



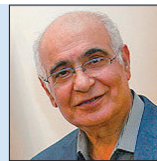
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Trump cornered on his Iran rhetoric

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New avenues explored for economic co-op

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Masoud Karbasian in separate meetings with his Italian, Indian, and Afghan counterparts discussed ways for boosting bilateral ties. The meetings were held on the sidelines of the 2017 Annual Meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington, Shada reported on Saturday. In his meeting with the Italian finance minister Pier Carlo Padoa-Schioppa, Karbasian noted that in comparison with the same time in 2016, the Iran-Italy trade has tripled during the first half of the current year. **->4**

ISIL faces imminent Raqqa defeat

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group is on the verge of defeat in Syria's Raqqa and the city may finally be cleared of the group's terrorists on Saturday or Sunday, the Syrian Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG/Yekîneyên Parastina Gel) militia said. "The battles are continuing in Raqqa city. Daesh (ISIL) is on the verge of being finished. Today or tomorrow the city may be liberated," YPG spokesman Nouri Mahmoud told Reuters news agency by telephone. The YPG dominates the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an alliance of Arab and Kurdish militias that has been battling since June to defeat ISIL at Raqqa, which served as the group's de facto capital in Syria. Al Jazeera's Hashem Ahelbarra, reporting from Antakya in Turkey, said only about seven percent of the city was still under control of ISIL on Saturday. An activist group that reports on Raqqa, said on its Facebook page on Saturday that dozens of buses had entered Raqqa city overnight, having travelled from the northern Raqqa countryside. **->13**

Hormuz, the rainbow island of Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran's Hormuz Island in the Persian Gulf is well-known for its eye-catching ochre, a red-colored earth pigment that attracts domestic and foreign nature lovers and holiday-makers. Also spelled Hormoz, the island covers an area of approximately 42 square kilometers, most of which is fairly uninhabited. It is sprawled in the Strait of Hormuz, 8km from the mainland. Most of its visitors are day trippers from adjacent Qeshm Island and Bandar Abbas, the latter is a bustling port city and the capital of Hormozgan province. **->10**

Iraq tells Peshmerga to pull out from Kirkuk: Kurdish official

A senior Iraqi Kurdish official says the Baghdad government has set a deadline for Kurdish forces to withdraw from positions in the oil-rich northern Kirkuk Province, which have been under their control over their past three years. "The deadline set for the Peshmerga to return to their pre-June 6, 2014 positions will expire during the night," the official, who was speaking on condition of anonymity, told AFP on Saturday. He said the deadline had been set at 2300 GMT on Saturday. This is while a Peshmerga commander in Kirkuk said separately that no warning had been issued to the Kurdish forces. Kurdish Peshmerga forces moved into

Kirkuk in 2014, when the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group launched an offensive across Iraq. The fresh ultimatum comes amid simmering tensions between the central government in Baghdad and the Iraqi semi-autonomous Kurdistan Region (Kurdistan Regional Government/KRG) over a recent controversial referendum on the secession of region. The plebiscite took place on September 25, sparking strong objection from Baghdad. Iraq's neighbors and the international community also voiced concerns about the repercussions of the vote, which was only supported by Israel.

Kirkuk, with some 10 percent of Iraq's oil reserves, has long been contested by Baghdad and Erbil. Latest reports say Kurdish and Iraqi government forces have squared off south of Kirkuk. On Friday, Iraqi troops wrested control of formerly Kurdish-held positions in the south of Kirkuk Province, including the town of Taza Khurmatu. The gains came as Iraqi President Fuad Masum was holding urgent talks with Kurdish leaders in the city of Sulaimaniyah, but no statements had been emerged from his meetings. (Source: agencies)

Trump aims at Iran, hits the U.S.: Bloomberg

Trump's decision flies in the face of eight reports from the IAEA confirming that Iran is adhering to the nuclear deal, which went into effect in January 2016. It also puts the U.S. at odds with its European, Russian and Chinese negotiating partners, all of whom have reiterated the importance of the agreement for global security and nonproliferation. Trump's action doesn't in and of itself shred the nuclear pact: Congress now has 60 days to vote on that step, and the White House is asking it instead to set up a number of "trigger points" that would result in re-imposition of sanctions.

But don't be fooled: By decertifying in the face of all evidence that Iran is complying, Trump is in effect going rogue, and the consequences will be felt across the globe. In the two years since the deal was signed, Europe has slowly regained its access to the Iranian market. Iran's economy is rebounding. EU foreign policy chief Frederica Mogherini has called the nuclear deal vital to international peace and security. French President Emmanuel Macron and UK Prime Minister Theresa May have gone on record saying the deal is doing what it was intended to do. Trump's actions, and any new sanc-

tions from Congress, will drive a wedge between Washington and Europe on Iran. It would be virtually impossible to reconstitute that sanctions regime that was in place before the nuclear deal came into effect. Trump's decision will be viewed as callous disregard for multilateral negotiations and norms. It will reinforce the image that Iran often portrays the U.S. as being a bully on the world stage that does what it wants with reckless abandon -- alliances and commitments notwithstanding. It's an image that Trump embraces in both style and substance. **->13**

ARTICLE
 By Hanif Ghaffari
 Political analyst

Trump remains unescorted in anti-JCPOA moves

Despite receiving some faint green lights from certain European partners, Donald Trump has so far failed to obtain full companionship of the European Troika for renegotiating the JCPOA. Ultimately, US President Donald Trump, in what was more a controversial speech, accused Iran of not complying with the nuclear deal and charged the US Treasury and Congress with the task of joining hands with Iran in order to resolve shortcomings of the international agreement also known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The US president stated that "Iran has violated the agreement for several times. For instance, the volume of their enriched materials has exceeded the specified limit. We will impose new sanctions on Iran to stop its support for terrorism. We will block all routes of nuclear weapons for the Iranian regime."

A number of points need to be addressed regarding recent remarks made by Trump. First and foremost, president of the US failed to raise any legal or technical claim to prove that Iran has violated the N-Deal. Eight reports by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) confirming Iran's nuclear activities had reduced maneuvering power of Trump. Moreover, his claim on increased amount of materials enriched by Iran were incompatible with IAEA reports.

Over recent weeks, people like US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson have repeatedly warned Trump that he needs sufficient legal evidence to accuse Iran of violating the deal, while there exists no such evidence! Nevertheless, Trump insisted on his view under influence of the AIPAC lobby and radicals inside his government, such as United States Representative Nicky Haley. **->7**

ARTICLE
 By Payman Yazdani
 Political analyst

Dual aims of Trump's pseudo-strategy

Eventually, the U.S. president in a heavily advertised speech on Friday announced what his team called his new strategy on Iran and the Joint Comprehensive plan of action (JCPOA) officially. Despite U.S. President Donald Trump Friday speech that claimed to be unveiling a new strategy to address the full range of Iran's destructive actions, his speech was neither new or a strategy. Most part of his speech expressed his anger at Iran's support for its regional allies like Hezbollah, missile test, Iran's fundamental regional policy and a series of repetitive accusations against Iran. In fact, he didn't explain what, specifically, his new strategy would be.

While much of the speech was more rhetoric than policy, he unveiled two new policies toward Iran. One was sanctioning Iran's elite military unit, the Revolutionary Guard, which is already under US heavy sanction and the other was decertifying the Iran nuclear deal that doesn't actually pull the U.S. out of the agreement.

The speech was in fact the repetition of Trump's Predecessors hostile policy toward Iran, but this time expressed in a more discourteously and uncivilly tone by diplomatically illiterate Trump. With his heavily advertised speech on Friday that he and his team introduced as America's new Iran strategy, Trump is aiming dual goals domestically and internationally.

Connecting Iran and its elite military unit, the Revolutionary Guard not only to Al-Qaida, North Korea like his Predecessors and the U.S. military and intelligence establishments that labelled Iran as 'axis of evil' it is obvious that Iran is defined as the key geopolitical enemy by the Trump administration which is a real obstacle in the way of the U.S. geopolitical ambitions for the region. **->2**



Sports car racing held in Tehran

The third round of Iran's sports car racing was held at Azadi Sport Complex in Tehran on Friday. Sports car racing is a form of circuit auto racing with sports cars that have two seats and enclosed wheels. They may be purpose-built (Prototype) or related to road-going models (Grand Touring).

Teheran Times/ Behnam Tofighi

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Macron considers trip to Iran

POLITICS French President Emmanuel Macron is considering visiting Iran after speaking by phone with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani on Friday.

"A trip to Iran by the president, at the invitation of President Rouhani, has been considered," The Telegraph quoted the Elysee presidential office as saying.

Iranian presidential website said the visit would happen next year.

Macron's visit to Iran would be the first by a French head of state or government since 1971. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian is set to travel to the Islamic Republic in the next few weeks.

Macron said in the phone conversation that the U.S. decision to decertify Iran's nuclear deal "will not put an end to the Iranian nuclear accord and that together all the parties in France and its European partners will continue to meet their commitments".



'No talks between Zarif, Tillerson on new U.S. strategy'

POLITICS The Iranian Foreign Ministry has rejected reports that U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson had notified his Iranian counterpart of Washington's new strategy toward Tehran, Press TV reported.

"What Mr. Tillerson says goes back to his speech during the ministerial meeting of the 5+1 group on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. Apart from that, there have been no other meeting and talks between the foreign ministers of Iran and the U.S.," ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Friday.

Earlier in the day, Reuters cited Tillerson as saying that he had discussed with Zarif the possibility of negotiating a new agreement.



Interior Ministry: Trump admits Islamic Revolution's power

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian Interior Ministry issued a statement on Saturday stating that U.S. President Donald Trump has grudgingly admitted "greatness," "power" and "dignity" of the Islamic Revolution.

The statement came one day after Trump announced his new Iran strategy.

"Remarks made by the U.S. president showed that the ideology and doctrine that claim to be the world's superpower are based on lie, distortion and bullying and lack the least historical and legal information and political intelligence which have embarrassed the [U.S.] people," the statement read.



Top legislator: Iran's parliament to counter any 'unwise' move by Trump

POLITICS TEHRAN — Alaeddin Boroujerdi, chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, has said that Iran's parliament will counter any "unwise" move by U.S. President Donald Trump.

"The Majlis will allocate more budget for missile capability and the government will definitely be more determined in this respect," he told IRIB in an interview published on Saturday.

Iran will take decision on the U.S. acts based on its national interests, he added.



VP calls for unity to counter U.S. mischievous acts

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri said on Saturday that unity and integrity are required to counter the Trump government's mischievous acts against the Islamic Republic.

"The Iranian nation is independent and enjoys political, cultural and economic independence and has turned into a role model of following the path of development," he said.

He also said that U.S. President Donald Trump's Friday remarks on new strategy on Iran came from "anger" and are contrary to the realities.



Russian MP predicts U.S. isolation if nuclear deal ditched

POLITICS Leonid Slutsky, the chairman of the International Affairs Committee, has predicted U.S. isolation if Trump's administration rips up the 2015 nuclear deal.

"The United States may become isolated in the UN Security Council if Trump's threats to break the JCPOA are fulfilled. Accusations of Tehran's non-compliance with the terms of the agreement are unfounded and unsubstantiated. The remaining members of the P5+1 stand for preserving the Iran deal. Europe, China and Russia are well aware of irreparable consequences such provocations against Iran may lead to," Sputnik quoted him as saying on Saturday.

Zarif: We are all IRGC

"No wonder supporters of Trump's inane Iran speech are those bastions of democracy in the Persian Gulf: KSA, UAE and Bahrain," Zarif notes

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian foreign minister has strongly defended the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in the face of new accusation by U.S. President Donald Trump, saying "Iranian all are IRGC".

"Today, Iranians--boys, girls, men, women--are ALL IRGC; standing firm with those who defend us & the region against aggression & terror," Zarif tweeted.

On Friday, in announcing his new Iran strategy, Trump decertified Iran's compliance with the international nuclear agreement and leveled many accusations against Iran.

The decertification came despite repeated confirmations by the UN nuclear watchdog that Iran is living up to its commitments under the nuclear accord.

Zarif described Trump's speech against Iran as "inane" and stressed that using threats against the Islamic Republic will prove to be ineffective.

"Allegations, threats and profanity will never intimidate Iranians. Trump will eventually discover this; as every predecessor did," Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted.

"Everyone knew Trump's friendship was for sale to the highest bidder. We now know that his geography is too," Zarif wrote in another Tweet, referring to Trump's use of the "Arabian Gulf" instead



of the Persian Gulf in his speech.

"No wonder supporters of Trump's inane Iran speech are those bastions of democracy in the Persian Gulf: KSA, UAE and Bahrain," he noted.

"Everyone knew Trump's friendship was for sale to the highest bidder. We now know that his geography is too," Zarif added.

Iran protests Trump's remarks at UN Meanwhile, Iran's Ambassador to

the United Nations Gholamali Khoshroo sent a statement to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to protest Washington's long-term animosity, interventionism, and destabilizing approach against the Iranian nation since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

The statement pointed to U.S. support for terrorist plots and coup attempts as well as Washington's

support for the former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussain during Iraq's imposed war on Iran in the 1980s, as other examples of the U.S. animosity against the Iranian nation.

The statement pointed to the IRGC's role in fighting Takfiri terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria and expressed regret over the U.S. efforts to portray a wrong image of Iran's actions against terrorism in the Middle East.

The Iranian UN mission pointed to Trump's claims about Iran's non-compliance with the JCPOA, noting, "While the IAEA, as the only authority responsible to deal with the issue, has repeatedly confirmed Iran's commitment to its obligations under the JCPOA, it once again proves that the U.S. is not a trustworthy negotiating party."

'U.S. playing with terrorism' Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani also said he had held talks with Russian officials while in Saint Petersburg about the U.S. "troublesome measures" on the JCPOA.

The United States' unilateral actions have infuriated all parties, the Iranian speaker added, slamming Washington's policy toward the JCPOA as a disdain for all of the efforts the parties involved in the nuclear talks made to achieve the nuclear deal.

Trump cornered on his Iran rhetoric

POLITICS TEHRAN — U.S. President Donald Trump has been attacked by various world dignitaries for his decertification of the Iran deal and his harsh rhetoric against the Islamic Republic.

Hillary Clinton has said Trump's initiative to ditch the Iran deal is "very dangerous".

"I think it's very dangerous. I think to talk about decertifying... sends the wrong message for a number of reasons," Clinton told CNN's Fared Zakaria on Friday. "First of all, it basically says America's word is not good. That even in the absence of evidence that Iran is not complying with the Iran nuclear deal, this president is going to abandon it."

"We have different presidents, and this particular president is, I think, upending the kind of trust and credibility of the United States' position and negotiation that is imperative to maintain," she noted.

"Secondly, it once again gives Iran an advantage. If Iran is complying, which all the evidence is, then all of a sudden, instead of working to isolate Iran, on every issue, we are giving Iran the spotlight, the aggrieved party spotlight. That makes us look foolish and small and plays right into Iranian hands."

Russia: Trump's speech runs counter to norms of civilized world

In a statement issued on Friday, Russia's Foreign Ministry said Trump's speech "once again underlines the inadmissibility of using aggressive and threatening rhetoric in international relations" and that such language was "doomed to fail."

"It is a hangover from the past, which does not correspond to modern norms of civilized dealings between countries," the Russian statement read.

Elsewhere in its statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry said it "viewed with regret" Trump's decision on the JCPOA, saying, "We expect that this step will not have a direct effect on the progress of implementation of the agreements, although, clearly, it does not correspond to the spirit and letter."

It further reiterated that the Islamic Republic was strictly abiding by the terms of the deal.

"In particular, there can be no talk of a renewal of sanctions via the UN Security Council," it added.

"Russia remains committed to the JCPOA, is interested in preserving it, and will continue to fulfill its obligations under it. We call on all other participants to do the same," it said.

Jack Straw: Trump ignorant of reality in Iran

Former British foreign secretary Jack Straw reacted to the speech by Trump on his new strategy towards Iran by saying that Trump is willfully ignorant of the reality of Iran.

"An appalling decision by a U.S. President willfully ignorant of the reality of Iran, and of the fact that Iran has complied with the JCPOA," Straw said in an exclusive comment to the Islamic Republic News Agency.

"It was a terrible and shocking speech by the U.S. president," Straw added.

In another development, Richard Bacon, chairman of the All Party Parliamentary Group, said in an exclusive statement to IRNA that Iran has adhered to its obligations under the JCPOA, which has been confirmed on many occasions by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

He said, "All the signatories of the JCPOA, including the United States, agreed to the verification process which the IAEA has followed."

"There is simply no case for saying that Iran is in

breach of the JCPOA," he stressed, adding, "The United States is both a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency and a signatory to the JCPOA."

IAEA reconfirms Iran's compliance with JCPOA

The Director General of the IAEA, Yukiya Amano, confirmed once again that the Islamic Republic of Iran is honoring all its nuclear-related commitments under the nuclear deal.

"As I have reported to the Board of Governors, the nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under the JCPOA are being implemented," Amano said in a statement shortly after Trump refused to certify the deal.

"The IAEA's verification and monitoring activities address all the nuclear-related elements under the JCPOA. They are undertaken in an impartial and objective manner and in accordance with the modalities defined by the JCPOA and standard safeguards practice," Amano added.

UN Chief calls for keeping Iran nuclear deal

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres also in a statement called for keeping Iran nuclear deal.

The secretary general has repeatedly said that the adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was a very important breakthrough to consolidate nuclear non-proliferation and advance global peace and security, UN News Center quoted UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric as saying on Friday.

"The UN chief strongly hopes that it will remain in place," Dujarric added.

Immediately after his declaration of new Iran strategy in which Trump refused to certify Iran's compliance with the nuclear deal, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said, "Today, the United States is lonelier than ever in the face of the JCPOA."

Rouhani receives credentials of five ambassadors

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani received on Saturday credentials of the new ambassadors of Czech Republic, Norway, Greece, Switzerland and Nigeria in separate meetings.

During his meeting with Swiss Ambassador Markus Leitner, Rouhani said that causing harm to the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, will harm international security and stability.

"We hope that the European Union would counter wrong moves that disturb peace and impede international cooperation," he said.

He noted that the JCPOA helped create a more peaceful atmosphere in the world, saying, "Today, we are in a very sensitive and important situation which is not just restricted to Iran and the 5+1 group."

Rouhani insisted Tehran's long held doctrine that Iran's nuclear program has been and will remain peaceful.

He added Iran will remain committed to the JCPOA as long as the other side respect the deal.

However, the president noted, Iran will not be the first to violate the multilateral agreement.

For his part, Ambassador Leitner said that Switzerland supports the JCPOA.

As part of his new Iran strategy officially declared on Friday, U.S. President Donald Trump decertified the nuclear deal and used harsh language against Iran.

Rouhani, in response to Trump, said on Friday that Iran will respect the nuclear deal despite Washington's new strategy.

"We will respect the deal as long as our interests are met," Rouhani said. However, he added, "If our partners would attempt to disregard their obligations under the deal, we will not hesitate a moment to respond."

Rouhani calls on Europe to protect JCPOA

During his meeting with Lars Nordrum, the Norwegian ambassador, Rouhani said Europe should play a "constructive role" in protecting the JCPOA.

He said that the nuclear deal created many opportunities to negotiate on various international issues.

Ambassador Nordrum said that all sides should remain committed to

their obligations under the JCPOA as Iran is doing.

'Nuclear deal benefits international security'

In a meeting with New Ambassador of Czech Republic Svatopluk Cumba, the Iranian president said the JCPOA benefits the international security and helps promote peace.

Rouhani noted that the JCPOA has improved the situation for Iran and the European countries to expand cooperation.

He also said that there is no obstacle for Iran and the Czech Republic to expand relations.

The president also said Tehran attaches great importance to facilitating banking ties between the two countries.

For his part, Cumba called for expansion of relations with Tehran in various areas.

'Signatories who refuse to honor JCPOA are making mistake'

Rouhani, in the meeting with Greek Ambassador Dimitri Alexandrakis, said that the JCPOA proved the fact that dialogue is the best solution to



international disputes.

Alexandrakis also said Athens gives priority to preserving the nuclear deal and noted that the signatories who refuse to abide by the agreement are "making mistake".

'Iran ready to expand ties with Nigeria'

During his meeting with Ibrahim Hamza, the new Nigerian ambassador, Rouhani said that the Iranian corporations are ready to expand ties with Nigeria.

He added that expansion of relations with the African countries is Iran's principled policy.

In turn, the Nigerian ambassador called for expanding ties with Iran.

Dual aims of Trump's pseudo-strategy

1 -> Despite certifying Iran's compliance with the nuclear deal (JCPOA) which Iran inked with world major powers by the IAEA, Trump decertified it because the US real goal is regime change in Iran to bring to power the U.S. agents, so no matter Iran complies with the JCPOA.

What Trump has done is to kick the ball to U.S. Congress's court and congress which have already passed many sanctions against Iran will continue on this

path. In this way, Washington won't formally withdraw from the JCPOA, but will keep on pressure on Iran.

Domestically, Trump knows very well that breaking the nuclear deal with Iran will put U.S. in a difficult situation and will isolate it more because the European countries, Russia and China which are increasingly active in Iran won't follow up the U.S. policy toward Iran. Moreover, a U.S.-Iranian crisis could negatively affect U.S.-Russia

relations, too.

On the other hand, Trump has promised to scrap the nuclear deal with Iran during his presidential campaign. Kicking the ball to the Congress court by decertifying Iran's compliance with the JCPOA and repeating his harsh repetitive rhetoric against Iran and the, he tries to pretend that he is trying to meet his campaign promises, so most part of his Friday speech is for domestic use.

Turkey had talks with Russia on S-500: Erdogan

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says Ankara has had talks with Moscow over Russia's S-500 surface-to-air missile defense systems, announcing that Turkey has also no "problem" with the Kremlin over its previous deal on receiving batteries of S-400 systems.

"In our talks with [Russia President Vladimir] Putin we are not thinking of stopping with the S-400s. We have had talks on the S-500s too," said the Turkish leader at a press conference upon his return from Ukraine and Serbia on Friday.

The S-500 air shield systems are currently under development by Russian manufacturer Almaz-Antey, and will enter service in the coming years. The systems are said to be able to simultaneously detect and destroy up to 10 ballistic missiles at speeds of up to 7 kilometers per second, as well as aircraft, helicopters and cruise missiles, within a radius of 600 kilometers.

Erdogan added that Turkey would "take joint production steps" of the S-400 systems as soon as it received the second batch of the advanced air shield from Russia.

The Turkish leader's comments came a month after Ankara and Moscow reached an agreement on the delivery of the S-400 systems to Turkey. At the time, Erdogan said a deposit had already been paid for two batteries of the advanced missile systems.

