rt.com reported.

(Source: RT)

IWF congratulates Iran for sending women weightlifters to World C'ships

International Weightlifting Federation has congratulated the Iranian federation for sending four female weightlifters to the 2019 IWF World Championships.

The competition will take place on 18-27 September in Pattaya, Thailand.

At the IWF Congress, which took place in Pattaya with representatives from 100 Member Federations, Special congratulations was reserved for the Member Federation of Iran which has sent female athletes to this year's World Championships for the first time.

Poupak Basami (55kg), Abrisham Arjomandkhan (64kg), Elham Hosseini (71kg) and Parisa Jahanfekrian (87kg) are the Iranian women participating in the competition.

On Friday Basami will make history by becoming the first Iranian woman to compete at the World Weightlifting Championships in the 55kg division.

While the nation has been a powerhouse in men's competition for several years, it was not until 2017 that the Iranian Weightlifting Federation allowed women to compete officially.

Basami was the first Iranian woman to take part in a major senior event, lifting at April's Asian Championships in Ningbo, China.

(Source: IWF.net)

Iranian duo to compete at Chile Karate 1-Series A

TASNIM — Two Iranian karate athletes Zabihollah Poorshab (-84kg) and Amir Mehdizadeh (-60kg) will participate at the Chile Karate 1-Series A.

The competition will be held in Santiago, Chile from September 20-22.

Shanghai in China is scheduled to stage the last of four events in 2018, from December 7 to 9.

The Karate 1-Series A is a world-class competition that provides karatekas across the globe with more competitive opportunities to shine at the highest level.

Presented in an open format, thus allowing every athlete in the world to compete, the Karate 1-Series A is framed under the umbrella of Karate 1 to bring together the best competitors in a series of open championships of unprecedented scale and quality.

In addition to this, the Karate 1-Series A offers karatekas the chance to increase their ranking position as the universality of the sport's top tournaments is showcased.

Iran chess team wins Shanghai tournament

IRNA — Iranian chess players ranked first at Shanghai Cooperation Organization International Team Championship 2019 which kicked off on September 15 in Jiaozhou, China.

The event was held with the attendance of Belarus, India, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan as well as China.

Pouria Darini, Pouya Idani along with Arian Gholami represented the Iranian team at this competition.

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GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

Do not seek something which does not exist, and make use of what is accessible. Do not follow far-fetched ideas, and engage in something easy and at hand.

Imam Ali (AS)

Troupes from Iran to perform at Armenia High Fest

TEHRAN — Seven Iranian theater troupes will compete in the 17th HIGH FEST International Performing Arts Festival, which will be held in Yerevan, Armenia from October 1 to 8.



A poster for the 17th HIGH FEST International Performing Arts Festival.

Director Amir Asani will stage "Ilion, The History of Destruction" and "Woyzeck" will be directed by Qasem Tangsirinejad and Mahsa Rahsepar. Albert Beigjani, an Iranian member of the festival's selecting board, told the Persian service of MNA on Tuesday.

Magical Dolls led by director Zahra Moridi will perform "Deep in the Ocean", while Deemak led by Beigjani will stage "Marshmallow". Director Zahra Moridi's troupe Magical Dolls will perform "Deep in the Ocean", while Beigjani's theater group Deemak will stage "Marshmallow".

Directors Sohrab Khajenejad and Firuzeh Modir Khorasani from Mashhad along with their troupe Namik will stage "Stories of My Homeland". Meisam Moradi's troupe Darya from Nahavand will perform "Dream".

Oynar, a troupe led by director Mehdi Salehyar from the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz, is scheduled to perform "Yashil".

Over 50 troupes from countries across the world including Korea, Russia, the U.S., Brazil, Italy, the UK, Sweden and Poland will attend the festival, which will be held in the two sections of stage and street performances.

"Yeva" to hit silver screens in U.S.

TEHRAN — Iranian-Armenian filmmaker Anahid Abad's acclaimed drama "Yeva" will go on screen in New York, on October 25, Iran's Farabi Cinema Foundation announced on Wednesday.

Venera Films, a U.S.-based film distribution company, is the international distributor of the film, which will be screened in Los Angeles on November 1.

Produced by Farabi and the National Cinema Center of Armenia, the film tells the story of Yeva, a young woman who escapes her influential in-laws with her daughter Nareh after her husband's tragic death, and takes refuge in one of the villages in the Karabakh region. She is a complete stranger in this ballgame and is obliged to live her daily life in disguise.

"Yeva" was Armenia's submission to the 90th Academy Awards, but it did not make the shortlist.

The film has been awarded in several international festivals, including best film awards at the Arpa International Film Festival in Los Angeles last November and the Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival in Armenia last July.

