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Amano says Iran is implementing nuclear deal



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IAEA chief Amano tells reporters Iran had not broken any promises and was not receiving special treatment.

Iran: Any party who violates nuclear deal will pay heavy price

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's **d e s k** Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Monday that any party that violates the nuclear deal will have to pay a heavy price.

"In case a country for whatever reason fails to meet its commitments [under the deal], it will have to pay the heavy price of non-compliance. It doesn't matter what country it is," Bahram Qassemi told a press briefing.

"As previously said, Iran will not initiate a violation of the JCPOA but of course will react as necessary to violations by any other country and will not tolerate breach of the JCPOA," the spokesman insisted, using the official name for the nuclear agreement.

However, he said, any decision on non-compliance by any party will be made by the high-level Iranian supervisory board.

The deal, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

(JCPOA), was struck between Iran and the 5+1 countries in 2015. Iran's partners under the deal are France, the UK, China, Russia, the U.S., Germany, and the European Union.

Washington has recently been resorting to different pretexts to undermine the deal including efforts to influence the International Atomic Energy Agency's reports about Iran's compliance to the deal.

Qassemi said the IAEA would not allow third parties to determine what it has to do.

Zarif's meetings in New York being planned

Qassemi also said Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif plans to travel to New York for the annual meeting of the United Nations General Assembly.

There is speculation about a possible meeting between Zarif and the new U.S. Secretary of States Rex Tillerson. **->2**

Iranian women urge UN to stop violence in Myanmar

WOMEN TEHRAN — A **d e s k** group of women-based Iranian organizations and formations in a letter sent to the United Nations asked the international body to act immediately to end the violence against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.

They seriously condemned the plight of Rohingya women and children and appealed to the Myanmar

government, UN officials, human rights organizations, Muslim states, and human right activists to make efforts to solve the problem of Rohingya Muslims.

The international community is facing another tragedy in broadest dimensions in Myanmar, the letter reads, adding the tragedy has shaken the conscience of humanity. **->12**

Rhetoric on Iran deal has hurt U.S. stature: Zarif

Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the United States' belligerent rhetoric on a multilateral deal with Iran has impacted other countries' faith in potentially negotiating with Washington.

In an interview with the Iranian Borna News, which was published on Sunday, Foreign Minister Zarif referred to the "very dangerous" tensions between the U.S. and North Korea and implied that Pyongyang was not interested in talking to Washington to defuse the tensions because of the U.S.'s past behavior.

Dialog was badly needed, he said however.

"The situation is very dangerous. I do not recall any time in my 40 years in politics when there was talk [of using nuclear weapons] in the international community," he said.

Tensions have been running high between the U.S. and North Korea in recent months. Pyongyang has been swiftly advancing its missile and military nuclear programs, which Washington perceives as a threat to itself and its allies in East Asia.

Both sides have been threatening one another with military action, and the prospect of a nuclear confrontation remains on the horizon. On September 3, North Korea conducted a nuclear test — its sixth overall — and said it was now capable of building a nuclear warhead small enough to fit on a missile.

The US, which has permanent military presence in the region, angrily reacted to the test. Washington has reportedly prepared a sanctions resolution, which it plans to table at the United Nations Security Council on Monday. Trump has not ruled out military action against North Korea.

Zarif said a solution had to be reached peacefully, and threats and pressure had to be avoided.

He said that the US, however, suffered from a reputation problem and negotiating with it was not viewed as a favorable option.

"Some of the rhetoric that the US has adopted about the JCPOA since Mr. Trump took office has cast doubt about the US's reputation as a [credible] negotiating partner," the Iranian foreign minister said, referring to the Iran deal by its official abbreviation. **->2**

Suu Kyi is a US/ Western darling: Lendman

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — U.S. columnist Stephen Lendman says that "Suu Kyi is a fraud, a US/ Western darling."

"She reminds me in some ways of Mother Theresa, more myth than 'saint of the gutters'," Lendman tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the text of the interview:

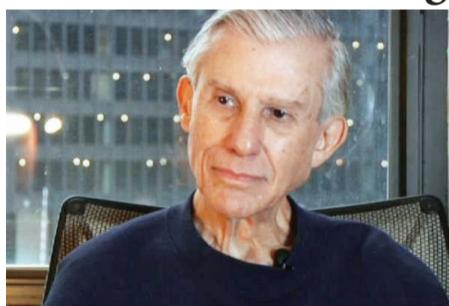
■ Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar are in a disastrous situation. Why aren't international organizations and institutions attentive to their sufferings?

A: What's going on is shocking and disturbing, largely ignored in Washington and other Western capitals - what I call slow-motion genocide against the Rohingyas, going on for years, accelerated in recent weeks.

■ Aung San Suu Kyi, the Nobel Peace winner, who was herself the victim of the Myanmar Army and had been tortured for many years, is silent about the savagery against the Rohingya and even supports the military action. What is your assessment of this approach?

A: Suu Kyi is a fraud, a U.S./ Western darling. She reminds me in some ways of Mother Theresa, more myth than "saint of the gutters."

Instead of helping the poor and needy as falsely claimed, she fostered a cult of suffering, her missionaries of charity a disgrace - deplorable conditions substituting for noble work.



Her hospitals were human warehouses. She ignored hunger, malnutrition and diseases. Mistreatment substituted while she jet-setted in luxury, hobnobbing with the world's rich, famous and infamous.

She's more sinner than saint. The same

Western double standards are notorious and outrageous. Look how abusively Iran is treated. For aiding Syria combat US-supported terrorism, it's called the world's greatest terrorist threat - what applies to Washington and Israel most of all.

goes for Suu Kyi, guilty of crimes against the Rohingyas.

■ Why aren't the UN and the UNHCR doing their responsibility in reducing the agonies of the Muslim minority in Myanmar?

A: The UN is an appendage of U.S. imperial policy, supporting what demands condemnation. What has the current and former secretaries-general done for Palestinians and other beleaguered people - nothing besides meaningless rhetoric.

■ If the situation that Rohingya Muslims are facing were imposed on the citizens of a Western country, all of the international organizations and institutions would have taken measures to deal with it. Why do these organizations practice dual standards?

A: Western double standards are notorious and outrageous. Look how abusively Iran is treated. For aiding Syria combat US-supported terrorism, it's called the world's greatest terrorist threat - what applies to Washington and Israel most of all.

Earlier claims about Iran having a military nuclear component were fabricated, Trump repeating the phony notion that it wants one.

In contrast, nuclear armed and dangerous Israel's regional threat is ignored.

Western countries and their rogue allies are indifferent to human suffering, uncaring about the Rohingyas, Palestinians and other severely abused people - their policies contributing to their misery.

Myanmar crisis textbook example of ethnic cleansing: UN

The top UN human rights official has denounced Myanmar's "brutal security operation" against Rohingya in Rakhine state, which he said was "clearly disproportionate" to militia attacks carried out last month.

Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein, addressing the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva on Monday, said that more than 270,000 people had fled to Bangladesh, with more trapped on the border, amid reports of the burning of villages and extrajudicial killings.

"I call on the government to end its current cruel military operation, with accountability for all violations that have occurred, and to reverse the pattern of severe and widespread discrimination against the Rohingya population," Zeid said.

"The situation seems a textbook example of ethnic cleansing."

The UN chief's warning comes a day after Bangladesh's foreign minister said "a genocide" is being waged in the country's violence-hit Rakhine state.

"The international community is saying it is a genocide. We also say it is a genocide," AH Mahmood Ali told reporters after briefing diplomats in Dhaka on Sunday.

Ali described actions following the attacks on security forces on August 25 as "revenge" by Myanmar troops.

"Should all people be killed? Should all villages be burnt? It is not acceptable," he said, adding Dhaka was seeking a peaceful solution, not a "war" against Myanmar.

"We did not create the problem. Since the problem started in Myanmar, that's why they should resolve. We have said we'll help them," he said, adding that the problem took a "new turn" after the August 25 attacks.

The minister's comments come as the chair of Bangladesh's National Commission for Human Rights said leading figures in Myanmar could face trial for "genocide" at an international tribunal.

(Source: The Guardian)



Symphony of colors in wedding ceremony

Symphony of colors have always been a key characteristic of Bakhtiari nomads in southwest Iran. The picture shows a Bakhtiari girl holding up a copy of the Holy Quran and a box of traditional sweets for good omen during a wedding ceremony. She is encircled with ethnic fellows clad in vivid colorful garments who are adding charm to the ceremony with a traditional performance.

Tehran Times/ Farhad Safari

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

Iranian parliament
condemns genocide
in Myanmar

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian Parliament's human rights faction issued a statement on Monday condemning the "genocide" of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar based on "racism".

"Genocide of the oppressed Muslims in Myanmar is taking place while the human rights' bodies are keeping deadly silence and are in a historic passivity," part of the statement said.

Lack of efforts to stop this genocide will cause "irreparable damages" to the world of Islam, the parliamentary faction explained.

'Iran has always
stood beside
Afghans'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Mahmoud Saikal, the permanent representative of Afghanistan to the UN, has said that Iran has always stood beside the Afghans in fighting terrorism.

Iran has always played an important positive role in developments in Afghanistan, he told IRNA in an interview.

"The two countries have many affinities such as language, religion and culture. So, our relations are historic. The two countries have lived together based on mutual respect and will continue to live so," he explained.

Berlin seeks full
implementation
of nuclear deal:
German diplomat

POLITICS TEHRAN — Michael Klor-Berchtold, Berlin's ambassador to Tehran, has said that Germany is seeking a full implementation of the nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Only through a full implementation of the deal the sides can trust each other, the ambassador told the Iran newspaper in an interview published on Monday.

Klor-Berchtold, whose country is a party to the nuclear deal, said Germany wants Iran to be its "constructive partner". He said the JCPOA has opened the door for deeper mutual ties, regular political dialogue including on issues surrounding the region.

Iran has documents
of warning U.S.
warship

POLITICS TEHRAN — Rear Admiral Reza Abbasi, a navy officer from the Iranian Army, said on Monday that Iran has documents and records of warning off the U.S. warship in the Sea of Oman and will publish them if necessary.

The Navy issued a statement on Sunday announcing that an Iranian missile boat has warned off an American warship approaching an Iranian dhow near the Strait of Hormuz.

According to Reuters, the U.S. Navy has denied any direct contact with Iranian forces.

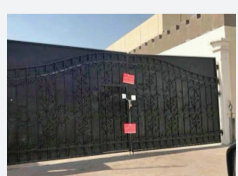
Interior minister
appoints new
deputy for political
affairs

POLITICS TEHRAN — Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazel appointed on Sunday Esmail Jabbarzadeh as his deputy for political affairs.

Jabbarzadeh has been the governor of East Azarbaijan province since 2013.

He won a seat in parliament in the legislative elections of 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2004, representing the city of Tabriz.

The interior minister said he is appointing Jabbarzadeh in the post in line with efforts to support political factions and boosting unity among various Iranian ethnic groups and minorities.

UAE shuts down
Iranian school in
Sharjah

POLITICS TEHRAN — UAE officials have closed down an Iranian school in the emirate's third city of Sharjah, refusing to extend its permit over what they have called illegal construction within the facility.

However, Ali Hosseini, the Iranian deputy education minister for international affairs, said the facility had been leased and had not undertaken any construction activities, Press TV reported.

"Our political relations with the Emirates are not good and, therefore, pressure is being exerted on us to close down Iranian schools," he said.

Involvement of regional states, especially
Iran, needed to counter crises: Pakistan FM

POLITICS TEHRAN — Pakistani Foreign Minister **d e s k** Khawaja Muhammad Asif who made a visit to Tehran on Monday said it is necessary to involve all regional countries, especially Iran, to find solutions to the conflicts engulfing certain regional countries.

Asif made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

The Pakistani foreign minister went on to say that there is no military solution to the regional crises.

"The settlement of the problems of regional countries entail regional solutions, especially with the involvement of Iran," the minister remarked. "Any move by foreign powers cannot be helpful."

Pakistan attaches great importance to a "regional" and "strategic" solution to crises in the region, the minister pointed out.

"Today countries in the region are in danger of terrorism and efforts for a strategic and regional solution for getting out of the problems is essential," the Pakistani chief diplomat noted.

He added, "We believe that we should counter terrorism and establish peace, security and stability in the region".

For his part, Rouhani said solutions to the crises in the region can only be found by the regional countries without interference of extra-regional powers.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the regional countries, especially Iran and Pakistan, should make efforts and cooperate in establishing security and stability in the region," the president noted.

Rouhani says Iran firm to deepen ties with Pakistan

Rouhani also said Iran is determined to expand political, economic and cultural ties with neighboring Pakistan.



"Iran and Pakistan are two friendly, brotherly and influential countries in the region and Tehran is determined to expand political, economic and cultural relations with Islamabad," Rouhani stated.

Rouhani also said it is essential for the two countries to expand cooperation in fighting terrorism in line with increasing security at joint borders.

The president said increasing security at borders helps increase security and stability in the region.

Rouhani also called for facilitating banking relations

between the two countries.

Asif and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also held separate talks, discussing regional issues, drug trafficking, refugees, campaign against terrorism and extremist groups and also the sufferings of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.

Prior to his visit to Iran, Asif also said the resolution of the Afghan crisis entails a consensus among regional countries. He also said a "U.S. prescription" is not the remedy to the wounds of the region.

Rhetoric on Iran deal has hurt U.S. stature: Zarif

I → "Other countries, too, feel that this administration is not trustworthy. The US's own allies in Europe say that, too," he said.

Zarif added that the proliferation of nuclear weapons had to stop and all such weapons in the world had to be destroyed.

As foreign minister, Zarif was Iran's chief negotiator in long-running talks in 2013 to 2015 that culminated in the Iran deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, or the JCPOA.

The US was a party to the talks and is a party to the deal. But the new American president, Trump, has called the deal the "worst" he has ever seen and has been publicly undermining it.

Zarif has said before that the Trump administration has violated the text of the deal by attempting to discourage Iran's European partners from doing business with Iran.

Iran and the other parties to the deal — namely the UK, France, Russia, China, and Germany — have stressed that the agreement should be sustained.

"Iran has options"
In the interview with Borna News, Zarif said while Iran tried to maintain the agree-

ment as it was, Tehran had the option of withdrawal.

He said another option was to "create conditions in which America's withdrawal from or non-performance of the JCPOA would lead to the US's isolation."

He referred to the fact that the Trump administration has twice verified Iranian compliance with the deal to the US Congress, adding that happened despite the White House's skepticism because Washington knew that acting otherwise would lead to its isolation.

The European parties to the deal as well as China and Russia are opposed to the re-imposition of any nuclear sanctions on Iran because Tehran has been confirmed in full compliance with the deal by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

The IAEA is the official institution in charge of verification of Iranian compliance, and the US has in the recent past attempted — although unsuccessfully — to sway the agency's reporting on Iran.

"World has failed Rohingya Muslims"
Elsewhere in his remarks, the Iranian foreign minister referred to the crisis in Myanmar, where the government is carrying out

a deadly crackdown on minority Rohingya Muslims.

"The situation is outrageous in Myanmar," he said. "The international community has once again failed to uphold the rights of the oppressed and the people who face torture, pressure, and even genocide."

He said Iran had engaged in diplomacy to facilitate a peaceful end to the plight of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar but stressed that the Islamic Republic did not seek to pressure the Myanmar government.

"All we seek is find a solution to improve the situation," he said.

Myanmar has laid a siege to a western state where the Rohingya are concentrated. There, horrific violence has been taking place against the minority Muslims, according to reports and eyewitnesses.

Soldiers and extremist Buddhists have reportedly been killing or raping the Muslims and setting their homes on fire. The Myanmar government says 400 people, mostly Muslims, have died in the violence. The UN says the actual number likely tops 1,000.

On Saudi Arabia

Zarif was also asked about Saudi Arabia, which has severed its diplomatic relations with Iran. He said Riyadh had to reach a better understanding of the region before an enhancement of relations with Iran could take place.

"We hope the Saudi government reaches a real understanding of the situation in the region and the policies it has adopted in Syria, Iraq, Bahrain, and especially Yemen, where we face a humanitarian situation," he said.

The Saudi government has had nothing to gain from those activities, he added.

Once Saudi Arabia gets a real understanding of the situation in the region, "it will see that Iran is prepared for positive interaction," Zarif said.

Asked about recent remarks by Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, who described earlier comments by Zarif as "laughable," the Iranian foreign minister declined to comment.

"I usually don't respond to remarks that are not based on reason and rationality," he said.

(Source: Press TV)

Amano says Iran is implementing nuclear deal

IAEA chief says Iran not receiving special treatment

Yukiya Amano, chief of the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency, reconfirmed on Monday that Iran is honoring its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

Speaking at the seasonal meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors in Vienna, Amano also said the body under his leadership is continuing to "implement the Additional Protocol in Iran".

Amano said the IAEA is conducting its inspection of Iran's nuclear activities in "an impartial and objective manner".

According to the nuclear deal, Iran is obliged to put limits on its nuclear activities in exchange for termination of financial and economic sanctions. The IAEA is tasked to monitor Iran's compliance with the agreement.

A reconfirmation of Iran's nuclear compliance is another blow to U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley and her chief Donald Trump who have been seeking to downplay Tehran's loyalty to the international deal negotiated between Iran, France, Ger-

many, Britain, the European Union, China, the U.S., and Russia.

Iran not receiving special treatment

In news conference the head of the UN nuclear watchdog said Iran was abiding by the rules set out in the nuclear accord.

According to Reuters, Amano said Iran had not broken any promises and was not receiving special treatment.

Nikki travelled to Vienna last month to speak with Amano about Iran and asked if the IAEA planned to inspect Iranian military sites, something she has called for.

Amano declined to comment on Haley's statements when asked by reporters.

Iran has been applying the Additional Protocol, which is in force in dozens of nations and gives the IAEA access to sites, including military locations, to clarify questions or inconsistencies that may arise.

The IAEA is conducting its inspection of Iran's nuclear activities in "an impartial and objective manner".

Iran: Any party who violates nuclear deal will pay heavy price

I → However, Qassemi said the Foreign Ministry was currently planning meetings that are necessary.

'Iranophobia, a worn-out tactic'

Asked about the recent anti-Iran remarks by Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir, Qassemi said Iranophobia has turned into a worn-out tactic that is being used as a tool for the pursuit of political goals by certain countries.

Iranian influence in the region is an obvious and natural thing, he said.

'Ties with Turkey to grow further'

The spokesman also said the Islamic Republic's new administration is willing to follow stronger regional cooperation with

Ankara following the recent exchange of visits between high-ranking officials, including a trip to Ankara by Iran's Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Baqeri.

"This is a new atmosphere between the two countries where, seeing international and regional situations, they intend to use their capacities to work toward a synergy that would serve to establish peace and stability in the region," the spokesman said when asked about new developments in Tehran-Ankara relations.

"Negotiations between Iran and Turkey will continue with more strength and we hope that the two countries succeed

in improving upon the existing level of cooperation," the Iranian diplomat stated.

On August 21, Qassemi called trip by General Baqeri to Turkey exceptional and successful. He said Turkish and Iranian military commanders held talks on major topics, including cooperation on the Syrian conflict and counter-terrorism.

Turkey's ties with Washington have been recently strained by the United States' support for the Kurdish fighters in Syria. The visit of General Baqeri may be viewed as the latest indicator of Ankara's increasing cooperation with other powers, such as Iran and Russia.

conducted in the last few months.

The Agency has been verifying and monitoring the implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action since JCPOA Implementation Day in January 2016.

We fulfil this role in accordance with the modalities set out in the JCPOA, consistent with the Agency's standard safeguards practices, and in an impartial and objective manner.

The nuclear-related commitments undertaken by Iran under the JCPOA are being implemented.

The Agency continues to verify the non-diversion of nuclear material declared by Iran under its Safeguards Agreement. Evaluations regarding the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in Iran remain ongoing.

We will continue to implement the Additional Protocol in Iran, including carrying out complementary accesses to sites and other locations, as we do in other countries with additional protocols.

Iran and Russia back the government of President Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian conflict. Turkey used to cooperate with the opposing front, comprised of Syrian dissidents, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S.

However, in recent months Ankara has grown more welcoming of Iran and Russia's position and the three countries continue to hold negotiations under the title of the Astana talks to reach common grounds on the Syrian issue.

Official reports indicate that in an upcoming meeting within the Astana talks, the three countries expect to finalize their plans on cooperation to sustain and strengthen de-escalation zones in Syria.

Qatari FM: Doha ready for dialogue despite blockade

Qatar's foreign minister has said that the blockade by Persian Gulf neighboring countries is violating international law and human rights, but repeated that Doha is ready for dialogue.

Speaking at a UN Human Rights Council session in Geneva, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, said Qatar has faced numerous challenges because of the "illegal imposition" by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Bahrain, after accusing Doha of funding "terrorism".

Qatar has vehemently rejected the allegations.