Under the deal, Russia would send two S-400 systems to Turkey within the next year and then help the country domestically produce two more batteries. The deal is said to be worth around \$2.5 billion.

The S-400, whose full name is the Triumf Mobile Multiple Anti-Aircraft



Missile System (AAMS), is an advanced Russian missile system designed to detect, track, and destroy planes, drones, or missiles as far as 402 kilometers away. It has previously been sold only to China and India.

Turkey, being a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member state with the second-largest army in the military alliance, drew an outpouring of criticism from the United States and other members of the bloc, which criticized Ankara for drifting toward Moscow.

"They went crazy because we made the S-400 agreement. What were we supposed to do, wait for you?" said Erdogan on September 13, a day after he inked the deal with the Russians.

Earlier in the week, however, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Turkey's decision to purchase the S-400 from Russia does not harm the military bloc's interests.

"I spoke with President Erdogan when I met him in September. I said that the kind of capabilities different nations want to acquire is a national decision," he said.

Turkey is striving to boost its air defense, particularly after Washington decided in 2015 to withdraw its Patriot surface-to-air missile system from Turkey's border with Syria, a move that weakened Turkey's air defense.

Before gravitating towards Russia, the Turkish military reportedly walked

out of a \$3.4 billion contract for a similar Chinese system. The withdrawal took place under purported pressure from Washington.

Turkey's ties with its Western allies in NATO have been strained over a range of issues. Erdogan has been critical of Washington for supporting Kurdish groups in Syria that he says are responsible for terror attacks inside Turkey.

The Turkish leader has also lambasted American officials for rejecting his requests to hand over Fethullah Gulen, a powerful opposition figure living in the U.S., who is blamed by Ankara for masterminding last year's mid-July failed coup.

(Source: TRT)

U.S. Republican Senator Corker blasts Trump for 'castrating' Tillerson



The United States Republican Senator Bob Corker stepped up his public feud with Donald Trump on Friday, saying the U.S. president's undermining of his top diplomat was like castrating him in public. Corker told the Washington Post in an interview that Trump had undercut Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's efforts to enlist China in reining in North Korea's nuclear program by denigrating the diplomat.

"You cannot publicly castrate your own secretary of state" without limiting the options for dealing with North Korea, Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations committee, told the Post. Tillerson told a news conference in Beijing two weeks ago that the United States was directly communicating with North Korea on its nuclear and missile programs but it had shown no interest in dialogue. Trump took to Twitter the next day, saying Tillerson was "wasting his time" trying to negotiate with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

"The greatest diplomatic activities we have are with China, and the most important, and they have come a long, long way," Corker said. "Some of the things we are talking about are phenomenal." "When you jack the legs out from under your chief diplomat, you cause all that to fall apart," Corker told the Post, adding that working with China was the key to reaching a peaceful settlement with North Korea.

"When you publicly castrate your secretary of state, you take that off the table."

(Source: Reuters)

N. Korea readies missile launch ahead of U.S.-South Korea drill



A South Korean newspaper has claimed that the North is "highly likely" preparing to test-launch a ballistic missile prior to an upcoming joint naval drill by Washington and Seoul.

The Donga Ilbo daily, citing a government source, said on Saturday that satellite pictures showed ballistic missiles on launchers being transported out of hangars near the North Korean capital, Pyongyang, and in North Phyongan Province.

The newspaper said the United States and South Korean military officials suspect the North might be preparing to launch missiles capable of reaching the U.S. territory.

There are speculations that the launch pertained to the Hwasong-14 inter-continental ballistic missile (ICBM), whose range could extend to Alaska, or Hwasong-12 intermediate-range missiles, which Pyongyang threatened to fire at the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam in August.

This comes a day after North Korea renewed a threat to fire missiles toward the U.S. territory of Guam, warning that "reckless moves" by Washington would force Pyongyang to take action.

"We have already warned several times that we will take counteractions for self-defense, including a salvo of missiles into waters near the U.S. territory of Guam," a report by the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted Kim Kwang Hak, a researcher at the Institute for American Studies of the North Korean Foreign Ministry, as saying.

"The US military action hardens our determination that the U.S. should be tamed with fire and lets us take our hand closer to the 'trigger' for taking the toughest countermeasure," Kim added.

The U.S. and South Korea are set to hold a joint navy drill on October 16-26 in the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea, in a fresh show of force against North Korea amid escalating tensions over its nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Meanwhile, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg warned that any military action against North Korea could trigger "devastating consequences" days after the U.S. President Donald Trump said diplomatic solutions would not work with North Korea.

The United States and North Korea have been at loggerheads over Pyongyang's weapons and nuclear programs.

Pyongyang says it will not give up on its nuclear deterrence unless Washington ends its hostile policy toward the country and dissolves the U.S.-led UN command in South Korea. Thousands of U.S. soldiers are stationed in South Korea and Japan.

Tensions have recently significantly risen between North Korea and the U.S. The two countries have been trading threats of military action against one another, and there is a potential for a real armed conflict to erupt.

(Source: agencies)

U.S. drone attack leaves 14 Afghan civilians in Kunar Province: lawmaker

An Afghan lawmaker says more than a dozen civilians have been killed in a recent United States drone strike, which was said to be aimed at a militant target in the country's eastern province of Kunar.

On Friday, residents from the Chawki district of Kunar Province held a gathering to pay tribute to the victims of the deadly drone attack a day earlier.

Speaking during the ceremony, Afghan lawmaker Shahzada Shahid said "the villagers are very upset about this incident, people are now busy with the funeral ceremony of the 14 civilians from the area."

"There is no doubt that they were civilians, they were not armed with weapons and those that were killed were oppressed," he added.

A resident also said, "All the victims were civilians and they bombarded the villages and the houses. All of them were local people and did not belong to the enemy."

Provincial governor's spokesman Abdul Ghani Musamim said on Saturday that the strike targeted a

meeting of local Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) and Taliban terrorists, without elaborating on any details.

Afghanistan's Defense Ministry spokesman Dawlat Waziri also confirmed the report.

The U.S.-led foreign military forces in the country have not yet commented on the incident.

The government has no control over the remote area where Afghanistan's ISIL affiliate has managed to establish a foothold, among other areas in the eastern part of the country.

The United Nations announced in a quarterly report on Thursday that Afghan civilian casualties from the U.S. and Afghan airstrikes have climbed by more than 50 percent since last year.

UN investigators said in a quarterly report on Thursday that as of the end of September, at least 205 civilians had been killed and 261 wounded this year in airstrikes in Afghanistan.

The U.S. military has escalated attacks in Afghan-

istan under a new strategy announced by President Donald Trump in August.

Washington currently maintains 8,400 soldiers in Afghanistan, with NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) troops making up another 5,000.

Civilian casualties caused by NATO forces have been one of the most contentious issues during the 16-year military campaign in Afghanistan, prompting strong government and public criticism.

Afghanistan is still suffering from insecurity and violence years after the United States and its allies invaded the country as part of Washington's so-called war on terror. The military invasion removed the Taliban from power, but the militancy continues to this day.

The war in Afghanistan is the longest in the U.S. history with a cost of about \$1 trillion. More than 2,400 Americans have died and another 20,000 have been wounded since the invasion in 2001.

(Source: Press TV)

Catalan talks with Spain 'would aim at independence'

A senior Catalan official said on Saturday that an offer of talks with Madrid over his region's secession push was aimed at negotiating separation from Spain, not halting it.

The central government has given the Catalan President Carles Puigdemont until next Thursday to abandon designs on secession, failing which it may trigger unprecedented constitutional steps that could see Madrid take control of the semi-autonomous region.

Puigdemont's number two Oriol Junqueras said on Saturday that dialogue with the central government "must have at its heart the formation of the (Catalan) republic and our commitment to independence".

"We need to be clear that the best way of achieving an independent republic is to talk to everyone, including the international community," Junqueras told members of his Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) party in Barcelona.

The wealthy region's drive to break away from Spain has unleashed the country's worst political crisis in a generation.

After staging a banned referendum on October 1, in which separatists say 90 percent of people voted for secession, Puigdemont said last week he had accepted a "mandate for Catalonia to become an independent state".

He immediately suspended the declaration, however, ostensibly to allow time for dialogue with Madrid.

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, who has repeatedly said Catalan independence is not up for discussion, responded



ed by giving Puigdemont a deadline to make up his mind.

The journalist-turned-politician now has until Monday morning to declare Catalonia independent or not.

If he does, he has until October 19 to change his mind or Rajoy has said Madrid will start taking direct control over the semi-autonomous region.

As the standoff drags on, dozens of companies have moved their legal headquarters out of Catalonia, and concerns are rising that the crisis will severely damage the region's economy and even dampen Spain's growth prospects.

Spain's deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria warned on Friday that if "there is no quick solution, we see ourselves having to lower economic

forecasts for 2018".

The International Monetary fund has also voiced concern and ratings agency Standard and Poor's said the region's economy risked sliding into recession if the crisis persists.

Spain's Association of Registrars said on Friday that 540 firms had sought to relocate their legal addresses from Catalonia from October 2-11.

Puigdemont is under pressure from Madrid and the European Union states to remain part of Spain but also from his allies in the Catalan parliament who want the region to break away immediately.

Adding to tensions, Catalonia is deeply divided over secession, and those who want to stay in Spain are increasingly making their voices heard,

having staged two mass rallies in just five days.

"The Spanish government is rejecting every day," the chance of international mediation in the crisis, Junqueras said.

But Madrid has never countenanced talks on a push it insists violates the constitution.

It is ready to invoke article 155 of Spanish law, a never-before-seen provision that allows Madrid to take direct control of its devolved regions if it deems them to be acting against the national interest.

The head of Rajoy's Popular Party in Catalonia, Xavier Garcia Albiol, said on Friday that measures could include changing the structure of the local Mossos d'Esquadra police force, as well as imposing more direct rule over education.

Officials in Madrid are waiting to see what Puigdemont decides by the Monday deadline, but it is thought the Catalan leader could deliver what the central government deems another "ambiguous" response to the question of secession.

"If that's the case, that will show that he doesn't want dialogue and so the Spanish government will need to take necessary measures to return to normality," said Interior Minister Juan Ignacio Zoido Alvarez on Saturday.

Junqueras, who is under investigation for civil disobedience, abuse of office and misuse of public funds over the referendum, said Catalans needed to be united "for the good of (Catalonia)".

(Source: AFP)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber of Commerce opened

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran-Turkmenistan Joint Chamber of Commerce was officially opened in Tehran on October 11, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (IC-CIMA) reported on Saturday.

According to the report, Mohammad-Reza Karbasi, the ICCIMA deputy head for international affairs, and Behrouz Olfat, director of Europe and America Department at the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran, attended the opening ceremony.



Liquidity grows 24.3% yr/yr

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran's liquidity in the fifth month of current Iranian calendar year, Mordad (July 23-August 22, 2017), showed 24.3 percent rise compared to the same time in the previous year, Tasnim news agency reported on Saturday.

According to a report released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI), liquidity stood at 13.66 quadrillion rials (about \$340.05 billion) in the said month.

Liquidity in Iran witnessed a 2.5-fold rise during the past four years, IRIB news quoted Hamidreza Hajjibabaie, the chairman of parliament (Majlis) ad hoc committee for reviewing the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), as saying in February 1st.

Boeing and Airbus sales of planes to Iran safe for now

By David Koenig

President Donald Trump's decision not to re-impose sanctions against Iran is good news for Boeing and its European rival, Airbus, which can continue doing business with Iranian airlines that are desperate for new planes.

Between them, Boeing and Airbus have announced deals with Iranian airlines that, if finalized, could cover nearly 300 planes worth \$40 billion.

Still, those numbers pale in comparison to standing orders at both companies. Boeing has a backlog of orders that would take more than eight years to fill even if it never made another sale. Airbus has a similarly long list.

"This isn't a make-or-break type of thing for either company, but it is definitely good for both Boeing and Airbus," said Douglas Harned, a Bernstein analyst who tracks Chicago-based Boeing Co.

Boeing declined to comment beyond a brief statement saying that it follows U.S. guidelines and is in close touch with regulators regarding sales to Iran. Airbus declined to comment.

Iran wants to modernize its ancient, accident-prone aviation industry. Years of Western sanctions prevented Iranian airlines from buying new planes from Boeing and Airbus, the duo that dominate the global aircraft-manufacturing market. Iran also has had trouble buying spare parts for planes that date to the 1970s.

The 2015 agreement negotiated by the Obama administration lifted some sanctions on Iran and cleared the way for aircraft sales. Both Boeing and Airbus need U.S. Treasury Department permission for such sales — in the case of Airbus, which is not a U.S. company, that is because some of its airplane components come from U.S. suppliers.

Even without the re-imposed sanctions, however, hurdles still remain. Richard Aboulaifa, an analyst with Teal Group, an aviation and defense consulting firm, said the Iranian airlines could yet have trouble financing their orders, partly because banks are unlikely to loan them money until Iran signs the Cape Town Agreement, an international treaty that includes provisions for repossessing capital assets like planes.

And American politics could still play a role, with Trump leaving it to Congress to consider next steps.

Some in Congress, including Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., want to stop the aircraft sales to Iran. In September, the House approved a measure to block Treasury from approving future aircraft deals and possibly hinder the Iranians' ability to finance pending purchases. The bill's fate in the Senate is uncertain.

Boeing and Airbus currently have firm contracts to sell 180 planes to Iran — 100 by Airbus, 80 by Boeing — and tentative deals for more planes.

— In December 2016, Boeing said it signed a contract with Iran Air for the sale of \$16.6 billion worth of planes — 30 large 777s typically used on long routes and 50 737 Max 8s, a new version of Boeing's workhorse short-haul plane.

— The same month, Airbus finalized a deal with Iran Air for 100 planes worth more than \$18 billion at list prices; A320s, A330s and A350s.

— In April, just over two months after Trump was sworn in, Boeing said Aseman Airlines signed its intent to buy 30 737 Max jets worth \$3 billion, and an option for 30 more. The sale has not been finalized, according to a Boeing spokesman.

— In June, Airbus said Airtour Airlines and Zagros Airlines had committed to buy 73 planes worth \$2.5 billion.

Those figures are list prices — Iran would likely pay Boeing and Airbus far less — and would be spread over many years. And the sales themselves don't amount to a huge chunk of business when considering Boeing's revenue in 2016 was \$94.6 billion and Airbus took in 66.6 billion Euros (\$78.7 billion).

"The numbers are basically insignificant — planes, revenue, jobs," Aboulaifa said. "You never know, it might get bigger, but it certainly doesn't look very impressive."

Harned, the Bernstein analyst, said that while both aircraft manufacturers have bigger business elsewhere, Iran Air's order of Boeing 777s is particularly important in helping shore up production levels of that plane, a two-aisle, widebody jet that is frequently used on long international routes.

(Source: Associated Press)

Aircraft purchase deals to support employment

By Mahnaz Abdi

Iranian national flag carrier Iran Air's deal with the French giant plane maker Airbus on January 28, 2016 for the purchase of 118 Airbus jets worth \$27 billion was among the first deals the country signed with Europe after the implementation of its nuclear deal, known as Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), which lifted the sanctions against Iran in the same month.

The biggest aircraft order by Iran since its Islamic Revolution in 1979 was followed by another deal signed between Iran Air and ATR on February 1, 2016 for buying up to 40 turboprop planes from the Franco-Italian manufacturer.

Iran Air also inked a deal with Boeing on December 11, 2016 to buy 80 aircrafts valued at \$16.6 billion. It is Iran's biggest deal with an American company since the 1979 revolution and the U.S. embassy takeover.

The first, second and third planes that Iran purchased from the European aviation giant Airbus landed in Tehran on January 12, March 11, and March 25, 2017, respectively, and according



The first Airbus A321XLR aircraft Iran purchased in January 2016 landed in Tehran's International Mehrabad Airport in January 2017

to Iran Air's former Managing Director Farhad Parvaresh the country will receive four new Airbus jets in 2017 and five other ones in 2018.

Iran Air also took delivery of the first four of the purchased ATR passenger jets on May 17, 2017 and the fifth and sixth

turboprop aircrafts landed in Tehran's International Mehrabad Airport on September 28, 2017.

The nine new aircrafts joining Iran Air added over 1,200 new seats to the country's aviation fleet while creating some job opportunities.

Global statistics indicate that each commercial aircraft creates jobs for about 1,000 people. While the job opportunities are created for the people of both countries (manufacturer and buyer), entrance of over 200 airplanes which Iran has signed their purchase deals could play some significant role in supporting employment in different sectors of the country.

According to Iranian Labor Minister Ali Rabiei, the government can create 300,000 to 400,000 job opportunities annually but based on the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), more than 900,000 jobs should be created per year.

The country's need for new jobs underlined the role that air transport can play in employment and arrival of the new aircrafts, besides renewing Iran's aging passenger fleet, will support job creation in the country.

As Head of Iran's Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) Ali Abedzadeh said: "If we want to achieve success in job creation for the young people, air transport could be one of the sectors to play great part in this due."

New avenues explored for economic co-op

→ Padoan, for his part, underscored his country's tendency for increasing bilateral economic ties with Iran and voiced Italian companies' readiness for cooperating with their Iranian counterparts.

In a meeting with Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, Karbasian announced Iranian Finance Ministry's readiness for holding Iran-India Joint Economic Committee's

meeting in Tehran in 2018. Jaitley welcomed expansion of economic ties with Iran and underscored the vitality of improving banking cooperation between the two sides.

The Iranian minister also had a meeting with his Afghan counterpart Ekil Ahmad Hakimi, where both sides underlined the significant role of Iran and Afghanistan in the region and called for removal of ob-

stacles on the way to tighten mutual economic cooperation in various economic sectors specifically transportation and railroads.

The annual meetings of the boards of governors of WBG and IMF bring together central bankers, ministers of finance and development, parliamentarians, private sector executives, representatives from civil society organizations and academics

to discuss issues of global concern, including the world economic outlook, poverty eradication, economic development, and aid effectiveness. Also featured are seminars, regional briefings, press conferences, and many other events focused on the global economy, international development, and the world's financial system.

This year's events are taking place in Washington, DC on October 9-15.

Iranian light oil price at \$55.31 in a week

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iran's light crude oil price fell \$1.69 in the week ended on October 6 to settle at \$55.31, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Also, the country sold its heavy crude oil at \$53.27 per barrel in the said week, down \$1.26 compared to its preceding week.

Meanwhile, with \$1.4 fall from its preceding week, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)'s basket price stood at \$54.38 per barrel in the mentioned week.

Oil prices fell in the mentioned week due to a rise in crude inventories following a raise in U.S. oil exports and the resumption of production at Libya's giant Sharara



oilfield which was forced to shutdown.

EIA data about U.S. crude oil exports for the mentioned week showed that they hit a record-high of 1.98 million barrel per day. This is the highest weekly average since exports were once again allowed.

Iran had raised its light crude's official October selling prices for Asia by \$0.48 to set 50 cents above the Oman/Dubai average for the same month.

Railway cargo transport to commence between Iran, Azerbaijan in late Nov.

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Azerbaijani Railways (ADY) chairman said ADY is preparing for the beginning of rail freight transportation in the direction of Iran, ABC. AZ reported on Friday.

According to Javid Gurbanov, a container terminal in Iranian Astara is expected to open in late November.

"Trains in the direction of Astara (Azerbaijan) - Astara (Iran) will begin to operate in November," he said.

The Azerbaijani side has rented 35 hectares of land in the territory of Iranian Astara, where 1.2 kilometers of railroad and two bridges are constructed; a third bridge is also going to be built.

Totally four terminals (the grain, dry

cargo, oil product and container ones) will be constructed there.

"We plan to rent another 27 hectares of land, and then multi-modal shipments from Iran will be carried out through the territory of Azerbaijan," Gurbanov said.

Gurbanov also stated that Baku-Nakhchivan railway communication could be organized through Turkey or Iran.

"...the \$1 billion worth North-South project is being realized on the territory of Iran. The Iranian side undertook obligations for acquisition of a land plot and after completion of construction works, it will be possible to lay the railroad with length of 1,450 km through Iran to Nakhchivan," the official said.

U.S. sanctions will not disrupt Iran's oil trade with Europe

A looming ramp-up in U.S. sanctions on Tehran will further spook potential buyers of Iranian oil although supplies to Europe will most likely remain uninterrupted, top trading houses told the Reuters Global Commodities Summit this week.

Any big increase in sanctions will effectively leave the oil market where it was at the start of this decade, when Washington had a tough stance on Iran while the European Union still allowed trade with Tehran before beefing up sanctions in 2012.

The EU eased sanctions last year as part of a broader

nuclear deal, paving the way for Tehran to increase oil trade and attract billions of dollars in investment.

Glencore and Vitol, the world's No.2 and No.1 oil trading houses, have resumed dealings with Iran since last year.

The chief executive of Vitol, Ian Taylor, said he expected transactions with Iran to become more complicated although a small number of financial institutions would still facilitate trade.

"Trump's decision will have some impact but I don't think the Europeans will go with him so probably the

impact will be limited," he said.

Kim Gyo-hyun, CEO of Lotte Chemical, South Korea's No.2 petrochemical maker, told the summit he did not think oil prices would spike due to tighter sanctions because the world has much larger crude oil stocks than it did in 2012.

"We are not short of oil," he said.

Jeff Brown, president of energy consultant FGE, said new U.S. sanctions would complicate Iranian oil trade finance under which Tehran could attract loans guaranteed by future oil deliveries. (Source: Reuters)

Deterioration of Iran deal could have 'meaningful impact' on oil market next year

President Donald Trump's announcement of a new Iran strategy won't necessarily have an immediate impact on the oil market, but that could change, experts warned on Friday.

The president said on Friday he would not certify the multinational nuclear agreement with Iran. He also pledged to terminate the deal if Congress and U.S. allies do not reach a solution under a plan his administration has put forward.

Benjamin Salisbury, energy policy analyst at FBR Capital Markets, said oil

investors need to be aware of potential risks down the road and not get complacent.

While there has been essentially no risk premium in the market because of excess supply, geopolitical risk will have to start being priced back in as supply and demand start to balance out in the oil market next year, he said in an interview with "Closing Bell."

"The president has made it very clear that he wants to escalate the pressure on Iran. So sometime middle of next year you could see the deal start to

deteriorate and then you could have meaningful impact on oil supplies right when the market is tightening," Salisbury said in an interview with "Closing Bell."

Andy Lipow, president of Lipow Oil Associates, believes Trump's announcement introduces "a degree of geopolitical risk and uncertainty going forward that could increase oil prices."

The 2015 deal allowed Iran to resume exporting oil. The country is currently exporting about 2.3 million barrels a day, but if there were renewed sanctions it could cut off that supply,

"The world simply can't afford to see that lost supply because we can't make it up from the other OPEC and non-OPEC producers," he told "Closing Bell."