Iran's Art for Peace Festival to open on Friday

TEHRAN — Iran's Art for Peace Festival will open in Baroque Gallery in Tehran on Friday.

The motto of this year's festival is "The World Is Colorful", the director of the festival, Fereidun Farbud, said during a press conference held at the gallery on Tuesday.

Artists from 20 countries will be displaying 200 works in the media of painting, photo, sculpture, motion graphic, installation, video art, cinema and theater during the seventh edition of the festival. Art centers from France and India are among the 12 galleries that will be participating in this year's festival, which will be running until October 4.

The artworks are also coming from Italy, Germany, Australasia, Spain, South Korea, Brazil and several other countries.

A lineup of 23 films will be screened

during the festival at the Farhang Theater Hall in Tehran for four days on September 23, 25, 28 and 30.

The theater will offer free admission on these four days. However, members of the audience need to register on the festival website.

The Art for Peace Festival is a non-competitive event. However, two films selected by the organizers and the audience will be honored with special awards on the closing day.

The festival was established in 2013 by the Iran Art for Peace Group, an independent ensemble led by graphic designer Farbud.

The festival is organized every year in Tehran to promote world peace as well as to attract attention to the environmental issues in the country.

The organizers also honor an individual who has made a significant contribution to peace with a medal every year.



A poster for the seventh edition of the 7th Art for Peace Festival.

"Hendi and Hormoz" to screen at two intl. events



Zohreh Eslami acts in a scene from "Hendi and Hormoz".

TEHRAN — Iranian director Abbas Amini's film "Hendi and Hormoz" about an arranged marriage will be screened at two international events in Italy and Ireland during October.

The Queen's Film Theatre, a small independent cinema at Queen's University Belfast in Northern Ireland will screen the movie on October 19.

The film will also be reviewed at the 1st UNICEF Innocenti Film Festival (UIFF), which will be held in the Italian city of Florence from October 25 to 27.

The story of the film is set on the hematite-rich island of Hormoz where Hendi, a 13-year-old girl, is married off to Hormoz, a 16-year-old boy who is

jobless and lives in poverty like most of the rest of the island's inhabitants. When Hendi becomes pregnant, Hormoz turns to a drug smuggler in an effort to ensure his family's livelihood.

As a co-production between Iran and the Czech Republic, "Hendi and Hormoz" was honored by the NETPAC (Network for the Promotion of Asia Pacific Cinema) at the 36th Fajr International Film Festival in Tehran in April 2018.

It was also selected as best film at the 4th CineIran Festival in the Canadian city of Toronto in November 2018.

In addition, the 1st Iranian Film Festival New York in January honored the movie with a special jury award.

Iranian shorts honored at Canberra film festival

TEHRAN — Several Iranian movies won awards at the 23rd Canberra Short Film Festival (CSFF), which is currently underway in the Australian capital.

"You Are Still Here", co-directed by Katayun Parmar and Mohammad Ruhbakhsh, brought the best sound design award to sound engineer Ramin Abolsedq.

Farshad Mohammadi received the best cinematography award for his collaboration in the film.

The film is about the life story of a young couple, which is on the verge of collapse due to the sudden blindness of the man. They try to hold on to their common past to save their lives.

Iranian films "Sleepless" by Sudabeh Kamrani, about a woman who wakes up every night with a child's cry, and "Greyish" by Eqlab Shirazei, an animation about a woolen old man, also received honorable mentions.



A scene from "You Are Still Here" co-directed by Katayun Parmar and Mohammad Nurbakhsh.

The German movie "Extra Sauce" written and directed Alireza Qasemi won the best screenplay award.

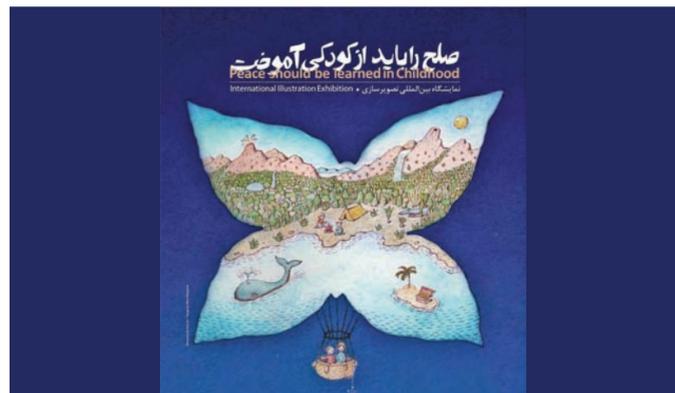
German actors Antonio Lallo and Ben Janssen shared the best actor award for their roles in the movie.