"These Persian Gulf countries have taken illegal measures that constitute a grave violation of civil, economic and social human rights, including banning Qatari citizens travelling or transiting through their territories," Al Thani said in the session.

"This has torn apart many families and has interrupted education and the right to work in Qatar."

On June 5, the four countries cut diplomatic ties with Qatar and imposed a land, air and sea blockade on its Persian Gulf neighbor.

On June 22, the group issued a 13-point list of demands, including the shutdown of Al Jazeera, limiting ties with Iran, and expelling Turkish troops stationed in the country as a prerequisite to lifting the blockade.

Doha rejected all the demands, denouncing them an attempt to infringe on Qatar's sovereignty.

The head of Qatar's National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) Ali bin Smaikh al-Marri said last month that his organisation would be taking legal action against the blockading countries on behalf of citizens who filed official complaints seeking financial and economic redress.



■ 'Willing to talk'

The Qatari foreign minister also emphasised that the blockading countries tried to "hide facts from people" and fabricated allegations of supporting terrorism.

"The real motivation behind the siege was not fighting terrorism, but rather to interfere in our (Qatar's) foreign policy and undermine its sovereignty," Al Thani said, adding that the GCC crisis will only be solved through dialogue.

"The state of Qatar reaffirms its position in rejecting and condemning terrorism in all its forms, whatever the cause and motives are. Qatar is an active member in the coalition to counter terrorism.

"So despite any challenges and allegations, Qatar is willing to talk."

On Sunday, Saudi Arabia suspended plans to hold talks with Qatar, shortly after reports of a phone call between Qatar's emir and the Saudi crown prince hinted at a potential breakthrough in the crisis.

The call on Friday between Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman was the first official contact between Doha and Riyadh since the start of the row.

In the phone call, which was reported by state media from both countries, the two leaders expressed a willingness to discuss an end to the rift.

However, there seemed to be a dis-

pute over protocol - with some reports pointing to Qatar News Agency's (QNA) apparent failure to mention that it was Doha that had initiated the call.

In the phone discussion, Sheikh Tamim and Mohammed bin Salman "stressed the need to resolve this crisis" through dialogue "to ensure the unity and stability" of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC), said QNA.

On Thursday, Trump held talks with the emir of Kuwait, who has been acting as a mediator to defuse the crisis, at the White House.

The PGCC is an alliance of six Middle Eastern countries: Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain, Kuwait and Oman.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Fake news, referendum weigh on Catalonia national day

Nearly two million people crowd Barcelona's streets on Monday for Catalonia's national day, known as the Diada, as tensions over a referendum on its independence continues.

A Spanish high court last Friday decided to suspend the October 1 vote on the province's independence pending a decision on its constitutionality.

This year, the national day celebration bears a special name: la Diada del Si, Catalan for the National Day of Yes.

The Yes is a rallying cry in the vote for independence. The Catalan government's ruling coalition, Junts pel Si, or Together for Yes, is a joining of parties from across the political spectrum to achieve this end.

The majority of municipalities in the northeastern region are prepared to facilitate the vote, in spite of Madrid's threats to prosecute any mayor who goes ahead with polling.

■ Playing politics

Joan Maria Pique, the international press secretary for Catalan President Carles Puigdemont, told Al Jazeera that the swell in support for an independent Catalonia has been swift.

Though Pique has always been in favour of independence, he said many in the Catalan government have switched to the secessionist camp over the past few years and the same can be said for much of the Catalan public.

Now, polls say that unionists and independent sentiments are running neck-and-neck.

Pique explained that many Catalan "don't feel welcome in the Spanish state" after years of unfair economic relations and recent political measures against the headstrong region.

Talks regarding financial agreements stalled in 2012. Catalonia's then-President Artur Mas aimed to create a new "fiscal pact" that would have more evenly distributed tax income between the regional and federal governments.

Catalonia's gross product was 223bn euros in 2016, the highest in Spain, and it shares a border with France and Barcelona is home to Spain's most financially successful port.

Mas told CNN in 2012 that "if you compare the money we send to Madrid every year and the money we get back from Madrid, there is a difference - a near difference of \$20bn".

Pique confirmed that fiscal relations have not improved.

Furthermore, Catalonia is still recover-



ing after the violent attacks committed by ISIL-linked attackers between August 16 and 17 that left 14 people dead, the majority of whom were killed in downtown Barcelona.

It should have been a moment of unity.

However, Pique said the Spanish authorities "have mixed the independentist process with the attacks".

The Catalan police were blocked from the Interpol database by the Spanish government, Pique said, which left security forces without valuable information regarding the cell that planned the attack.

"It's the Spanish government playing politics with security," which risked the safety of secessionists, unionists and "everyone who visits [Barcelona]," the press secretary commented.

■ Spanish 'fake news'

Pique said that it is not only the Spanish government playing politics with the attacks, but also pro-union media.

el Periodico, a centre-left Catalan newspaper viewed as a pro-Madrid, published a document at the end of August, originally thought to be correspondence from the United States' Central Intelligence Agency to Barcelona's police, warning them of possible attacks on May 25.

But the document featured grammatical errors and Spanish words in place of their English equivalent. Observers, including Wikileaks' Julian Assange, called on the newspaper's editor to resign.

"The director of the newspaper admitted that it wasn't real, but said that it was a recreation built from bits of information they had received from unspecified sources," Arkaitz Zubiaga, a

visiting professor at Madrid's National University of Distance education who researches the "fake news" phenomena, as well as social media data in the context of journalism, told Al Jazeera.

"The way in which this was reported with later clarifications, and the reference to unspecified sources, made it still very questionable," Zubiaga said.

That did not stop the "fake news" from jumping the language barrier. English-language outlets wrote about the dubious document without including information as to its questionable sourcing.

Zubiaga said the purported CIA document was only a part of the Spanish campaign against the Catalan referendum, going on to cite raids of print shops suspected of producing ballots by the Spanish Civil Guard, a national military-police force.

Madrid has also made threats of sending the Civil Guard to stop voting.

The Spanish constitution says matters of sovereignty must be decided on the national level, and Article 155 of the Spanish constitution grants Madrid the power to intervene in the running of Catalonia's regional government.

But stopping the referendum, a democratic exercise whose outcome is far from certain, may be the more damaging option for the Spanish government.

Zubiaga said "the democratic nature of the Spanish government's practices is being called into question".

■ New state, what next?

Catalan President Puigdemont has promised to declare independence from Spain within 48 hours if voters back secession.

A new state would emerge, popu-

lated entirely of European Union citizens, though Catalonia itself would no longer be in the EU.

This would mean the wealthy region would need to renegotiate economic ties with Spain, as well re-joining the EU.

Pique, the international press secretary for the Catalan president, said it would be in Spain's economic interest to make these agreements.

Also, it would be difficult for Spain to block Catalonia's EU membership without first recognising Catalonia's independence, he claimed.

Maria Mut Bosque, a lecturer of international and EU law at the International University of Catalonia, somewhat agreed.

She told Al Jazeera that it would be beneficial for both parties to "adopt a pragmatic vision" in their future relationship.

Regarding the EU's role, Bosque said there are two paths it could take: "The EU sometimes acts as a mere intergovernmental organization, where the vision of the member states is the only one that prevails".

This would mean Spain would have a say in Catalonia's ascension.

"While other times, like in the case of Kosovo, which has not been recognized by Spain and other EU members, the EU has managed to reach an agreement," Bosque continued.

Kosovo and the EU signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) in 2015, establishing free trade and other agreements between the two parties.

Scholars agree that Catalonia would have to enter the queue to join the EU behind states such as Montenegro, Serbia and others.

An accord like the SAA, or similar trade, monetary and movement agreements, which Switzerland and Andorra enjoy, could serve as a stopgap measure as Catalonia negotiates with both the EU and Spain.

Regardless of external recognition or agreements, it must be borne in mind that "an entity becomes a state as soon as it meets the minimal criteria for statehood," Bosque said.

These criteria include territory, population, governmental institutions and sovereignty.

After the October referendum, Catalonia could meet them all.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Hariri asks Bassil to issue complaint to UN against Israel

Prime Minister Saad Hariri requested Monday that the Foreign Ministry file a complaint to the UN against Israel for planting spy devices and violating Lebanese airspace.

"We have begun preparing a complaint to be referred to the [UN] Security Council," Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil said in a tweet. He said the intrusion had caused "material, moral, and sovereign damage" to Lebanon.

Lebanon's Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri also said, "Israeli low flyby above Sidon and particularly [the Palestinian refugee camp of] Ain al-Hilweh, is a direct message of threat directed towards us."

Speaking to local newspaper Al-Akbar on Monday, Berri regretted that internal divisions had emboldened Tel Aviv to take such measures.

"We are distracted internally, while Israel carries out maneuvers against us and it provided an example for that by breaking the sound barrier in Sidon," he said.

The Israeli warplanes violated Lebanon's airspace on Sunday, flying at a low altitude and breaking the sonic barrier above the country's third city of Sidon and Palestinian refugee camps in the area.



On Saturday, Hezbollah said it had spotted an Israeli spying contraption, with a thermal camera for night vision, which was hidden in a rock in Kfar Shebba, east of Shebba Farms in southern Lebanon.

■ Back-to-back incursions

The incident came a day after Bassil said the Arab country would lodge an "urgent complaint" with the Security Council against Israel over an airstrike conducted from the Lebanese airspace on a military facility in the western Syrian province of Hama.

The Syrian Army said in a statement on September 7 that Israeli warplanes had fired a number of missiles at 2:42 a.m. local time (0042 GMT) from the Lebanese airspace against one of its military positions near the town of Masyaf, located approximately 40 kilometers west of the provincial capital city of Hama.

(Source: Daily Star)

U.S. asks Syria militant groups to retreat to Jordan

The U.S. and its allies have urged two militant groups fighting the government in southeastern Syria to retreat into Jordan in the face of army advances, Reuters has quoted militant sources as saying.



Both Usoud al-Sharqiya and Martyr Ahmad Abdo, part of the so-called Free Syrian Army group, were urged by their main backers, the CIA and some Arab states, including Jordan and Saudi Arabia, to end fighting in the area, militant sources said.

Badr al Din al Salamah, a senior official in the Usoud al-Sharqiya group, said, "There is an official request for us to leave the area."

The request comes as the Syrian army is advancing against foreign-backed militants after retaking control of a string of border posts with Jordan.

The militant commanders were allegedly told in a letter that their presence in a small enclave near the Jordanian border posed a threat to them.

The two groups, which have hundreds of fighters, will subsequently have to hand over heavy artillery and scores of U.S.-made anti-tank missiles, according to the militants.

The decision has reportedly irritated the militants. In a meeting on Saturday, their commanders told the joint operations center in Jordan that they would rather "stay and die" in the desert.

"We have rejected the request, since if we entered Jordan we would consider it the end," al-Salamah said.

Another militant source said they don't oppose the withdrawal, but they want assurances from Jordan that they could lobby to expand a ceasefire brokered by Russia and the U.S. in southwest Syria to the Badia desert area.

Said Seif, a spokesman for the Martyr Ahmad Abdo group, said, "We have accepted in principle and there are matters that have to be resolved. But until this moment there is no final agreement on withdrawing and we are still in the Badia and still fighting at our posts."

The news comes amid reports that U.S. aircraft were evacuating Daesh field commanders in Dayr al-Zawr in the face of army advances.

Last month, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which is sympathetic to militants, reported at least five instances of U.S. airlifts of Daesh elements in Dayr al-Zawr. Washington has rejected the reports as "false".

The US has long been accused of colluding with Daesh through providing safe passage and logistical support to members of the Takfiri group in conflict zones.

Last week, Syrian government forces broke the three-year-long Daesh siege on Dayr al-Zawr, the provincial capital of the oil-rich province of the same name.

(Source: Press TV)

Afghanistan seeks speedy development of Iranian port

NEW DELHI (AP) — Afghanistan's foreign minister asks India to expedite development of a strategic port in Iran to bolster a trade route for land-locked Central Asian countries that would bypass Pakistan.

The port would allow India to transport goods to Afghanistan by sea. Pakistan currently does not allow India to transport through its territory to Afghanistan.

Last year, India committed up to \$500 million for the development of the Chabahar port along with associated roads and railroads.

India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj said Monday that India would speed up the port development and begin supplying wheat to Afghanistan within weeks.

Japan govt. launches \$12 billion follow-up sale of Japan Post Holdings shares

TOKYO (Reuters) — The Japanese government said it will sell additional shares in Japan Post Holdings Co Ltd (6178.T) worth around \$12 billion, but the offering is expected to struggle to attract healthy demand from institutional investors due to lack of a strong growth story.

Japan Post, with a network of 24,000 post offices and workforce of 400,000 people, has been hurt by a constant decline in mail delivery volume. Its two financial units Japan Post Bank Co Ltd (7182.T) and Japan Post Insurance Co Ltd (7181.T) have been hurt by the nation's ultra-low interest rate environment.

The sale - the first since its postal and financial giant's mammoth IPO in 2015 which also raised about \$12 billion - also comes in the wake of M&A missteps.

It had to write down much of its acquisition of A\$6.5 billion (\$4.9 billion) Australian logistics company Toll Holdings Ltd and this year scrapped plans to buy Nomura Real Estate Holdings Inc (3231.T) after failing to agree on terms.

Including options to sell additional shares in the event of strong demand, the sale could be equivalent to 22 percent of Japan Post's shares outstanding and worth around 1.3 trillion yen (\$12.1 billion) based on Monday's closing share price of 1,321 yen.

Iranian oil flows gain further ground in China, Europe

London (Platts) — Iran's crude and condensate exports rose slightly in August as lower deliveries from key competitors like Saudi Arabia and Iraq meant there was more demand for crude from some of Iran's main buyers.

Total estimated export volume on Aframax, Suezmax and VLCCs from Iranian ports in August rose almost 2.5% to 2.42 million b/d from 2.37 million b/d in July, according to data from Platts trade flow software cFlow.

Exports to Asia fell to 1.46 million b/d in August from 1.55 million b/d in July, with demand from key customer India down sharply, although flows to China continued to rise.

Europe's share of Iranian exports grew sharply, with demand from Italy, France, the Netherlands and Greece all up, while Turkey remained a key buyer too.

Sources and analysts noted that Iranian oil exports last month rose as demand for its crude, especially in China and Europe, climbed, supported by favorable economics.

Moves by Saudi Arabia and Iraq to further reduce their exports in August, both to meet domestic demand and also as part of OPEC's coordinated output cuts, bode well for Iran.

The reductions have created a gap for Iran to fill, while state-owned NIOC has also reduced prices for some of its heavy crude grades, making them more economically viable for refiners and pushing up spot demand.

Flows to China, Europe climb

Exports to Iran's largest customer, China, were up slightly to 693,419 b/d in August from 638,322 b/d, the highest volume Iran has exported to China this year, according to Platts data.

Chinese consumption has increased this summer on healthy spot demand, buoyed by growing interest from both Chinese state-owned and independent refiners. Chinese companies have seen cuts in their term contract volumes from Saudi Aramco in the past few months, pushing up demand for Iranian crude, which is of a similar quality.

At the same time, Indian demand for Iranian crude has slowed this summer, particularly from state-owned refiners, after the two countries faced a standoff over the development of Iran's Farzad B gas field.

Exports to India fell by 167,258 b/d month on month to 264,742 b/d in August. The key buyers of Iranian crude in India were again Essar Oil and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL).

As a result of lower flows to India, South Korea has now emerged as the second-biggest buyer of Iranian oil in August, taking 284,742 b/d.

In neighboring Japan, flows from Iran continued their downward trend, falling by 43,162 b/d on the month.

Meanwhile, Iranian oil flows to Europe rebounded sharply in August, with 835,742 b/d sailing to the region, a rise of almost 200,000 b/d month on month.

Turkey remains the region's largest buyer of Iranian crude, with 256,258 b/d exported last month.

Exports to Italy, France, the Netherlands and Greece were all up month on month, demonstrating the price competitiveness of Iranian crude against other regional sour grades, like Russia's Urals, Iraq's Basrah Light and Saudi Arabia's Arab Heavy.

Production boost

Iran's oil production has also continued to rise in the past few months and is now above its OPEC quota of 3.797 million b/d.

According to a recent Platts OPEC survey, Iranian crude oil production was at 3.83 million b/d in August, up 10,000 b/d from July.

The country's oil minister Bijan Zanganeh also confirmed earlier this week that production was more than 3.8 million b/d.

«We hope to increase oil production capacity in the coming months. We can do that with [development] of the West Karun [oil fields] and also South Pars gas condensates,» he said.

Iran hopes to improve trade balance with Brazil

By Mahnaz Abdi

TEHRAN — Iran hopes to improve its trade balance with Brazil through exporting some highly required products to the Latin American country, Kaveh Zargaran, the head of Iran-Brazil Joint Chamber of Commerce, told Tehran Times in a telephone interview on Sunday.

Trade between Iran and Brazil is currently tipped in favor of Brazil, as the country exported \$2.1 billion worth of products (mainly corn, meat, soy bean and sugar) to Iran in 2016 while Iran's exports to Brazil stood at \$75 million, Zargaran announced.

"In my opinion, making our trade balance positive with Brazil is not possible in a near future. But we can improve it through exporting some products that we have export advantage about them and also they are highly required in the Brazilian market, for example fertilizer, steel sheet, and plastic raw materials", he opined and said; "We are encouraging the Brazilians to export these products from Iran."

The head of Iran-Brazil Joint Chamber of Commerce, which was officially opened in Tehran on July 9, went on to say: "We should accept that Brazil is among the top countries in agricultural production. The country has a unique advantage in this due in a way that it can sell the agricultural products with an end price that other countries cannot compete with it. This advantage is somehow because of the vast water resources the South Amer-



ican country enjoys. It is while Iran is a semi-dry country with limited resources of water; so it should import some part of its required agricultural products, as the foodstuffs account for about one fourth of the country's total imports."

"Considering this issue, Brazil can be one of the main sources of agricultural products for Iran; therefore we cannot expect our trade balance with Brazil tipped in favor of Iran or any specific change in this due, while we can just think of improving trade balance with that country", he concluded.

'Enjoying Iran's market conditioned on importing Iranian goods'

Commenting on the strategies to

improve Iran's trade balance with Brazil, Zargaran also referred to the Sunday meeting of Iranian Deputy Agriculture Minister Ali-Akbar Mehrfard with Brazilian Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply Eumar Novacki and his accompanying delegation in Tehran, and said that the Iranian official has told the Brazilians that if they want to take the advantage of Iranian large market, they should import Iranian products as well, as Iran is taking the policy of limiting its trade with those countries which are mainly exporters of goods to Iran rather than importing Iranian commodities.

'Banking problems main barrier'

Elsewhere in his remarks, Zargaran mentioned the problems in banking relations between the two countries as the main hurdle in bilateral trade.

He believes that removing this problem in a way that opening LC will be possible for banking transactions between Iran and Brazil could boost mutual trade far beyond the current figure.

A delegation of some Iranian banks has already visited Brazil and in some meetings with the Central Bank of Brazil the two sides investigated the ways to resolve this problem. Some follow-up measures have been taken in this due and Brazilian Embassy in Tehran is following up the matter seriously, Zargaran announced.

'Big differences in investment making laws'

"There are some big differences between Iranian and Brazilian investment making laws and none of the two countries has been able so far to persuade the other side to accept its terms of the contract. Therefore, given this problem and also with the banking barriers still in place, I do not think that any specific task will be soon taken for their investment making in the other side", the head of joint chamber of commerce commented.

Asked about transferring the Brazilian technology to Iran, he said none of the negotiations has already come to result in this due.

Britain thinking of Iran's market after Brexit: Iranian envoy

ECONOMY TEHRAN — In a meeting with Chairman of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie, Iran's Ambassador to London Hamid Baedinejad said that since Britain is due to leave the EU, it is looking for new markets including Iran's lucrative one.

Time is now ripe for developing mutual cooperation considering Britain's tendency for collaborating with Iranians and the available wide range of areas for cooperation, the portal of ICCIMA reported on Sunday quoting Baedinejad.

Informing that an Iran-Britain joint conference will be

held in near future in London, the ambassador invited Shafeie to attend the event.

ICCIMA chairman, for his turn, noted that under the support and efforts of Iranian Foreign Ministry a constructive cooperation between the private sectors of Iran and Britain has been formed, which is unprecedented during the past 30 years.

He also announced that an Iranian trade delegation will leave Tehran for London in this Iranian calendar year's eleventh month of Bahman (January 21-February 19, 2018) to take part in a business forum with their British counterparts.



Iran sells crude oil at \$50.93 per barrel in a week

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iran sold its light crude oil at \$50.93 per barrel in the week ended on September 1, with seven cents decrease from its previous week, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Also, Iran sold its heavy crude oil at \$48.51 per barrel in the mentioned week, down \$0.33 from its preceding week.

Meanwhile, with 17 cents drop from its preceding week, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)'s basket price stood at \$49.53 per barrel in the mentioned week.