And while there has been an oil glut, it has been getting "smaller and smaller," Lipow pointed out.

"The last place that we have an excess supply of oil is actually in the U.S. and you saw week ago we exported record amounts of that oil and that trend's going to continue for the rest of this year," he said. (Source: CNBC)

China expects double digits trade gains for 2017

Growth of China's imports and exports is expected to see double-digit gains this year, thanks to rising demand as a result of improvement in the domestic and global economies, the General Administration of Customs said.

The country's foreign trade volume jumped by 16.6 percent year-on-year to 20.29 trillion yuan (\$3.08 trillion) in the first three quarters of this year, according to customs data released on Friday.

GAC spokesman Huang Songping said unstable and uncertain elements may affect the country's foreign trade development, but new growth drivers are taking the place of old ones and steady progress is being made in the structural adjustment, thus supporting sta-

ble growth of foreign trade.

"The situation will remain positive if the current conditions remain unchanged by the end of this year," Huang said at a news conference.

The latest trade figures and Huang's positive forecast of the country's trade growth prospects this year have helped ease concerns that it is struggling to maintain stable trade growth this year.

Exports grew by 12.4 percent year-on-year to 11.16 trillion yuan in the January-September period, while imports surged by 22.3 percent to 9.13 trillion yuan.

Trade surplus shrank by 17.7 percent from the same period a year earlier to 2.03 trillion yuan.

Huang said rising demand for goods in overseas markets with economic recovery and infrastructure projects, trade of high-tech products, and development of the Belt and Road Initiative will build a solid foundation for China's foreign trade this year.

"It has been a year since global trade recovered, and it has passed its peak moment," said Zhang Yongjun, a researcher at the China Center for International Economic Exchanges in Beijing.

Meanwhile, foreign direct investment to China rose by 1.6 percent year-on-year between January and September to 618.57 billion yuan, the Ministry of Commerce announced on Friday. (Source: China Daily)

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The Queen has seen 12 U.S. presidents come and go during her reign – but she's never seen anything like Trump

By Janet Street-Porter

Next month, the Queen will watch the Remembrance Ceremony from a balcony alongside her husband – a solemn task she's only missed six times during her 65-year reign. On those occasions she was either pregnant or travelling – this time, it is an acknowledgement that – at 91 – she doesn't relish the physical strain.

Nevertheless, this pensioner is still remarkably spry – attending a party at the Army and Navy Club this week with her daughter, she laughed and joked with women who (like her) had served in the Territorial Army during the Second World War. Since her husband announced his retirement this year, the Queen is handing over her more demanding commitments to younger members of the family – Prince Charles will take her place at the Cenotaph, and both Harry and William are undertaking more foreign tours.

Whatever you think of the monarchy, there's no denying her appetite for work and unstinting dedication to her job. When I received my CBE from Her Majesty last year, she talked to hundreds of guests, standing for almost two hours. I present a live television show twice a week and that can sometimes seem exhausting – so how the Queen can offer each person undivided attention for what is a very special moment in their lives is remarkable. No wonder that when the job is done, she goes upstairs, takes her shoes off, and eats lunch off a tray listening to the Archers.

Prince Harry says that he and his brother want to “modernize” the monarchy, but it's the traditional aspects of the Crown – the ceremonies, marches and processions, the balcony waving, medals and state banquets – that give the monarchy its mystique. Not chats on Gardener's Question Time, where an innocent remark about aircraft noise just highlights that a monarch doesn't experience the stresses and strains of our frenetic world. The Queen's appeal lies in her dependability, her resistance to unnecessary change, her frugality.

Photographs of her sitting room at Sandringham reveal an unchanging way of life – she's clung to the same chairs and clunky old heaters for decades. Well-loved photos of family and friends cover every surface, and carefully arranged books (probably unread) line the shelves. The television and the comfy foot stools are not making any fashion statements – an interior that's replicated all over middle England. It would be hard to imagine a world more different to the shiny gold-coated tat that sums up the Donald Trump signature style.

■ Greatest challenges

Trump's orange complexion and his strange hair all seem perfectly normal in the brash glittering world of Mar-a-Lago or Trump Tower. Not for him a tweedy stool or a three-bar electric fire. Now, the Queen faces one of her greatest challenges, at the very moment she'd be perfectly entitled to take more time off and tune into the afternoon racing from Sandown Park.

She has been tricked (by our feeble Prime Minister) into meeting a man who sums everything she must find repellent – a testy, thin-skinned narcissist, king of the vulgar tweet, a chap whose close advisor described as “a moron”. A fellow who – like Harvey Weinstein – is well known for looking at women as if they are toys to grope and play with – even when they are married to a head of state.

In Paris, Brigitte Macron received the full Trump ogle of approval, her face frozen into a smile that said a thousand words. Trump worked the same “charm” on Ms May on her first visit to Washington, demanding a state visit so that he could meet the Queen. The Prime Minister – hoping to secure beneficial trade deals – offered him one. Cue outrage back home – and Speaker John Bercow jumped in to declare Trump would not be allowed to address MPs.

Trump is said to have asked for a carriage ride down the Mall, and a round of golf at Balmoral. Melania and Ivanka would have been planning extensive additions to their wardrobes, as well as lessons in how to curtsy in five-inch Louboutin heels.

■ Aggressive stance

Now, Trump's visit is undergoing a rethink – he plans to visit Europe next spring to bolster support for his aggressive stance on Iran and North Korea, and could slot in a trip to London. But will it still be a state visit? The Queen would have to formally invite the President – and there was no mention of it in her speech at the opening of Parliament last month.

Trump, like many Americans, is not a great traveler – he's slagged off Camp David, preferring to spend his weekends in his own resort in Florida, where he can entertain world leaders whilst showing off his prowess on the putting green, eat basic food and wear casual clothes. He has visited Italy and Germany, but hates stairs and likes to be ferried around in a buggy. He's not great on aircraft steps either, frequently pushing Melania in and out of shot, waving like a Thunderbirds puppet.

In Paris, the Trumps posed for a staged photo-opportunity at a bizarre dinner half way up the Eiffel Tower. In London, there will be security risks and massive protests. Recently, Trump's bellicose tweets about the “rocket man” running Korea and threats to shut down NBC News hint at a man whose grip on reality is gradually becoming more tenuous. As for a trade deal, Trump is threatening thousands of jobs in our aircraft industry, imposing tariffs that make our products ludicrously expensive, all to protect Boeing aviation. In order to save face, the UK trip is being billed as a “working visit”, and may only include a brief audience with the Queen.

She may want to invest in some very thick elbow length gloves, and impose a ban on selfies.

(Source: Independent)

It would be hard to imagine a world more different to the monarchy than the shiny gold-coated tat that sums up the Donald's signature style

World should support Palestinian consensus government

TEHRAN (FNA) — On Thursday in Cairo, officials from both Hamas and Fatah signed the long-anticipated agreement to reform the Palestinian Authority, meaning the PA will retake control over the Gaza Strip, and the Gaza and West Bank security forces will merge. The deal is intended to allow for new elections across Palestine for the first time since 2006. In that election, Hamas won a majority of seats. Fatah refused to join the government, and the two sides were at odds until 2007, when they split outright.

There have been talks of unity deals in the past, but none had progressed nearly this far. Putting the Palestinian Authority under both de jure and de facto control of the Gaza Strip is likely to compel major changes in Israel's illegal blockade.

■ The new unity government

For the start, the new unity government has a lot catching up to do. For example, it could help the Palestinians to exert more pressure on the usurper regime of Israel to stop building new illegal settlement units on the occupied territories. To this end, the agreement must be supported by the United Nations and the European Union.

That the United States cannot be part of this international support drive is beyond dispute. Just like Tel Aviv, the political class in Washington will never support any kind of unity between the Palestinians. To substantiate, it suffices to state that the United States has formally notified the UN's world heritage body UNESCO that it is withdrawing its membership of the organization citing “continuing anti-Israel bias.” The announcement by the Trump administration was followed a few hours later by news that Israel was also planning to quit the financially struggling cultural and educational agency.



Saleh al-Aruri of Hamas and Fatah's Azam al-Ahmad sign a reconciliation deal in Cairo on October 12, 2017.

Putting the Palestinian Authority under both de jure and de facto control of the Gaza Strip is likely to compel major changes in Israel's illegal blockade.

The body is best known for its world heritage listings of outstanding cultural and natural sites but has often drawn the ire of Israel and the Trump administration for a series of decisions, including the listing of Hebron, a city in the southern part of the occupied Palestinian territories, as a Palestinian world heritage site.

Nor is that all. Back in 2011, the U.S. also cancelled its budget contribution to UNESCO in protest against the admission of Palestine as a full member. The U.S. withdrawal was proof that the UN resolutions against

Israel would have consequences.

Moreover, though Israel has been building at a rapid pace. The current rate of illegal expansion means Israel seeks a record year of settlement expansion. This is in no small part because President Trump is seen as very accommodating to the construction. Trump has at times criticized the expansions, and the U.S. and Israel were briefly in talks earlier this year on an understanding on the settlement. Israel rejected all such proposals, however, and just went back to building.

■ Palestinian reconciliation deal

That said, it is still in the interest of the long-suffering people of Palestine and of a legitimate and representative government for the world community to support the intra-Palestinian reconciliation deal – even though Netanyahu has warned that Tel Aviv would never negotiate with any government backed by Hamas, much less bet on peace or stop building illegal settlement units.

For now, though, the status quo may seem politically safer for Israel in the short term but it cannot deliver any long term gains. Leadership is about making possible what is necessary, and peace is necessary in the region. Peace and security for the Palestinians are moral imperatives for the international community.

So while the new government will help reunify Palestinians, it will not do much to restart the broken up peace talks that failed because of Israeli overstretching and changing the goal posts. Netanyahu's attempts to push Palestinians to recognize the Jewishness of Israel has been the most obvious sign that he is not ready to make peace despite the verbal words. The U.S. also needs to understand that it can't just allow the conflict to go on while it supports one side financially and politically yet tries to claim that the parties have to find a solution. The U.S. needs to have a much more effective strategy.

For the Palestinians the only way ahead is unity. Both sides need to appear as serious leaders trying to address their public opinions and their lawful cause for freedom and self-determination. In between, President Abbas also needs to improve his immune system against the inevitable incoming fire from Israel and the United States.

Trump alone can order a nuclear strike. Congress can change that.

The broad debate over President Trump's fitness for the difficult and demanding office he holds has recently been reframed in a more pointed and urgent way: Does he understand, and can he responsibly manage, the most destructive nuclear arsenal on earth?

The question arises for several reasons. He has threatened to “totally destroy” North Korea. He has reportedly pressed for a massive buildup in the American nuclear arsenal, which already contains too many – 4,000 – warheads. And soon he will decide whether to sustain or set a course to possibly unravel the immensely important Iran nuclear deal.

Doubts about his competency were reinforced last week by Senator Bob Corker, who charged that Mr. Trump was treating his office like “a reality show” with reckless threats that could set the nation “on the path to World War III.” Corker, a Republican from Tennessee, says he is relying on Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and John Kelly, the White House chief of staff, to help “separate our country from chaos.” That is a searing indictment, and Corker is no garden-variety legislator; as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, he is a respected, and largely responsible, voice on national security issues.

Further, NBC News now reports that Tillerson judged Trump a “moron” after a July 20 meeting in which Trump, ap-



Congress has been sufficiently alarmed to consider legislation that would bar the president from launching a first nuclear strike without a declaration of war by Congress.

parently distressed that the arsenal had declined since the Cold War, said he wanted a nearly tenfold increase in weapons.

Trump's policy pronouncements during the campaign betrayed either profound ignorance or dangerous nonchalance: At one point he wondered why America

had nuclear weapons if it didn't use them; at another he suggested that Japan and South Korea, which have long lived under the American security umbrella, should develop their own nuclear weapons. But nothing he said has been quite as unsettling as his recent tweetstorms about North Korea, his warnings of “fire and fury” and his quip about “the calm before the storm.”

Many have hoped, and still hope, that Trump's aggressive posture is mostly theater, designed to slake his thirst for attention, keep adversaries off guard and force changes in their behavior by words alone. But there is no underlying strategy to his loose talk, and whatever he means by it, Congress has been sufficiently alarmed to consider legislation that would bar the president from launching a first nuclear strike without a declaration of war by Congress. It wouldn't take away the president's ability to defend the country.

That's a sound idea, and could be made stronger with a requirement that the secretaries of defense and state also approve any such decision. As things stand now, the Atomic Energy Act of 1946, passed when there was more concern about trigger-happy generals than elected civilian leaders, gives the president sole control. He could unleash the apocalyptic force of the American nuclear arsenal by his word alone, and within minutes.

(Source: The NYT)

International mediation is not the answer in Catalonia



By Ana Palacio

Former Spanish foreign minister

Since Catalonia's referendum on independence on October 1, regional leaders and their sympathizers have called repeatedly for international mediation between the Catalan and Spanish governments. But external mediation would pose a severe threat to democracy and the rule of law – and not only in Spain.

On the evening of October 10, Catalonia's separatist president, Carles Puigdemont, stood before the regional parliament to deliver what was widely expected to be a unilateral declaration of independence. But he ended up offering a fudge. Despite asserting “the mandate that Catalonia become an independent state in the form of a republic,” he proposed “suspending the effects of the declaration of independence to undertake talks in the coming weeks.”

The performance left more questions than answers, but that was precisely the point. Puigdemont was not addressing anti-independence protesters on the streets of Barcelona, or Spanish citizens more broadly. He was speaking to the international community. Like his fellow Catalan separatists, Puigdemont knows that the movement's only chance of moving forward lies in internationalization.

Since the Catalan regional government held an illegal referendum on independence on October 1, its separatist leaders and their sympathizers have called repeatedly for international mediation in their standoff with the Spanish government. The goal, exemplified by Puigdemont in his speech, is to make Catalonia appear unanimous, in order to get the international community on its side.

The call for dialogue – such a sleek and simple request, fitting neatly into a 140-character tweet – resonates with much of the international media and the broader nebula known as the “international community.” International doyens, including former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his fellow Nobel Peace Prize laureate Desmond Tutu, have also called for dialogue. In the face of chaos and confusion, what could be wrong with talking?

■ A legal framework

The answer, of course, is nothing. Democracy relies fundamentally on dialogue. At its core, a democratic system is simply a legal framework – underpinned by a constitution – that facilitates discussion and dispute resolution. It is not a static model. If there is a problem with the framework, the constitution can be changed, though this cannot be done frivolously. Democracy is hard work. It requires persuasion, alliances, and compromise. But, so long as society believes in it, it works.

It is when dialogue is pushed beyond the system's constitutional bounds that the

problem arises. There is no need to engage in the give and take of democracy if one can simply circumvent its ground rules. And, with all due respect for Annan and Tutu, this is what external mediation would amount to – and it would threaten to cripple Spanish democracy.

That is why the world – and especially Europe – must resist Catalan separatists' calls for international mediation. Nothing less than the future of the rule of law and constitutional democracy in Spain – and elsewhere – depends on it.

What is happening in Catalonia is a problem for the Spanish nation and, in particular, for a divided Catalan society. And, while Spain is a relatively young democracy, it is also a mature one, having endured many challenges in the 42 years since the death of the dictator Francisco Franco. We should let its robust and vibrant system work.

The good news is that, so far, the European Union and its member states have taken precisely this stance. French President Emmanuel Macron rejected European intervention, declaring that it would “give reason to those who do not respect the rule of law.”

■ The European level

At the European level, European Council President Donald Tusk, despite some ambiguous statements on the topic, urged Puigdemont to “respect the constitutional order.” European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans

declared that the Catalan regional authorities had “chosen to ignore the law,” and that if one of the three pillars of European societies – “democracy, respect for the rule of law, and human rights” – is removed, “the others will fall, too.”

But the pressure to internationalize – or, specifically, to “Europeanize” – the crisis will continue. The Catalan separatist leaders are smart and media-savvy. They know that scenes of violence, or even a prolonged stalemate, would weaken European leaders' resolve not to get involved. They also know that in an increasingly intergovernmental EU, some member states would not necessarily consider the prospect of a weakened Spain to be a negative outcome.

European leaders must not succumb to this temptation. The EU is, at its core, a construction of law. Facilitating the erosion of the rule of law and democracy should be anathema to its leaders. It should also be abhorrent to member states, which continue to guard their sovereignty and prerogatives.

More broadly, if democracy in Spain, in the heart of Western Europe, can be weakened so fundamentally, so can democracy everywhere. If, however, Spain is given the space to work through the challenge it faces, the rule of law will be reinvigorated. For those who proclaim themselves to be champions of liberal democracy, short-circuiting that possibility is as irresponsible as it is hypocritical.

(Source: project-syndicate.org)

Senate and JCPOA riddle

By Yunes Alizadeh

TEHRAN — John McCain and Lindsay Graham are the two senators who opposed the nuclear deal with Iran from the outset and voiced their opposition during the Congressional vote in 2015. However, these two senators, whose extremist positions against Iran have always been considered by the American media, are now confused about the aggressive and unwise strategy of Trump towards the Nuclear Deal. On the one hand, they can't deny their opposition to the outcome, and on the other hand, they feel threatened by the consequences of adopting the current strategy of Trump against the nuclear deal with Iran.

John McCain has stated in one of his most recent positions on Iran:

"I believe that Iran should be punished for its actions by imposing new sanctions on its ballistic missile program and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, imposing sanctions against Iranians accused of violating human rights and intensifying the sanctions applied on arms embargoes in Tehran!"

McCain has tried not to take a clear stand in refusing or confirming the current approach by Trump towards JCPOA. The 81-year-old, Arizona senator, declared that the Congress is willing to work with Trump to resume a new deal considering the nuclear programs of Iran. However, he has not yet explicitly stated his comments on the formal breach of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the return of nuclear sanctions against Iran.

This confusion is also seen in Lindsey Graham's behavior, another extremist senator. Graham, 62, is from South Carolina. Lindsey Graham is also among the main proponents of Iran's sanctions, and subsequently the opposition to the nuclear deal in the Senate. Lindsey Graham believes that instead of walking out of JCPOA, the U.S. should try to have reforms in the content of the nuclear deal with Iran. This is despite the fact that the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran have resolutely and correctly stated that there can't be any more negotiations



over a new nuclear deal.

Sen. Lindsey Graham said that Trump administration should revisit Iran nuclear agreement to toughen its provisions rather than abandon it as Trump pledged on the 2016 presidential campaign trail.

"They can be in technical compliance with their nuclear program, but to give them a bunch of money and to not make them change their destabilizing behavior is a huge mistake. But I don't want to abandon the nuclear part of it unless we have a reason to because I know the world is invested in this deal."

It should be noted that John McCain and Lindsey Graham are two influential senators in the United States Senate, and some other Senate Republican members also follow their approach. Both McCain and Graham are worried about the presence of Trump at the White House. The irrational, emotional, and unreasonable conduct of the President of the United States has made even the most extremist senators of the country, such as McCain and Graham, worried. They find themselves in a place where they see absolutely no way to justify and accompany Trump's stances. Undoubtedly, over the course of months or even weeks, we will see an escalation of internal controversy

among the Republicans over Trump's methods and positions, including his strategy towards the nuclear deal with Iran.

On the other hand, Tom Cotton, the young senator from Arkansas is trying to play a prominent role in the U.S. Congress in recent days. About two years ago, when a nuclear deal between Iran and the P1 + 5 was ratified by both parties, Tom Cotton was struggling to prevent the approve of the agreement in the Senate, but eventually, with 42 Democratic Senators voting, he didn't succeed and his attempts were all useless. Subsequently, Tom Cotton was one of the main supporters of the cancellation of the Nuclear Deal and the resumption of sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran. Following the presence of Donald Trump in the 2016 presidential campaigns, Cotton also declared his agreement with Trump's negative approach towards JCPOA.

Tom Cotton is now trying to use this opportunity to maneuver politically in the United States, with the Congress becoming more prominent in its pursuit of the nuclear issues of Iran. Cotton could be called the youngest and at the same time, the hardest opponent of the Nuclear

Deal in the U.S. Senate. This 40-year-old senator is from the state of Arkansas, USA. In one of his most recent positions, Tom Cotton has called for dissent opponents within Trump's administration to resign or to align with the U.S. President's strategy to oppose the nuclear deal.

These statements by Cotton have raised a lot of controversy in the U.S. media atmosphere. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Secretary of Defense James Mattis have been the main opponents of Tom Cotton in this regard. It has to be emphasized that Tom Cotton's negative positions towards JCPOA have always been backed by AIPAC lobbyists, and the opponents of the nuclear deal with Iran have opened a special account on their lobbying in the Senate. As it can be seen, in recent U.S. political atmosphere, even the closest to Donald Trump is against the United States walking away from JCPOA. The U.S. Defense Secretary and Secretary of State, along with Trump's National Security Advisor, are among these people. Another interesting point is the support of Nicky Haley, the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, of Cotton's remarks against Tillerson and Mattis. This suggests that the rivalry in the Republican camp has reached its peak in terms of how to face with JCPOA and the nuclear deal with Iran.

Another point that needs to be addressed in this regard is the attempt by Tom Cotton to appear in the CIA (as the head of this organization). Recently, some Zionist media outlets have announced Tom Cotton's election as the director of the CIA. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Minister of War Avigdor Lieberman are among those who support the presence of Cotton at the top of the U.S. security equation. What is certain is that Tom Cotton has called on the Zionist authorities to do their best to realize this. Therefore, Tom Cotton is seeking to bring Netanyahu's satisfaction and the authorities of the Zionist regime by adopting radical positions over the nuclear deal with Iran. However, the positions of U.S. President Donald Trump are not yet clear on this issue (appointing Cotton as CIA director).

French protest against Macron economic reform

By Saeed Sobhani

TEHRAN — Emmanuel Macron has a hard time ahead. The protest of French workers to Macron's economic reforms continues. The widespread recent strike in France showed that Macron's opponents in France had a lot of power in front of the Elysées Palace. Hence, in the coming months, we will see an intensification of trade union opposition with the French President's economic reforms. Although these protests were foreseeable, few believed that the protests would be widely held.

As The Telegraph reported, France's nine main unions united for the first time in a decade in public sector protests against President Emmanuel Macron's plans to freeze pay and shed 120,000 state workers in five years.

Thirty per cent of flights were cancelled from French airports and many schools shut, yet in a boost to Mr Macron's reform drive, turnout was relatively low; police said 209,000 people from among France's 5.4 million public workers took to the streets around France, while unions said it was double the number.

The education ministry said less than a fifth of the country's teachers had gone on strike and public transport was running more or less normally.

There were a few sporadic clashes between protesters in Paris and police, who made eight arrests. The protests were the fourth round of demonstrations in France since September aimed at forcing France's 39-year-old centrist head of state to reverse reforms, which unions called a "deep disappointment".