The film is about Hans, a mediocre, heartbroken actor, who is greeted by an Angel of Death after attempting suicide an hour before his play's premiere. A sarcastic conversation begins as Hans tries to convince the angel that he should be brought back to the world of the living while the angel enjoys delicious cheeseburgers and lemonade, and gives the actor relationship advice.

"Portraitist" by the Iran-born Luxembourgish director Cyrus Neshvad was crowned best film, while Lily Landecy from Switzerland was named best director for her movie "La Chrysalide".

The film screenings in various sections of the CSFF will continue until Sunday.

Tehran exhibit to display works by 2018 IBBY Honor List illustrators



A poster for "Peace Should Be Learned in Childhood", an exhibition illustrations from the 2018 IBBY Honor List in Tehran.

TEHRAN — A selection of works by illustrators of the 2018 IBBY Honor List will be on view in an exhibition at Laleh Gallery in Tehran under the title "Peace Should Be Learned in Childhood".

The Children's Book Council of Iran and the Iranian Illustrators Society are the organizers of the exhibit, which will open on Friday to commemorate the International Day of Peace that is annually observed around the world on September 21.

The illustrations are by artists from 21 countries, including France, Spain, Argentina, Italy, Mexico, Denmark, Russia, Norway, Finland and Belgium.

The IBBY Honor List is a biennial selection of outstanding, recently published

books, honoring writers, illustrators and translators from the members of the International Board on Books for Young People.

The poster for the exhibition has been designed based on an illustration by the Czech-born American illustrator and writer of children's books Peter Sis. Sis received the Hans Christian Andersen Award in 2012.

The organizers are planning to host the exhibit annually and display a selection of works by artists from the IBBY Honor List and the Biennale of Illustrations Bratislava (BIB).

The exhibit will be running until October 8 at the gallery located on Fatemi St., off Laleh Park.

Bazinga! HBO Max wins U.S. streaming rights for "The Big Bang Theory"

NEW YORK (Reuters) — HBO Max, the upcoming streaming service from AT&T Inc's WarnerMedia, has secured exclusive five-year streaming rights in the United States to all 12 seasons of comedy hit "The Big Bang Theory".

Ranked as the No. 1 comedy on U.S. television for the past seven years, the show has garnered an audience of some 20 million people.

The rights for the show cost HBO Max between \$500 million and \$600 million, a source familiar with the matter told Reuters.

All 279 episodes will be available on HBO Max when it launches in the spring of 2020, WarnerMedia said in a statement.

Winning rights to hit shows has become expensive in a crowded streaming industry dominated by Netflix Inc, Hulu and Amazon.com's Prime Video. Walt Disney Co and Apple Inc have also announced their own streaming services.

Comcast Corp's NBCUniversal said on Tuesday it would name its upcoming streaming service "Peacock" and offer a broad slate of original content, including "Dr. Death" starring Emmy and Golden Globe winner Alec Baldwin.

Peacock will also offer classic sitcoms "The Office" and "Parks and Recreation" and is scheduled to be launched in 2020, NBCUniversal said. The company owns

traditional television network NBC, which features a peacock in its logo.

Netflix Inc, poised to lose "The Office" to Peacock in 2021, said on Monday it had landed the global streaming rights for classic TV sitcom "Seinfeld".

"The Office" was the most-watched show on Netflix in the United States, followed by "Friends", when measured by minutes streamed, according to Nielsen data for 2018.

HBO Max, which is expecting a slate of 10,000 hours of premium content at launch, got here the rights to stream U.S. reruns of "Friends" from 2020 in July.

Television rights for "The Big Bang Theory" will remain with cable television

channel TBS till 2028, WarnerMedia said on Tuesday.

The show about four brilliant but socially inept scientists that made geeks and comic book nerds pop culture cool, began in 2007 and went on to win 10 Emmy awards, four of them for Jim Parsons as quirky theoretical physicist Sheldon Cooper.

Over the years, the series featured cameos by celebrities including British theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, Tesla Chief Executive Elon Musk, Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, astronaut Buzz Aldrin, "Star Trek" actors William Shatner and George Takei, and Marvel comics legend Stan Lee.



Spanish festival picks "Stairs" from Iran

TEHRAN — Iranian animation "Stairs" by Siamak Vahed will be competing in Prime the Animation, a festival running in the Spanish city of Valencia from October 3 to 6, Iran's Experimental and Documentary Film Center (EDFC) announced on Wednesday.

"Stairs" will be competing with movies from Mexico, Germany, Estonia, India and several other countries.

The event is a student festival looking for new talents.