Oil prices have been experiencing some downward trend during the last two weeks as commerce and energy demand in the U.S. were hit by hurricanes Harvey and Irma, two of the most powerful storms in a century.

Sepehri appointed NIDC's new managing director

ENERGY TEHRAN — Sep-eh Sepehri was appointed as the new managing director and board chairman of National Iranian Drilling Company (NIDC), Shana reported on Monday.

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) Managing Director Ali Kardor appointed Sepehri to the position replacing Heidar Bahmani.

Bahmani was appointed as NIDC's managing director for the third time in Iranian year of 1393 (March 2014-March 2015) up to September

2017. Kardor in a decree mentioned planning and taking necessary measures to increase the company's drilling efficiency, training drilling experts and professional workforce, cooperating with knowledge-based firms and institutes as well as universities to transfer up-to-date knowledge into the drilling sector, supporting domestic production and localization of drilling industry in line with the country's resistance economy ideals as some duties expected from Sepehri.

Harvey, Irma could ding U.S. economy for combined \$290b

The one-two punch from Hurricanes Harvey and Irma could cost the U.S. economy up to \$290 billion, according to a prediction by AccuWeather on Sunday.

Much as the unusually long period of torrential rainfall caused the most damage in Texas, the unusually long period of high winds is expected to take the greatest toll in Florida, the forecasting company said.

"The size of the storm combined with its slow movement means that hurricane-force wind gusts in some places will occur over a time period of 12 or more hours, so the damage will be compounded," Joel Myers, AccuWeather's founder, president and chairman, said in a statement.

As Irma made landfall Sunday, South Florida was hammered by high winds and flooding from both rainfall and storm surge. The storm is expected to leave a destructive swath in its wake as it moves north up Florida's Gulf Coast, extending far inland.

"We believe the damage estimate from Irma to be about \$100 billion, among the costliest hurricanes of all time. This amounts to 0.5 of a percentage point of the GDP of \$19 trillion," Myers said. "We estimated that Hurricane Harvey is to be the costliest weather disaster in



U.S. history at \$190 billion or one full percentage point of the GDP. Together, AccuWeather predicts these two disasters amount to 1.5 of a percentage point of the GDP, which will about equal and therefore counter the natural growth of the economy for the period of mid-August through the end of the fourth quarter."

This is the first time two Category 4 hurricanes have hit the U.S. mainland in the same year.

AccuWeather said the economic costs include disruptions to businesses, increased unemployment, dam-

age to infrastructure, crop losses, property damage and increased fuel prices.

"Some of the losses will be covered by insurance, some will not, so the losses will be felt in a variety of ways by millions of people. Many millions of people have already been evacuated, so their lives have already been affected and they have incurred costs of one sort or another," Myers said.

In a separate report Sunday, catastrophe modeling firm AIR Worldwide estimated combined insurance losses of up to \$65 billion in the U.S. and Caribbean.

In the U.S., insured losses from Irma could range from \$15 billion to \$50 billion, AIR said in a statement, and Caribbean losses could range from \$5 billion to \$15 billion.

"In Florida, close to 80% of the total insured value is located in coastal counties, where the amount and value of exposure has been growing significantly for decades," AIR said. The company noted that structural damage was unlikely to approach that of Hurricane Andrew in 1992, thanks to "stronger building codes and better enforcement."

(Source: Market Watch)

London retains its crown as world's top financial center

London retained its crown as the world's top financial center in a ranking that surveys industry professionals, extending its lead over New York and Hong Kong despite ongoing uncertainty about the implications of Brexit.

The U.K. capital fell only two points in the latest Global Financial Centres Index published by Z/Yen and the China Development Institute, the smallest decline among the top 10 centers. New York held on to second place, but fell 24 index points overall, "presumably due

to fears over U.S. trade," the survey said.

Frankfurt, Dublin, Paris and Amsterdam -- all set to gain banking jobs that will likely have to leave London -- all rose. In Asia, Hong Kong leapfrogged Singapore into third place, while other U.S. cities followed New York in losing points.

"Overall assessments for the European centers continued to fluctuate as people speculate about which centers might benefit from London leaving the EU," Mark Yeandle, associate director of London-based think

tank Z/Yen and author of the FCI, said in the study, released Monday. "Protectionism and barriers to international trade concern many -- especially in the USA."

London's role as the world's banking hub is under threat if Brexit costs firms based in the city their ability to easily serve clients across the European Union. Most international banks currently sell their goods and services throughout the bloc from bases in London, but those so-called passporting rights are unlikely to be extended after the U.K. quits the EU in 2019. (Source: Bloomberg)

Is it time for OPEC to turn the taps back on?

Russia's Energy Minister Alexander Novak said earlier this week that he'd spoken with his Saudi counterpart about the possibility of another extension to the OPEC-non-OPEC crude oil production deal; oil prices rose. Industry observers once again reminded us that there aren't any new options for OPEC and its partners: they can either keep on cutting and lose market share, or they can turn the taps back on and bring prices down.

Bloomberg Gadfly's Liam Denning argues that the second scenario is the only one that could work for low-cost producers such as Saudi Arabia. Enough with the comments about a new extension, Denning suggests, nobody is listening. A U-turn in Saudi oil policy, according to him, is the only way to survive. Yet there is a catch in Denning's scenario.

He says, "The rational thing to do would be for large, low-cost producers such as Saudi Arabia to maximize output and drive oil prices down to a level that both stops the flow of capital into U.S. fracking and spurs demand for more barrels."

That's dreamland for any low-cost oil producer, but how do you find it? Oil demand forecasts from the International Energy Agency and the Energy Information Administration alike don't see a lot of support for a sharp growth in demand. On the contrary — as Denning himself notes, the factors that will slow oil demand growth further are growing, chief among them the switch to electric vehicles.

It may be true that experts are no longer paying much attention to what this or that energy minister from the Vienna Group says about deal extensions. Media do, however, and diligently report on every such comment despite the fact that the discussion Novak was referring to in his latest remark took place in July and can hardly be considered news. The Russian minister has, since the start of negotiations of the cut, said that all options are on the table. They still are, is what he said this week. No surprises.

But Russia and Saudi Arabia were pushing for this second extension, the Wall Street Journal reported late last month, citing unnamed sources familiar with the discussion. Russia seems to be feeling just fine with current oil prices. Customs data this week showed that revenues from crude oil exports had jumped by 35 percent over the first seven months of the year. Novak said the current price level of Brent, at \$54 a barrel, is "optimal," allow-



ing the industry to make investments in new production while keeping prices at the pump affordable.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia is revising its Vision 2030, as it turns out the initial goals set in the program were a bit too ambitious. The Kingdom is also preparing for the listing of Aramco, which could literally make or break Vision 2030. The program is costly and Saudi Arabia has a budget deficit to deal with besides the long-term diversification.

There's hardly any doubt that Saudi Arabia and Russia are the leaders of the pack when it comes to the Cut deal. They've been forging closer ties in recent months, and not only in energy. Yet they don't exactly want the same thing when it comes to oil. Russia is a higher-cost producer than Saudi Arabia, so it will have more trouble if prices fall sharply. On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is more heavily reliant on oil revenues for its budget than Russia — any oil revenues — not to mention that Riyadh

has cut more of its output than Moscow.

A projection from energy economist Phil Verleger, as quoted by Denning, sees low-cost OPEC producers — Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, Qatar, and Iran — losing 9 percentage points from their market share if the artificial propping up of prices continues until 2022. Russia's share under this scenario will remain virtually unchanged, and that of the United States and other non-OPEC producers will rise.

Turning the taps back on indeed starts to look like the only thing left to do, as long as those turning them are ready to bear the consequences, which could include bankruptcies (think Venezuela), unrest at home, and the breakup of OPEC, most likely. This last one, if it happens, means other deals to control the supply of the world's most popular commodity will become a lot harder to reach should the need arise.

(Source: oilprice.com)

ExxonMobil slashes 20-year LNG price to India

India has won a big price cut on a 20-year liquefied natural gas (LNG) deal with global giant ExxonMobil Corp in a rare contract renegotiation, a bad sign for global producers in a heavily over-supplied market.

Long-term contracts are rarely revised in the LNG market, and for a big producer to cave in shows how supply from new plants in Australia and the United States over the past two years has transformed the market, analysts said.

"This trend is overall a negative for sellers, as they are forced to provide more flexibility to buyers' needs to maintain their markets," said Saul Kavonic, an analyst with energy consultants Wood Mackenzie.

India has been aggressive in seeking cheaper deals, also renegotiating a contract with Qatar in 2015, but the real pain for producers would come if major Asian buyers in Japan, Korea and China followed suit.

India's oil minister, Dharmendra Pradhan, said on Saturday the country had been able to renegotiate a contract agreed in 2009 for around 1.5 million tons a year of LNG from ExxonMobil's share of the Gorgon LNG project in Australia going to Petronet LNG.



"Happy to share good news that India has, yet again been able to address the long term price issue of LNG from Gorgon to suit Indian market," Pradhan said on social media.

Indian consumers would soon receive LNG at an "amicable price," he said. Gorgon began exporting LNG last year.

Citing market sources, RBC analyst Ben Wilson estimated ExxonMobil would receive 15 percent less revenue per unit on its sales to Petronet under the new deal.

If ExxonMobil had not agreed to renegotiate the contract, Petronet might have scrapped the agreement, leaving the major to pursue damages and resell the volumes on a weak spot market.

ExxonMobil had no immediate comment.

(Source: Reuters)

Russia's Rosneft not seeking Sistema's assets: CEO

The chief executive of Russian oil giant Rosneft said on Sunday his company was not seeking the frozen assets of Sistema as it presses its multi-billion dollar lawsuit against the business conglomerate.

A court in the Russian region of Bashkortostan ruled last month that Sistema should pay Rosneft 136.3 billion roubles (\$2.4 billion) to settle a claim that Rosneft-controlled oil producer Bashneft was stripped of assets when Sistema was the owner.

Sistema has rejected the claim as groundless and said it would appeal against the court decision. It has appealed against asset freezes imposed as part of the litigation but its latest request was turned down by a court last Tuesday.

The dispute has rekindled broader fears about investor rights in Russia and some observers have speculated about the redistribution of wealth among Russian elites.

"We in no way foresaw ... our owning these stakes," TASS news agency quoted Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin as telling state Russian television, referring to the frozen assets.

"For us it's sufficient that Sistema settles our claims which the court has



recognized," Sechin was quoted as saying in the interview broadcast on Sunday.

He added Rosneft was ready to help Sistema arrange credit lines with the banks to repay the damage award.

Last Tuesday Russian President Vladimir Putin said he had met Sechin as well as Vladimir Yevtushenkov, chairman and main owner of Sistema, and that an amicable agreement would benefit both companies and the Russian economy as a whole.

The court froze 185 billion roubles (\$3.2 billion) worth of Sistema's assets in June, including 31.76 percent of shares in Russia's top mobile operator MTS.

If Sistema loses its appeal, it will be able to raise the money from banks and has no plans to sell its shares in MTS, Sistema CEO Mikhail Shamolin said in August.

(Source: Reuters)

Oil weakens on fears Irma could dent U.S. demand

Oil prices edged lower on Monday on concerns that Hurricane Irma's pounding of heavily populated areas of Florida could dent oil demand in the world's top oil consuming nation.

Losses were capped by weekend talks between Saudi Arabia's oil minister and counterparts over a possible extension to a pact to cut global oil supplies beyond next March.

Brent crude oil futures for November delivery were up 5 cents at \$53.73 a barrel while benchmark U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude advanced by 32 cents to \$47.80.

Hurricane Irma knocked out power to nearly four million Florida homes and businesses on Sunday after millions were told to evacuate ahead of the storm.

"We believe that Irma will have a negative impact on oil demand but not on oil production or processing," Goldman Sachs analysts said in a note.

Irma is forecast to weaken to a tropical storm over northern Florida or southern Georgia later on Monday.



It comes on the heels of Hurricane Harvey, which struck the U.S. oil hub of Texas two weeks ago, knocking out a quarter of the nation's refineries, many of which are now restarting operations.

The two hurricanes are expected to inflict a "bearish shock" on oil balances in September of about 600,000 barrels per

day (bpd), Goldman said.

The longer-term focus, however, was on discussions over a possible extension to the 15-month production pact between members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and non-OPEC producers including Russia and Kazakhstan. The deal

aims to curb an oil supply glut that has weighed on crude prices for more than three years.

The deal agreed late last year to reduce output by about 1.8 million bpd until March 2018 helped to keep prices as high as \$58 a barrel in January, but they have since sagged as global stocks have not fallen as quickly as expected.

Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih met his Venezuelan and Kazakh counterparts at the weekend to discuss an extension of the deal by at least three months, the Saudi energy ministry said.

Venezuela Energy Minister Eulogio del Pino said on Friday that global oil inventories remain too high and urged producers to look at exemptions granted to countries such as Libya and Nigeria and their effect on the market.

Elsewhere, Iran will reach an oil production rate of 4.5 million bpd within five years, a senior Iranian industry official said on Sunday. Iran has been producing about 3.8 million bpd in recent months.

(Source: Reuters)

Saudi's Falih discuss oil supply cuts extension with Venezuela, Kazakhstan

Saudi Arabian Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih discussed with his Venezuelan and Kazakh counterparts the possible extension of the global oil supply cut pact beyond March 2018, the Saudi energy ministry said on Sunday.

OPEC and other producers, including Russia, have agreed to reduce output by about 1.8 million barrels per day until next March in a bid to reduce global oil inventories and support oil prices.

A further extension for at least three more months beyond March is now being discussed before OPEC meets again in November.

The deal to curb output propelled crude prices above \$58 a barrel in January but they have since slipped back to a \$50 to \$54 range as the effort to drain global inventories has taken longer than expected.

"Both countries agreed that the option to extend the voluntary market rebalancing effort, beyond the first quarter of 2018, would be considered in due course as market fundamentals may dictate," the ministry said in a statement on Falih's meeting with Kazakh Energy Minister Kanat Bozumbayev.

Non-OPEC Kazakhstan is aiming for a stand-alone deal with OPEC on restraining its crude production due to a need to crank up output at its Kashagan field, a Kazakh official said last week.

The Central Asian nation increased oil and gas condensate output by 9.9 percent in January-July to 1.724 million bpd, exceeding its quota of 1.7 million bpd under the cut pact.

Kazakhstan has said it needs to adjust the terms of the deal as it expects to boost output later this year thanks to the giant Kashagan field.

The Saudi Energy Ministry said that Bozumbayev, who met with Falih on Sunday, said that despite the gradual ramp up of the Kashagan field this year, "Kazakhstan was able, through reducing production in other fields in August, to achieve more than full conformity" with its output cut target.

"A similar production level is also anticipated for September," the Saudi ministry said.

Both ministers agreed to continue, and expand, their energy cooperation, including in two major projects in Kazakhstan in petrochemicals and renewable energy, the ministry said in the statement without providing details.

Falih, who has held his meetings in Astana, also met Venezuelan Oil Minister Eulogio Del Pino and both ministers "agreed on the importance of leaving all options open" including the possible extension of the oil output cuts beyond the first quarter of 2018, if needed, according to a separate statement.

Del Pino on Friday said global oil inventories remain too high and urged producers to look at exemptions granted to countries such as Libya and Nigeria and the effect of those exemptions on the market.

Both ministers discussed oil market developments and how the OPEC-led pact "is improving market stability, contributing to the rebalancing of supply and demand, and drawing down excessive inventories," the Saudi ministry said.

"They both shared an optimistic outlook on market fundamentals in 2018."

(Source: Reuters)

U.S. solar bracing for first decline as rooftop demand slumps

The U.S. is poised to experience its first annual decline in solar-panel installations, as a drop in rooftop demand slows growth in the world's second-biggest market.

Developers added a total of almost 2.4 gigawatts in the second quarter, putting the industry on pace to reach 12.4 gigawatts this year, according to a report Monday from GTM Research and the Solar Energy Industries Association. That's down about 17 percent from a record 2016, and the research company expects another decline in 2018.

The solar industry is girding for a slowdown after a decade of double-digit expansion. Utilities are reaching state-mandated goals and rooftop suppliers are slowing growth in some of the largest markets, dragging down demand this year. And that's before a trade complaint that may prompt President Donald Trump to impose tariffs on imported panels, a move that the industry warns would dramatically exacerbate the slump.

Imposing tariffs would mean "installations would significantly drop," according to the report. "Downside risk looms over the long-term outlook for U.S. solar due to the trade dispute."

Total installations in the second quarter increased 8 percent from a year earlier. The industry was anchored by giant, utility-scale solar farms, which increased 17 percent to 1,387 megawatts. That accounted for more than half of all installations and offset a 17 percent decline in the residential market. Homeowners added just 563 megawatts as developers like Sunrun Inc. and Vivint Solar Inc. push for profitability over growth.

Bloomberg New Energy Finance expects the U.S. market, second only to China, to contract even more, forecasting a 23 percent decline this year to 10.4 gigawatts.

The analysts continue to expect installed capacity will triple over the next five years -- unless Trump imposes tariffs under the trade case currently before the U.S. International Trade Commission. That "would result in a substantial downside revision to our forecast," GTM said in the statement.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Yemen's misery calls out for global intervention

A Saudi misadventure has created a terrible humanitarian crisis

The civil war in Yemen, which descended into a new circle of hell after Saudi Arabia committed its air force to defeating Houthis in March 2015, is fast destroying what is left of the poorest of Arab nations. Eclipsed by the ostensibly greater geopolitical stakes of the carnage in Iraq and Syria, this ancient country has been largely ignored by the world as its people face catastrophe. Time is running out. The UN says two-thirds of the 28m population face shortages of food and clean water, while a quarter are on the brink of famine. A cholera epidemic is raging. The war itself has killed an estimated 10,000 people.

Saudi Arabia, under Mohammed bin Salman, crown prince and the power behind the throne, launched its air war. The Saudis, backed by a United Arab Emirates expeditionary force on the ground, and with episodic U.S. support, have failed to reinstate their client regime, led by Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. They have not retaken the capital Sana'a from the Houthi movement.

They have regularly hit hospitals and schools, weddings and funerals, mosques and marketplaces — as well as creating more space for al-Qaeda's franchise in the Arabian peninsula. While the impetuosity of the Prince is part of the problem, the ruling House of Saud's historical record with Yemen is comparably disastrous. The Saudis have used their oil wealth to divide a shifting constellation of actors and tribes, wracked by sectarian and secessionist tensions.

Despite the presence of many common tribal links, the Saudis have done little to help the Yemenis build a nation, preferring to finance Wahhabi mosques than modern infrastructure — this, in a country running out of water but awash with guns. Ali Abdullah Saleh, the Yemeni strongman backed by Riyadh for three decades until he was ousted in the Arab Spring, remarked that ruling the south Arabian country was "like dancing on the heads of snakes". It is time for this tragic misadventure to end. Under Donald Trump, the U.S. has encouraged a Saudi-led Sunni in hopes of isolating Shia Iran. This overlooks the futility of the Saudi campaign in Yemen and the likely blowback if the country collapses. The U.S. Congress, though equally hostile to Tehran, is becoming less tolerant of Riyadh's exporting of Wahhabi extremism.

The U.S., with its 2003 invasion of Iraq, helped reignite the age-old schism between Sunni and Shia. It could douse some of the flames from this fratricidal struggle by pushing for immediate relief and longer-term help for Yemen. The U.S., UK and France, the major suppliers of arms to Saudi Arabia and the UAE as well as permanent members of the UN Security Council, need jointly to insist on a ceasefire and huge influx of humanitarian aid. Russia should intercede with its ally Iran, which has already called for a ceasefire. International peacekeepers may eventually be required; a global development package to refloat Yemen will certainly be needed. What Yemenis need now, above all, is an end to their misery. They should be forgotten no longer.

(Source: FT)

Trump's travel ban may expire before it reaches the Supreme Court

Once again, a federal court has ruled against the Trump administration's temporary ban on admission into the United States of refugees and citizens of six majority-Muslim countries. And once again, the Justice Department is appealing the ruling to the Supreme Court — this time arguing that the government should not have to exclude from the ban grandparents or other close family members of people within the United States, along with refugees sponsored by American resettlement organizations, while the case is pending before the court.

It's not clear what the Justice Department hopes to gain by appealing this injunction against Trump's executive order, as the Supreme Court was already set to hear arguments on the ban's legality on Oct. 10. What's more, a significant portion of the ban will likely have expired by that date — and the rest before the justices can even rule on the case.

Trump's order halts entry into the United States by citizens of the six banned countries for 90 days and suspends refugee admissions for 120 days. After courts blocked the ban, Trump clarified that these clocks would begin ticking as soon as the policy was allowed to go into effect. Because the Supreme Court lifted in part the lower-court injunctions against the order on June 26, the refugee ban will expire in late October, and the entry ban at the end of September.