"In the space of a few weeks, Macron has gone from being Jupiter to Thatcher without any warning," said Pierre-Marie Ganozzi from the FSU, France's biggest state sector union in the southern *Bouche-du-Rhône* département.

The French president's plans to water down a wealth tax have seen the Left dub him "president of the rich". He has also faced accusations from opponents and the unions of treating workers with contempt after he was recorded describing a group of workers at a struggling factory as "wreaking havoc".

The outburst came weeks after he blasted opponents of reform as "slackers".

As crowds gathered near Paris's *Place de la République*, one placard read "Slackers of the world unite", while another featured portraits of Mr Macron, his prime minister and finance minister reading: "The ones wreaking havoc".

But the movement has so far not reached the scale seen as necessary to force the government into major U-turns, analysts say. On Monday, Edouard Philippe, the prime minister, insisted the government had no plans to change course, while assuring public sector workers they were "not at all unappreciated".

The government has announced plans to cut



spending by €16 billion (£14.3bn) next year via measures that include freezing civil servants' pay and cutting nearly 1,600 public jobs - the first of 120,000 posts to go by 2022. State sector workers are angered at his plans to reduce sick leave compensation by making the first day unpaid. He has also irked regional governments who have seen their funding from Paris cut by €450 million.

Thierry Arnaud, political editor at BFM TV, pointed out that despite appearances, the unions remained highly divided and there was no sign for now of any rising tide of discontent. Frederic Dabi of the Ifop polling agency said that unless rolling strikes ensued or young people angered by cuts to student housing subsidies took to the streets, the coast appeared relatively clear for the president.

"What is positive for Emmanuel Macron is that he is seen as facing down the street and implementing his programme," he said.

In any case, recent strikes in France have put a hard time on the authorities. Macron is now well aware that he will not have a quiet day at Elysee Palace. If he fails to convince his country's public opinion about this, he will face a lot of crises. In this case, he may not be able to win the presidential election in 2022. Just as happened to Sarkozy and Hollande.

An overview of recent polls in France can be particularly useful.

The poll, conducted by Ifop for newspaper *Le Journal du Dimanche* (JDD), showed Macron's "dissatisfaction rating" declining to 53 percent in September, from 57 percent in August. Some 45 percent expressed satisfaction with the centrist leader - up from 40 percent in August.

The poll of 1,989 people was carried out on Sept. 15-23. Macron's approval ratings have dropped sharply in opinion polls since his election in May, dragged down by labor reforms and planned budget cuts, including a decrease in housing aid for students. The new poll comes as French far-left opposition party leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon drew tens of thousands to a rally on Saturday against Macron's labor reforms, aiming to reinforce his credentials as Macron's strongest political opponent.

Anyway, protests in France could reduce the popularity of the country's president. In this case, Macron can not win the presidential election of 2022. Under such conditions, the extreme left and right parties will have a better chance of power.

John Lloyd in Reuters reported that Protestors against President Emmanuel Macron's proposed liberalization of French labor laws were on the streets of the country's cities on Tuesday. The marchers, chanting slogans and brandishing placards, halted traffic as they moved slowly through the streets. A fringe of anarchists broke windows; police responded by firing tear gas. But this was no rerun of the mass marches of past years, let alone the semi-revolutionary eruptions of 1968.

As Reuters reported, France's second-largest union, the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT) was the only one of the three main workers' organizations that took part. Another protest, this one organized by the far-left *France Insoumise* (France Unbowed) party is scheduled for Sept. 23. This week's marching columns numbered, nationwide, in the few hundred thousand rather than the many millions hoped for - the police claimed 223,000, the organizers 400,000. There was little effect on production, services or transport.

It was neither victory nor defeat for either side. Instead, Macron's changes to the vast labor code - hiring and firing will be easier, some workplace issues will be negotiated at company level - hang in the balance. The CGT, the left and the far-right *National Front* all oppose them, but Macron and his government have a solid, if inexperienced, majority in the Assembly.

More than his predecessors who tried and failed to liberalize France's labor market - the center-right Nicolas Sarkozy and the center-left Francois Hollande - Macron has pinned the credibility of his presidency on systemic, cultural change, a deliberate jolting of French society and economy out of the rut into which he believes it has fallen. He is contemptuous of both former presidents (he knew Hollande well, having been both his advisor and Finance Minister), believing them to have given up too soon and too easily. When Macron spoke, as he did earlier this month, of "slackers," he said when challenged that he meant those who retreated from the necessary surgery on France's body politic. The marchers, however, seized on the word and put it on their placards: "Macron, the slackers will kick you out," read one.

The slackers have a point. Indeed, they have several. Labor productivity in France is relatively good, only a little behind that of the United States and the highest of Europe's major economies. When French workers work, they work well.

Finally, the French president faces public protests in the face of economic reforms, and on the other hand, he must be careful about the movements of the far right - left. Meanwhile Macron's economic policies are opposed to the two right-wing (conservatives) and left-wing (socialists) parties.

Trump remains unescorted in anti-JCPOA moves



Secondly, Trump delivered a speech on the occasion of a dispute among US officials and even in the Republican camp about the president's attempt to deal with the nuclear deal. The controversy was so much that Trump, in part of his remarks, warned the Congress about consequences of non-cooperation over tackling deficiencies of the JCPOA.

Undoubtedly, at a time when the US national security advisor and the US defense and foreign ministers are opposed to Trump's strategy towards the nuclear deal, American senators and subsequent members of the House of Representatives are bound to become confused. The recent week controversy between Trump and the Republican Senator Bob Corker, who is responsible for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, confirms the same issue.

The third point is that the President of the United States, who had virtually failed to achieve his goal of convincing Washington's partners to modify the JCPOA during his recent UNGA speech, this time warned the European authorities in his Friday remarks. Trump's warning on unilateral withdrawal from the nuclear deal can also be analyzed in the same vein.

Although some European partners of Washington have shown faint green lights on the issue, Trump still has not achieved his ultimate goal, which is absolute co-sponsorship of the European Troika on reforming the JCPOA.

The last but not the least matter is that words of Donald Trump were replete with anger and lacked convincing or legal propositions. He repeated the same banal remarks of other American officials on Iran. Trump's speech on the nuclear deal had more of media and promotional nature than a strategic one.

Anger and rage were the main focus of Trump's words in opposing the Islamic Republic of Iran and the JCPOA. Donald Trump's annoyances with Iran, the Congress, European Allies and even with his own foreign and defense minister were all manifest and crystal clear through Friday speech the much-hated US president.

Obviously, any action by the United States, including the Congress and the White House and the Treasury, in deforming the N-deal will mean Washington's withdrawal from the international agreement; an issue that will preserve Islamic Republic of Iran's right for counter measures.

Almost half of Germans, French, Poles think U.S. interferes in foreign elections

SPUTNIK — The majority of the educated European public believe that the US exerts its influence over elections in other countries, according to Sputnik's latest public poll, conducted by the leading French pollster Ifop.

Sputnik asked French pollster Ifop (French Institute of Public Opinion), a renowned international market researcher that has been gathering public opinion for large companies and political parties worldwide since 1938, to discover what Europeans think about the issue of interference in foreign elections in the wake of the accusations of Russia's alleged meddling in other countries.

Russia has been accused by the US of interfering in foreign parliamentary and presidential elections, with the allegations leading to a new round of anti-Russian sanctions levied by Washington.

Among the suggested countries were the US, Russia and the EU bloc, other options suggested another country or none.

One-third of the UK residents think it is the US which exerts influence on the elections in other countries. However the percentage is significantly higher in Germany and France (over 40%). Interestingly, both countries held elections this year.

In Poland, which voted in parliamentary and presidential elections in 2015, 43% also point their suspicions towards the US.

Only 21% of the UK residents and less than 30% of continental Europeans, however, believe that Russia has an influence on the voting in other countries.

The number of those who think that the EU interferes in the elections of other countries is almost twice as high in the UK (18%), than in France, Germany or Poland.

Age seemed to have an important influence on the answers, with the tech-savvy under 35's showing less faith in the impartiality of the US political machine than the older generation.

Taking into account the respondents' existing political preferences, it's the left wingers who have the strongest belief that the US meddles in other countries' elections, with supporters of the *National Front* and the *Democratic Movement* party less certain.

In Poland, it is mainly the political right (44%) and centrists (43%) who blame the US, while 38% of the left share this opinion.

As for Germany, 46% of Eastern Germans support the idea that the US interferes, versus 39% of the Western Germans polled. Meanwhile, 31% of Westerners think Russia interferes in foreign elections, while only 18% in Eastern Germany share this sentiment.

In the UK, people residing outside the capital think the US interferes more, while about 30% of Londoners support this point of view.

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Reasons apple cider vinegar weight loss works

By Tina Donvito

Apple cider vinegar helps to control blood sugar

There are more than 50 ways to lose weight without a lick of exercise—and one may be adding apple cider vinegar (ACV) to your diet. How? An apple cider vinegar weight-loss plan affects how blood sugar is regulated, according to a study by Carol Johnston, PhD, at Arizona State University. "Her research provides evidence that drinking vinegar before eating actually led to a decrease in change of blood glucose post meals," says Tanya Zuckerbrot MS, RD, New York City-based registered dietitian, best-selling author, and founder of The F-Factor Diet. "Drinking apple cider vinegar before a carbohydrate-filled meal can reduce blood sugar spikes that would usually occur after eating."

ACV affects how food is digested

Researchers theorize that apple cider vinegar for weight loss helps achieve this blood-sugar regulation in a few different ways. "Carol Johnston believes the acetic acid in the vinegar blocks disaccharidases, enzymes that break down starches for digestion, from being absorbed into the bloodstream," Zuckerbrot says. "If the disaccharides from the carbohydrates we eat cannot be digested then we avoid the rapid increase of our blood sugar level, which is followed by a subsequent drop." Healthy diets often control blood sugar to keep our eating patterns more regular. But watch out for these three fat diets that could raise your risk of diabetes.

ACV makes you feel full

Don't fall for these sneaky ways you get tricked into overeating. One way to fight back is with ACV, which can also give a feeling of fullness after a meal and keep you from reaching for that evening snack a couple of hours later. "A small Swedish study found when individuals consumed vinegar with a meal, they reported feeling a higher level of satiety after eating than those who did not consume vinegar," says registered dietitian Erin Palinski-Wade, RD, CDE, author of *Belly Fat Diet For Dummies*. "Although this study was conducted on only a small number of individuals, it may give insight into how the consumption of vinegar may help to promote a healthy body weight by reducing caloric intake."

ACV may control appetite

Eating this secret food can stop your junk food cravings for good—but ACV can help too. "Acetic acid, the main component of vinegar, has been promoted as a natural appetite



suppressant," Zuckerbrot says, which has been shown in research from the U.K. Blood sugar drops leave us craving sugar to replace it, and instead, the acetic acid helps keep it steady. "When blood sugar levels are more evenly maintained, cravings for sugar and unhealthy foods are minimized or not experienced," she says. One way apple cider vinegar for weight loss works is to help us avoid binging later on.

ACV affects insulin regulation

You should be eating bread at the end of your meal for the same reason you should start it with apple cider vinegar—to lower insulin levels. "It appears from the results of one small study in the *American Diabetes Association journal Diabetes Care* that consuming vinegar

because blood glucose control is a main concern for diabetes management, and it can affect insulin sensitivity," Zuckerbrot says. But, be careful if you're on meds for your condition. "Since vinegar may reduce blood glucose levels after meals, those taking medications to reduce them, such as insulin, should carefully monitor their readings and response to prevent hypoglycemic episodes," Palinski-Wade says.

ACV may help you lose fat

So apple cider vinegar may work to regulate blood sugar, appetite, insulin and cravings, but it can actually melt pounds? Some research suggests it does. "In 2009 a double-blind, placebo-controlled study was done investigating the effects of apple cider vinegar intake

Apple cider vinegar has a slightly higher mineral and vitamin content. Since it is made from apple it also retains its natural antioxidants, fruit polyphenols, and essential nutrients necessary for normal body function like digestion and metabolism.

with a carbohydrate-rich meal may improve insulin sensitivity directly after the meal in those with insulin resistance or who have been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes," Palinski-Wade says. In addition, "an improvement in insulin regulation in the body may be beneficial for weight management."

ACV is helpful for diabetics

You can potentially reverse type 2 diabetes if you drop pounds, and an apple cider vinegar weight-loss plan can help you do that. "Apple cider vinegar may be particularly useful for people with diabetes

on body weight and abdominal fat in 175 obese Japanese subjects," Zuckerbrot says. "This was the first study to show that continuous vinegar intake reduces body weight, BMI, and body fat mass." She says acetic acid may help fat breakdown. But more research is needed to replicate the study's findings and identify exactly how ACV caused the weight loss. Check out the scientific reason why belly fat is so hard to ditch.

ACV may improve metabolism

We all want to know the ways to get the metabolism of a 25-year-old, and

apple cider vinegar may be one of them. "Although this has not been proven in human studies, one animal study from Japan found consuming vinegar may increase the production of an enzyme responsible for fat burning," Palinski-Wade says. But again, more research is needed in this area.

Why ACV is different from other vinegars

Eating an apple a day may be one of many old-time remedies we need to bring back—and likewise, apple cider vinegar weight loss works through its unique properties. "In comparison to other vinegars, apple cider vinegar has a slightly higher mineral and vitamin content," Zuckerbrot says. "Since it is made from apple it also retains its natural antioxidants, fruit polyphenols, and essential nutrients necessary for normal body function like digestion and metabolism." In addition, ACV contains pectin, found naturally in apples. "Pectin is known to increase satiety, which aids in weight loss," she says. You can choose filtered or unfiltered—unfiltered is often unpasteurized and contains the "mother," leftover bacteria from the fermentation process, which some say has potent medicinal properties. But Zuckerbrot says to use whichever type you prefer.

The benefits of apple cider vinegar go beyond weight loss, and are a healthy addition to any meal—they can even help tummy troubles. "One to two tablespoons of vinegar may be diluted into eight ounces of water or added into a marinade, salad dressing, or soup," Palinski-Wade says. Zuckerbrot says you can also use it in smoothies, a homemade brine for pickles, or DIY BBQ sauce. "Johnston [the researcher from Arizona State] suggests drinking apple cider vinegar on an empty stomach at the beginning of your meal to reduce insulin and glucose spikes," she says. Just don't drink it straight—the acid can damage your tooth enamel and throat.

Don't use ACV as an excuse

As with all weight-loss tips, you can't rely solely on one thing to make the pounds drop—and using ACV as a reason not to take other measures to get healthy will backfire. "Apple cider vinegar is not a magic eraser! Just because apple cider vinegar has many diverse health benefits, it does not negate the negative health effects of unhealthy foods, nor are its weight-loss benefits potent enough to simply counteract caloric intake," Zuckerbrot says. "While it can certainly aid in weight loss, it does not actually cause weight loss."

(Source: rd.com)

Here are the top 10 ways to get rid of a headache fast

1. Water

If the cause of your headache is dehydration, you can easily get relief from the pain by rehydrating your body.

- Simply drink a glass of water at the first sign of a headache and continue taking small sips throughout the day.

- Along with water, you can have sports drinks. The electrolytes present in sports drinks can treat headaches caused by tension and dehydration.

When suffering from a headache, stay away from drinks like alcohol that can dehydrate your body.

2. Ice pack

Placing a cold compress like an ice pack on your forehead will numb the pain, help shrink the blood vessels and improve circulation to the area. This particular remedy works well for headaches due to stress or sinus problems.

- Wrap some ice cubes or crushed ice in a thin towel. Hold it against your forehead for a few minutes. A bag of frozen vegetables can also serve as an icepack. Never apply ice directly on your skin as it can damage the skin.

- Alternatively, apply a cold cloth on your head and temples for 10 minutes and repeat the process for some time until you get relief.

3. Hot water

Applying heat on the back of your neck can relieve headaches caused by stress. Heat relaxes tense muscles, thus alleviating the throbbing pain.

- Simply apply a hot water bag to the back of your neck or take a hot shower directing the water onto the back of your neck.

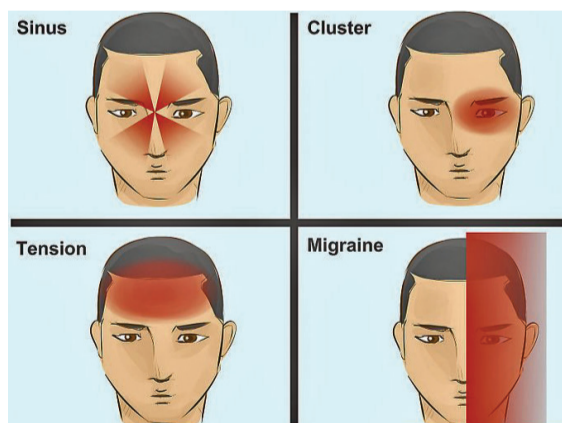
- Another option is to fill a tub with bearable hot water and put your hands in it for 10 to 15 minutes. This will improve blood circulation and thus give you relief from the headache.

- If you suffer from chronic headaches, you can dip your legs in a bucket filled with hot water for 10 minutes before going to bed.

4. Lemon

Lemon is a very effective and powerful ingredient to treat headache because it is refreshing and relaxing. Plus, it helps maintain the acid-alkaline balance in the body.

- Drinking warm water mixed with juice squeezed from one-half of a lemon will reduce the intensity of



a headache. This particular remedy is beneficial for headaches caused by gas in the stomach.

- Another option is to apply lemon crusts, pounded into a paste, on your forehead to immediately relieve pain.

5. Apple

Both apples and apple cider vinegar can be used to fight off a headache. They help restore the acid-alkaline balance in the body. Furthermore, simply the smell of green apples can help reduce migraine headaches.

- When you wake up in the morning with a headache, eat a piece of apple sprinkled with some salt. Then drink some warm water.

- Alternatively, fill a large bowl with steaming hot water and add 3 to 4 tablespoons of apple cider vinegar to it. Hold a towel over your head and take in the steam for 10 to 15 minutes.

- Another option is to add 2 teaspoons of some apple cider vinegar to a glass of water. You can also add a little honey and lemon juice. Drink it 2 or 3 times a day.

6. Peppermint

Peppermint has calming and soothing properties that can help treat headaches.

- You can make an herbal tea by adding 1 teaspoon of dried peppermint to a cup of boiling water. Cover and let it steep for 10 minutes. Strain and add some honey to sweeten it. Sip the tea slowly.

- You can also use peppermint oil to gently massage your temples, jaw and the back of your neck for instant

pain relief.

- In addition, inhaling the soothing aroma of peppermint steam can ease headache as well as accompanying symptoms, such as nausea and vomiting.

7. Ginger

Ginger has anti-inflammatory properties that can help ease headache pain. It also helps relax the blood vessels in the head, reduces swelling in the brain and activates natural opiates in the brain that help lessen the pain.

Simply drink ginger tea up to 3 times a day to reduce inflammation in the body and alleviate headache pain. It is important to start at the onset of the headache so the ginger can act quickly.

8. Eucalyptus oil

Eucalyptus oil has pain-relieving and anti-inflammatory properties. It provides a soothing effect and helps relax tense muscles contributing to a headache.

Simply massage your forehead and temples with eucalyptus oil for 15 to 20 minutes. Along with eucalyptus oil, you can use coconut or almond oil.

9. Cinnamon

Cinnamon is another herb that can effectively treat headaches. This remedy is helpful for headaches caused by exposure to cold air.

- Grind some cinnamon sticks into a powder.
- Add some water to make a thick paste.
- Apply it on your forehead and temples and lie down for 30 minutes.

- Wash it off with lukewarm water.

10. Betel leaves

Betel leaves are known for their analgesic as well as cooling properties, which can effectively alleviate a headache within a few minutes.

- Put 2 to 3 fresh betel leaves in a grinder to make a fine paste. Apply this paste on your forehead and temples. Leave it on for 30 minutes. Soon you will get relief from the intense pain.

- You can also chew 1 or 2 betel leaves to treat a headache.

So, next time you get a headache, just try some of these natural remedies to get rid of it quickly and effectively. However, if you have frequent headaches, consult a doctor

(Source: tophomeremedies.com)

Obesity among all U.S. adults reaches all-time high

By Victoria Larned

The United States will not be escaping the obesity epidemic crisis anytime soon: Nearly 40% of adults and 19% of youth are obese, the highest rate the country has ever seen in all adults, according to research released Friday by the National Center for Health Statistics.

Since 1999, there has been a staggering rise in the prevalence of obesity, particularly in adults, without any "signs of it slowing down," according to the study's lead researcher, Dr. Craig Hales, medical epidemiologist at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Youth obesity rates seem to be more stable in recent years. However, it is "too early to tell" what direction youth obesity prevalence will take. At least four more years of data are required to truly understand the direction, Hales said.

What is "very striking" about this information is that there has been a 30% increase in adult obesity and 33% increase in youth obesity from 1999-2000 data to 2015-16, despite government-focused efforts to address the issue, according to Michael W. Long, assistant professor at the Milken Institute of School Public Health at George Washington University.

"They haven't done enough," said Long, who was not involved in the new report.

When looking at the goals of Healthy People 2020 -- a 2010 government effort to improve the health of Americans, including by reducing obesity -- the crisis looms even larger. The initiative aims to lower obesity rates to 14.5% among youth and 30.5% among adults by 2020.

"I have no expectation at all for Healthy People 2020 to be achieved," Long said.

Hispanic adults had an obesity rate of 47% and Non-Hispanic black adults a rate of 46.8% in 2015-16, the new report showed, with non-Hispanic white adults at 37.9% and Asian adults at 12.7%.

Among youths, Hispanics and non-Hispanic blacks also had higher rates of obesity, at 25.8% and 22% respectively, compared with 14% of non-Hispanic whites and 11% of Asians.

Even though the trend of racial disparities in obesity for youth and adults is not necessarily new, Long says it should remain a primary area of concern. "This equity issue is a serious problem that will lead to disparities in health and life expectancies for the next entire generation of children," he said.

For the study, data were collected from Americans ages 2 to 19 and 20 and older, through mobile physical examination centers across the country, and then measured using body-mass index (BMI), Hales said. Body mass index is the ratio between a person's weight and height; a BMI of 25 to 29.9 is considered overweight, while anything over 30 is obese.

Integrating the research and interventions from all demographic groups can provide a better understanding of how effective efforts have been at fighting childhood obesity, said Dr. Ihuoma Eneli, professor of pediatrics at Ohio State University and director of the Center for Healthy Weight and Nutrition at Nationwide Children's Hospital. She was not involved in the new report.

Long said that improving racial disparities in obesity may involve implementing policies such as raising soda taxes and improving the quality of benefits in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which provides healthy food for families, housing vouchers and home energy assistance.

Efforts to reduce obesity, especially in children, will also come from a change in policy, Eneli said. It is important to start looking at the effectiveness of available health programs at public health institutions, school systems and clinics.

Family plays a role in curbing obesity, as well. Interventions such as avoiding fast food, eating healthy meals together and planning family activities are great ways to support a child with obesity, Eneli suggested.

The most important point is to avoid isolating children in trying to treat their obesity. Planning to be healthy together can put a family on the right path, she said.

(Source: CNN)

Antidepressant side effects: Feeling better, but not quite right?

For managing side effects of these common drugs, a few simple steps may help.

Antidepressant medications can be a godsend for people struggling with the dark mantle of depression. Yet like all drugs, they can cause side effects, which is why it's important to be aware of any changes in your body when you begin any new medication.

If you have any uncomfortable or worrisome antidepressant side effects, tell your doctor immediately. But for many of the mildly distressing side effects, a few simple steps may help. Here are some suggestions for managing side effects of antidepressants.

- Dry mouth. Drink a lot of water, chew sugarless gum, and brush your teeth frequently.

- Constipation. Eat whole grains, bran cereal, prunes, and hearty servings of fruits and vegetables. Drink plenty of water.

- Trouble urinating. If you have difficulty starting urination, your doctor may be able to adjust your medication to relieve this problem.

- Dizziness. Sudden changes in position can lead to a sharp drop in blood pressure that causes dizziness. To counter this effect, move slowly when you rise from a chair or get out of bed. Also, drink plenty of fluids.

- Daytime drowsiness. This problem usually occurs at the beginning of treatment and may not last long. In some cases, it may help to take medication at bedtime, but ask your doctor about this first. If you feel drowsy, don't drive or use heavy or dangerous equipment.

- Trouble sleeping. Sleep often improves after a few weeks, but sometimes a mild sleep aid or a switch to another medication is necessary.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

82,000 historical objects on show at Golestan Palace

HERITAGE TEHRAN — The UNESCO-registered Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran features some 82,000 historical objects inside its museums that add up to its own charm, director of the historical site says.

"Golestan Palace embraces various treasures that are needed to be put on show and be subject of research in addition to being protected and conserved," IRNA quoted Masoud Nosrati as saying on Saturday.



A view of Golestan Palace in downtown Tehran

"For example, the antique utensils, vessels and jewelry sections are wonderful. Moreover, over 350 carpets and rugs are being kept at the palace some of which have already been on show and the others aimed to be displayed in future exhibitions," the official added.

Every day, clusters of foreign travelers visit the lavish palace, which is a masterpiece dating from the Qajar era (1785 to 1925). It embodies a successful integration of earlier Persian crafts and architecture with Western influences.

Golestan Palace became a center of Qajari arts and architecture of which it is an outstanding example and has remained a source of inspiration for Iranian artists and architects to this day.

Birjand gears up for handicrafts exhibit in December

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Iran's northeastern city of Birjand will play host to a national handicrafts exhibition, which will open its doors to the public on December 10, the organizers say.

The sales exhibit will embrace over 100 booths to be dedicated to traditional jewelry, local garments, ceramics, potteries, woodwork, illuminated manuscript, enamel, leatherwork, handwoven products, metalwork, and marquetry, amongst other works.

Handicrafts exports from Iran hit a record high over the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22, 2017) with 45.4 percent growth in contrast to the same period a year earlier.

The growth was tagged as the highest in exports of non-oil products from the country, Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization announced in September.

Over the past couple of years, dozens of high-quality Iranian handicrafts have been honored with the UNESCO Seal of Excellence.

Hormuz, the rainbow island of Iran

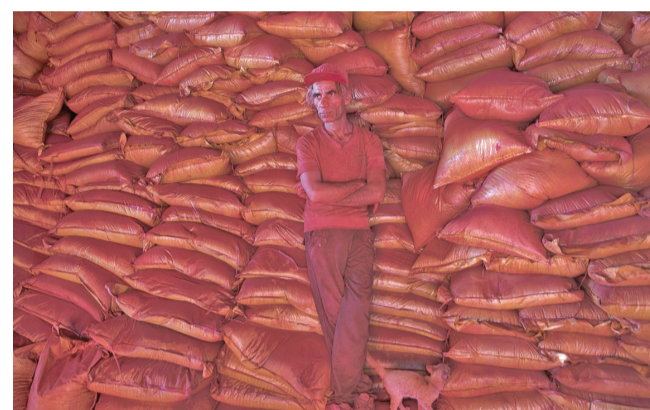
I → It is probable to traverse much of the land in a single day by car. However, there are a few popular spots, some on the beaches and some in the valleys where eco-tourists prefer to camp out for days. The sunny coastline is made up from striking blend of golden beaches and amazing steep cliffs and slopes.

The arid island gets unbelievably hot during midday so that ideally, winter may be the best time to pay a visit. In summertime its temperate can rise to over 43 °C.

The island also features ruins of Portuguese ramparts with clusters of eroding artillery cannons all around. In the early 16th century the land was occupied by Portuguese forces who utilized it as stopover for ships voyaging to Goa, Gujarat and nearby Qeshm.

The rugged land is covered by sedimentary rocks, layers of volcanic material and various minerals that contribute to formation of fantastic colors, a feature that also attracts miners and exploiters to the region too.

The exploitation of the island's other has been accelerated over the past couple of years so that rising ecological concerns has prompted the Department of Environment to take action to defend interests of the inhabitants and safeguard



the region for future generations. Traditionally, its reddish soil, which indigenous people call it "Golak", is used for making local foodstuff to decorative arts and even as spices for cooking fish to making pickled vegetables.

Tougher regulation aims to protect Iran's caves against damages

TOURISM TEHRAN — A task force commissioned by the Iranian Cave and Speleology Association has issued new guideline that requires provincial departments of environment to put in place tougher regulations to ensure the caves are better shielded against potential harms by people.

"The caves across the country will be categorized in order to determine human access to each cave in what extent should be," Mehr quoted Javad Nezamdoust, a cave expert and former director of the ICSPA, as saying on Thursday.

Nezamdoust expressed deep concern over some state-run organizations, private sector and NGOs who use their clout to exploit the natural sites under the excuse of developing tourism at any cost, Mehr reported.

The development of the guideline took some two years of research based on international standards of speleology.



Visitors walk through the scenic Kataleh Khor Cave in Zanjan province, western Iran

It divides caves into four categories, on top of which stands total prohibition of tourist entry so that such caves

are exclusively dedicated to scientific and speleological research. Categories three and two respec-

tively apply less strict curbs on the presence of visitors and tourists. And finally caves in the fourth stage are associated with the least sensitive archaeological and historical indicators so that they could be freely accessible to people.

Iran is geologically a part of the Alpine-Himalayan organic belt. The country features variety of mountain ranges and hundreds of caves with Ali-Sadr, Karaftu, Katalah Khor, Quri Qala amongst the most notables.

According to Britannica Encyclopedia, the enigmatic evidence of human presence on the Iranian plateau is as early as Lower Paleolithic times. The first well-documented evidence of human habitation is in deposits from several excavated cave and rock-shelter sites, located mainly in the Zagros Mountains of western Iran and dated to Middle Paleolithic or Mousterian times (c. 100,000 BC).

Thailand bans smoking on 20 of its beaches

Thailand is banning smoking on most of its beaches including top hotspot Phuket. The move comes in response to Thailand's Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR) reporting it had picked up tens of thousands of cigarette butts from the country's beaches — making up a third of all beach waste.

Anyone caught smoking where it is prohibited risks a year's imprisonment or fine of up to 100,000 baht (£2,280). As a concession there will be smoking areas further inland.

Jatuporn Buruspat, head of the

DMCR said that his team had collected up to 138,000 cigarette butts on a 2.5km stretch of Patong beach in Phuket. Officials are also looking into the issue of tourists dropping cigarette butts from boats.

The ban will be trailed in November and will affect 20 beaches including Patong, Koh Khai Nok, Koh Khai Nai (Phuket); Hua Hin, Cha-Am, Khao Takiab (western province of Prachuap Khiri Khan); Pattaya, Jomtien, Bangsae (eastern province of Chonburi) and Samila (Songkhla city).

(Source: The Travel Magazine)

Airbnb targets business travelers to France

Business travelers to France are in the sights of online rental marketplace Airbnb, according to a senior official on Thursday at the company best known for hosting holidaymakers.

Airbnb For Business was launched in 2015 for companies looking for new and cheaper ways to accommodate staff on business trips and for Airbnb to keep up its rapid expansion.

Business travel is growing faster than leisure travel and corporate customers now account for some 15 percent of rental nights booked on Airbnb. The goal is to lift that ratio to 30 percent by 2020.

"We think there are very good prospects for Airbnb in business travel and France is definitely a market we are looking at," Jon Liebtog, Airbnb's head of business travel for EMEA told Reuters, mentioning Germany and Britain too.

In France last year the number of stays booked on Airbnb by business travelers grew four-fold.

With over 400,000 listings, France is Airbnb's second largest market after the United States, and Paris, the most visited city in the world, is its biggest single market, with 65,000 homes listed.

(Source: Reuters)

Despite travel warning, cruises to Cuba continue

Although the U.S. Department of State recently issued a travel warning on Cuba, a number of cruise lines plan to add itineraries to Cuba next year.

The Sept. 29 statement, which "warns U.S. citizens not to travel to Cuba," is based on a series of mysterious illnesses that have befallen U.S. Embassy workers in Havana.

But several cruise lines operating ships in and around Cuba have released statements pushing back on the warning, noting that no tourists have been harmed in these incidents.

They also say cruising is compliant with new travel restrictions that were imposed in June by President Trump, who essentially rolled back President Obama's easing of sanctions in 2014.

The new rules make independent travel more difficult, essentially funneling interested travelers to tour companies, including cruise lines.

Although the Trump administration's expulsion of Cuban diplomats in retaliation for the American diplomats' illnesses suggests that relations are becoming more fraught between the two nations, travel remains legal, and non-Cuban-born Americans seeking to visit Cuba may still receive their visas to do so through their airline, cruise line or tour operator. It is possible, given the skeleton crew operating at the Cuban embassy, that the visa process could slow, but at present tour operators say they have visas on hand.



SeaDream Yacht Club will offer Cuba cruises in 2019. (Credit: SeaDream Yacht Club)

Several cruise companies had already announced significant expansion of their Cuba operations before the warning was issued. Carnival Cruise Line launched its Cuba itinerary aboard the Carnival Paradise in June and recently announced five new sailings in 2018.

Departing from Tampa, the mix of four-to-eight-day cruises include Havana as a port of call along with other Caribbean island stops (from \$589 a person).

Norwegian Cruise Line is adding four-day cruises to Cuba from Port Canaveral next May. The trips also visit Key West and offer an overnight in Havana (from \$599

a person).

Especially when venturing beyond Havana, which is relatively well-equipped for tourism, cruise ships provide accommodations in places where they are scarce and offer comfortable conveyance getting there.

Touting a more immersive experience, the small ship operator Victory Cruise Lines will venture to Cuba next year on two-week sailings that circumnavigate the island. Trips will depart from Miami and call at Santiago de Cuba, Trinidad, Cienfuegos and Havana, offering overnight stays in most. The all-inclusive trip aboard the 202-passenger Victory 1 starts at \$8,957 a person, with a \$3,000 discount per cabin if booked before Oct. 13.

SeaDream Yacht Club recently announced its new Cuba-only cruises operating between Havana and Cienfuegos and set to begin in 2019. Seven-day trips aboard its 112-passenger ship SeaDream II will call at Trinidad and visit a series of Cuban islands including Cayo Largo, Isla de Juventud and Maria La Gorda. Trips start at \$4,599 a person.

SeaDream will offer water sports from a special deck off the back of the ship, but the trips focus on cultural exploration through shore excursions.

"People selecting Cuba are really looking at the culture, history and background and doing what others have not done which is to explore Cuba while it's still relatively new and very, very interesting," said Bob Lepisto, the president of SeaDream Yacht Club. (Source: The New York Times)

ROUND THE GLOBE

Sangiran Early Man Site

Excavations here from 1936 to 1941 led to the discovery of the first hominid fossil at the Sangiran Early Man Site, a World Heritage in Indonesia.

The site is situated about 15 kilometers in the north of Solo town in Central Java, covering an area of 5,600 hectares. It became famous after the discovery of Homo erectus remains and associated stone artifacts (well-known as Sangiran flake industry) in the 1930s.



A sign of the Sangiran Early Man Site is seen in front of the World Heritage property in Indonesia.

There is a very significant geological sequence from the upper Pliocene until the end of Middle Pleistocene by depicting the human, faunal, and cultural evolutions within the last 2.4 million years. The property also yields important archaeological occupation floors dating back to the Lower Pleistocene around 1.2 million years ago.

The microfossils that appear abundantly from the layers provide a detailed and clear record of many faunal elements, while the property reveals more than 100 individuals of Homo erectus, dating back to at least 1.5 million years ago.

These fossils show human evolution process during the Pleistocene period, particularly from 1.5 to 0.4 million years ago. Inhabited for the past one and a half million years, Sangiran is one of the key sites for the understanding of human evolution. (Source: UNESCO)

The next Yellowstone supervolcano eruption will cover most of America, says geologist



A supervolcano currently lies dormant underneath the Yellowstone National Park, but once it prepares for its next eruption, we will not have much time to prepare for the disastrous event.

The troubling findings were presented at the IAVCEI 2017 volcanology conference in Portland, raising fresh concerns on how the world will deal with the Yellowstone supervolcano if it decides to wake up.

The supervolcano hiding under the Yellowstone National Park deserves such a name. It is capable of releasing over 1,000 cubic kilometers of ash and rock at once, which is about 2,500 times more compared to the material

expelled by the Mount St. Helens eruption in 1980.

The Yellowstone supervolcano, if it erupts, will cover most of the United States in a very thick ash layer, and will also likely transform the Earth's weather into a volcanic winter. Even more concerning is the fact that we might not be given enough time to prepare for such a disaster.

■ Magma chambers

Scientists previously thought that if the Yellowstone supervolcano starts to rumble and its magma chambers start filling up for an explosion, it would take centuries before the eruption takes place.

However, according to new research, it would only take decades, significantly reducing the expected preparation time that we would have for the disaster.

The findings were the result of a study carried out by a team from Arizona State University.

They discovered that the build-up for the Yellowstone supervolcano's last eruption about 631,000 years ago started when new magma moved into its system just decades before the explosion.

■ Taking a volcanic system

"It's shocking how little time is required to take a volcanic system from being quiet and sitting there to the edge of an eruption," said Hannah Shamloo, a graduate student and one of the members of the team. This means that the Yellowstone supervolcano can go from its current level activity to its next eruption

"It's shocking how little time is required to take a volcanic system from being quiet and sitting there to the edge of an eruption," said Hannah Shamloo, a graduate student and one of the members of the team.



Hannah Shamloo

as soon as about 2030. When the supervolcano will start exhibiting signs that it is building up for an explosion, however, is anybody's guess.

This research is just one among many studies being conducted on the Yellowstone supervolcano, which has also made appearances in various films, novels, and other media.

Last year, two separate studies discovered evidence of 12 giant super eruptions around the Yellowstone hot-spot track and cast doubt on the Yellowstone supervolcano origin. Two years ago, a study painted a bleak picture of the damage that a Yellowstone supervolcano eruption can cause, with molten lava covering the Earth's surface, thick clouds of smoke in the atmosphere, and up to 90,000 immediate fatalities. (Source: Tech Times)

Researchers just shattered the record for the shortest-ever pulse of light

At just 53 attoseconds, a single flash of an X-ray laser has become the shortest light pulse of its kind in the history of optics, smashing the previous record by 14 attoseconds.

As cool as it is, the record light pulse is more than just about bragging rights. The advance will improve research that requires measuring the positions and behaviors of particles within atoms and molecules in ways that could open doors to new kinds of technology.

The boundaries on ultrafast light pulses have been steadily narrowing since lasers were first developed in the 1960s.

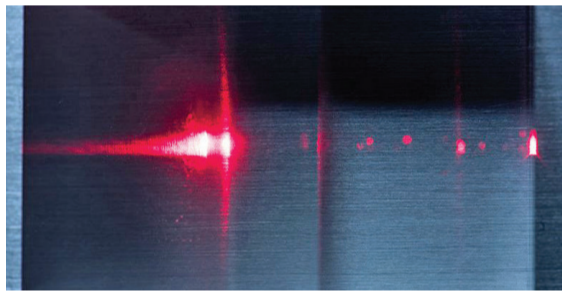
We've come a long way since those first millisecond pulses, with the duration now measured in just a few dozen quintillionths of a second.

Researchers from the University of Central Florida had also set the previous record of 67 attoseconds back in 2012, only that time they'd used pulses of UV light.

■ Shortened wavelength

In this latest experiment they've shortened the wavelength as well as the pulse, achieving the tiny blip of light with light in the more energetic X-ray part of the spectrum.

For some perspective on how quick this is, in a single second light can travel around the Earth 7.5 times. In 53 attoseconds, imagine light travelling only the distance of about a thousandth of the width of a human hair.



Breaking light down into such short pulses has some serious physical applications.

"Such attosecond soft X-rays could be used to shoot slow-motion video of electrons and atoms of biological molecules in living cells to, for instance, improve the efficiency of solar panels by better understanding how photosynthesis works," says researcher Zenghu Chang.

On an atomic scale, certain measurements are made easier by relating them to common units.

The atomic unit for time is a ridiculously tiny 24 attoseconds, so having pulses that come close to that help improve resolution just as a faster camera allows us to record high-speed events like popping balloons or speeding bullets.

Previous records were accomplished using processes that limited the energy in the pulse to around 100 electron volts.

So the researchers tweaked the process to raise the amount of energy within the light pulse while still making the overall burst quite short.

■ Energetic X-ray

Ultrashort pulses among the more energetic X-ray part of the spectrum, above 124 electron volts, have a distinct advantage.

Electrons can only leap from their orbitals around the nucleus once they absorb specific quanta — or units — of light energy.

One way physicists describe the specific energy holding electrons in place comes from experiments done using X-rays.

This X-ray notation labels the orbitals with letters and numbers, with K1 as the first, then L1, L2, L3, M1, and so forth. (Source: sciencealert.com)

Climate change forced ancient humans out of Africa

Lots of us complain about the weather — but it's another thing entirely to pick up and relocate because of it. Yet according to a new study published in the journal *Geology*, an unpleasant climate in Africa may have driven the earliest humans north, starting their spread around the globe.

Scientists have speculated for a while now that climate may have played a role in the migration, but in general they have focused on ways the climate could have made the journey itself easier, such as by bringing rain to the vast Sahara.

The new study tracked down evidence of the climate itself, then compared that timeline with what archaeologists know about human migrations — and saw a

very different picture.

"We really wanted to figure out if we could find a way to reconstruct the climate at this time using geologic archives," lead author Jessica Tierney, who studies past climate change at the University of Arizona, told Newsweek. "It seemed like the migration lines up with this really dry and cold time." That might have been enough to push early humans north, she and her colleagues conclude.

■ The first challenge

The team's first challenge was simply finding climate records old enough, since humans began migrating between 55,000 and 70,000 years ago. Eventually they tracked down a sediment core — "essentially a tube of mud," as Tierney

describes it — collected in 1965 from the seafloor in the Gulf of Aden, off the Horn of Africa. Within that core, for every four inches deeper into the sediment the scientists could look 1,600 years earlier into the past, as far as 200,000 years before the present.

They analyzed two types of chemical fingerprints contained in that core to understand precipitation and temperature levels around the time of the migration.

Of course, sediment cores don't record thermometer readings; in both cases, the scientists used surrogate measurements to understand climate.

For precipitation, they analyzed the composition of wax particles, produced on land by plants to protect their leaves

from the environment and carried to the bottom of the sea by the wind. When plants grow in a wet environment, their leaf wax carries a different proportion of types of hydrogen atoms pulled from water. "These wax compounds are really well preserved actually in these cores, so they're easy for us to isolate and analyze," Tierney says.

And for temperature, they studied compounds called alkenones, which are produced by marine algae and settle into the sediment below. Like leaf wax changing with precipitation, the precise composition of alkenones changes depending on how warm or cool the algae's environment is. (Source: Newsweek)

Astronomers find the missing normal matter in the universe

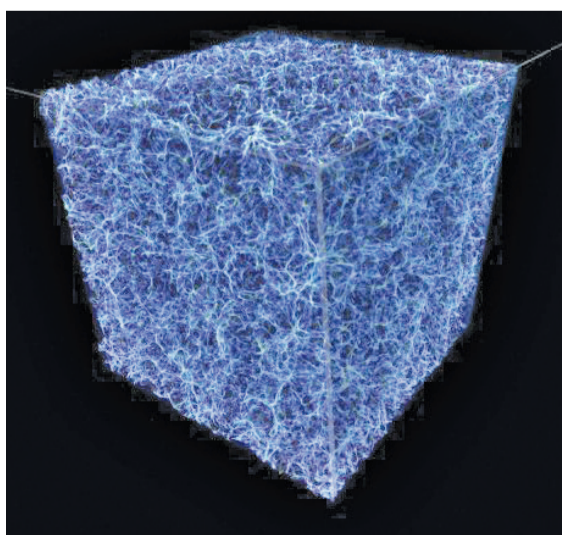
For decades, the predominant cosmological model used by scientists has been based on the theory that in addition to baryonic matter — aka. "normal" or "luminous" matter, which we can see — the Universe also contains a substantial amount of invisible mass. This "Dark Matter" accounts for roughly 26.8% of the mass of the Universe, whereas normal matter accounts for just 4.9%.

While the search for Dark Matter is ongoing and direct evidence is yet to be found, scientists have also been aware that roughly 90% of the Universe's normal matter still remained undetected. According to two new studies that were recently published, much of this normal matter — which consists of filaments of hot, diffuse gas that links galaxies together — may have finally been found.

The first study, titled "A Search for Warm/Hot Gas Filaments Between Pairs of SDSS Luminous Red Galaxies", appeared in the *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*. The study was led by Hideki Tanimura, a then-PhD candidate at the University of British Columbia, and included researchers from the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR), the Liverpool John Moores University and the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

■ Planck mission

For the sake of their studies, both teams consulted data from the Planck Collaboration, a venture maintained by the European Space Agency that includes all



those who contributed to the Planck mission (ESA). This was presented in 2015, where it was used to create a thermal map of the Universe by measuring the influence of the Sunyaev-Zeldovich (SZ) effect.

This effect refers to a spectral distortion in the Cosmic Microwave Background, where photons are scattered by ionized gas in galaxies and larger structures. During its mission to study the cosmos, the Planck sat-

ellite measured the spectral distortion of CMB photons with great sensitivity, and the resulting thermal map has since been used to chart the large-scale structure of the Universe.