As a matter of law, the Supreme Court can't rule on a case that no longer presents an ongoing issue. Yet the Justice Department hasn't given any indication of awareness that the court might well dismiss the case without deciding whether the ban is legal. Not only is the department now battling over an injunction on a policy that likely expires in two weeks, but its opening brief before the Supreme Court didn't even address the issue.

If the White House wants to keep the case alive, Trump could declare that the clock has yet to start with respect to those immigrants and refugees with "bona fide" connections to the United States, for whom the ban has remained on pause. Or he might extend the order on the grounds that the government has been unable to conduct reviews of vetting procedures — ostensibly what the halt in travel was meant to allow — without the ban fully in place. He could even issue a new ban or make the existing order permanent.

Yet the government's best option would be to allow time to run out on an executive order lacking in any security benefit to justify its cruelty. Permitting the ban to expire would let the administration save face while avoiding the risk of a damaging Supreme Court decision that could not only strike down the order but also place lasting constraints on presidential power over immigration and national security. Let's hope that, despite its choice to appeal the injunction, the Justice Department's silence on the ban's expiration is a sign that the government recognizes the opportunity to take the graceful way out.

(Source: The Washington Post)

9/11: Washington's enthusiasm for retaliation against Saudi terror has a blind spot

One way or another, the attack paved the way for the U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen, killing hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians along the way. It also destabilized the entire planet at the expense of the Muslim world. The consequences of America's endless War on Terror are so terrible that victims in these nations and beyond will never be able to live a normal life for at least two generations.

Likewise, memories are still fresh for the survivors and the family members of victims who are to this day living with their losses while continuing to fight for accountability through both the military court in Guantanamo, where individuals allegedly involved in the attacks have been tried or are still facing painstakingly slow trials — and torture programs. This sixteenth anniversary of 9/11 is the first time since the attacks that the American families now have another legal recourse for seeking accountability not only from individuals but from a regime the U.S. government itself says was involved in the attack: Saudi Arabia.

Introduced in the Senate on September 16th, 2015, the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA) removed a major roadblock to justice by opening the way for private U.S. citizens to file suit against the Saudi government, which was previously protected by the blanket immunity given to foreign governments. There is much that we do not yet know about what went on behind closed doors with regard to the orchestration of the suspicious 9/11 attacks, but the declassification of the portion of the 2002 Congressional Joint Inquiry known as the 28 pages on July 15th, 2016, after 14 years of secrecy, offered the preliminary hope of some much-needed answers.

The report makes clear: Of the 19 total hijackers who carried out the attacks, 15 were from Saudi Arabia, and evidence contained within the 28 pages points to financial connections between these individuals, (the Bush administration officials — emphasis here), and members of the Saudi government.

Curiously, however, Saudi Arabia's suspected culpability in the attacks has not been reflected in U.S. response. From the War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan to regime change campaigns in Syria, Libya and Yemen, and then to President Trump's travel ban affecting a list of seven Muslim-majority countries — from which Saudi Arabia is notably absent, it would appear that the U.S. government's enthusiasm for retaliation against terrorism has a blind spot in the shape of the convenient alliance with Saudi Arabia.

A vital step

The point of this write-up is not to say who was behind the suspicious attacks on 9/11; nor is it about getting at the truth of the extent to which the Saudi government sponsored and aided in the attacks, which is apparently a vital step towards justice and closure for families that, until JASTA, had the power of foreign sovereign immunity standing in its way. Despite fierce opposition from Saudi lobbyists and a presidential veto that argued that it would invite similar lawsuits against the United States government from victims of U.S. war crimes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, JASTA was successfully passed into law on September 28th, 2016. Only two days later, the first lawsuit under this new act went forward, setting the precedent for many other lawsuits of its kind to follow. That's good news for the American victims. But what about other victims of America's War on Terror?

The rise of ISIL has been aided by the deliberate failure of the U.S. government to investigate the role



of Saudi Arabia in the 9/11 attacks and its support of Wahhabi-Takfiri movements such as Al-Qaeda in the years since. The failure to shine a full light on Saudi actions and particularly its involvement in 9/11 and terror financing has contributed to the Saudi ability to continue to engage in actions that are damaging even to the U.S. and its so-called War on Terror — and in particular their support for ISIL and Al-Qaeda.

One reason that international justice has been less than stellar is that not enough attention was given to Saudi Arabia's fostering of Al-Qaeda-type Wahhabi Takfiri movements, of which ISIL is the most notorious and successful. So far the CIA and other intelligence services have faced little criticism in the U.S. for their deliberate failure to foresee the explosive expansion of ISIL and suchlike.

Therefore, shining the light on this blind spot — Saudi terror financing and criticism of the U.S. policy towards Saudi Arabia — is important because it comes amidst growing doubts in the U.S. about the wisdom of President Donald Trump's plan to look to the Persian Gulf Arab monarchs as crucial allies in the U.S. campaign to contain and, if possible, push back Iran and Russia after their victories against ISIL and Al-Qaeda in Iraq and Syria during the past few months.

Under the plan, Saudi Arabia has hosted a special training facility for "moderate" terrorists which are to fight both ISIL and the Syrian government, but later joined ranks with these terror groups at the expense of the U.S. and the rest of the international community. A problem is that Saudi Arabia is still in love with ISIL and Al-Qaeda, whatever its role in their creation, and it gives priority to regime change in Damascus and containment

Despite fierce opposition from Saudi lobbyists and a presidential veto that argued that it would invite similar lawsuits against the United States government from victims of U.S. war crimes in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, JASTA was successfully passed into law on September 28th, 2016.

(Source: FAN)

Hungary is making Europe's migrant crisis worse

Another summer has passed, and still there seems to be no lasting solution to one of the great humanitarian conundrums of our time: how to resettle the thousands of migrants who continue to risk dangerous passage across the Mediterranean in search of sanctuary from violence in the Middle East and Africa. The number of arrivals in Greece has steadily declined since 2015, after measures that all but closed the route from Turkey. But the problem will remain so long as conflict and poverty drive people to take huge risks in the hope of reaching Europe.

It is indisputably a difficult problem, but it has not been made easier by the inhospitable attitudes of some of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe — Hungary in particular — which have stubbornly blocked entry to refugees. This is a shame, given that back in 1989, Hungary led the way in opening its borders to let the people of Communist-ruled Eastern Europe move freely between East and West. Effectively throwing its lot in with the West, Hungary declared then that it was guided "by generally accepted international principles of human rights and humanitarian consideration."

No longer, it seems. When the European Union decided in the summer of 2015 to help Italy and Greece cope with a huge wave of migration by resettling 120,000 people in other European countries, Hungary and Slovakia took the decision to the Court of Justice of the European Union. On Wednesday, the court threw out their case, which seemed only to stiffen Hungary's opposition. With

unconscious incongruity, the country's foreign minister, Peter Szijarto, angrily declared that "politics has raped European law and values," vowing that no one would be relocated to Hungary against its wishes.

The Court of Justice decision will not greatly improve the lot of migrants, and not just because of Hungary's callousness. The program for migrants from Greece and Italy has resettled barely a quarter of the people it was supposed to help, and Eastern European countries were allotted a tiny fraction to begin with. And the European Union does not have the tools to effectively punish recalcitrant nations.

Still, it is incumbent on Europe to continue to look for humanitarian solutions, whether by helping to resolve the conflicts or ease the poverty that drive people to flee, or by making room for those who reach its shores. That effort and burden must be shared, and it must be based on international law and European values, which include tolerance, cultural diversity, and protection of minorities and a rejection of xenophobia.

Hungary and its neighbors are not alone in trying to keep immigrants out. President Trump has set a scandalous example by his demagogic policy on immigration, Britain's vote to leave the European Union was based largely on blocking immigrants, and populist and nationalist parties have exploited immigration to gain strength in many other European nations.

But it is particularly sad to see countries that so



poignantly celebrated the lifting of the Iron Curtain now argue, as Hungary does, that being asked to take in a small number of Muslim immigrants is somehow a violation of European laws and values. Hungary's hard-line prime minister, Viktor Orban, has gone so far as to ask for European Union money to tighten his border against migrants — an arrogant request promptly dismissed by the president of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker. The Court of Justice ruling should stand as a strong reminder to Hungary and its neighbors that the principles of human rights and humanitarian considerations they once so ardently embraced are not optional.

(Source: The NYT)

U.S. leverage in region declining: analyst

Western, especially the U.S., leverage in the Middle East has decreased and that's why necessitates independent forces' attempts to plan a new pattern for security in the region, Lebanese scholar Ahmad Melli of Lebanon National University said.

The Head of the Political and Legal Research Department of the Lebanese university made the remarks in an exclusive interview on the sidelines of the 'West

Asia in the monopolar post-Western Atmosphere. Challenges of Transition Period' that was held in Beirut on Thursday.

'The meeting was held at a right time; we are in an era that the leverage of the West, especially the U.S., is decreasing,' Melli said.

The member of Hezbollah added that holding such a meeting in Beirut has a special meaning; Beirut has long been a cultur-



al capital and the capital of the Resistance.

He said that one cannot say that the West has completely been defeated, but he can say that the Resistance Axis has acted well in fighting Western plans.

Melli said the power of the Zionist regime has decreased and, hence, it is trying to find a standing point among Arab countries.

(Source: IRNA)

Myanmar's stance on Rohingya crisis gearing to intl. community's wishes: Indonesian Amb

by: Marjohn Sheikhi,
Payman Yazdani

MNA: The grievous situation of 1.1 million Rohingya Muslims in the wake of a new wave of violence that broke out on 25 August after decades of ethnic tensions in the Rakhine state of Myanmar has managed to make headlines all across the globe. The world's most persecuted people, Rohingya Muslims have been subjected to mass killings, systematic discrimination, and rigid restrictions, with their rights to citizenship, freedom of movement, access to medical aid, education and other basic services all denied.

According to reports, at least 400 people were killed during the outbreak of violence two weeks ago. UN says during this time, 146,000 people have fled to Bangladesh due to widespread persecution by Myanmar security forces, and has estimated that the number of refugees would double.

Meanwhile, Indonesia as a predominantly Muslim country has been quite vocal in its support toward the Rohingya crisis, with thousands of Indonesian Muslims staging pro-Rohingya demonstrations in Central Jakarta. The Indonesian government has also made contact with Myanmar national Leader Aung San Suu Kyi on the situation and has taken a number of measures to help resolve the humanitarian crisis in the Rakhine state.

For this reason, the English Desk of Mehr News Agency reached out to Indonesian Ambassador to Tehran Ocatvino Alimudin in order to shed more light on Indonesia's stance over Rohingya crisis and the country's plans for settling the situation.

The following is the full text of the interview conducted at Indonesian Embassy in Tehran on Wednesday, September 6:

■ Indonesian President Joko Widodo has recently said that he would take some concrete actions to help resolve the humanitarian crisis of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. What are those practical measures that President Widodo was talking about?

President of the Republic of Indonesia Joko Widodo has mentioned that we need not only statements and condemnation, but clear actions toward the Rohingya crisis. During the visit of Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi to Myanmar on Monday [4 October], there were talks with Myanmar's leader Aung San Suu Kyi on implementation of some very concrete measures in terms of building a hospital there. We have completed phase I of the construction of the Indonesian Hospital in Rakhine state which occupies approximately 8000 square meters of land with a building area of more than 1000 square meters. Now we are in phase II of the construction which includes construction of doctors' and nurses' rooms and will be completed by October. The good thing about the Indonesian Hospital is that it will accommodate all local people of the Rakhine state, not only the Muslims. This is a good initiative, a good starting point,



where both Rakhine and Muslim people work together on a joint project to construct the hospital. This is not a project for only one ethnic group, but a project for all.

Apart from the hospital, we are also ready to send humanitarian aid in the form of containers for medical supplies and foodstuff to Myanmar once we get access to delivering the humanitarian assistance there. We have also sent humanitarian aid to Bangladesh and some food supplies to the local community there, which is hosting tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees. Foreign Minister Marsudi has also held talks with officials of Bangladesh after visiting Myanmar about the situation of Rohingya Muslims.

■ What has been the reaction of the Burmese government to Indonesia's stance toward the mass killings of Rohingya Muslims and about the measures Indonesia is going take to assist with the grievous situation?

I think I should stress that Indonesia's stance on this issue has been very clear. During a meeting of Foreign Minister Marsudi with state counselor Suu Kyi in Myanmar's capital on Monday, Ms. Marsudi submitted a proposal to Myanmar to help resolve the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine State. These four elements include 1) restoring peace and security as a means to stabilize the region; 2) maximum restraint and non-violence in order to stop any coercive measures and atrocities there; 3) protection to all persons in the Rakhine State, regardless of race and religion; and 4) immediate access to humanitarian aids.

The proposal also includes another element which is more technical, and that is the implementation of the Final Report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, which we call the Kofi Annan report since the commission is chaired by him. Under the Final Report, we can think of practical measures, technical issues, about citizenships, free movement, and so on.

I believe that the government of Myanmar will receive these positions, and its reaction will be in line with our proposals. I think after Aung San Suu Kyi's conversation with Turkish President in which she voiced support for the rights of Rohingya Muslims, she would go on to consider some practical measures that

would be acceptable to all of us. I think Myanmar's stance is gearing toward the international community's wishes. So once Myanmar gives access to humanitarian aid, countries like Indonesia and Iran can round up cooperation not only between governments, but also between governments and civil societies in order to deliver the donations to the right parties in Myanmar. I think people will soon get a clear view on what is going on and what is best for them, and the government of Myanmar will work together with the international community and we can see the progress after this.

■ On Monday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif held a telephone conversation with his Indonesian counterpart on the situation of Rohingya Muslims while Ms. Marsudi was in Myanmar to assess the situation. What are the areas in which Iran and Indonesia in particular could cooperate together in order to help resolve the Rohingya crisis?

I should note that Iran and Indonesia are very close. We are always exchanging views by phone conversations which are facilitated by our embassies. Since the Monday talks were held with Foreign Minister Marsudi in Myanmar, that conversation was also connected to Indonesian Embassy in Myanmar. I heard that the two sides discussed the situation of Muslims in the Rakhine state, and I am sure Mr. Zarif has also conferred on the issue with the Iranian government as well as a number of other governments. As for us, we are fully ready to have more discussion on the issue, and sit together with the ASEAN member states to discuss humanitarian aid and what kind of assistance they can give and how they are going to do that. First and foremost, we need to bring together the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), the IOM (International Organization for Migration), as well as the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), so those related parties will be involved in the issue.

As for bilateral cooperation between Iran and Indonesia, we are quite open to any suggestion. It will depend on what the Islamic Republic of Iran has and what we have to help with the crisis. But when we talk about the needs of Burmese people in Rakhine state now, we are thinking about capacity building, education,

economy empowerment, and other such subjects which we are open to discuss with any country that wants to help.

■ Myanmar has been laying landmines near its border with Bangladesh in a move that is believed to prevent return of Rohingya Muslims fleeing the brutal violence. Wouldn't this move be considered in violation of the international law?

Whenever we talk about territorial integrity, or peace and security, or how we enforce our laws on our borders, each country is entitled to its own rights. The most important thing is that countries need to discuss with their neighbors the kind of measure they are going to take in regards to the borders, such with the building of walls. In this regard, part of the Final Report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State includes some measures about the movement of Rohingya Muslims while crossing borders. I cannot say whether Myanmar's move is against international law or not, but what the international law says in the UN Charter or the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (1969) is that every state has to secure its borders and make their borderlines clear and visible. It falls into border cooperation between neighbor states to agree on what measures they want to take in regard to border security. In terms of the view of the international community, we give preference to what the neighboring countries have agreed with each other. They have the final say to decide whether the measure would be acceptable or not.

■ But landmines are quite different from building walls which is more or less agreed by all to ensure border security. Landmines can actually endanger lives. Would the international community be okay with that?

First, we have to clarify who represents the international community. Right now we are talking about the Advisory Commission on Rakhine state which is appointed by the government of Myanmar, and then the chairman, Kofi Annan, is also an acceptable figure by the international community. I think this year we need to focus on the implementation of the Final Report before going further to other measures. I think the best course of action for us at the moment is to make documentations, since the most important thing is how to register the Myanmarish migrants who are in Bangladesh and are in need of support. The government of Myanmar also needs cooperation from Bangladesh on this matter.

■ Are you optimistic about the future of Rohingya Muslims and the outcome of Indonesia and other countries' measures toward their situation?

This is still an ongoing process, but considering the fact that governments of Indonesia and Myanmar are on good terms, the prospect of cooperation looks positive. I think the next step is to bring this issue to bigger forums, such as ASEAN or the United Nations, which would hopefully make a clear way toward progress and we would see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Another Political marathon in Scotland

By Ana Sadat Hosseini Fard

Although the British government has opposed the Scottish Independence re-referendum, Scottish Independents and the residents of this region seem to be more likely to hold a referendum next year than ever before! Scotland's Independents are planning to hold a new referendum in May or September 2018. In this regard, the Scot independents have substantiated arguments, the arguments with which the Tory Party (the ruling party) and, of course, other traditional British parties have seriously disagree.



Scottish Independents believe that the "election" is a new chapter in the social, political, and international relations of England. Meanwhile, the Scottish residents' previous decision to abstain from the UK is related to the time before the election and is virtually out of credit. The Scots believe they should decide on their independence, given the current situation in the UK, and especially the conditions that will govern Britain after the departure of the European Union. Hence, the current equations in Scotland are very complex and interconnected.

Scotland's prime minister, Nicola Sturgeon, had already warned strongly against British withdrawal from the single European market, with the Scottish separation referendum taking place in Britain. In other words, Scottish residents believe that regarding the change in UK's political and economic system after leaving the European Union, there should be a new opportunity for the Scots to hold a referendum on independence. Obviously, the government of London has no answer to this argument!

Another important point is that the Scottish residents have been calling for standing in the European Union during a referendum poll. Unlike residents of many other parts of the UK who voted for separation from Europe, they have accepted to remain in the United Europe as an important principle in their political approach. The Scots now believe that they have been the victim of British people's decision, and the only way to stop this trend is to hold a referendum on independence again, separation from Britain and make a stand and stay decision in Europe as an independent actor. As noted above, when the British people (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales) took part in the European Union's referendum on the third day of July this year, most people in England and Wales voted for withdrawal but most of Scotland's people along with Northern Ireland had voted for remaining, which ultimately resulted in 51% of the vote casting out of the European Union. The Scots now consider themselves a great victim of celebrations! They have to take long steps to survive in the European Union. The prerequisite for the survival of Scotland in the European Union is its independence from Britain. The central government of London is now struggling to prevent another referendum in Scotland since British politicians are well aware of the outcome of this new referendum in Scotland! They are aware of the Scottish residents' desire on independence of the British, according to the Scottish election and dissatisfaction. The London government is therefore seeking to prevent any referendum on independence in Scotland under any circumstances.

The opposition between the Scottish Independents and the London Government will peak in the coming months. Independents have decided to take their decision on separation from Britain till the negotiations between the British and European governments over the Brexit come to an end, so that they will eventually be able to find the groundwork for their survival in the European Union. Now we have to wait till 2018 to see the result of this political marathon.

The story of Iran and unreliable Europe

By Hanif Ghafari

Germany's Foreign Minister, Sigmar Gabriel, in a recent meeting with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, has stated that Germany wants to maintain a nuclear deal with Iran, but is also prepared to push Tehran with France, Britain and the United States to execute all details of the agreement! There are some points about the German Foreign Minister's remarks that can not be easily overlooked.

First, since the signing of the nuclear deal, the Treasury Department of the United States has prevented the normalization of banking and business relations between Iran and European countries. However, not only the European Troika has not taken action against the Washington, but has actually been associated with it.

European officials are well aware that the congressional sanctions against Iran, the US Treasury blocking the normalization of banking relations with Iran, the creation of visa restrictions for those who travel to Iran, and the extension of the ISA law are all violations of the JCPOA. However, Germany, France and Britain have preferred instead to face up to these issues to complete the

puzzle of the US game in confrontation with Iran.

The second point is that recent comments by Sigmar Gabriel have been delivered as Trump stepped down to overturn the nuclear deal. As news sources report, the US president is planning to announce Iran's lack of compliance in his October report to Congress. In such a situation, the remarks of the German Foreign Minister are worth considering! German co-operation with anti-Iranian policies of the United States once again showed that European Troika is unreliable. This is also true of a nuclear deal with Iran.

Undoubtedly, the statements of the European authorities regarding adherence to the JCPOA are not in line with their own practice. Federica Mogherini, the EU's foreign policy chief, has repeatedly spoken out of adhering to a nuclear deal, but in practice, she has not acted in a bid to halt US actions.

Now, the Islamic Republic of Iran is facing tensions with the United States, Germany, France and Britain for a nuclear deal. Obviously, the European Troika was unsuccessful in containing the United States. An issue that public opinion in Iran and the world are aware of that.

Johnson's Misconception

By Hossein yari

In one of his remarks, British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson has identified North Korea as a source of tension on Korean Peninsula, and emphasized that Pyongyang must resolve the problem that has emerged between this country and the United States.