However, the filaments between galaxies appeared too faint for scientists to examine at the time. To remedy this, the two teams consulted data from the North and South CMASS galaxy catalogues, which were produced from the 12th data release of the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS). From this data set, they then selected pairs of galaxies and focused on the space between them.

■ Thermal data

They then stacked the thermal data obtained by Planck for these areas on top of each other in order to strengthen the signals caused by SZ effect between galaxies. As Dr. Hideki told Universe Today via email:

"The SDSS galaxy survey gives a shape of the large-scale structure of the Universe. The Planck observation provides an all-sky map of gas pressure with a better sensitivity. We combine these data to probe the low-density gas in the cosmic web."

While Tanimura and his team stacked data from 260,000 galaxy pairs, de Graaff and her team stacked data from over a million. In the end, the two teams came up with strong evidence of gas filaments, though their measurements differed somewhat. (Source: Universe Today)

A single photon reveals quantum entanglement of 16 million atoms

Quantum theory is unequivocal: it predicts that a vast number of atoms can be entangled and intertwined by a very strong quantum relationship even in a macroscopic structure. Until now, however, experimental evidence has been mostly lacking, although recent advances have shown the entanglement of 2,900 atoms. Scientists at the University of Geneva (UNIGE), Switzerland, recently reengineered their data processing, demonstrating that 16 million atoms were entangled in a one-centimeter crystal. Find out all about their research in the journal *Nature Communications*.

The laws of quantum physics allow to emit signals and immediately detect when they are intercepted by a third party. This property is crucial for data protection, especially in the encryption industry, which can now guarantee that customers will be aware of any interception of their messages. These signals also need to be able to travel long distances using some rather special relay devices, known as quantum repeaters: crystals whose atoms are entangled and unified by a very strong quantum relationship. When a photon penetrates this small crystal block enriched with rare earth atoms and cooled to 270 degrees below zero (barely three degrees above absolute zero), entanglement is created between the billions of atoms it traverses.

It is relatively easy to entangle two particles: splitting a photon, for example, generates two entangled photons that have identical properties and behaviors. «But,» explains Florian Fröwis, a researcher in the applied physics group in UNIGE's science faculty, «it's impossible to directly observe the process of entanglement between several million atoms since the mass of data you need to collect and analyze is so huge.» (Source: EurekAlert)

Blueberries boost children's brainpower, study finds

Children should eat blueberries before taking exams to benefit from a short-term boost to brain function, new research shows.



A study revealed that primary school-age children performed tasks with 10 per cent greater speed and accuracy after taking wild blueberry drinks.

The fruit, which contains flavanols, has been associated with a range of health benefits including antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects.

This is the first time that we have seen the positive impact that flavanols can have on the executive function of children, but the new findings also indicate an enhanced cognitive benefits.

Children were asked to pay attention to an array of arrows shown on a PC screen and press a key corresponding to the direction that the central arrow was facing.

The task was repeated over a number of trials, where cognitive demand was manipulated by varying how quickly the arrows appeared.

The cohort who had drunk the blueberry juice performed comparatively better the harder the tasks became.

Professor Claire Williams, a neuroscience professor at the University of Reading said: "This is the first time that we have seen the positive impact that flavanols can have on the executive function of children."

"We designed this double blind trial especially to test how flavanols would impact on attention in young people as it's an area of cognitive performance that hasn't been measured before." (Source: The Telegraph)

NASA satellite sees overheated tropical forests oozing with CO2

NASA's latest carbon dioxide-mapping satellite has detected a dramatic spike in the amount of the greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, measuring the largest annual increase Earth has seen in at least 2,000 years. The cause? Overheating of three major tropical forest regions across the globe.

NASA's Orbiting Carbon Observatory (OCO-2), is one of several satellites that collect greenhouse gas emissions data, and researcher Junjie Liu of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in Pasadena, California, used this probe's data to uncover how much — or in this case, how little — carbon dioxide (CO2) was absorbed out of the atmosphere by Earth's tropical forests.

NASA presented new research findings with a teleconference on Oct 12 that featured Liu alongside Michael Freilich, director of the Earth Science Division at NASA headquarters in Washington, D.C.; Annmarie Eldering, the OCO-2 deputy project scientist at JPL; and Scott Denning, professor of atmospheric science at Colorado State University.

OCO-2 has given scientists a "revolutionary" new way to understand the effects of droughts and heat on tropical rainforests, Freilich said in the briefing. The remoteness of these regions, their lack of field stations and the distorting effect of thunderstorms on land-based measurements of CO2 make the OCO-2 satellite an important and unique tool for monitoring the movement and increase of this greenhouse gas, he added. (Source: space.com)

Tehran traffic police to ban polluting vehicles, fine drivers

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Tehrani motorists who fail to live up to emission standards set by traffic police will face 500,000 rials (nearly \$13) fine and their vehicles will be impounded by the police.

Taking effect as of Saturday high-emitting vehicles and those with outdated or no vehicle inspection decals [stickers issued after passing mandatory periodic vehicle inspection] will be banned from the streets of the capital.



Tehran air pollution is attributed to power plants and factories surrounding the city, sand mines, sand and dust storms originating from dried up wetlands, pollutant industries, carburetor motorcycles, and most significantly automobiles.

To address the persisting air pollution responsible organizations, namely Department of Environment, has come up with stricter regulations levied on vehicles and other pollutant sources.

High emission public transport buses and taxis that don't have inspection decals are strictly liable for fine and impoundment, IRNA quoted Tehran Traffic Police Chief Mohammad Reza Mehmandar as saying.

Vehicles impounded by the police will be sent to garage to be repaired, Mehmandar added.

Mehmandar went on to warn that by using the traffic enforcement cameras which are able to detect any violation of the law by telling the fake or outdated inspection decals from the valid stickers clunkers and cars exceed official pollution limits will be fined every 24 hours in case they fail to conform to regulations governing emissions.

He further asked motorists to have their highly polluting cars fixed in no time and ensure their conformity to the law or they would have to accept its legal implications.

World Health Organization reports that in 2012 around 7 million people died - one in eight of total global deaths - as a result of air pollution exposure. This finding confirms that air pollution is now the world's largest single environmental health risk. Air pollution is a huge problem especially for people living in smog-choked cities.

LEARN ENGLISH

Daily Life - The Butcher

Butcher: Hi. What can I get for you?
Gina: I'd like a half a pound of **ground beef**, please.
Butcher: Good choice! Our ground beef is extra **lean**, if you know what I mean.
Gina: Could I also have half a dozen **pork chops** and two pounds of boneless **chicken breasts**?
Butcher: No, no no no chicken breasts at the moment, but we have some nice **chicken thighs**.
Gina: No, that won't do. I'll take this **smoked ham** you have here.
Butcher: Okay, is there anything else?
Gina: Do you have any other **cold cuts**? Is this **salami** and **bologna** you have here?
Butcher: Yes! It's very fine meat! Made it myself...
Gina: Sounds good. Okay, that's it.
Butcher: Wait! We have **T-bone**, **rib eye**, and **sirloin steaks**. They are very fresh! Just came from the **slaughter house**...
Gina: Mmm... No that's okay, really. I think that's all for today.
Butcher: Okay. That will be thirty-four dollars and fifty cents.

Key Vocabulary
ground beef: beef that has been put through a grinder
if you know what I mean: used to express the listener is aware of something that is assumed to be known
lean: having a low fat content
pork chop: a cut of pork in a individual size
chicken breast: the meaty breast portion of a chicken
boneless: Adjective with the bones removed
chicken thigh: the upper leg portion of meat on a chicken
smoked ham: a ham which has been seasoned with smoke
cold cuts: cold cooked meat, used for sandwiches
salami: spicy dry sausage
bologna: wide sausage that is sliced
T-bone: a thick piece of beef with a T shaped bone in it
rib eye: a tender cut of beef from the outer side of the rib
slaughter house: the place where animals are killed for their meat
sirloin: a piece of beef from lower back of the cow
steak: a slice of beef

Supplementary Vocabulary
turkey: a type of meat from a large bird, similar to chicken
hot dog: a type of small sausage
cleaver: a type of knife a butcher uses
chopping block: the table that a butcher works on
butcher paper: the waxy paper a butcher uses to wrap meat in

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Have an idea?
Be in touch!
lifestyle.tehrantimes@gmail.com

Iran plans to provide Rohingya Muslims with warm food

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Iran plans to supply warm food to Rohingya Muslims living in displacement camps in Bangladesh.

The Iranian deputy health minister Mohammad Reza Ayyazi, heading a delegation, paid a visit to a refugee zone near Cox's Bazar close to Myanmar border in Bangladesh on Friday.

"Now a group of sikhhs from Punjab supplies some 5,000 dishes of warm food to the region on the daily basis," he said, adding, Iran has the capacity and potential to provide the Rohingya refugees with much more meals.

Iranian benefactors can provide funds for supplying warm food and preparing cooking facilities in Bangladesh, he proposed.

"In this line, the expenses for consignment of relief through airway is decreased as well and Myanmar Muslims enjoy food with their favorite taste," he said.

"During our visit to the refugee camps, we decided to organize Iranian aid for



Rohingya refugees stretch their hands for food near Balukhali in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, September 4, 2017 (REUTERS/Mohammad Ponir Hossain)

Rohingya Muslims," Tasnim quoted him as saying.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society chief Ali Asghar Peyvandi and Iran's

Ambassador to Dhaka Abbas Vaezi accompanied Ayyazi during his visit.

The arrival of Rohingya Muslims from Buddhist-dominated Myanmar since

August 25 has put an immense strain on camps in Bangladesh where there are growing fears of a disease epidemic.

Bangladesh health minister hails Iranian aid

The Bangladeshi Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mohammed Nasim has expressed his thanks over the dispatching of aid consignments by Iranians for Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

Nasim met with the Iranian Red Crescent Society chief Ali Asghar Peyvandi in Dhaka on Thursday.

During the visit, Nasim said that the displaced people of Myanmar in Bangladesh need physical and mental supports.

Several volunteer physicians are offering free medical services to refugees in the region, he explained.

On Thursday, Iran sent its third humanitarian aid shipment for Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims to Bangladesh.

The 30 tons of relief supplies included humanitarian aid and food supplies.

'Unhealthy environment kills 33,000 Iranians annually'

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Around 33,000 people die each year in Iran because they are exposed to unhealthy environment, director for the environmental health research network affiliated with the Health Ministry said on Thursday.

"Pollution in the air, water, food as well as exposure to chemicals are threatening the public health and we are facing greater environmental challenges in metropolises," Alireza Mesdaqinia explained.

Currently airborne particles including dust, dirt, soot, and smoke are the most significant problem plaguing the people and an operational action plan is needed to



tackle this predicament, Mesdaqinia added.

Regarding the lower precipitation levels and drought spells in Iran the water shortage has become a cause for concern and the more the groundwater is depleted the more polluted the environment gets, he regretted.

Chemical-contaminated fruits are also posing a threat to the public health and consumers must make sure of the food is safe to eat, he noted.

According to a World Health Organization report published in March 2016, around 12.6 million people die each year worldwide because they are exposed to unhealthy environments.

Intl. Day of Rural Women: invaluable contribution of rural women to development

The first International Day of Rural Women was observed on October 15, 2008. This new international day, established by the General Assembly on December 18, 2007, recognizes "the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty."

The crucial role that women and girls play in ensuring the sustainability of rural households and communities, improving rural livelihoods and overall wellbeing, has been increasingly recognized.

Women account for a substantial proportion of the agricultural labor force, including informal work, and perform the bulk of unpaid care and domestic work within families and households in rural areas. They make significant contributions to agricultural production, food security and nutrition, land and natural resource management, and building climate resilience.

Even so, women and girls in rural areas suffer disproportionately from multi-dimensional poverty. While extreme poverty has declined globally, the world's 1 billion people who continue to live in unacceptable conditions of poverty are heavily concentrated in rural areas. Poverty rates in rural areas across most regions are higher than those in urban areas. Yet smallholder agriculture produces nearly 80

per cent of food in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa and supports the livelihoods of some 2.5 billion people. Women farmers may be as productive and enterprising as their male counterparts, but are less able to access land, credit, agricultural inputs, markets and high-value agrifood chains and obtain lower prices for their crops.

Structural barriers and discriminatory social norms continue to constrain women's decision-making power and political participation in rural households and communities. Women and girls in rural areas lack equal access to productive resources and assets, public services, such as education and health care, and infrastructure, including water and sanitation, while much of their labor remains invisible and unpaid, even as their workloads become increasingly heavy due to the out-migration of men. Globally, with few exceptions, every gender and development indicator for which data are available reveals that rural women fare worse than rural men and urban women, and that they disproportionately experience poverty, exclusion and the effects of climate change.

The impacts of climate change, including on access to productive and natural resources, amplify existing gender inequalities in rural areas. Climate change affects women's and men's assets and wellbeing differently in terms of agricultural production, food security, health, water

and energy resources, climate-induced migration and conflict, and climate-related natural disasters.

2017 Theme: "Challenges and opportunities in climate-resilient agriculture for gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls"

In agriculture, climate change exacerbates the existing barriers to gender equality faced by women farmers. Globally, women comprise 43 per cent of the agricultural workforce and play a critical role in supporting household and community food security. However, due to discriminatory policy frameworks or inequitable social norms, women farmers have less access than men to secure land tenure, agricultural inputs, financing, water and energy, appropriate infrastructure, technologies, and extension services.

According to some estimates, closing the gender gap in access to land and other productive assets could increase agricultural outputs by up to 20 per cent in Africa. It would also enable women farmers to adopt climate-resilient agricultural approaches at the same rate as men, as key initiatives that address these gender gaps such as secured land tenure, greater financial inclusion and access to information are also essential to accelerate the adoption of climate-resilient agricultural practices. In essence, providing equal access to women and

men farmers to land and other productive resources can provide a "triple dividend" of gender equality, food security and climate management, thereby offering a cost-effective and transformative approach to the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals.

A changing climate means that there is a shrinking window of opportunity to close gender gaps in agriculture. Climate change aggravates existing barriers, limiting women farmers' access to long-term affordable finance and agricultural extension services, and increasing their unpaid care work burden as water and fuel become scarce. Women farmers are at risk of being trapped in a downward spiral in the absence of concerted efforts to close these gender gaps.

Women are powerful change agents to address climate change at scale. They are key actors in building community resilience and responding to climate-related disasters. Women tend to make decisions about resource use and investments in the interest and welfare of their children, families, and communities. Women as economic and political actors can influence policies and institutions towards greater provision of public goods, such as energy, water and sanitation, and social infrastructure, which tend to matter more to women and support climate resilience and disaster preparedness.

(Source: un.org)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

Free healthcare services at Tehran subway

Tehran subway will provide passengers with free healthcare services at two specific stations on October 6, 8 and 15.

Blood pressure test, meal and midwifery services will be offered at special temporary units set up for this purpose at Qaem Station of Line 3 and Qeytariyeh Station of Line 1.

The units are designed to raise public awareness about healthcare issues. The scheme is sponsored by Tehran Municipality's Department of Social and Cultural Affairs.

The services are offered on the occasion of the national week of older persons, which is annually held from October 2 to 8 in line with the International Day of Older Persons, October 1.

ارائه خدمات رایگان سلامت محور در مترو

همزمان با هفته سالمند، روز جهانی بهداشت و روان در روزهای ۱۵، ۱۷ و ۲۴ مهر، خدماتی مانند تست فشار خون، مشاوره تغذیه، مشاوره فردی و مشاوره مامایی با همکاری معاونت امور اجتماعی و فرهنگی شهرداری منطقه یک تهران در این دو ایستگاه انجام می‌شود.

به گزارش خبرگزاری تسنیم، به همت معاونت فرهنگی و اجتماعی شرکت بهره‌برداری مترو تهران و با هدف توسعه و ارتقای فرهنگ سلامت اجتماعی و افزایش سلامت جسمانی، خدمات مشاوره‌ای و سلامت محور در دو ایستگاه قائم و قیطریه به مسافران مترو ارائه می‌شود.

در روزهای ۱۵، ۱۷ و ۲۴ مهر، خدماتی مانند تست فشار خون، مشاوره تغذیه، مشاوره فردی و مشاوره مامایی با همکاری معاونت امور اجتماعی و فرهنگی شهرداری منطقه یک تهران در این دو ایستگاه انجام می‌شود.

ENGLISH PROVERB

The way to a man's heart is through his stomach

Explanation: Feed a man well and he will love you.
For example: My mom advises me to cook good meals for my husband. She says that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

PHRASAL VERB

Wimp out

Meaning: Not be brave enough to do something
Example: I was going to have the hottest curry on the menu, but I wimped out and had a mild lamb Korma instead.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Watch like a hawk

Explanation: keep your eyes on them or watch them very carefully
For example: Sarah watches the children like a hawk when she takes them swimming.

ISIL faces imminent Raqqa defeat

Over 90% of Syrian territory free from ISIL: Russian daily

➔ The Britain-based so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) said Syrian ISIL terrorists and their families had already left the city, and buses had arrived to evacuate remaining foreign fighters and their families. It did not say where they would be taken to.

The Observatory said the evacuation was taking place according to a deal reached between the SDF and the United States-led coalition on the one hand, and ISIL on the other.

During the more than six-year foreign instigated war, the arrival of buses in a conflict zone has often signaled an evacuation of fighters and civilians.

90% of Syrian territory free from ISIL

As the Syrian army and its allies continue their advances against terrorists, a Russian daily affiliated with the country's defense minister says more than 90 percent of Syrian territory are free from the control of the ISIL terrorists.

A total of 92 percent of Syria's land is now retaken from the control of ISIL terrorists, according to information published in Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) newspaper on Thursday.

The daily further said that Russian fighter jets conducted 517 sorties in the past week, destroying 1,260 ISIL targets.

Meanwhile, Colonel General Sergei Rudskoi of the Russian military's General Staff said on Friday that Russian jets hit 993 ISIL targets in the area of Dayr al-Zawr alone in 383 sorties over the past week.

He also noted that the area under the control of ISIL has shrunk to 14,800 square kilometers (5,714 square miles), or less than 8 percent of Syrian territory.

Rudskoi further said that the Syrian



troops have been successfully developing its offensive on the eastern bank of the Euphrates River.

He also noted that ISIL counter-attacks involving over 1,000 terrorists who moved from Iraq have been thwarted.

Rudskoi added that the Syrian forces are working to purge the troubled city of Mayadin in Dayr al-Zawr of the Takfiri militants.

Earlier, Syria's official news agency SANA reported that the government forces pushed deeper into Mayadin as they are joined by allied fighters from popular defense groups.

Syria has been gripped by foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. The Syrian government says the Israeli regime and its Western and regional allies are aiding Takfiri terrorist groups wreaking havoc in the country.

Russia has been conducting air raids

against the positions of ISIL terrorists and other groups in the country upon the Damascus government's request since September 2015.

Chemical probe

Meanwhile, Russia says there are "serious problems" with an international investigation into an April chemical incident in Syria.

Mikhail Ulyanov, the director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's non-proliferation and arms control department, made the remark at a briefing at the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York on Friday.

The investigation, being carried out by the UN and The Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), was unanimously created by the 15-member UN Security Council (UNSC) in 2015. Its mandate was renewed in 2016 for another year and is

due to expire in mid-November.

Ulyanov said Russia, a permanent member of the UNSC, had to wait until the team released its next report to decide if it would support the extension of its mission.

"In order to judge if it deserves an extension of the mandate, we need to see the report to be issued on October 26 and assess it," he said.

"I ask myself what is the reason for the extension of the mandate of this mechanism if it is not capable and is not willing to fulfill its mandate," he added, noting, "We will wait for the report and then we will define our position."

The investigators have found Syrian forces responsible for three "chlorine gas attacks" in 2014 and 2015. This is while Damascus turned over its entire chemical stockpile under a deal negotiated by Russia and the United States back in 2013. The OPCW oversaw the operations to remove the chemical arsenal from Syria and destroy it.

U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley said last week that renewing the investigation into the mandate had to be the Security Council's top priority.

The chemical incident occurred in Syria's northwestern province of Idlib in early April, killing dozens of people.

The United States and its allies claimed the Syrian government had employed a chemical weapon, while Damascus and Russia said a chemical weapons depot held and run by anti-Damascus militants had been hit in a conventional Syrian government airstrike, causing the leak of the chemicals and the deaths.

(Source: agencies)

Former Canadian hostage: Child killed, wife raped in Afghanistan

Former hostage Joshua Boyle said upon arriving back in Canada that the Haqqani network in Afghanistan had killed his infant daughter and raped his wife during the years they were held in captivity.

Boyle gave the statement shortly after landing in Canada late on Friday with his American wife, Caitlan Coleman, and three young children.

The couple was rescued on Wednesday, five years after they had been abducted by the Taliban-linked network while in Afghanistan as part of a backpacking trip.

Coleman was pregnant at the time and had four children in captivity. The birth of the fourth child had not been publicly known before Boyle appeared before journalists at the Toronto airport.

"I was in Afghanistan, helping the most neglected minority group in the world; those ordinary villagers who live deep in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, where no NGO (non-governmental organization), no aid worker or no government has ever been successfully able to bring the necessary help.

"The stupidity and evil of the Haqqani network's kidnapping of a pilgrim and his heavily pregnant wife engaged in helping ordinary villagers in Taliban-controlled regions of Afghanistan was eclipsed only by the stupidity and evil of authorizing the murder of my infant daughter," he said.

Boyle said the killing of his daughter was retaliation for his "repeated refusal to accept an offer that the criminal miscreants of the Haqqani network had made to me".

Boyle said his wife was raped by a guard who was

assisted by his superiors. He asked for the Afghan government to bring them to justice.

On the plane from London, Boyle provided a written statement to The Associated Press saying his family has "unparalleled resilience and determination".

The handwritten statement Boyle gave AP news agency expressed disagreement with the United States foreign policy. "God has given me and my family unparalleled resilience and determination, and to allow that to stagnate, to pursue personal pleasure or comfort while there is still deliberate and organized injustice in the world would be a betrayal of all I believe, and tantamount to sacrilege," he wrote.

He nodded to one of the State Department officials and said, "Their interests are not my interests."

He added that one of his children is in poor health and had to be force-fed by their Pakistani rescuers.

"It will be of incredible importance to my family that we are able to build a secure sanctuary for our three surviving children to call a home," he said in his later statement at the airport. "To try to regain some portion of the childhood that they have lost."

The Canadian government said in a statement they will "continue to support him and his family now that they have returned".

"Today, we join the Boyle family in rejoicing over the long-awaited return to Canada of their loved ones," the Canadian government said.

Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nafees Zakaria said the Pakistani raid that led to the family's rescue



was based on a tip from the U.S. intelligence and shows that Pakistan will act against a "common enemy" when Washington shares information.

Haqqani network

The Haqqani network is an Afghan terrorist group using asymmetric warfare to fight against the U.S.-led NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) forces and the government of Afghanistan. Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani and his son Sirajuddin Haqqani lead the group. The group is based in Afghanistan, where it operates.

In 2012, the U.S. designated the Haqqani network as a terrorist organization. In 2015, Pakistan also banned the Haqqani network as part of its National Action Plan.

(Source: agencies)

Two Lashkar-e-Taiba fighters killed in Kashmir raid

Two fighters and a civilian were killed and six others wounded in the clashes in the southern part of Indian-administered Kashmir, officials said.

Clashes erupted in the Litter village of Pulwama on Saturday morning after the killing of the two local fighters linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Good/Army of the Righteous), in an encounter with the Indian troops, officials said.

The police officials identified the slain civilian as 25-year-old old Gulzar Ahmad Mir from Lassipora village in Pulwama, 30km from the main city of Srinagar in the disputed region.

State police Chief Shesh Paul Vaid told Al Jazeera that Mir was shot when protesters started throwing stones at paramilitary personnel after the operation. The man later succumbed to his injuries.

"Two terrorists were killed in the operation today; one of them was the district commander of Lashkar-e-Taiba. There were no casualties among the forces," the official said.

He said that internet services were temporarily suspended in the Pulwama district to prevent further disturbance of public order.

The gun battle started early morn-

ing on Saturday after security agencies received specific information about the presence of fighters in the village, officials said.

"After the cordon was laid in Litter village, the terrorists, two in number, fired and both of them were killed. There were incidents of stone throwing near the site in which two people suffered bullet injuries. One died while the other is critical," Pulwama district superintendent of police Muhammad Aslam told Al Jazeera, adding that four more people suffered minor injuries.

As the news of the killings spread on Saturday, thousands protested and clashed with police in several parts of southern Kashmir, where residents chanted slogans against India and in favor of Lashkar-e-Taiba.

The separatist group has fought against New Delhi's rule since 1989.

On Wednesday, two Indian air force commandos and two fighters were killed in a gun battle in north Kashmir's Bandipora village.

In the attack, three fighters and an Indian soldier were killed when the gunmen stormed into an Indian army camp outside the region's international airport.

In August this year, suicide attackers managed to enter the highly guarded police camp in south Kashmir's Pulwama and killed four policemen and four paramilitary personnel.

Rebel groups have been fighting since 1989 for the Indian-administered portion of Kashmir to become independent or merge with Pakistan.

Nearly 70,000 people have been killed in the uprising and the ensuing Indian military crackdown.

India maintains roughly 500,000 soldiers in the territory.

Anti-India sentiment runs deep among Kashmir's mostly Muslim population, most of whom support the rebels' cause against Indian rule, despite a decades-long military crackdown to fight the armed rebellion.

India has accused Pakistan of arming and training the rebels, which Pakistan denies.

Rebel groups have largely been suppressed by Indian forces in recent years and public opposition to Indian rule is now principally expressed through street protests.

Lashkar-e-Taiba

Lashkar-e-Taiba (Let/Army of the Good/Army of the Righteous/Army of

the Pure) is one of the largest and most active terrorist organizations in South Asia, operating mainly from Pakistan. It was founded in 1987 with funding from Osama Bin Laden. Its headquarters are in Muridke, near Lahore in Punjab province of Pakistan, and the group operates several training camps in Pakistan-administered Kashmir.

Lashkar-e-Taiba has been accused by India of attacking military and civilian targets in India, most notably the 2001 Indian Parliament attack and the 2008 Mumbai attacks. Its stated objective is to introduce an Islamic state in South Asia and to "liberate" Muslims residing in Indian Kashmir. The organization is banned as a terrorist organization by India, the United States, Britain, the European Union, Russia, and Australia. Though formally banned by Pakistan, the general view of India and the Western countries, including of experts such as former French investigating magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguière and New America Foundation president Steve Coll is that Pakistan's main intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), continues to give LeT help and protection.

(Source: agencies)

Audrey Azoulay wins vote to be next UNESCO chief

Audrey Azoulay has been elected to become the next head of UNESCO - the UN's education, science and culture agency - after an unusually heated vote that was overshadowed by Middle East tensions.



The board's selection of Azoulay, 45, over a Qatari candidate came the day after the United States announced that it intends to pull out of UNESCO because of its alleged anti-Israel bias.

The news rocked a weeklong election already marked by geopolitical resentments, concerns about the Paris-based agency's dwindling funding and questions about its future purpose.

If confirmed by UNESCO's 195-member General Assembly next month, Azoulay will succeed outgoing Director-General Irina Bokova of Bulgaria, whose eight-year term was marred by financial woes.

Azoulay was born in Paris to a Moroccan Jewish family from Essaouira, and is the daughter of Andre Azoulay, an advisor to King Mohammed VI of Morocco.

Azoulay, a former French culture minister, narrowly beat Qatar's Hamad bin Abdulaziz al-Kawari in the final 30-28 vote after she won a runoff with a third finalist from Egypt earlier on Friday.

The outcome was a blow for Arab states that have long wanted to lead the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

UNESCO has had European, Asian, African and American chiefs, but never one from an Arab state.

In brief remarks after she won the election, Azoulay said the response to UNESCO's problems should be to reform the agency, not to walk away from it.

The Qatari government extended congratulations to France on Azoulay winning the post.

Egypt's foreign ministry has demanded an inquiry into alleged "violations" during the voting.

(Source: agencies)

Kenya police shoot dead two opposition protesters

Police in western Kenya shot dead two opposition protesters who allegedly threw rocks at a police station, while officers used tear gas on rallies in the capital and elsewhere demanding reforms in advance of a looming presidential vote rerun.

In the town of Bondo, the rural home of Opposition Leader Raila Odinga, a large crowd on Friday confronted officers outside the police station, scattering as live shots were fired.

Witnesses told AFP news agency two people were shot dead. "One person had his head shattered by a bullet while the other was hit on the chest," said witness Sam Oguma.

Three other protesters had gunshot wounds in the confrontation in the Odinga stronghold of Siaya County, Paul Kiarie, Bondo police chief said.

The opposition says banning these protests is unconstitutional and they want to continue demanding electoral changes from the electoral body.

In Nairobi, police fired tear gas as opposition supporters tried to march to city center. In Kisumu city, local television showed running battles with stone-throwing youth. Police also used tear gas in Mombasa, said

The government on Thursday banned the protests because of "imminent danger of breach of peace".

Human rights groups protested, with some pointing out that police have killed at least 37 people in demonstrations since the results of the August election were announced.

Kenya's Supreme Court nullified that vote, citing procedural irregularities and voiding the victory of President Uhuru Kenyatta. The ruling opened the way to a repeat vote on October 26.

But Odinga has refused to take part, saying the rerun should not happen until wide-ranging reforms are brought in to prevent another failed vote.

The election board has said the polls will go ahead anyway, pitting Kenyatta against six other candidates, none of whom polled more than one percent in August.

(Source: agencies)

Trump aims at Iran, hits the U.S.: Bloomberg

➔ If the U.S. fails to live up to its own promises, it will just embolden Tehran to accelerate its ballistic missile program. No future Iranian leader will be able to credibly make the case to his people that negotiating with the U.S. and compromising is better way forward than confrontation and defiance. Iran may yet stay in the deal, but it will be leery of any follow-on agreement.

It now falls on Congress to save the deal and restore U.S. credibility on the world stage. It should not re-impose sanctions absent an Iranian breach that is verified by the IAEA.

Still, no matter what decision Congress takes, the fact that an American president would not live up to the word of the U.S. is something the international community is not used to. It will further fragment partners, allies and embolden adversaries. It will make the world a more dangerous place

U.S. eager for Winter Games despite L.A. 2028 commitment

U.S. Olympic officials are eager to see the Winter Games return to the country in 2026 or 2030 even though doing so would create challenges for Los Angeles as it prepares to host the Summer Games in 2028.

Leaders of L.A.'s bid committee have said hosting a Winter Games in the years surrounding 2028 could hurt their ability to sell corporate partnerships and infringe on its exclusive rights to use the Olympic rings in its marketing.

"During my comments at the Assembly I put a stake in the ground and said we are interested in hosting the Winter Games," USOC Chairman Larry Probst told reporters following a meeting of the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Assembly in Colorado.

"Ideally that's probably 2030 so there is no confusion with the preparations for 2028."

Probst said there was the possibility the International Olympic Committee (IOC) might award 2026 and 2030 Winter Games simultaneously, as it did this year where Paris won the 2024 Summer Games while L.A. landed the 2028 event.

"If the IOC considers the possibility of a dual award of 2026 and 2030, we certainly want to be in that conversation. We want to be at the table for that discussion," he said.

USOC would need to identify a city by next March if it decided to bid for the 2026 Games, USOC CEO Scott Blackmun said.

Salt Lake City was the last U.S. city to host the Winter Games in 2002 and is expected to be in the running for any future events.

(Source: Reuters)

Spalletti challenges Inter to go beyond limitations



Luciano Spalletti has challenged his Inter side to go beyond their limitations in a hotly anticipated derby against AC Milan. Inter have enjoyed a superb start under Spalletti's stewardship and sit just two points off leaders Napoli in third having won six and drawn once in seven Serie A matches.

By contrast, Milan are seven points adrift of the Nerazzurri having lost their previous two league matches to crank up the pressure on under-fire boss Vincenzo Montella. Spalletti is relishing his first taste of the Milan derby, but warned his players there is no hiding place in a highly charged atmosphere.

"The players know how important the derby is and we must go beyond our limitations," he told a pre-match news conference.

"There are no alibis. This is the game, we must make sure we're ready."

"It will be a privilege for me, I have experienced the Rome derby. I will enrich myself and I want to live it fully."

Inter have the best defensive record in the league this season having seen their goal breached just three times and Spalletti insists luck has had no part to play in that regard. "Having a strong defense is important. It is not fair to say we have been lucky," he added.

"People only remember the times we were saved by the woodwork, not when we were denied."

(Source: Goal)

Sharapova storms past Peng into Tianjin final

Former world number one Maria Sharapova eased past defending champion Peng Shuai 6-3 6-1 at the Tianjin Open on Saturday to reach her first WTA final in almost two and a half years.

Sharapova, who returned to the tour in April following a 15-month doping ban, will meet teenaged Belarusian Aryna Sabalenka, who is ranked 102 and made her first WTA final after beating Italy's Sara Errani 6-1 6-3 in the other semi-final.

The Russian, who is currently ranked 86, broke her Chinese opponent in the opening game and rarely looked troubled on her own serve.

Peng, ranked number 25 in the world, had no answer to Sharapova's power hitting from the baseline and gave up another break en route to conceding the first set.

Sharapova, who is yet to drop a set in Tianjin, raced into a 3-0 lead at the start of the second but suffered a brief bout of nerves while serving for the fifth game, when she was forced to save three break points.

The 30-year-old turned the tables on Peng in the very next game, breaking her opponent once again before closing out the contest in 78 minutes.

It will be Sharapova's first WTA final since she defeated Spain's Carla Suarez Navarro to win the Italian Open in May 2015.

(Source: Eurosport)

Liverpool frustrated by Manchester United in goalless draw

If nothing else, Liverpool should probably take it as a compliment that Manchester United would choose to approach the game this way. It was the second successive season this fixture has ended in a goalless draw and it didn't need an overly suspicious mind to deduce that José Mourinho had decided the priority was to avoid being beaten – and to hell with anyone who might question their tactics.

Mourinho's team had averaged three goals a game from their previous seven Premier League fixtures but this was the first time they had faced any of the sides in the top 12 positions. Mourinho altered his tactics accordingly and the second half, in particular, was an exercise in defensive resilience directly beneath the Kop. Liverpool were unable to break them down and Mourinho, remember, has already made it clear what he thinks about the people who might question his methods. For the story of this game, refer to his quote after last season's Europa League final: "There are lots of poets in football, but poets don't win many titles."

He tends to know what he is doing but it was a risky strategy and it would have been intriguing to see Mourinho's back-up plan if one of those Liverpool attacks had finally found a way behind the opposition defence. Instead, the home side did not have the wit or creativity to make it a happier occasion and Jürgen Klopp could be forgiven for thinking his team ought to have done more. They have won only one of their last eight games in all the various competitions and it all felt rather flat at the end. Liverpool, put bluntly, had come up short.

Mourinho, in stark contrast, will probably reflect on a job well done, no matter how much it grates with him on occasions that he is accused of putting together teams that lack adventure on the toughest assignments. They did not manage a single noteworthy attack in the second half and, as for the opening 45 minutes, perhaps the most extraordinary statistic of the afternoon was that it was not until the 17th



minute that Romelu Lukaku even managed a touch of the ball. The Belgian is often accused of lacking his best work against elite opponents but his failure to score here, the first blank in his opening eight Premier League games for his new club, owed more to the circumstances. Lukaku had one chance in the first-half when he aimed his shot too close to Simon Mignolet but he was isolated for most of the game and perhaps there was a measure of frustration in the challenge that sent Joe Gomez flying close to the touchline.

Instead this was an afternoon when Phil Jones and Chris Smalling demonstrated their improvement under Mourinho and one moment in the first half served as the latest reminder that there might not be

another goalkeeper in the world with David de Gea's shot-stopping ability.

That apart, there was not a great amount of danger for either goalkeeper during the first half. The game had set off at the kind of speed that makes these encounters so watchable but, at that kind of pace, it was far too hectic to expect either side to pass the ball with their normal accuracy. Mohamed Salah showed, in flashes, some lovely, deft touches but there was so little time on the ball, with a challenge never too far away, that it was difficult to build possession. Both sides were guilty at times of not taking enough care of the ball but perhaps that was inevitable when everything was so fast and furious.

(Source: Guardian)

Nadal edges out Cilic to reach Shanghai Masters final



World number one Rafael Nadal squeezed past Marin Cilic into the Shanghai Masters final with a 7-5 7-6(3) victory over the big-serving Croatian on Saturday.

Nadal, runner-up in 2009, was pushed hard by the battling fourth seed, who put his booming forehand to good use but failed to derail the Spaniard, who has now won 16 matches in a row.

The 31-year-old Nadal, who will face Swiss Roger Federer or Argentine Juan Martin del Potro in Sunday's final, forced Cilic to save six break points in his first two service games.

The Croat hung on and even had a chance to take the lead, but squandered three break points of his own with the score tied at 5-5 in the first set. Nadal then finally broke the world number five before serving out the set.

The Spaniard looked set for a routine win when he broke again early in the second to go 2-1 up, but Cilic had

other ideas, forcing him to cough up another break point in the sixth game.

Nadal missed an easy volley with his opponent stranded and pounded the net cord with his racket in frustration as Cilic wheeled away pumping his fist after leveling things up.

There was more drama to come as a flurry of Cilic errors gave Nadal three break points with the second set tied at 4-4.

The Croatian, who made 40 unforced errors in total, got himself out of trouble with three big serves but double faulted to hand the initiative back to Nadal and skied a forehand to give his opponent the chance to serve out the match.

Nadal failed to capitalize, squandering a match point before Cilic unleashed two massive forehands to level again at 5-5 as the set headed towards a tiebreak where Nadal's ability to hold his nerve in clutch situations proved the difference.

(Source: Reuters)

Egypt launching tourism campaign with AS Roma



Egypt's tourism ministry said on Saturday that it will launch a promotional campaign with Italian football team AS Roma to attract Italian tourists to the country.

The ministry said the ad campaign will start during AS Roma's match against Napoli on Saturday, and will continue during the Italian team's home games until the end of the season. The advertisements will be placed around the stadium and on the team's radio station, and a promotional video will be shown on the stadium's mega screens. Competitions will also take place on the team's radio station, with the winners awarded trips to the Egyptian resorts of Sharm El-Sheikh, Marsa Alam, Luxor, Aswan, and Matrouh.

The Italian club's star Stephan El-Shaarawy, who is of Egyptian origin and is nicknamed Il Faraone (The Pharaoh), will be the face of the campaign.

The advertisements will also be aired on Italian sports channels Sky Calcio, which holds exclusive broadcast rights to the Italian league and cup, as well as the Italian club's official channel Roma TV.

The move by the Egyptian tourism ministry comes one day after it signed a strategic partnership agreement with the Italian tourism federation Fiavet that will see a six-month promotional campaign involving 1,000 Italian tourism companies.

Weekly low-cost flights between Milan and the Red Sea resorts of Sharm El-Sheikh and Marsa Alam will be soon be re-launched, after being halted two years ago, according to Egyptian tourism minister Yehia Rashed, who is currently attending TTG Incontri tourism exhibition in Rimini, Italy.

The agreement is part of efforts by Egypt to revive tourism to the country, which suffered major blows after the 2011 uprising and the 2015 crash of a Russian airliner in Sinai. Earlier this month, the ministry launched a campaign with CNN to promote tourism to the country around the world. The ministry said in a statement that an advertisement will be aired in Europe, the Middle East and Africa during the channel's weather forecast, for which Egypt will be the main sponsor.

(Source: ahramonline)

Milan football derby fever rages from Chinatown to Beijing

Italy's traditional derby match between footballing giants Inter and AC Milan now has a distinct Asian flavour and following, fuelled by multi-million dollar investments by the Chinese owners of the two clubs.

Sunday's derby has gripped Milan including the city's Chinatown district — and the football fever has spread as far as the Chinese capital Beijing.

The match is not only a duel between the city's rival teams but also their Chinese owners — Zhang Jindong, whose Suning Group bankrolls Inter Milan and Li Yonghong's Rossoneri Sport Investment Lux Group, which owns AC Milan.

The flags of both teams flutter across the long avenue via Paolo Sarpi in the heart of Milan's Chinatown — where many of the city's 29,000 Chinese residents live — ahead of the Derby della Madonnina.

The excitement is also building thousands of kilometers away in Beijing.

AC Milan officials on Friday launched the club's

Chinese branch to develop business partnerships.

"With an enormous base of devoted football fans in China, there is huge potential for AC Milan and for professional football in China," AC Milan's chief commercial officer Lorenzo Giorgetti said.

"We are going to organize an event starting from next Sunday with our Fan Clubs in Beijing."

"We are looking forward to embracing more and more Chinese partners who will help us on our journey back to glory!"

Most of the Chinese residents in Sarpi hail from the Zhejiang region in eastern China. The younger generation, in particular, have grown up with football and are devoted fans.

Many of them will be among the 70,000 spectators at the famed San Siro stadium for a match between two former European superpower teams hoping to rekindle their glory days through the big injections of cash.

AC Milan have been completely overhauled at a

cost of 230 million euros (\$270 million) by Li Yonghong, who already paid 740 million euros to buy the club last April.

But despite the heavy investment, Milan have failed to find their rhythm on the pitch yet, with Montella's side currently sitting in seventh place on the Serie A table.

Milan last won the Serie A title in 2011 while Inter's last championship was the previous season in 2010.

Zhang's Suning group paid nearly 270 million euro for Inter Milan in June 2016.

The club finished a disappointing seventh last season, one place behind AC Milan, but have made a brighter start to the 2017-18 campaign, winning six of their first seven matches.

They currently sit third in the standings but are well aware of the added importance attached to Sunday's traditional derby match.

(Source: AFP)

We respect all teams in U-17 World Cup: Abbas Chamanian

S P O R T S Iran coach Abbas Chamanian **d e s k** says that they will respect all teams in the FIFA U-17 World Cup in India.

Despite having won all three of their games, Iran U-17 coach Abbas Chamanian says that there are still a lot of good teams in the competition.

Iran qualified for the FIFA U-17 World Cup Round of 16 with three wins over Guinea, Germany and Costa Rica.

Chamanian's boys will face Mexico or Chile in the next stage on Tuesday.

"We have picked up nine out of nine points in the group stages, but the most important thing we must think about from now is the next round" Chamanian told sportskeeda.

"Indeed, our attack has been great but our defense also deserves all the praise it can get. We have conceded only one goal in the tournament and did not allow any clear opportunities to our opponents, this is something we can build on for our future opponents as well," he added.

"We must not forget that we are not the only team that finished with nine points. Winning all three games does not make us automatic title contenders, there are still a lot of good teams that we must respect. However, it is still a very important achievement for the team and players," Chamanian concluded.

Despite having won all three of their games, its great to see that Iran still remain as humble ever.

Perhaps this is the key to their success. Humility and Coherence in this Iranian team seem to be a constant, game after game. Don't forget the 10 goals they have scored have come from seven different scorers and that in itself speaks a lot.



Iran the benchmark for AFC Futsal Championship 2018 hopefuls

The Islamic Republic of Iran is the setting as the countdown starts for the AFC Futsal Championship 2018 with the South and Central Zone Qualifiers which kicks off on Sunday.

The South and Central zones have been merged into one qualification zone as Nepal are the only representatives from the South, bringing the total to seven teams competing for four spots in the Finals in Chinese Taipei next year.

Uzbekistan, runners-up in the previous edition, are one of the favorites to qualify.

The White Wolves had an impressive run at the 2016 tournament, topping Group A to progress into the quarter-finals where they beat Iraq 3-0, before a 3-1 penalty shootout win in the semi-finals against Thailand secured them a place in the final against Iran.

In the recent 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, history repeated itself with Iran beating Uzbekistan to claim the title.

Uzbekistan will face Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Nepal in Group A of the qualifiers

Kyrgyz Republic finished sixth in the AFC Futsal Championship 2016, and an early elimination from the 2017 Asian Indoor Games leaves the Snow Leopards with much ground to cover.

However, they have not missed a single Finals since the tournament's inception in 1999, and can be expected to provide stiff opposition.

After two failed attempts to qualify for the Finals, Turkmenistan are ready to make a difference.

Despite losing out to Afghanistan on penalties in the quarter-finals in 2016, hosting the 2017 Asian Indoor Games has helped the team improve significantly.

Having played more competitive matches, the Turkmenistan side will be aiming to outdo their previous performances.

The South zone's sole representative Nepal will make their AFC Futsal Championship debut against Asia's best, but in a top flight tournament, surprises cannot be ruled out.



In the three-team Group B, Iran are the ones to beat and the odds are surely against Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

The futsal powerhouse hold the record of 11 championship titles, and the team have enjoyed much success in recent years.

After winning the 2016 AFC Futsal Championship, the Iranians finished third in the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016, before claiming their fifth Asian Indoor Games gold medal.

Dangerman Ali Asghar Hassanzadeh (pictured below), who was named the Most Valuable Player after assisting Iran beat Uzbekistan in the final, will definitely play a huge role in this qualifier.

Tajikistan's closest attempt at the title was their 2007 campaign where they reached the quarter-finals but were halted by Uzbekistan.

They have struggled to make the cut into the knock-out phase ever since, despite consecutive qualifications.