Boris Johnson has also said that he will work with Washington to resolve the crisis. There are some points about Boris Johnson's remarks that can't be easily overtaken:

The first point is that British officials, both conservative and Democrat, have consistently followed US policies. In this regard, there is essentially no concern for the English authorities which party to work at the White House.

This is true of Trump government as well. It is not unreasonable that many analysts of international affairs consider London as an executor of US policies in Europe and the international system. Boris Johnson's recent remarks are also analyzed in the same way.

The bitter memory of former British Prime Minister Tony Blair with George Walker Bush during the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq is not forgotten yet. Even though Downing Street No. 10 is now under Conservatives control, and the Labor Party has left the scene, Washington's pursuit remains a con-

stant strategy and constant pursuit of British foreign policy.

Also, the British authorities know well what role the United States has played in pushing the six-party nuclear talks with North Korea. In recent years, whenever Seoul and Pyongyang have decided to negotiate directly with each other, American officials prevented the two countries from doing so.

Undoubtedly, as long as the United States is present in this equation, North Korea can't basically speak of stabilization and peace.

Third, in recent days, many US politicians, Democrat and Republican have warned Trump about a new adventure in North Korea and called for it to be restrained. Even people like Newt Gingrich who are close to Trump, have warned him about the United States' lack of readiness to enter the military phase (against Pyongyang).

Many US media outlets, according to analysts, have expressed their concern over the US-sponsored Trump adventure in the field of US foreign policy, especially in North Korea. In such a case, declaring British support for the United States is a strategic mistake.

Obviously, the result of this inaccurate and dangerous calculation is nothing less than the engagement of Britain in a difficult dispute. The truth that Boris Johnson and other government officials have closed their eyes on.

Syrian army victories in Deir Ezzor bring us closer to final victory

Syrian Deputy Foreign and Expatriates Minister Fayssal Mikdad stressed the importance of the strategic achievement realized by the Syrian Army in cooperation with the allies in Deir Ezzor, which has suffered from ISIL terrorist organization.

In an interview with Beirut-based al-Mayadeen TV on Sunday, Mikdad said that this achievement is a turning point in eliminating terrorism as "it brings us closer to the moment of the final victory".

He pointed out that the attacks of the US-led international coalition's warplanes against one of the Syrian Army's position in Thardah Mountain in Deir Ezzor last year paved the way for ISIL terrorists to attack and control the position, asserting that Deir Ezzor Airport was a strategic target for the US and ISIL terrorist organization which is one of the Israeli and US tools in the region.

Mikdad hailed the sacrifices presented by the Syrian Army in realizing this significant achievement.

Syria will ever remain united as all the schemes against have begun to unfold, Mikdad said, indicating that the huge achievements realized by the Syrian army earlier in Aleppo and today in Deir Ezzor are turning points on the long way for defeating terrorism and fulfilling the aspirations of the Syrian people and Syria's friends in the region and the world.

The Deputy Foreign Minister reiterated that any foreign presence on the Syrian territories is unacceptable according to the international law and the US presence on the Syrian soil can't be justified at all as the US forces destroyed the infrastructure in Syria and its works serve terrorism only.

(Source: SANA)

Slavery in the U.S. prison system

By David A Love, Vijay Das

September 9, 2017 marked one year since the largest prison labor strike in U.S. history. More than

24,000 prisoners across 29 prisons in 12 states protested against inhumane conditions, timing it around the anniversary of the Attica Prison uprising, a prisoner strike now 46 years old.

That violent uprising originated from prisoners rebelling against overcrowded cells, unsanitary conditions, medical

neglect and abuse. From Attica to the strike led by the In-carcerated Workers Organizing Committee last year, these protests draw attention to an ugly truth: Prisoner abuse runs rampant and it has extended into modern-day versions of slavery. Last year's strike organizers described slavery-like conditions in prisons in the nationwide call to action.

Slavery persists by another name today. Young men and women of color toil away in 21st-century fields, sow in hand. And Corporate America is cracking the whip.

Influenced by enormous corporate lobbying, the United States Congress enacted the Prison Industry Enhancement Certification Program in 1979 which permitted U.S. companies to use prison labor. Coupled with the drastic increase in the prison population during this period, profits for participating companies and revenue for the government and its private contractors soared. The Federal Bureau of Prisons now runs a program called Federal Prison Industries (UNICOR) that pays inmates under one dollar an hour.

The program generated \$500m in sales in 2016 with little of that cash being passed down to prison workers. State-side, where much of the U.S. addiction to mass incarceration lies, is no different. California's prison labor program is expected to produce some \$232m in sales in 2017.

These exploited laborers are disproportionately African American and Latino - a demographic status quo resulting from the draconian sentencing and other criminal justice policies ransacking minority communities across the United States. →13

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4 tendon gliding exercises for carpal tunnel relief

By Brett Sears

1. Treating carpal tunnel syndrome with tendon gliding exercises



Tendon gliding exercises are often a useful tool to manage the symptoms of carpal tunnel syndrome. The goal of the exercises are to improve the way your tendons move through the carpal tunnel of your wrist and alleviate pain that can limit your ability to perform normal, everyday functions like typing or grasping. Tendons that glide and slide smoothly through the carpal tunnel help to keep your wrist and fingers functioning normally.

Try the following tendon gliding exercises to help decrease the pain and tingling associated with carpal tunnel syndrome. You can also use the exercises to help prevent future problems with

carpal tunnel syndrome and promote optimal mobility.

Be sure to check with your doctor or physical therapist to make sure you should be performing these exercises. Also, consult with your doctor if your symptoms are severe or have been present for more than four weeks.

Start with your hand opened up, like you are telling someone to stop. After each subsequent position, return to this open hand position for two to three seconds.

2. Fingers down position



Slowly bend your fingers down until each knuckle is bent and the tips of your fingers are touching the pads at the base of your fingers. You should not experience any pain as you do this, although you may feel some tension in your fingers or wrist. Hold this position for two to three

seconds and then return to the starting open-hand position.

3. Fist position



From the open hand starting position, slowly make a fist and squeeze gently. This should be pain free. Hold this position for two to three seconds and return to the open hand position.

4. "L" position



Slowly bend your fingers forward, but be sure to keep the knuckles of your

fingers straight. Only the joint where your fingers meet your hand should bend. Your hand should now be in the shape of an "L." Hold this position for two to three seconds and then return to the starting position.

5. Fingers to palm position



Bend your fingers at the first and middle joints only. The tips of your fingers should rest gently on your palm. Hold this position for two to three seconds and return to the open-hand starting position.

Repeat this series of tendon glides five times, three times per day to help relieve symptoms and prevent future problems with carpal tunnel syndrome. By keeping your tendons gliding properly, you can be sure to keep your hand and wrists moving the best they can.

(Source: verywell.com)

What is heartburn?

Despite its name, heartburn has nothing to do with the heart. Some of the symptoms, however, are similar to those of a heart attack or heart disease.

Heartburn is an irritation of the esophagus -- the tube that connects your throat and stomach. It's caused by stomach acid. This leads to a burning discomfort in your upper belly or below your breastbone.

What causes heartburn?

Heartburn symptoms can start up because of a problem with a muscular

valve called the lower esophageal sphincter (LES). It's located where the esophagus meets the stomach -- below the rib cage and slightly left of center.

Normally, with the help of gravity, the LES keeps stomach acid right where it should be -- in your stomach. When it's working right, the LES opens to allow food into your stomach or to let you belch, then closes again. But if the LES opens too often or doesn't close tightly enough, stomach acid can seep into the esophagus and cause a burning sensation.

If your LES doesn't tighten as it should, there are often two things that contribute to the problem. One is overeating, which puts too much food in your stomach. Another is too much pressure on your stomach, often due to obesity, pregnancy, or constipation.

Certain foods can relax your LES or increase stomach acid, including:

- Tomatoes
- Citrus fruits
- Garlic and onions
- Chocolate

- Coffee or caffeinated products
- Alcohol
- Peppermint

Meals high in fats and oils (animal or vegetable) often lead to heartburn, as do certain medications. Stress and lack of sleep can raise how much acid your stomach makes and can cause heartburn.

If you're pregnant, the hormone progesterone can relax your LES and lead to heartburn. Smoking also relaxes the LES and increases stomach acid.

(Source: webmd.com)

Psychologists find the key to a thriving life

By Ana Sandoiu

Recent research published in the journal *European Psychologist* reviews the literature available on the concept of human thriving and outlines key elements that may lead to a thriving life.

In certain situations, some individuals flourish and thrive, whereas others merely survive, sometimes giving up in the face of adversity.

For centuries, the question of why human individuals react so differently to

employees thrive and others not, and so on. By setting out a clear definition, I hope this helps set a course for future research."

Dr. Brown carried out this research as part of his doctoral studies at the University of Bath in the U.K. alongside study co-author Dr. Rachel Arnold, an expert in the psychology of performance excellence.

What does it mean to 'thrive'?

"Thriving is a word most people would be glad to hear themselves

has been alternatively defined as vitality, learning, task focus, "mental toughness," or a combination of all of these concepts.

Dr. Brown offers a simpler explanation.

"[Thriving] appears to come down to an individual experiencing a sense of development, of getting better at something, and succeeding at mastering something. In the simplest terms, what underpins it is feeling good about life and yourself and being good at something."

But underpinning this simple definition is a list of so-called enablers, or factors that increase our likelihood of thriving. The researchers note that, in order to thrive, not all of these factors are required, but a combination of some elements from both lists could lead to a thriving life.

"Personal enablers" listed by the authors include having a positive outlook on life, being religious or spiritual, having a proactive personality, being motivated, being committed to learning and expanding one's knowledge, being psychologically resilient, and being socially competent - that is, surrounded by family, friends, and colleagues.

"Contextual enablers" include being in a situation wherein the challenges are at an adequate level compared with one's capabilities, and having interpersonal relationships based on attachment and trust.

Receiving support from one's family, colleagues, and employers is also important, and being given a high degree of autonomy and being trusted as competent are key elements.

(Source: medicalnewstoday.com)

"Personal enablers include having a positive outlook on life, being religious or spiritual, having a proactive personality, being motivated, being committed to learning and expanding one's knowledge, being psychologically resilient, and being socially competent - that is, surrounded by family, friends, and colleagues."



similar circumstances has preoccupied philosophers and psychologists alike.

However, these scholars do not seem to have been able to reach a consensus on the matter. This prompted Dr. Daniel Brown, a sport and exercise scientist at the University of Portsmouth in the United Kingdom, to review the existing literature on the topic in an attempt to achieve three aims.

Firstly, Dr. Brown and colleagues wanted to come up with an all-encompassing concept of thriving that covers various population groups, from babies to adult professionals.

Secondly, they wanted to put forth a set of key principles that we can all apply if we wish to thrive in our daily lives. And finally, the third goal of the review was to identify gaps in the existing research and outline directions for future research.

Dr. Brown explains the motivation for his study, saying, "Part of the reason for a lack of consensus is [that] the research so far has been narrowly focused."

"Some have studied what makes babies thrive," he adds, "others have examined what makes some

"SHAHR" Welfare Complex, a Gem in Northern Iran

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Meanwhile, most travelers prefer to use the coastal waters of Mazandaran Province to make unforgettable memories along with family or friends.

Among coastal cities of Mazandaran Province, Izadshahr is an ideal place for summer trips due to its favorable climatic condition. This city is located at 8 km West of Mahmoudabad and 7 km east of the Noor city in Mazandaran Province.

"SHAHR" Welfare Complex is one of the best welfare and recreational hubs in Izadshahr which is offered to the northern travelers. It has a beautiful residential and tourist area along with all amenities and facilities and can be considered as the most suitable option for staying a few days along the Caspian Sea.

This modern and newly-built complex is equipped with 188 seafront apartment units, constructed in seven floors with a unique view, located in a dreamy town for passengers and travelers special of ESKANO.

All units of this residential and welfare complex are equipped with two- and three-bedrooms, duplex, fully furnished (with stylish and classy furniture). It should be noted that the beachfront terrace has increased the attractions of the surrounding environment to a great extent.

Of the other amenities of this Complex, it should be referred to the private beach, a children's park, a football field, beach volleyball, basketball, Ping-Pong, a gym, a bike ride, a swimming pool, sauna and Jacuzzi as free of charge, etc.

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Milad Tower to host Rasht Cultural Nights

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Rasht Cultural Nights will be held at the foot of Milad Tower in Tehran on September 23 and 24 to turn the spotlight on the rich history, traditions and charms of the northern city.



A poster for the Rasht Cultural Nights on Sept. 23 and 24, 2017

Sales exhibits and workshops on indigenous handicrafts, souvenirs, garments, as well as live performances of traditional music and games are on the agenda for the event that also includes a photo exhibit of natural sceneries and cultural heritage of the city.

Besides being a cultural center, Rasht is generally known for its beauty, lush landscapes, rice paddies and parks. The Caspian Sea coastal city is the capital of Gilan province as well.

Visitors to Rasht, dominated by domestic holiday-makers, experience much wetter and milder climate there that is all and all far different from that of southern and central parts of the country.

Turkey issues travel warning for Germany before vote

Turkey has told its citizens visiting or living in Germany to "be careful" and keep their composure against "racist and xenophobic slurs" in advance of the country's upcoming federal elections.

"It is advised for our citizens in Germany or planning to visit this country to be even-tempered, keep themselves out of political discussions and absent themselves from rallies held by terrorist groups ahead of the elections," said the Turkish foreign ministry in a statement published on its official website on Saturday.

It also said political leaders in Germany were using anti-Turkey rhetoric in their election campaigns and voiced the aim of blocking Turkey from becoming a member of the European Union.

"The political atmosphere in the aforementioned country is under the influence of far-right and racist propaganda," said the ministry.

"It is worrying that a chancellor-candidate political leader in Germany has recently made statements including clear racist elements and German officials took no measure about it."

Almost two weeks before the September 24 general elections, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and her centre-left rival Martin Schulz clashed over Turkey policy in a TV debate on Sunday night.

During the televised event, Schulz made a proposal to halt Ankara's EU membership talks and freeze 4 billion euros (\$4.68bn) in pre-accession funds.

Last month, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called on ethnic Turks living in Germany to vote for those who are "not hostile to Turkey" in the elections.

(Source: Aljazeera)



ROUND THE GLOBE

Studenica Monastery

Studenica Monastery, located in the Rashka district of central Serbia, is the largest and richest of Serbia's Orthodox monasteries.

A UNESCO World Heritage site, Studenica is an outstanding and well-preserved example of a Serbian Orthodox Church monastery. Enclosed by an almost circular wall strengthened with two fortified gates, it features an array of exceptional monuments, including the main church at the center and monastic facilities along the encircling wall.



It was founded near Studenica river in the late 12th century by Stefan Nemanja, also known as Saint Simeon, who established the medieval Serbian state. His remains, as well as those of his wife Anastasia and of the first Serbian king, Stephen the First-Crowned, rest in this monastery.

It is there that Stefan Nemanja's youngest son, Saint Sava Nemanjic, initiated the independent Serbian Orthodox Church in 1219 and wrote the first literary work in the Serbian language.

The complex's two principal monuments, the Church of the Virgin and the King's Church, enshrine priceless collections of 13th- and 14th-century Byzantine paintings. Studenica became the most important monastery in Serbia, and has remained so to the present day.

Churches and hermitages are located in the area surrounding the monastery, as well as the quarries and vestiges of a settlement for the workers who mined and shaped the marble used to build the Church of the Virgin.

(Source: UNESCO)

Over 4.9m foreign travelers visited Iran in 2016: UNWTO

TOURISM TEHRAN — The number of international tourist arrivals to Iran stood at 4.9 million in 2016, falling 5.6 percent from a year earlier and showing the first decline since 2013, according to the latest UNWTO Tourism Highlights report released on August 15.

Tourist arrivals in the country jumped from 2.938 million in 2010 to 4.967 million in 2014 and 5.237 million in 2015, fetching \$2.43 billion, \$3.84 billion, and \$3.86 billion in revenues in 2010, 2014 and 2015 respectively, the report said.

Iran made up 1.6 percent of all international tourism arrivals in Asia and the Pacific during 2016. The survey categorized Iran in South Asia region, which also includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh and India amongst others.

From a global point of view, the demand for international tourism remained robust in 2016 despite challenges and worldwide tourist arrivals grew by 3.9 percent to reach a total of 1.235 billion. Some 46 million more tourists (overnight visitors) travelled internationally last year compared to 2015.

"Tourism has shown extraordinary strength and resilience in recent years, despite many challenges, particularly those related to safety and security. Yet, international travel continues to grow strongly and contribute to job creation and the wellbeing of communities around the world," UNWTO website quoted Secretary-General Taleb Rifai as saying in January.

"2016 was the seventh consecutive year of sustained growth following the 2009 global economic and financial crisis. A comparable sequence of uninterrupted solid growth has not been recorded since the 1960s," the report says.

Iran is extraordinarily easy on the wallet since travel costs including the ones for



Foreign travelers pose for a photo during their visit to the UNESCO-registered Persepolis, in southern Iran.

food, accommodation and transportation are fairly low and the country has maintained its topmost global rank as a lower-cost destination for a third straight year, according to a 2017 biannual report by the World Economic Forum.

"Foreign travelers are able to find amazing bargains while trekking in Iran with some travel sources put daily travel expenses

and the ones for 24-day trip at \$25 and about \$600 respectively."

Filled from corner to corner with ancient bazaars, museums, mosques, monuments, gardens and palaces set inside bustling cities, historical ruins and rich rural landscapes, Iran is increasingly filled with camera-wielding Westerners seeking adventure, archeology and art. It is a hub for medical and

health tourism as well.

Iran has launched extensive plans to bolster its tourism sector. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country is expecting to increase the number of tourism arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Iran's 5-month outbound passengers +20.9% y/y: official

TOURISM TEHRAN — Over 3.4 million Iranians traveled abroad during the first five months of the current [Iranian] calendar year (started on March 21, 2017), an increase of 20.9 percent from a year earlier, a tourism official said on Monday.

Some 9.2 million Iranian tourists visited other countries during the past year (March 2016 – March 2017), Abdolreza Mohajerinnejad told ISNA.

Turkey, Iraq, the UAE, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Germany and Saudi Arabia were respectively the most-visited destinations by Iranians during the five-month period, the official added.

Relatively high rates of [tourism] services in the country [for local sightseers] in one hand and abundant products and facilities abroad on the other hand have led to a greater tendency of people for foreign travels, Mohajerinnejad pointed out.

"We must lower the rates for services in the country," he said, adding, "There are plans underway to achieve this goal as it has had impacts on both inbound and outbound travels."



An undated photo depicts an Iranian traveler looking at a tourist map in Istanbul, Turkey.

Some 9.2 million Iranian tourists visited other countries during the past year (March 2016 – March 2017),

"In [many] other countries, the variety of products is so broad that they no longer need to make revenues from travel services and usually make up for those [deficits] by supplying varied products in the food, shopping and entertainment sectors, but on the opposite side, Iran [tries] to earn revenues by providing tourism services, a reason behind why such rates are so high," the official explained.

Daily Sabah reported in August that the number of Iranian travelers to Istanbul has followed an upward trend in the recent years, ranking second after Germans when it comes to the distribution of tourists visiting the Turkish city by country.

According to Russian media, roughly 67,000 Iranians visited the country in 2016, a solid growth of 72 percent compared to a year earlier while the figure witnessed 9 percent year-on-year growth during the first half of 2017.

Back in June, former tourism chief Zahra Ahmadipour urged the need to achieve a balance between the inbound and outbound tourist flows between Iran and Russia.

Hurricane Irma threatens Florida's bustling tourism industry

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Hurricane Irma's path of destruction up Florida's Gulf Coast on Sunday threatens to disrupt a thriving state tourism industry worth more than \$100 billion annually just months ahead of the busy winter travel season.

Some of the state's biggest attractions have announced temporary closures, including

amusement park giants Walt Disney World's Magic Kingdom, Universal Studios, Legoland and Sea World, which all planned to close through Monday.

About 20 cruise lines have Miami as a home port or a port of call, according to the Port-Miami website, and many have had to move ships out of the area and revise schedules.

Carnival Cruise Lines and Royal Caribbean have canceled and revised several sailings as a result of the storm and have offered credits and waivers on trips where passengers are unable to travel.

A Carnival spokesman said the situation in Florida on Sunday was still not clear enough to fully assess how widespread the effects will be.

"We will know more in the hours ahead since the hurricane is active in Florida right now," spokesman Roger Frizzell said.

Irma made a second Florida landfall on Sunday on southwestern Marco Island as a Category 3 storm bringing winds of 115 miles per hour (185 kph) and life-threatening sea surge.

This family's road trip never ends

By Emily Harteau

When you are a child, time has a way of unspooling slowly, purely set to our natural rhythm. As we grow older, time is punctuated by appointments and alarm clocks, and we forget how to live at our own pace.