Afghanistan turned heads in the 2017 Asian Indoor Games when they defeated Uzbekistan 4-2 to claim top spot in their group to progress to the quarter-finals, but losses to eventual champions Iran in the semis and Japan in the third place play-off secured them fourth place.

A result worth highlighting, as the Lions of Khorasan have yet to make an appearance in the AFC Futsal Championship Finals stage.

Fixtures

October 15

Group A

Uzbekistan v Nepal

Venue: Pour Sharifi Futsal Hall, Tabriz

Kick-off: 1400

Kyrgyz Republic v Turkmenistan

Venue: Pour Sharifi Futsal Hall, Tabriz

Kick-off: 1630

Group B

Afghanistan v Iran

Venue: Pour Sharifi Futsal Hall, Tabriz

Kick-off: 1900

October 16

Group A

Nepal v Kyrgyz Republic

Venue: Pour Sharifi Futsal Hall, Tabriz

Kick-off: 1400

Turkmenistan v Uzbekistan

Venue: Pour Sharifi Futsal Hall, Tabriz

Kick-off: 1630

Group B

Tajikistan v Afghanistan

Venue: Pour Sharifi Futsal Hall, Tabriz

Kick-off: 1900

October 17

Group A

Uzbekistan v Kyrgyz Republic

Venue: Pour Sharifi Futsal Hall, Tabriz

Kick-off: 1400

Turkmenistan v Nepal

Venue: Pour Sharifi Futsal Hall, Tabriz

Kick-off: 1630

Group B

Iran v Tajikistan

Venue: Pour Sharifi Futsal Hall, Tabriz

Kick-off: 1900

(Source: the-afc)

Manchester United emerging from 'a dark tunnel,' says Park Ji-sung

By Manchester United's high standards, it has been a difficult four years.

True, last season United might have won three cups — the Community Shield, the Europa League and the League Cup — but England's most successful club has not won a Premier League title since 2013.

That was the year Alex Ferguson — their distinguished former manager and British football's most successful boss — retired.

The post-Ferguson years have been ones of upheaval and change — historic defeats under the Scotsman's initial successor David Moyes, then disenchantment at the turgid football of Louis van Gaal's team.

Now under current boss Jose Mourinho there is hope, says former player Park Ji-sung, that the club can once again become a force in the English Premier League and Europe.

"We're almost through that dark tunnel," Park tells CNN Sport, adding that Ferguson was a huge influence on his career.

"After Sir Alex Ferguson it's been a difficult time for Man United, but actually many people knows that after Sir Alex Ferguson it would be difficult time for Man United. Now you can see this season the performance is great. Hopefully it will be the same as under Sir Alex Ferguson."

Premier League not a two-horse race

The Champions League winner, a former midfielder

famed for his endless energy, won four league titles at United and was the first Asian player to captain the club and play in a Champions League final.

Adored in his home country, Park has also played 100 times for South Korea, scoring at three World Cups. He is widely regarded as Asia's most successful footballer.

Park said he hoped Mourinho, who was appointed United boss on a three-year deal in May 2016, could continue his feat of winning a league title in his second season at every club he has managed.

"Particularly this season, they are doing so well under Mourinho," said Park.

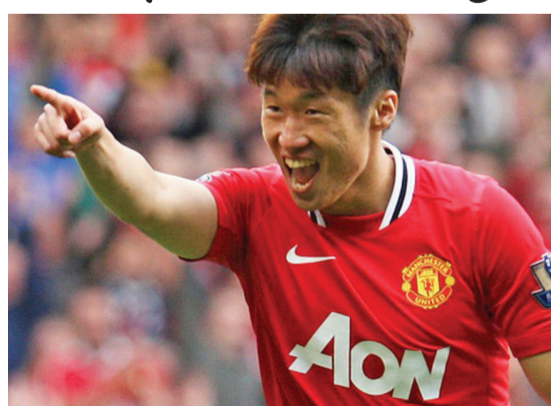
Though United won those three trophies in Mourinho's first term, they finished a disappointing sixth in the league.

But Mourinho's men — boosted by the summer acquisitions of Romelu Lukaku and Nemanja Matic — are currently in fine form, jointly leading the Premier League after an unbeaten start.

"He knows more about Man United now," added Park of the former Chelsea and Real Madrid boss.

"His second season is always good. In his first season, he knows what the club wanted. He found some things, brought in some players who he wanted and now it looks strong."

United and Pep Guardiola's Manchester City are the league's in-form teams, with both winning six and drawing one of their opening seven games, but Park warned



against expecting a two-horse race this season.

"I know this moment it's two clubs [City and United] that really fight each other, but the season's long and I know Chelsea, Arsenal and Liverpool all compete during the season."

"Always the Premier League has several clubs fighting for the title."

"At the moment, it looks like two clubs. We need to show our quality and don't think about other clubs, like Man City. The season's long, just focus on what they [United] have done because they've done so well and if we can continue with that then I think we can win the title again."

(Source: CNN)

World's best blind footballer Ricardinho praises Iran

Ricardinho, the best blind footballer in the world, expects Iran to come strong in 2018 IBSA Blind Football World Championships.

The competition will take place in Madrid, Spain from June 17-25, 2018.



"Iran did a great work to come to the final in Rio and I believe they can get even better. We know there will be other good teams in the World Championships. Argentina has a lot of tradition and China has a great record in major tournaments. But we will keep on doing what we have always done: our focus is always to give our best," Ricardinho noted.

The 28-year-old also chose the lone goal in the Paralympic Games final against Iran as his favorite ever.

"I had broken my left leg and damaged the ligaments early in the year so I wasn't sure I would make it to the Paralympics. But I managed to be fully fit for the final and scored the goal that gave Brazil its fourth 5-a-side gold medal. The goal against Iran still makes me feel emotional."

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Shahrdari Tabriz cycling team crested in 2017 Tour of Iran

Press TV — Iranian Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI) Continental cycling team Shahrdari Tabriz has shown great endurance and remarkable athletic skills at the 32nd edition of Tour of Iran (Azarbaijan), and deservedly claimed the title at the conclusion of the international sports event.

On Friday, professional road bicycle racers for the Tabriz-based team could accomplish the entire six stages of the tournament, and registered the total time of 69:37.15.

They rode the total length of 1,017 kilometers (631.93 miles) with the routs passing through the cities of Tabriz, Urmia, Jolfa and Sarein plus Sahand ski resort.

They were followed by compatriots from Pishgaman Yazd Cycling Team, who clocked 69:38.58 to finish in the second slot.

Third-placed Belgian UCI Continental cycling team Tarteletto-Isorex recorded 69:53.40.

Earlier in the day, Theodore Yates, who is currently riding for Australian UCI Continental cycling team Drapac-Pat's Veg Holistic Development Team, clocked 2:04.32, riding a distance of 114 kilometers (70.8 miles) within the northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz to stand atop the podium at the end of the sixth stage of Tour of Iran.

He was followed by Iranian opponent Mohammad Ganjkanlou and Marco Doets from the Netherlands.

Dutch racing cyclist Rob Ruijgh, who rides for UCI Continental team Tarteletto-Isorex, stood on top of the overall podium and received the golden jersey.

Additionally, Kazakhstani cyclist Ilya Davidenok, who rides for Shahrdari Tabriz Team, bested his rivals in the mountain racing section. Doets got

the green jersey.

The green jersey is a term used in road bicycle racing. It is a distinctive racing jersey worn by the leader in a subsidiary competition.

The 32nd edition of Tour of Iran (Azarbaijan) kicked off on October 8, and wrapped up on October 13, 2017.

A total of 14 teams from various countries, including Australia, Bahrain, Belgium, Germany, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait and the Netherlands, took part in the event.

Mourinho hails "positive point" from Liverpool stalemate

Jose Mourinho has insisted that he had no choice but to sit back on a point as Manchester United held on for a goalless draw against Liverpool at Anfield.

The Reds were on top for long periods of the match and had 19 attempts across the 90 minutes, five of which tested David de Gea in the visiting goal.

De Gea denied Joel Matip from close range in an uneventful first half and Emre Can squandered the best chance of a second half largely dominated by Liverpool.

Mourinho is happy enough with the result, however, telling BBC Sport: "The opposition was good today, but we played our game. In the first half we had a couple of very good chances and good control of the game. In the second half [Nemanja] Matic tired and I had no solutions on the bench."

"I tried with my substitutions to make us more dynamic in attack, but in reality we lost power and energy and control in midfield. We had one shot on goal - well for you and the experts it is easy to speak but it is more difficult from the sidelines."

"Liverpool's midfield was really strong. They are faster than us when the game breaks. I had no chance to bring the game in another direction so it is a positive point."

United climb to the top of the Premier League table on 20 points ahead of Manchester City's meeting with Stoke City at the Etihad Stadium.

(Source: Four Four Two)

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www.tehrantimes.com

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Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433
Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
Printed at: Rooztab - ISSN: 1017-94

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
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Iranian docs on ISIS, shoddy Chinese cosmetics produced

A R T TEHRAN — Raz Media Group, affiliated with the Qom Seminary, has produced two documentaries on ISIS and the shoddy Chinese cosmetics increasingly smuggled into Iran.



A poster for Iranian filmmaker Emran Cheraghi's documentary "Blood Color" that is about the ISIS media war

Co-directed by Emran Cheraghi and Mehdi Keshtkar, "Chinese Skin" puts its spotlight on the shoddy Chinese cosmetics and toiletries that are illegally imported into Iran.

The film also focuses on the numerous skin problems caused by the use of these materials.

The other documentary "Blood Color" directed by Cheraghi, discusses the ISIS media war and the ways they are using social networks to promote their beliefs.

Both documentaries have been produced in collaboration with the Owj Arts and Media Organization, an Iranian institution producing revolutionary works in art and cinema.

Battle with Thor kicks off three-movie arc for Marvel's Hulk

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Marvel's big green Hulk may not be getting his own standalone movie but actor Mark Ruffalo, who plays the current iteration of the superhero, said the character will get a mini arc within three upcoming Marvel movies.

Hulk, the muscle-bound, larger-than-life green alter-ego of scientist Bruce Banner, appears in the upcoming "Thor: Ragnarok," out in U.S. theaters on Nov. 3, as a gladiator trapped on a futuristic planet and forced to fight Thor.

The Hulk will also appear in 2018's "Avengers: Infinity War" and its sequel, 2019's yet-to-be-titled Avengers 4.

"We've taken the arc of a standalone Hulk movie and put it into those three movies, consciously," Ruffalo said.

Ruffalo, who has spent more time as scientist Banner than as the Hulk in the past two Avengers films, said he relished the opportunity to be in character as the Hulk for the majority of "Thor: Ragnarok."

"This movie is about just breaking free of the forms and rules, and so I got to break free from what we thought Hulk was to a slightly more fleshed-out character," he said.

The Hulk, who first appeared in comics in 1962, has had his own standalone television shows and movies in the past, notably 2003's "Hulk" and 2008's "The Incredible Hulk" films, both from Universal Pictures.

The cinematic rights to Marvel's Hulk superhero are owned by Comcast Corp's Universal Pictures, while Walt Disney Co owns Marvel studios and is behind the current success of the superhero movie franchise.

"Ultimately Universal owns the rights there. I don't see them like hanging out together any time soon to be like 'Hey, let's do another Hulk movie,'" he said.

Italy's Gucci bans fur, joining others in seeking alternatives

PARIS (Reuters) — Italy's Gucci will stop using fur in its designs from next year, joining a growing number of fashion houses looking at alternatives after coming under pressure from animal rights activists and changing consumer tastes.

Gucci, part of Paris-based luxury group Kering, has paraded models down the catwalk in luxurious fur coats in the past and creative director Alessandro Michele brought in loafers and sling-backs lined with kangaroo-fur two years ago.

But the brand said it would now join an alliance of fur-free companies, adding it would sell off remaining accessories and clothing made with animal fur in a charity auction.

Gucci has sold some of its mink fur coats for over \$40,000.

Marco Bizzarri, Gucci's chief executive, said the brand would drop fur starting from its spring and summer 2018 collection and that its new approach had been agreed on with Michele.

Gucci has enjoyed a revival under Michele, whose flamboyant, colorful designs have fueled sales over the past two years.

Hushang Moradi Kermani nominated for Astrid Lindgren Award

A R T TEHRAN—Celebrated Iranian children's author Hushang Moradi Kermani whose works also appeal to adults has been nominated for the 2018 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award, a prestigious Swedish honor to promote children's and youths' literature in the world.

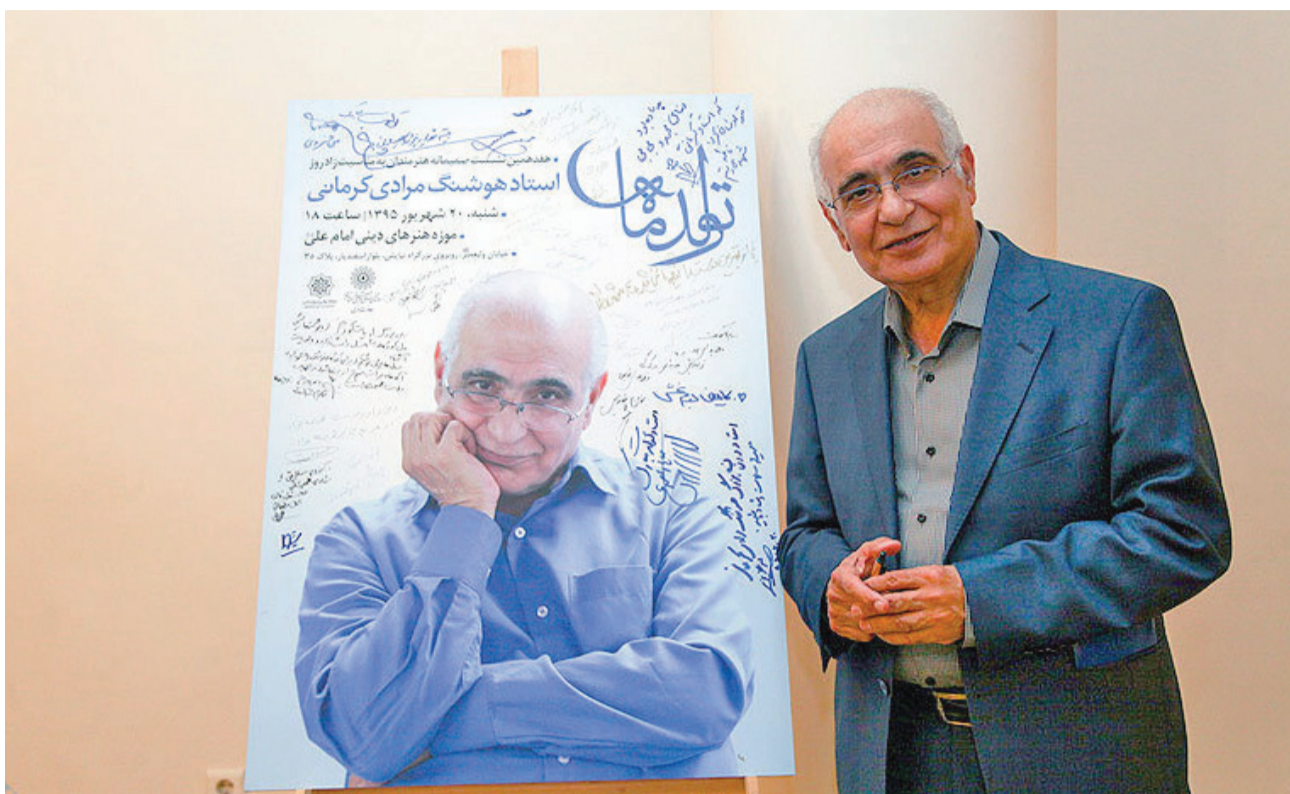
He was introduced to the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs, the organizer of the award, by Iran's Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, the institute announced on Saturday.

Moradi Kermani, 73, has been nominated for the award for several times.

"The Water Urn", "A Sweet Jam" and "Believe It Or Not" are among his credits. Most of his works have been translated into English, German, French, Spanish, Dutch, Arabic, Armenian, Turkish and several other languages.

The prize worth SEK 5 million (about \$600,000) is the largest international children's and young adults' literature award in the world.

The award was established in 2002 by the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs to commemorate writer Astrid Lindgren and to promote children's and youths' literature from around the world.



Writer Hushang Moradi Kermani poses beside his picture signed by a number of officials and artists during his 72nd birthday celebration at the Imam Ali (AS) Religious Arts Museum on September 10, 2016. (Honaronline/Mojtaba Arabzadeh)

"A Girl in the Room" crowned best short at Beirut festival

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Karim Lakzadeh's "A Girl in the Room" was selected as best short at the Beirut International Film Festival, the organizers announced on Thursday.

The film is about an elderly man and his friends at a guesthouse, in which they are preparing to welcome the man's daughter who is coming to visit her father after 25 years of living in Germany.

"The Guy Came on Horseback" by Iranian director Hossein Rabiee Dastjerdi was also screened in the short film category, which also featured 14 other films such as "Missed Call" by Christy Whaibe from France and "Story of a job Interview" by Alkim Ozmen from Turkey.

The organizers of the festival also paid tribute to legendary Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami by screening some of his films, including "Take Me Home", "Where Is the Friend's Home", "24 Frames" and "A Taste of Cherry".



Iranian director Karim Lakzadeh poses after accepting the best short film award for his "A Girl in the Room" at the Beirut International Film Festival in the Lebanese capital on October 12, 2017.

Movies from Iran on screen at Religion Today festival

A R T TEHRAN — Four Iranian films are on screen in various sections of the 20th edition of the Religion Today Film Festival, which is underway in Trento, Italy.

"Coldness" directed by brothers Bahram and Bahman Ark is competing in the main section of the festival while "A157" by Behruz Nuranipur will go on screen in the documentary section.

"Coldness" is about an eight-year-old boy who is constantly anxious and wets himself due to the grave financial difficulties of his family. He is forced to hide himself under his mother's chador every day coming back from school.

"A157" narrates the tragedy of three Kurdish girls who became pregnant after being raped by members of ISIS.

"White Shadows" by Mehdi Amini and "You Just Be My Mother" by Roqieh Tavakkoli will also go on screen in the short



A poster for "Coldness" directed by Iranian directors Bahram and Bahman Ark

film section of the festival, which will run until October 22.

Since 1997, Religion Today has been the foremost international film festival dedicated films on religions.

"Dialogue Announcement" conveys Iran's message of peace: diplomat

A R T TEHRAN — Top Iranian diplomat Majid Takht-Ravanchi has said that "Dialogue Announcement", a poster exhibition displaying works by Iranian graphic designers at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center, conveys the Iranian people's message of peace to the world.

Speaking at an opening ceremony of the six-day exhibit on Friday, he added, "The posters in this collection confirm once again that the Iranian people have always been seeking peace and dialogue."

"These artworks can represent the art-loving and pacifist nature of the Iranian people as certain people are waging wars in the world."

He praised the active participation of female Iranian artists in the exhibition and said that the exhibition can give the correct positive image of Iran to the world.

He expressed his hope that Iran could organize the exhibition at UN headquarters in the future.

"Dialogue and Positive Interaction with the Globe" is the theme of the exhibition, which is showcasing works by 29



A poster for "Dialogue Announcement", a poster exhibition at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center

promising young artists, including Zahra Salemnejad, Masumeh Najafi, Elham Zakizadeh, Vahid Nazari and Zohreh Shirvani.

Ashkan Qazanchi is the curator of the exhibition.

Book chronicles valor of Zoroastrians in modern Iranian history

A R T TEHRAN — A book that spotlights the Zoroastrians who have shown valor during various events in modern Iranian history has recently been published in Tehran.

Parvin Bamsian, Nakhostindokht Farhadi and Bozarjomehr Parkhideh are the co-authors of the book titled "Honoring Brave Zoroastrians".

The book released by Behjat Publications was unveiled during a special ceremony at Tehran's Khosravi Hall last Thursday.

The book begins with biographies of Parviz Shahjahan and Fereidun Khosro Arestani, two Zoroastrians who killed during the Constitutional Movement in the early 1900s.

The Zoroastrians who were killed during the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war have also



been discussed in the book.

The book also introduces the Zoroastrians soldiers who were held captive for years in Iraq.

The writers have conducted interviews with families of the soldiers for the book.

Stars of Russian Tzar film to miss premiere over safety fears: director

MOSCOW (Reuters) — The two lead actors in Russian movie "Matilda", which religious conservatives have condemned as blasphemous, have declined to travel to Russia for the premiere because they fear for their safety, the film's director said.

"Matilda", to be released internationally in late October, tells the tale of the late-19th century romance between Nicholas II, before he became Russia's last czar, and half-Polish dancer Matilda Kshesinskaya.

Opponents say it besmirches the reputation of the czar, who was killed by Bolshevik revolutionaries and is widely revered in Russia. The director, Alexei Uchitel, said he had received threats of violence, and several cinema chains have chosen not to screen the movie.

Uchitel told a news conference that Polish actress Michalina Olszanska, who

plays Kshesinskaya, and German actor Lars Eidinger, who plays the future czar, did not want to come for the Oct. 23 premiere in St Petersburg and the Moscow premiere the following day.

Uchitel said: "They are afraid and that's why they are refusing. They are worried first and foremost about security. I am still trying to change their minds."

He said that Eidinger had received threats and "he is afraid of some kind of physical attacks."

The director said that two other non-Russian actors in the film, Luise Wolfram and Thomas Ostermeier, also did not want to attend the premiere for the same reasons.

A Berlin-based agent for Eidinger, Gabriele Czapionka, said Uchitel's comments about the actor's security concerns, and receiving threats, were

correct.

Agents for Olszanska and Wolfram did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Ostermeier told Reuters by telephone that he had security concerns because of a series of violent incidents linked to the film. "In terms of the security aspect, I'm worried," he said.

But he said he was staying away from Russia primarily as a protest against the prosecution of Russian theater director Kirill Serebrennikov.

He is under house arrest awaiting trial on charges, which he denies, of embezzling state funds. His supporters say he is being punished for speaking out against the Kremlin.

"Matilda" has exposed fault lines in Russia between social conservatives with ties to the church, who have been

growing in influence under President Vladimir Putin, and liberals who argue that freedom of expression is under threat.

In September, a man drove a car packed with gas canisters into the entrance of a cinema in the city of Yekaterinburg. The cinema had been hosting a film festival at which the chairman of the festival jury spoke in support of Uchitel.

In August, someone tried to set fire to a building in St Petersburg that houses Uchitel's studio. Two cars parked outside the office of Uchitel's lawyer have been set on fire, Russian media reported.

A suspect detained over arson attacks linked to the film was identified by Russian media as Alexander Kalinin, leader of a radical Orthodox Christian group that had warned cinemas showing the movie could be set on fire.