When we set off on an overland road trip in a van five years ago, we wanted to slow down time again by raising a family on the road and use their questions about nature and life as our curriculum. We are world-schooling our kids.

Many factors determine our plans. Weather and finances help us decide which activities we do, where to camp and how long to stay. We have a loose idea of where we want to be for, say, a season, or if we need to meet someone somewhere in three months.

We have traveled throughout Central and South America, visiting one stunning landscape after the other. We hope that we are raising children who will grow up to cherish the natural wonders of the world.

Watching children play in nature is the best reminder of how to remain present. Above, we were on the trail to the famed towers in Torres del Paine National Park in Southern Chilean Patagonia. We had hiked up and set a base camp at Campamento Los Torres, gone to bed early, then awoke at 4:45 a.m. in the dark for an early morning push to watch the sun rise over the gorgeous spires.

From the highlands of La Paz, Bolivia, it took us three days to drive to the Amazon basin. After a few days by boat from Rurrenabaque, we met some locals who had just rescued this baby howler monkey the night before. They discovered it crying alone on the forest floor, and guessed that it was an orphan.

When we saw these incredible rock faces in the Potosi department of Bolivia, we decided we'd have to stop to climb them. We consulted local shepherds at Estancia Churata, who confirmed that bolted sport-climbing routes were there. The sight on the ground, though, awed us. Llamas grazed in the verdant pasture, watered by a trickling stream that flowed down the center of the valley.

We stopped to look for whales and other wildlife in the Atlantic from the top of Faro Punta Delgada lighthouse in Argentina. The Valdes Peninsula of Northern Patagonia is on the UNESCO World Heritage list for its bounty of fauna.

El Tatio geysers in the Atacama desert of northern Chile sits above 14,000 feet in elevation, making them among the highest geyser fields in the world. The fumaroles, steam plumes and bubbling, bursting geysers put on an impressive natural exhibition. We love the breadth and diversity we've encountered on the road.

We crossed one of the countless glacial rivers in Los Glaciares National Park in Argentina and took a break to let Colette lay on her belly to drink deeply from a stream.



She exclaimed "THAT is the best water I have ever tasted!"

The kids think that living in a tiny house with wheels is pretty cool because it means having a beach house one week, a mountain cabin the next. One week, above, we were 100 miles into the vast Salar de Uyuni, the world's largest salt flats, in southwest Bolivia, exploring one of the islands.

On another trip, below, we pitched camp in Los Glaciares National Park in Argentina with a view of Cerro Torre soaring in the background. Backcountry explorations with children require additional planning but pays you back handsomely.

(Source: The New York Times)

How to draw electricity from the bloodstream

Your body produces its own electricity in the form of nerve signals and your bloodstream travels at a very fast pace inside it. But the human body itself has never been used to generate electricity — a Chinese research team has developed lightweight power generator that can convert the energy of flowing blood in blood vessels into electricity.

The model works similar to how a hydroelectric plant works. Just like flowing or falling water turns turbines and generates electricity, blood flowing inside your veins could do the same. Hydroelectricity has definite advantages over solar or wind electricity as it is less weather-dependent, but generating electricity from blood stream would be even more efficient.

The research team from Fudan University in Shanghai, China, is using a fiber with a thickness of less than a millimeter that acts a turbine and generates electricity when surrounded by a saline solution in a thin tube.

Carbon nanotubes

The fiber is made by putting an array of carbon nanotubes together, wrapped around a polymeric core. The reason for choosing carbon nanotubes for this purpose is that they are electroactive i.e. exhibit a change in size and shape when stimulated by an electric field.

For generating electricity, the thread of the "fiber-shaped fluidic nanogenerator" (FFNG), which is what the re-



searchers are calling their minute electricity generator.

The "electricity was derived from the relative movement between the FFNG and the solution," the scientists explained in their research paper which

was published in *Angewandte Chemie International Edition Journal* on Friday.

Saline solution

The paper details how electricity is generated using FFNG — an electric double layer is created around the fiber,

The power output efficiency of this system of generating electricity is higher than most traditional electricity harvesting mechanisms — the researchers claim a power efficiency higher than 20 percent.

and the flowing solution composed either of a saline solution or water, which then distorts the charge distribution in the blood vessel and generates electricity along a long axis.

The power output efficiency of this system of generating electricity is higher than most traditional electricity harvesting mechanisms — the researchers claim a power efficiency higher than 20 percent.

The team has been testing the FFNG on frog nerves and have been successful in harvesting electric energy.

While that is the mechanism, what are the practical applications of this mechanism?

Well, the research could actually result in the development of fibers and clothes made from those fibers which can generate electricity — imagine your shirt generating the electricity you need to charge your phone, using your bloodstream.

Also, it could have large scale potential in the use of medical devices such as pacemakers. These devices could be charged without external intervention, which might extend the life of patients.

This is not the first research of its kind — a team of Swiss researchers tried to create nano-scale motors that float in the blood stream, but the project needed to be abandoned as it had the potential to create dangerous blood clots.

(Source: IBT)

Ultrathin craft could soon envelop and destroy space junk

Think of the latest idea of collecting space junk as something akin to a hungry tiger pouncing on its prey. Aerospace Corporation says its Brane Craft will wrap itself around debris orbiting Earth and drag it back down through the atmosphere, causing it to burn up and never again threaten satellites or astronauts.

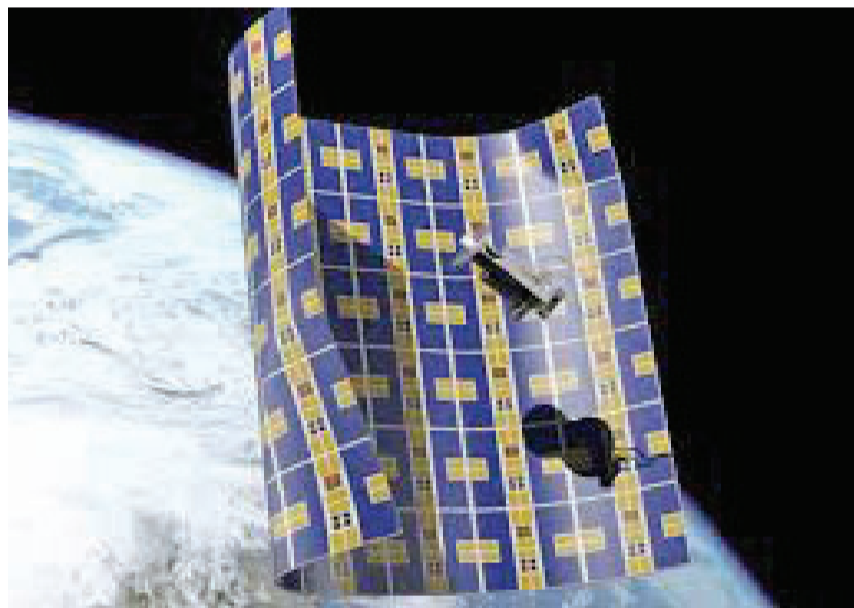
The project recently received a second round of funding from the NASA Innovative Advanced Concepts program, which funds far-out ideas that remain years away from launch — if they get there at all.

The Brane Craft is a yard across, flexible, and less than half the thickness of a human hair. This makes it difficult to protect the spacecraft's electronics from radiation, or even micrometeorites.

Structural sheet

"It has to be bullet-proof, because a 5-micron diameter particle can penetrate the main structural sheet, which is only 10 microns thick," Siegfried Janson, principal investigator and a senior scientist at Aerospace Corporation, said.

So the company, based in El Segundo, California, has designed the spacecraft to be resilient. If one solar cell is



whacked by a micrometeorite, only that cell will fail. Same goes for the craft's microprocessor and digital electronics — if one fails, others will keep working. Even the propellant tank, which is sandwiched between two thin sheets, is split into multiple segments. In the case of a micrometeorite strike or an electrical

short, other segments are designed to remain operable.

Radiation is another challenge as the spacecraft is thin and most commercial electronics cannot withstand the harsh conditions of space. The NIAC grant allows the company to investigate how to improve radiation tolerance during the

short deployments that the company has proposed for the craft.

Efficient craft

Aerospace Corporation aims to make the craft efficient and low cost. The thin spacecraft is not only lightweight, which reduces fuel consumption, but is easy to stack in a launcher and deploy in a swarm of dozens of bots, each on a track to a different rogue piece of debris. Brane Crafts will be powered by ultrathin solar cells as well as a little bit of propellant. The company plans to launch the craft frequently, with many Branes deployed at the same time, helping to reduce costs.

After each Brane envelops a piece of space junk, it will navigate back to towards Earth, acting like a near-space incinerator as it and the junk burn up in the atmosphere.

We've known about orbital debris for decades, but with each launch the problem becomes more urgent. There are at least 500,000 pieces of debris circling Earth. And that doesn't include tiny, yet dangerous, pieces of junk like paint flecks, which can cause a lot of damage when smacking into a spacecraft at upwards of 17,500 miles per hour.

(Source: space.com)

BIM and Russia's "VEB" Bank Ink Finance Deal, Worth €1.1b

Iran's Bank of Industry and Mine (BIM) and Russia's "VEB" Bank signed and sealed a contract to finance projects in Iran, the Public Relations Dept. of the Bank of Industry and Mine (BIM) reported.

The Bank put the value of contract inked between Iran and Russia in this regard at one billion and 200 million euro in line with financing Hormozgan ther-

mal power plant project.

It should be noted that this giant project will be put into operation in cooperation with the Russian government in the next five years.

Given the above issue, Bank of Industry and Mine has paved suitable ways for Russia especially in financing projects.

According to the negotiations made in this regard, Russia has expressed its

interest for granting short- and long-term loans without EXIAR insurance coverage and governmental guarantee letter.

It is worth mentioning that a contract to finance electrification of Tehran-Mashhad Railway Project was inked between Iran's Bank of Industry and Mine and Exim (Import and Export) Bank of China, worth \$1.5 billion, the BIM ended.



Bank Pasargad Named Exemplary Islamic Bank of the Year

In its latest edition, the Bank Periodical named Bank Pasargad as the top and exemplary Islamic Bank of the Year, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank announced.

Accordingly, Bank Pasargad stood at

1st rank among Iranian banks and also 1000th rank among top banks in the world.

It should be noted that Bank Pasargad was introduced as top and exemplary Islamic bank for the 5th consecu-

tive year.

As the top Iranian bank, Bank Pasargad also managed to win prestigious award of Euromoney Institute for the 3rd consecutive year, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank ended.



Major European Banks Establish Brokerage Ties with Iranian Banks in Post-Sanctions Era

After a landmark nuclear deal inked between Iran and six world's major powers (the five permanent members of UN Security Council plus Germany), many foreign banks expressed their readiness to bond brokerage relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

CEO of Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI) Dr. Salehabadi announced the above statement and said: "Belgian "KBC" and Austria's OBERBANK are of the most prestigious European banks which have voiced their readiness to broaden and enhance their

banking relations with Iran."

Even, leading Germany's "Deutsche" Bank has rolled up its sleeves in order to ramp up its ties with Iran, he said, adding: "Presently, the German bank accepts drafts and money transfer of Iranian clients especially in post-sanctions era."

In the end, CEO of Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI) Dr. Salehabadi said: "Currently, EDBI has set up brokerage relationship with 124 foreign banks."



VR-based robots may be the key to early Mars settlement

SpaceVR has been working to exploring space in virtual reality for long, but the company has come out recently with a new idea — exploring space using robots controlled from the earth and actually getting a real-world feel of space in virtual reality.

The company was founded in 2015 and is currently working on providing users real space videos from Mars captured using 360-degree cameras in VR. It is run by a board consisting of a former astronaut, space enthusiasts, and scientists. While human settlement on planets such as Mars might be a far-fetched dream, exploring the planet with the help of robots operated from earth seems like a much more practical approach at least for now.

While robots like Mars Rover have already explored the planet, the concept proposed by SpaceVR actually replicates movements of humans. So basically, explorers can just don gloves equipped with sensors and VR headsets and explore Mars using virtual reality and robots. This concept is called stereoscopic manipulation.

"We are automating all human tasks. Taking a different approach than all major companies. Our general purpose avatar, the Human, was just demoed last week doing tasks in SF, controlled by me from Mexico City," SpaceVR founder and chief executive told TechCrunch in an email.

This paradigm might actually be a stepping-stone towards eventual human migration to Mars. It has many advantages — it can massively cut costs of exploration and also help explore risks in extra-terrestrial without endangering humans.

Humans can actually control these robots from the earth and not be limited the way they would generally if they had to actually had to step on Mars.

These robots, according to SpaceVR, can be automated and eventually accommodate artificial intelligence for exploration.

(Source: IBT)

'No-fire-risk' lithium batteries launched

Researchers have developed a new type of lithium-ion batteries that are resistant to exploding or catching fire. The new devices are suitable for consumer electronics as well as business applications.



The new batteries use a water-salt solution as their electrolyte. This removes the risks carried by current commercial models which contain a non-water based chemical composition. In trials the batteries were subjected to high heating and puncture, and they did not ignite. The solid-electrolyte-interphase is stabilized by graphite and lithium-metal anodes in aqueous electrolyte.

Discussing the technology further, the lead researcher Dr. Kang Xu, who works at the U.S. Army Research Laboratory (ARL), told the BBC: "In the past, if you wanted high energy, you would choose a non-aqueous lithium-ion battery, but you would have to compromise on safety. If you preferred safety, you could use an aqueous battery such as nickel/metal hydride, but you would have to settle for lower energy." The new invention succeeds in providing high energy and safety.

Current lithium-ion batteries carry the intrinsic disadvantages of being flammable, toxic, and highly sensitive to ambient atmosphere. This has been overcome with the new battery. Initial work led to the creation of a 3 volt battery; going beyond this appeared difficult due to electrode degradation.

The latest development has led to a 4 volt version. This was achieved by coating the anode with the protective gel polymer. This allows the battery to be used with laptop computers.

In related battery news, engineers and microbiologists have invented a new type of battery based on a microbial fuel cells. The battery can be activated by spit and it is intended to be used in extreme conditions.

(Source: Digital Journal)

The world's first permanent nuclear-waste repository

In 1980, a 29-year-old Finnish geologist named Timo Äikäs accepted a huge responsibility: He joined a team in charge of finding a way to permanently store his country's growing stockpile of nuclear waste.

Doing so would require Äikäs and his colleagues to think far, far into the future. They would need to build something to last as long as the spent fuel from nuclear-power plants remains dangerous — between 100,000 and 1 million years. Considering that the pyramids are a mere 4,500 years old, this is an essentially unimaginable span.

When Äikäs began working on the project, repositories were already on the drawing boards in the United States, Sweden, Germany, and elsewhere. The Finns figured that other countries would do the early research and development, and Finland could copy their best ideas. Indeed, the plan Äikäs and his team settled on was borrowed from Sweden, which sits on the same slab of bedrock that Finland does.

Almost 40 years later, Finland is the only country in the world that has a permanent nuclear-waste repository under construction. The projects Äikäs had assumed would be completed long before Finland's have faltered on nimby politics.

(Source: The Atlantic)

On the memoir of Shahla Habibi, the first Iranian female presidential advisor

WOMEN **TEHRAN** — Today the women's society is mourning for a woman who was the first flag bearer of women's rights after the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Shahla Habibi, born in 1958, was the first Iranian presidential advisor on women's affairs in the government of President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

She made great efforts to improve women's situation with her great braveness. She made attempts to correct wrong views about women's social activities and tried hard to implement gender equality.



A steady involvement of women in international affairs was formed for the first time by Habibi. It was due to her endeavors that Iranian women attended the 4th International Women's Conference at Beijing in 1995. It was the first experience of Iranian women's presence at international events after the victory of the Islamic Revolution.

Other important tasks conducted by Habibi was formation of different women's NGOs. Habibi established the Islamic Republic of Iran Women's News Agency (IWNA) in the 1990s to meet the information needs of Iranian women. She also became the IWNA director.

Despite physical pains at the last days of her life, she insisted on supporting women and tried to abolish discriminations against women.

She left for the heavenly abode on September 6, 2017. Tehran Times condolees Iranian women on her loss. May her soul rest in peace!

Baked peaches and cream

"These baked peaches taste like pie, minus the guilt of eating one! Of course all pie is even better with ice cream. Perfect way to make those summer peaches disappear!"

Ingredients:

- 8 teaspoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter, cut into 8 pieces
- 1 pinch ground cinnamon, or more to taste
- 4 ripe peaches, halved and pitted
- 4 scoops vanilla ice cream

Directions:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).

Arrange brown sugar, 1 teaspoon per peach, in a 9x13-inch baking dish. Top each brown sugar mound with a piece of butter and a sprinkle of cinnamon. Place a peach half, cut-side down, on top of brown sugar-butter.

Bake in the preheated oven until peaches are soft, 15 to 20 minutes.

Plate 2 warm peaches per serving and top with 1 scoop vanilla ice cream.



Iranian women urge UN to stop violence in Myanmar

I→ Images of massacres, burnt bodies and razed homes, the tragic optics broadcast worldwide of women and children living in and at the mercy of the elements and reports of repeated assaults against defenseless civilians, is reminiscent of ethnic cleansing and genocide, it added.

On September 7, the Iranian vice president for women and family affairs, Masoumeh Ebtekar, sent a letter to UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UN Women Phumzile Malmbo Ngcuka, saying that the tragic events happening in Myanmar have shaken the conscience of humanity, emphasizing that women and children have been hurt more seriously in the plight.

She urged the UN official to do what-

ever in her powers to prevent the ongoing tragedy in Myanmar.

"I appeal to you in utmost sincerity that you take whatever measures within your powers to prevent this ongoing human catastrophe," Ebtekar wrote in her letter.

The UN Charter clearly stipulates the responsibility that lies in your hands to prevent conflict and to maintain peace and security, she went on to write.

In this case, which apparently includes -- and not for the first time -- both ethnic and religious cleansing, the UN has a clear global mandate to prevent this ongoing tragedy. The plight of Rohingya women and children is devastating and heartbreaking and requires immediate, sustained humanitarian intervention, Ebtekar wrote.



All-women police station opens in Tehran's subway

WOMEN **TEHRAN** — A police station solely for women and to be run by women police personnel was formally inaugurated on Thursday at a crowded station of Tehran's subway.

As women make up a large number of passengers of the subway, the creation of women's police stations seems to be vital, the CEO of Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operation Company said on the sidelines of the inauguration ceremony at Imam Khomeini station.

[Maintaining] security is an important issue for a busy public transportation system like Tehran subway. Thanks God, the goal is met through a close collaboration with

the Police, Mohammad Ahmadi Bafandeh explained.

The number of crimes happening in Tehran's subway is decreasing, Colonel Ali Raqi, the chief of the subway's police department said, appreciating the Tehran Urban and Suburban Railway Operation Company for launching women's police station.

Women make up more than one million passengers of around 3 million passengers Tehran's subway system carries a day.

In line with making Tehran's subway more convenient for female passengers, eight mother-and-baby rooms have been set up so far at different stations for breastfeeding and changing babies' diapers.



Tehran to host "women and national production expo"

WOMEN **TEHRAN** — The 11th exhibition on women and national production is to be opened at Tehran's Goftegoo Park, September 13, 2017.

The event aims at supporting domestic producers as well as supplying

products at competitive prices and better qualities, IRIB quoted Fahimeh Firoozfar, the head of women's empowerment headquarters affiliated with Tehran Municipality, as saying.

More than 3,000 breadwinner women will showcase and offer their clothing

products to the public during the exhibit, which runs until September 22, she said.

In recent years Tehran Municipality has proved to be one of the active organizations for preparing the ground for improvement of living standards of women heads of households. The exhibition on women and

national production puts products of women breadwinners on display.

Another step taken by Tehran Municipality in this regard is setting up houses of entrepreneurs throughout Tehran, of which 200 have started operation so far.

Asian and Muslim women get discriminated against in Australian workplaces: report

"Why are Asian women's feet so small? So they can stand closer to the sink!" a male employee joked with his Asian colleague, then got angry when she didn't like it.

"Why are you so uptight?" he asked. "You're misconstruing what I'm saying."

She replied: "That's not it, it's just that I want to be treated with respect."

Explicit bias, racist and sexist comments and offensive "jokes" are rife in corporate Australia, according to a report from Diversity Council Australia and the University of Sydney Business School, which asked 230 culturally diverse businesswomen (defined broadly in the report as someone with a non-Anglo Saxon background) about their experiences in the workplace.

The tale above was one of many similar stories featured in the report, Cracking the Glass-Cultural Ceiling: Future Proofing Your Business in the 21st Century. The report found only 12 percent of culturally diverse women surveyed strongly agreed they had the same opportunities in their workplace as anyone else with commensurate ability and experience.

Some women said "well-meaning" mentors had recommended they move overseas where their "difference" would be viewed as an asset rather than a liability. "They see you as three strikes and you're out -- a woman, a woman with children, and a woman with an accent," a respondent said.

Male Anglo-Celtic leaders preferred and selected people who dressed, looked and sounded like themselves. "It's like a voting system that doesn't work because, well, look who's voting," another respondent said.

Muslim women also reported discrimination and intolerance. "Stereotypes about Muslim women result in them being written off as leadership material," a respondent said. "They see a hijab and think I must be subjugated and I'm submissive and passive and therefore not able to lead."

The report found that, while 88 percent of culturally



diverse female talent surveyed planned to advance to a very senior role, only one in 10 strongly agreed that their leadership traits were recognized or that their opinions were valued and respected.

Further, 26 percent said cultural barriers in the workplace had caused them to scale back at work, including reducing their ambitions and working fewer hours. And 60 percent of culturally diverse female executives and 79 percent of senior managers surveyed were considering leaving their employers in the next year.

The report suggests raising awareness about common gendered cultural stereotypes that leaders and colleagues commit to understanding different cultures, and ensure that unconscious bias training considers this. In the same way companies are setting and reporting on gender-based targets, the report suggests they also report publicly on cultural diversity inclusion and outcomes.

The number of culturally diverse women in ASX100 and ASX200 companies is minuscule. Only 2 percent of ASX directors are culturally diverse women. In 2015, there were fewer than 25 female ASX200 senior executives, chief executives or chief financial officers, and 10 or less women in each of these positions in ASX100. The numbers of culturally diverse women in these categories

were even smaller.

They see you as three strikes and you're out -- a woman, a woman with children, and a woman with an accent.

AMP Capital Funds Management and DCA board member Ming Long, who participated in the research, told Fairfax Media it was time for gender-based quotas, noting they had worked in Sweden. "The case for quotas is getting much stronger because we're not seeing the pace of change we need for women and, when it comes to ethnic women, we're still in the dark ages."

Ms Long said given women were making the bulk of purchasing decisions, it made sense to have more women, including women of non-Anglo saxon backgrounds, on boards.

The report notes that the Australian "multicultural market" has an estimated purchasing power of more than \$75 billion a year, while the global buying power of women is estimated to reach \$40 trillion by 2018.

"I'd love to challenge leaders to actually speak to ethnic women they have in their business, get to know them and earn their trust," Ms Long said. "They've probably been overlooked for leadership. Please, look beyond gender and ethnicity. You might actually find there's a gem in your midst."

Ming Long has challenged company leaders to pay more attention to women from different backgrounds among their workforce.

Google, Aurecon, the Commonwealth Bank and Deloitte also supported the research. Google had to face hard questions following the anti-diversity memo from one of its U.S.-based engineers James Damore.

Google Australia and New Zealand managing director Jason Pellegrini said: "We strive to create an environment where everyone can feel comfortable bringing their best selves to work, so they can be more innovative, creative, and inspired."

(Source: The Sydney Morning Herald)

Call for women MPs to wear hijab

The Aalmi Chaddar Orh Tehrik (ACOT), headed by Pir Kabir Ali Shah, resolved on Sunday to launch a special campaign to persuade the women legislators to wear hijab (veil).

At a conference on the Hijab Day at Alhamra Art Center, the participants demanded that women anchors should be allowed to present their shows when properly covered. Also, they said, the parliament should pass legislation and Pemra should issue orders to all TV channels in this regard.

Various resolutions passed by the participants demanded that female students should be barred from using cell phones in their educational institutions; male members of official delegations should be disallowed to shake hands with female hosts

during their visits abroad; laws should be framed to discourage vulgarity at beauty parlors; Indian plays and films should be discouraged in Pakistan as they are like dangerous infectious diseases. ACOT has so far distributed veils among 750,000 women and Pir Kabir Ali Shah is determined to continue the mission till the country is a true mirror of an Islamic society.

A resolution expressed serious concern over the silence of the OIC, UN and world human rights organizations over the persecution of Kashmiri and Rohingya Muslims.

It said that ACOT would hold protest demonstrations in front of the OIC and UN offices to awaken their conscience.

Justices Ahmed Farooq Sheikh and Mian Nazir Akhtar Ghazi, former LHCB



president Muhammad Shafiqat Chauhan and Khateeb Data Darbar Masjid Mufti Muhammad Ramzan Sialvi, Syed Sibtain

Haider Gilani and Syed Ahmed Mustafain Haider Gilani were among the speakers.

(Source: The Nation)

LEARN ENGLISH

Daily Life - He's not a Good Fit

A: So, Lauren, I just wanted to talk to you quickly about our new customer support representative, Jason Huntley.

B: Sure, what's up?

A: Basically, I've got a few **concerns** about him, and the bottom line is, I don't think he's a good fit for our company.

B: Okay... what makes you say that? I thought you were pleased with his **overall performance**. Didn't you just tell me last week how impressed you were with his attitude?

A: Yeah, his attitude is great, but he's really **unreliable**. Sometimes he's really **productive**, but then other times... take last Tuesday for instance, he was forty-five minutes late for our morning meeting!

B: Well, I'm sure he had a **perfectly good** reason...

A: But that's not the only thing... you know, he really doesn't have the best **work ethic**. I'm constantly catching him on MSN and Facebook when he should be talking to clients.

B: Yeah, but come on, Geoff, as if you don't check Facebook at work. Look, you hired this guy, we've invested a lot of time and money in his training, so now it's up to you to **coach** him. Make it work, Geoff!

A: Make it work, Geoff. You would say that, wouldn't you, he is your cousin; what a jerk, make me hire your stupid, useless, cousin.

Key Vocabulary

concern: worry

overall: general

performance: how well someone does their job

unreliable: not able to be trusted

productive: doing a lot in a short amount of time

perfectly good: having no problems, just fine

work ethic: attitude to work

coach: teach and train someone new skills

Supplementary Vocabulary

poor judgment: regularly makes bad decisions

poor work ethic: bad attitude to work

dependable: able to be trusted and relied upon

a bad apple: a bad member of a group who makes things more difficult for others

unproductive: not productive, not doing a lot

(Source: irlanguage.com)

1400 foreign women, children left behind by Daesh after Tal Afar liberation

After being expelled from Tal Afar, the ISIL (Daesh) terrorist group has left behind some 1,400 foreign wives and children, who are now in the custody of the Iraqi government.

According to Iraqi security and aid officials on Sunday, those left behind are mostly from Russia, Turkey, and Central Asia, with some also from European countries.

Iraqi officials are currently engaged in the process of verifying their identities and nationalities, as many of the women have lost or destroyed their original credentials.

The group, which is the largest group of foreigners linked to Daesh in Iraq, are currently being housed in a specially-designated camp, which they are not permitted to leave.

On August 31, Iraq's Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced that the northern city of Tal Afar and the entire Nineveh province have been purged of the Daesh Takfiri terrorists.

The Iraqi government is currently negotiating with the women's home country embassies for their returning home.



"I want to go back (to France) but don't know how," said a French-speaking woman of Chechen origin who claims to come from Paris. She also said that she has no idea concerning the current whereabouts of her husband who brought her to Iraq

to join the terrorists.

Some of the women claim that they were tricked by their husbands into joining the terrorists during trips to Turkey.

"My mother doesn't even know where I am," said a French woman of Algerian

descent. "I had just given birth to this little girl three months before... He said 'let's go for a week's holiday in Turkey.' He had already bought the plane tickets and the hotel," she added.

Tal Afar, situated about 150 kilometers from Syria's border, was among the last Daesh-held cities in Iraq. The liberation of Tal Afar deprives Daesh of what was once a key supply route between its territory in Syria and Iraq.

Iraqi army soldiers and allied fighters from Popular Mobilization Units have been leading a major operation to rid the country of the Takfiri elements.

Iraqi forces launched the Tal Afar liberation operation on August 20, one month after fully recapturing the country's second biggest city, Mosul, which was Daesh's so-called "capital" in Iraq.

Daesh unleashed a campaign of death and destruction in Iraq in 2014, but it is currently retreating from much of the territory under its control in the Arab country due to recent advances made by the Iraqi forces on the battlefield.

(Source: agencies)

North Korea threatens 'pain and suffering' ahead of UN sanctions vote

North Korea has warned the United States that it will pay a "due price" if harsh sanctions against the country are agreed at a United Nations Security Council meeting on Monday.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry said in a statement published on state media that if the U.S. "does rig up the illegal and unlawful 'resolution'" it would respond in kind.

The Security Council is due to vote in New York on a U.S.-drafted resolution to impose new restrictions on the rogue state following its sixth and largest nuclear test, carried out just over a week ago.

"The DPRK is ready and willing to use any form of ultimate means," the statement said, referring to the country by its acronym.

"The forthcoming measures to be taken by the DPRK will cause the U.S. the greatest pain and suffering it had ever gone through in its entire history."

China supports plan

The U.S. had proposed some of the strictest sanctions yet against the already heavily censured nation. It called for a full ban on oil exports to the country, and an immediate asset freeze on North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and his government for all financial assets held overseas, among other measures.

The Reuters news agency reported Monday that those proposals had been watered down, citing a new version of the draft resolution. The report also said that the sanctions had been softened to appease China and

Russia, citing diplomats.

Russia and China both have veto power in the vote as permanent members of the Security Council. Both had expressed skepticism over the strict sanctions.

China -- North Korea's most powerful ally -- said Monday that it supported the Security Council's plan for a "further response" to North Korea and to take "necessary actions."

"We hope UNSC members will come to a consensus through full consultations and will send out the voice of unity and solidarity," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Geng Shuang said at regular press conference Monday.

"The UNSC's response and actions should be helpful to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to maintaining the stability of the region. And also helpful to solve the North Korea issue peacefully," Geng said.

The U.S. and its allies have been calling for stern measures against North Korea since the September 3 nuclear test.

The test sent powerful tremors across the region, suggesting the device used was the most powerful the nation has ever tested. Pyongyang claims it tested a hydrogen bomb capable of sitting atop a ballistic missile.

Merkel calls for Iran-like deal

Speaking on Monday, South Korea's Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha said North Korea's nuclear arsenal was "the biggest challenge to our foreign affairs and security

front and will continue to be so for many years to come."

But Kang added both the U.S. and South Korea believed in following a policy of "responding firmly (to) provocations through tough sanctions while leaving the door open for dialogue."

Over the weekend, leaders in Germany and France waded into the escalating crisis.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in an interview with a German newspaper she would "immediately say yes" if Germany was asked to help end the crisis.

She said an agreement similar to the Iranian nuclear deal struck under the Obama administration could be the solution. Under the deal, Iran agreed to scale back its nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

"I could imagine such a format being used to end the North Korea conflict. Europe and especially Germany should be prepared to play a very active part in that," Merkel told Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung in an interview published Sunday.

French President Emmanuel Macron spoke on the phone with U.S. President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Saturday to discuss the possibility of new sanctions.

"(They discussed) a firm and united reaction towards North Korea's repeated provocations as it is a threat to world peace and security," the Elysee Palace told CNN.

(Source: CNN)

Saudi authorities arrest 20 opponents amid talk of king's abdication

Saudi security forces have reportedly arrested nearly 20 people, known for opposing the absolute monarchy in the Persian Gulf kingdom, in the past 24 hours.

According to multiple unidentified sources and tweets by rights organizations, journalists and others, Prince Abdul Aziz Bin Fahd al Saud, a son of former King Fahd, is among those arrested.

The arrests come amid reports that King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud plans to renounce power in favor of his son, Crown Prince Mohammed.

The sources said among the detainees were also two clerics, identified as Salman al-Odah and Awad al-Qarni who have sparked controversies in the past over their opinions about social life in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi human rights group AIQST reported that Odah, who was imprisoned from 1994-99 for agitating for political change and who has 14 million followers on Twitter, was arrested on Saturday night for posting a tweet in support of

mediation to settle a dispute between Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates cut their diplomatic ties with Qatar on June 5, accusing Doha of sponsoring terrorism and destabilizing the region, charges Doha denies.

"May God harmonize between their hearts for the good of their people," Odah had written on Twitter, in reference to a phone call made between the Saudi crown prince and the Qatari ruler during which both leaders stressed the need to resolve the crisis through dialogue. Riyadh, however, suspended plans for negotiations minutes later.

The regime forces also detained al-Qarni, another cleric with an alleged 2.2 million Twitter followers.

Exiled Saudi opposition activists have called for demonstrations on September 15 in a bid to galvanize opposition to the royal family.

Since the establishment of Saudi Arabia as an absolute monarchy in 1932, the system has been effectively known as a



hereditary dictatorship and monarchy.

The kingdom is struggling with plummeting oil prices. The Al Saud regime also faces criticism over its deadly military campaign against neighboring Yemen,

which it launched on March 26.

Many also see Riyadh's policies as a major cause of the crises in the region, especially in Syria and Iraq.

(Source: Press TV)

Storm Irma brings flooding to parts of Florida; Cuba reports 10 killed

Downgraded from a hurricane to a tropical storm, Irma flooded several northern Florida cities with heavy rain and high storm surge on Monday as it headed out of the state after cutting power to millions and ripping roofs off homes.

Irma, once ranked as one of the most powerful hurricanes recorded in the Atlantic, hit a wide swath of Florida over the past day, first making landfall on the Florida Keys archipelago and then coming ashore south of Naples and heading up the west coast.

Irma, now a tropical storm with sustained winds of up to 70 miles per hour (110 km per hour), was located about 35 miles (56 km) west of Gainesville and headed up the Gulf Coast, the National Hurricane Center said at 8 a.m. ET (1200 GMT).

The Cuban government reported on Monday that 10 people had been killed after Irma battered the island's north coast with ferocious winds and 36-foot (11-meter) waves over the weekend. This raised the overall death toll from Irma's powerful rampage through the Caribbean to 38.

The sheriff's office in Jacksonville, on Florida's north-east coast, reported that it was making a rescue from waist-deep water on Monday morning and urged peo-

ple to stay off unsafe roads. The National Weather Service issued a flash flood warning for the city, with nearby St. Augustine also seeing flooding.

"Stay inside. Go up. Not out," Jacksonville's website warned residents. "There is flooding throughout the city and more rain is expected."

After what she called a terrifying night bunkered in her house in St. Petersburg, on Florida's Gulf Coast, with her children and extended family, Julie Hally emerged with relief on Monday. The winds had toppled some large tree branches and part of a fence, but her house was undamaged.

"My heart just pounded out of my chest the whole time," said Hally, 37. "You hear stuff hitting your roof. It honestly sounds like somebody is just whistling at your window the whole night. It's really scary."

As officials and residents began to assess the damage around the state, Governor Rick Scott said he would travel later on Monday to the keys. Irma first came ashore at Cudjoe Key as a Category 4 hurricane with sustained winds of up to 130 mph (215 kph.) "I've heard there's some significant damage, right where the eye of the storm hit," Scott told NBC's "Today" show. "We'll find out."

A large military airborne relief operation was being prepared to take help to the islands, which are linked by a dramatic series of bridges and causeways from Key Largo almost 100 miles (160 km) southwest to the city of Key West, Monroe County Emergency Director Martin Senterfitt told a teleconference.

The state's largest city, Miami, was spared the brunt of the storm but was still battered. Utility crews were already on the streets there clearing downed trees and utility lines. All causeways leading to Miami Beach were closed by police.

Much of the state's east and west coasts remained vulnerable on Monday to storm surges, when hurricanes push ocean water dangerously over normal levels. That risk extended to the coast of Georgia and parts of South Carolina, the hurricane center said.

As it traveled through the center of the state early on Monday, Irma brought gusts of up to 100 mph (160 kph) and torrential rain to areas around Orlando, one of the most popular areas for tourism in Florida because of its cluster of theme parks, the National Weather Service said. (Source: Reuters)

Slavery in the U.S. prison system

8 → African Americans are incarcerated at a rate five times higher than that of whites. In states like Virginia and Oklahoma, one in every 14 or 15 African American men are put in prison.

Locking people of color

We lock people of color up at alarming rates. We put them to work. Corporations gain. This story is an age-old American tradition. Throughout history, our nation has successfully pulled back corporate greed, but private corporations have always found new ways to reap enormous wealth from cheap labor.

The historical circumstances following the abolition of slavery provide the necessary context to understand how corporations function in a de facto replacement for slavery. Although the U.S. Constitution's Thirteenth Amendment prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude, it made an exception - a loophole for "punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted", which made prison labor possible.

Workers flipping burgers and frying french fries for minimum wage at McDonald's wear uniforms that were manufactured by prison laborers.

Following the Civil War, the Southern economy was in shambles and the slaves were emancipated. A cheap labor source was needed, and the convict lease system was invented. States leased out their convicts to industrialists and planters to work in locations such as railroads, coal mines and plantations, and entrepreneurs bought and sold these leases.

With little capital investment required and no need to care for the health of the prisoners, the system of economic exploitation became highly profitable for businesses and states and even cheaper than slavery. For example, in 1883 convict leasing provided Alabama with 10 percent of its revenue, 73 percent in 1898. Leased convicts were treated abysmally, with death rates 10 times higher than prisoners in states that did not employ leased convict labor.

Prisoners tortured to death

Secret graveyards contained the bodies of prisoners who had been tortured and beaten to death.

The viability of the convict lease system required that black people be returned to their former status as a source of labor. Hence, the Black Codes were enacted to suppress the rights of the recently emancipated African Americans, and criminalize them for minor offenses such as vagrancy. Under the vagrancy laws, any black person under the protection of a white person could be swept up by the system for simply loitering, as black people were rounded up in this manner to provide a source of nearly free labor.

Today, prison labor is a billion-dollar industry, and the corporate beneficiaries of this new slavery include some of the largest corporations and most widely known brands. For example, Walmart has purchased produce from farms, where women prisoners face bad working conditions, inadequate medical care and very low pay.

Workers flipping burgers and frying french fries for minimum wage at McDonald's wear uniforms that were manufactured by prison laborers.

Further, UNICOR manages 83 factories and more than 12,000 prison laborers who earn as little as 23 cents an hour working at call centers, manufacturing items such as military body armor, and in past years, defective combat helmets. In 2013, federal inmates made \$100m worth of military uniforms.

UNICOR has also provided prison labor in the past to produce Patriot missile parts for defense contractors Raytheon and Lockheed Martin, and parts for others such as Boeing and General Dynamics.

Corporations such as Starbucks, AT&T, Target, and Nordstrom have also profited from prison labor at some point in the past as well.

Prisons as slave camps

Some critics oppose the characterization of the U.S. prison system as a slave labor camp. For example, James Kilgore argues that prison labor is infrequently used, and identifying multinational corporations that profit from it loses sight of the key issues behind mass incarceration.

Kilgore is correct in his analysis that a lack of economic opportunity coupled with draconian laws results in a perverse private incentive to drive up mass incarceration. We should enhance employment options for former inmates to reduce recidivism and integrate returning citizens back into society. However, this does not mean that corporations do not profit from prisons and prison labor today and it is obscene that this still happens.

The Trump administration reversing the Obama-era order to phase out private prisons and enacting new law-and-order policies to increase arrests and fill these prisons will only increase opportunities for profit for Trump's corporate donors and their many investments in mass incarceration. Exploiting prison labor is consistent with this troubling trend.

Over a century and a half since the abolition of slavery, the dreaded institution still lives on in another dressed-up form. Taking advantage of a constitutional loophole, corporate profiteers continue the modern-day version of the convict lease system. In the land of the free, the dollar still takes precedence over human rights, and that which can be monetized and exploited for profit will be, regardless of ethical or moral considerations.

Once again, race, criminal justice and capitalism have joined forces to deprive captive black and brown bodies of their human rights. In the age of President Donald Trump and hardliner Attorney General Jeff Sessions, the return to "law and order" and a war on drugs signals a reversal of progress the U.S. was making untethering itself from the expansive grip of a carceral state.

The anniversary of last year's prison strike is a chilling reminder that one need not point to authoritarian regimes in distant countries to find examples of blatant labor rights violations. If you want to find slavery in the U.S., look no further than its penitentiaries, jails and detention centers where the consequences of being locked up extend much farther than doing time.

(Source: Aljazeera)

Chelsea's Hazard hopeful for Champions League title win

Chelsea footballer Eden Hazard says he is keen to win the Champions League title as his club begins its European campaign with a group stage match against Azerbaijani side Qarabag on Tuesday.

Hazard joined Chelsea shortly after they won their first Champions League title in 2012 but the London side have not won the competition since.

It came close in the 2013-14 season but lost to Atletico Madrid in the semi-finals.

Chelsea failed to qualify for the Champions League in the last campaign and as they prepare to return to Europe's elite competition this season, the Belgian international is hopeful that his team can seal the trophy.

"Yeah, this year (to win it) is important... I have only got to the semi-final when we lost to Atletico Madrid. So it's in my head to win this trophy," the 26-year-old told British media.

"I have won the Premier League and the title in France. Now all the big players want to win the Champions League."

Hazard played his first game for Chelsea this season in Saturday's 2-1 league win over Leicester City, after recovering from an ankle injury sustained in June.

"It was a good test (against Leicester). I'm just happy to be back," Hazard added.

Following their Champions League encounter, Chelsea host London rivals Arsenal in the league on Sunday.

(Source: Reuters)

Palace to replace Frank de Boer with Roy Hodgson

Crystal Palace have confirmed they have parted company with manager Frank de Boer, with a source telling ESPN FC that Roy Hodgson is set to take over.

De Boer had received the backing of Palace chairman Steve Parish on Sunday after suffering a fourth consecutive defeat to start the Premier League season but the club confirmed his departure in a statement on Monday.

"Crystal Palace Football Club have this morning parted company with Frank de Boer," the statement read. "We would like to thank Frank for his dedication and hard work during his time at the Club.

"A new manager will be appointed in due course and we wish Frank the very best of luck for the future.

"There will be no further comment at this time."

The BBC and Sky Sports News both reported that Hodgson had been identified as his successor and a source close to the former England boss subsequently told ESPN FC he is due to sign a two-year deal.

In a message on Instagram, De Boer wrote: "Very disappointed about the decision but never the less I want to thank the players, staff and the fans for their support. Good luck for the future."

Parish had urged everyone at the club to "stick together" despite the team's poor start to the Premier League season and increasing speculation about De Boer's position.

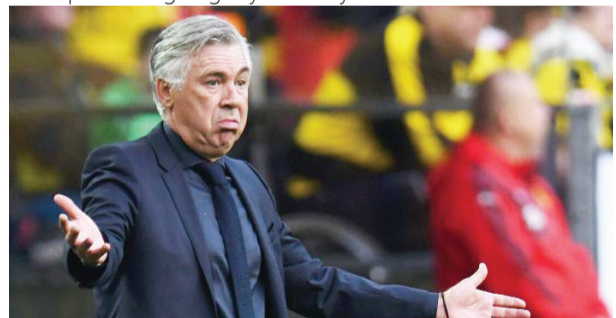
The former Ajax and Inter Milan boss, who signed a three-year contract when he was appointed in June, has overseen four defeats in as many games without scoring a goal since taking over at Selhurst Park in the summer, the worst start in Premier League history.

His departure comes after 77 days in the job, eight days fewer than he lasted in charge of Inter.

(Source: Soccermet)

Ancelotti brandishes China speculation 'a joke'

MUNICH -- Carlo Ancelotti has said speculation he is planning to take a job in China is "a joke" as he set his sights on Champions League glory with Bayern Munich.



Former Bayern winger Mario Basler told Sport1 he had heard from a "very trustworthy source" that the 58-year-old had a pre-contract agreement in place to join a Chinese Super League.

"A few days ago, I heard that Carlo Ancelotti has already signed a contract for a club abroad starting in the winter," Basler said. "Apparently he's already signed a pre-contract at the place where the most money is -- in China."

He added: "It might not be true but this is what I've been told."

However, Ancelotti dismissed Basler's comments at his news conference ahead of Bayern's opening Champions League fixture this season against Anderlecht.

"I am supposed to be here to speak about serious things. This is a joke," he said. "You have to ask Basler if he is so convinced. I think it is a joke. You know the problem is few people understand it's a joke -- a lot of people have taken it seriously."

Meanwhile, Ancelotti confirmed Jerome Boateng will return to the Bayern squad for the first time this season.

The Germany international has not played since suffering a muscle injury in the final game of last season against Freiburg.

However, Ancelotti also said David Alaba, Juan Bernat and Arturo Vidal are all unavailable for the game against the Belgian champions.

Ancelotti has led both Real Madrid and AC Milan to Champions League success in the past.

He feels the competition will be more difficult for his side to win this season and was happy to hand over the tag of favourites to Madrid as his former club seek a third consecutive Champions League title.

(Source: ESPN)

Nadal makes hardcourts look easy for third U.S. Open crown

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Rafa Nadal has long been king of the Paris clay but he was just as dominant on New York hardcourt on Sunday as he collected grand slam title number 16 with a clinical demolition of Kevin Anderson in the U.S. Open final.

The Spaniard insists nothing comes easy to him on any court but scanning his list of grand slam final triumphs one would be hard-pressed to find anything more comprehensive than this 6-3 6-3 6-4 victory on the Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The 6-2 6-3 6-1 thrashing of Stan Wawrinka at Roland Garros in June or the 6-1 6-3 6-0 win over Roger Federer in 2008 that earned him another of his 10 French Open crowns might have been more ruthless, but they were no more complete.

While his battling South African opponent kept the contest from being a complete blowout, there was never a single moment when Nadal was under threat.

Despite being one of the biggest servers on the ATP Tour, Anderson was unable make a dent in Nadal's defense and he managed not a single break point in his maiden grand slam final.

"It was more the conundrum of playing Rafa as opposed to being in my first final," said Anderson.

"His competitiveness, consistency at that level. He never goes away."

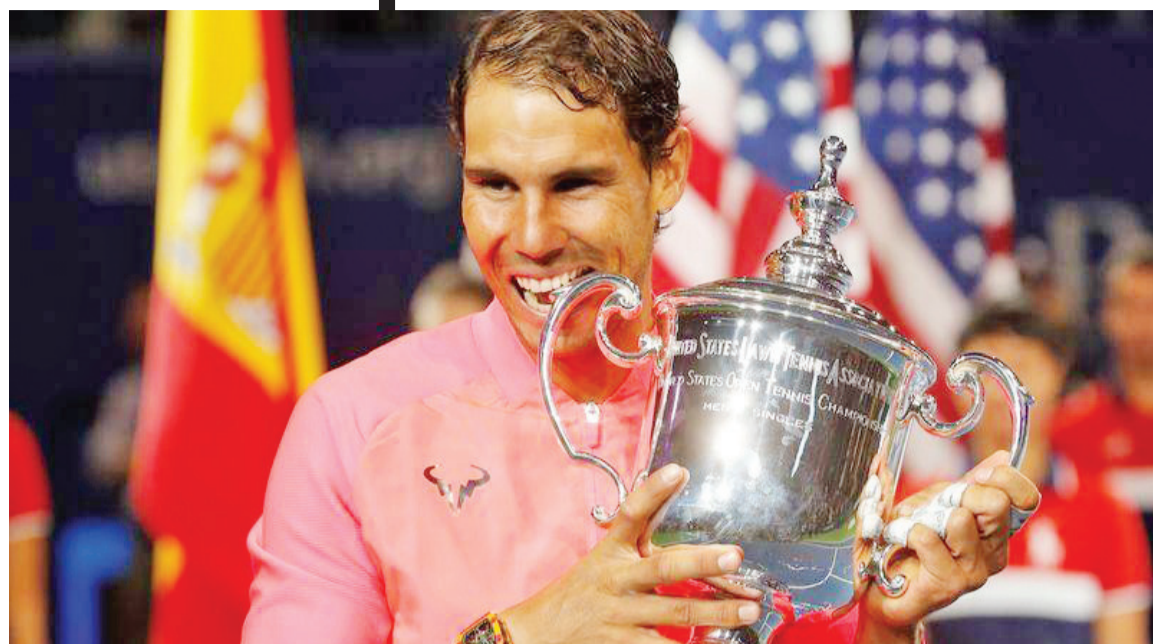
Having captured his third U.S. Open title, Nadal made it very clear to his rivals that he would indeed not be going away any time soon.

And although he did not count it as one of his primary objectives, the 31-year-old did not dismiss the possibility of one day surpassing Federer's grand slam haul of 19 titles.

"I really don't think much about these kind of things. I do my way, he does his way," said Nadal.

"I'm very happy with all the things that are happening to me, win this title again."

"I still have the passion and the love for the game. I



still want to compete and still feel the nerves every time that I go on court. While these things keep happening, I will be here.

"Well done for Roger that he is having an amazing season too and well done for me because I'm having a great season too."

"Let's see what happens."

While women's tennis produced two first-time grand slam winners this season, the old guard continued to rule supreme in the men's game with Nadal and Federer sweeping the majors with two apiece.

It marks the fourth time Nadal has won at least two major titles in a year and just the seventh time since tennis went professional in 1968 that a men's grand slam

final was contested by two players 30 and over.

With Federer and Nadal fit again after battling last year's injury woes and Andy Murray and Novak Djokovic fighting their way back to fitness, the Big Four might well be back in business next season.

"After them taking off most of last year to come back, winning all four grand slams was quite an achievement, regardless of how good they are," said Anderson, who is also 31.

"Looking at Rafa, just such a great competitor. He really makes you earn every single point. Roger, also."

"So it's been a very interesting year on the grand slam front. Certainly will be very interesting to see what happens next year."

Dutch rider van der Mark replaces Rossi for Aragon

LONDON (Reuters) - Dutch superbike rider Michael van der Mark will replace injured Italian great Valentino Rossi for the Aragon round of the MotoGP world championship in Spain on Sept. 24, Yamaha said on Monday.

Rossi broke his leg in a training accident on an off-road bike at the end of August and missed the San Marino Grand Prix at Misano in eastern Italy at the weekend.

Yamaha did not replace the 38-year-old nine times world champion for that race.

"Rossi is making good progress with his rehabilitation process. However, it is expected that he will not be able to compete again before the Grand Prix of Japan at the Twin Ring Motegi, held from October 13-15," Yamaha said in a statement.

Van der Mark, 24, will have Rossi's usual pit crew working with him at the 14th round of the season at the Motorland Aragon circuit.

The Dutch rider will be making his debut in the premier class and has nev-

er ridden a MotoGP bike before. He previously competed in seven 125cc (now Moto3) races in 2010 and the 2011 Dutch Moto2 round.

He is also a three times winner of the Suzuka eight hours endurance race and has raced at the Spanish circuit seven times previously with World Superbikes and other support series.

Yamaha's managing director Lin Jarvis said the team was obliged to enter two bikes for the race and had decided to seek a replacement within the company's own pool of contracted riders.

"It is never easy to step in to replace another rider and even more difficult to replace Valentino Rossi, but we believe that Michael has all the credentials and experience to do a good job," he added.

Honda's Spanish rider Marc Marquez, the reigning champion, and Italy's Andrea Dovizioso, for Ducati, are tied at the top of the championship after Sunday's race at Misano with five rounds remaining.

Rossi is fourth overall and 42 points adrift.

Froome makes history as he is crowned Vuelta champion

Chris Froome became the first Briton to win the Vuelta a Espana and the third rider to win a double of the Tour de France and Vuelta in the same season when he finished the race by retaining his advantage over Vincenzo Nibali on Sunday.

Froome and Nibali crossed the Madrid finish line together, allowing Team Sky rider Froome to stay two minutes 15 seconds ahead of the Italian after the professional, 117.5-km stage.

Italian Matteo Trentin took the stage victory, his fourth of this year's Vuelta, but narrowly missed out to Froome on the green jersey for the points classification.

Froome is the third cyclist to win the Tour and the Vuelta in the same year, after Jacques Anquetil in 1963 and Bernard Hinault in 1978.

He is also the first to win both races since 1995 when the Vuelta was shifted from its old start date in late April to late August, when temperatures in Spain are at their highest and put an extra strain on riders.

"What Chris Froome has achieved over the last 12 months has cemented his place as one of Britain's greatest sportsmen," said British Cycling's chief executive Julie Harrington.

"To win the Tour de France and Vuelta a Espana in the same year puts him up there with the best Grand Tour riders in the history of the sport. The cycling community in this country and indeed the whole nation are extremely proud of him."

Although the general classification victory was in the bag, Froome did not let up in the final stage and joined the bunch sprint at the end, coming 11th, the best finish of the general classification group, with Russian Ilnur Zakarin, third overall, 18th and runner-up Nibali 22nd.

The three-time Vuelta winner was serenaded by Spanish supporters on the podium by the Cibeles palace in Madrid, while his Trek Segafredo team mates jokingly urged him to postpone his imminent retirement, chanting: "One more year for Alberto".

(Source: Reuters)

Steinhaus: I'm delighted and grateful for Bundesliga opportunity

Bibiana Steinhaus became the Bundesliga's first female referee on Sunday when she took charge of Hertha Berlin's match against Werder Bremen.

The 38-year-old police officer has been named Germany's referee of the year on six occasions and has officiated 80 matches in the second tier of German men's football since 2007, as well as regularly overseeing fixtures in the women's game. To mark this historic occasion, FIFA.com took the opportunity to interview her.

■ FIFA.com: Congratulations on officiating in the Bundesliga for the first time. Do you believe you are a better referee than you were last year?

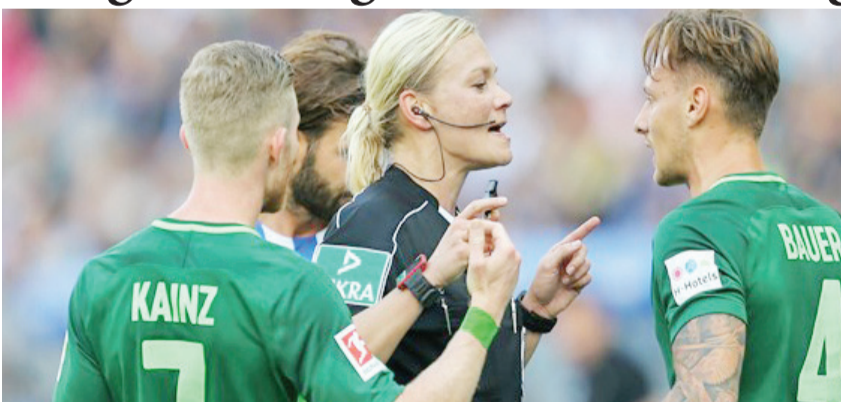
Bibiana Steinhaus: Thank you very much. Referees develop throughout their careers just like players do, and in any case, I have one more year's experience under my belt now.

■ Do you consider yourself to be a pioneer, or do you simply want to officiate Bundesliga matches?

My gender is completely irrelevant to my colleagues. As referees we are all measured based on the exactly the same criteria, and naturally this includes our performance. One excellent development, for example, is that one in four match officials at the upcoming U-17 World Cup in India will be women -- based purely on performance criteria.

■ You must also have experienced some negativity over the years because you are a woman.

Negativity is the wrong word. Every experience I have takes me forward, enables me to learn and expands my horizons as an individual, as a personality and also as a referee on the pitch -- and I feel extremely fortunate to be able to do that.



■ How would you describe your personal style?

Referees make a name for themselves with the quality of their decisions and their personality on the pitch. Making the right decisions is important -- fundamental in fact -- but referees also need to communicate and interact well with club staff, players and, of course, their fellow match officials.

■ Do you prepare specifically for a match or do you prefer to know as little as possible ahead of games to ensure that you can remain as impartial as possible? I have heard about both approaches from different referees.

Although I'm also aware of both of these options, I personally prefer to prepare specifically for a match. I like to be as ready as possible without forming any kind of bias. Intensive preparations give me a chance of anticipating the next step in a match as quickly as possible.

■ Are you particularly meticulous about these preparations?

Football has changed over the years and everything has become much faster, so we referees also need to keep on top

of these developments.

■ What are your memories of officiating the finals of the FIFA Women's World Cup 2011 and the Women's Olympic Football Tournament in 2012?

I have fantastic memories not only of these games but of the entire tournaments. We had terrific teams of match officials, a pool of around 50 to 60 referees as well as the 'team behind the team'. We all had a great and successful time, shared the experience and worked extremely hard in advance to have the opportunity to take part in these competitions. Experiencing a World Cup in your home country is wonderful.

■ It is striking that many referees talk about team spirit, even though the public generally consider the man or woman in the middle to be something of a lone wolf.

That is such a pity! Although you usually see four of us at a match, we're actually part of a much larger team. As I've already mentioned, there are around 50 referees at any given tournament as well as approximately 30 members of the team behind the team. We work

extremely hard to ensure that we can perform at our best as a group of match officials and create the ideal competitive conditions for the players.

■ Many people often only notice the main referee and not their assistants.

Officiating only works as part of a team. We need to work together to make the right decisions, as football is so complex nowadays. When it comes to the offside rule, for example, we have to consider whether a player is offside and if his position on the pitch means he has an influence on the goalkeeper, to name just one scenario. A team of match officials needs to communicate closely and extremely quickly with each other. Nobody can make these decisions alone!

■ You will no doubt be aware of the film 'Referees at Work', which makes the importance of communication between the officials very apparent.

Yes! That film is a great example of how complex and exciting a match official's job is. We're not lone wolves -- we're team players.

■ What would be your tip for young referees -- especially those just starting out?

I hope you always enjoy going about your work and see refereeing as teamwork, share your experiences and exchange views with your colleagues.

■ Having now achieved your major ambition of refereeing in the Bundesliga, what targets can you set yourself now?

I take things one match at a time. I've been a referee for more than 20 years now and during that time I've experienced many wonderful things but have also had to overcome a few setbacks. I'm delighted and grateful to have the chance to officiate in the Bundesliga.

(Source: FIFA)

We will fight until the end against Al Ahli, Persepolis coach Branko says

S P O R T S Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic says that they are determined to book a place in the AFC Champions League semifinal and will fight until the end to beat Al Ahli.

Persepolis have been scheduled to face the Saudi Arabian representative at the Mohammed Bin Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi, the UAE on Tuesday in the second leg of ACL quarter-final.

"This is for the second time we face Al Ahli and we have respect for them. Al Ahli are a dangerous team but we want to beat them, that's why we are here," Ivankovic said in the pre-match news conference.

"Persepolis are well equipped for this match but both team have a 50-50 chance of advancing to the next stage.

"In the first leg, we came from 2-0 behind to draw the match and it shows we have determination. On the other side, Al Ahli's Sergei Rebrov is a top level international coach and is hungry for the success," the Croat added.

"In football, everything is possible. We will do our best to qualify for the semi-final. Persepolis have the biggest fan base and we play for them," Ivankovic concluded.



Fighting spirit behind Persepolis' form, says captain Hosseini



Abu Dhabi: Jalal Hosseini has pinpointed Persepolis' fighting spirit and huge support as the reasons for their success in the 2017 AFC Champions League ahead of the Tehran-based side's quarter-final second leg with Saudi Arabia's Al Ahli on Tuesday.

Club captain Hosseini was suspended for the first leg last month when the Iranian side came from two goals down to claim a 2-2 draw in Muscat, and the defender will now return for the second leg in Abu Dhabi with the hope of leading his team to a first-ever semi-final in the competition.

Persepolis have already produced their best AFC Champions League performance ever in reaching the last eight after a 1-0 second leg win over Lekhwiya in the previous round proved enough to advance by the same score-line on aggregate.

"We may not be among the richest clubs in Asia, especially compared to clubs in the Gulf region, but there's no doubt we have the biggest fan base," said Hosseini.

"And Persepolis have the best

support in Asian football; because of this support, we fight. It gives us extra motivation and determination to make sure we can get great results.

"This is what we have always tried to do and will continue to do."

Hosseini, who has more than 100 caps for the Islamic Republic of Iran and is part of the squad that have qualified for next year's FIFA World Cup, is currently in his second spell with Persepolis.

Having spent two seasons with the club between 2012 and 2014, the defender moved to another Al Ahli, in Qatar, before signing for Naft Tehran in 2015.

After just one campaign back in Iran, he returned to Persepolis, where he helped them claim the Iranian Pro League title earlier in the year.

Form on the continent has been equally impressive, with the side advancing to the Round of 16 for the fourth time before the defeat of Lekhwiya set up an enticing clash with Al Ahli.

(Source: the-AFC)

AFC Champions League Quarter-finals second-leg: Al Ahli v Persepolis preview



Abu Dhabi: Al Ahli and Persepolis go into the second leg of their AFC Champions League quarter-final at Mohammed Bin Zayed Stadium on Tuesday with the tie tantalizingly poised after the sides played out an entertaining 2-2 draw in last month's first leg.

After letting a two-goal lead slip in the first leg, Al Ahli will look for a positive response as they aim to return to the semi-finals for the first time since 2012, when they eventually finished as runners-up to Korea Republic's Ulsan Hyundai.

The Jeddah-based side have been in fine form this year, advancing from a group that comprised Al Ain, Zobahan and Bunyodkor, before seeing off namesakes Al Ahli of the United Arab Emirates in the Round of 16.

With striker Omar Al Soma, fresh from leading Syria to the play-off stage of the FIFA World Cup qualifiers, and the recently acquired Brazilian Leonardo both netting in the first game against Persepolis, Sergei Rebrov's team look well equipped to challenge for the continent's top club honor once more.

Elsewhere, Claudemir is another new Brazilian signing who arrived after spend-

ing two seasons at Club Brugge in Belgium, while captain Taiseer Al Jassam should return after helping Saudi Arabia progress to a first FIFA World Cup since 2006.

Persepolis are enjoying their best-ever run in the AFC Champions League after reaching the quarter-finals for the first time and the evidence from the first leg shows they are not going to let it end without a fight. Two goals down with 20 minutes to play, Shojae Khalizadeh and substitute Godwin Mensha netted to force a 2-2 draw and to set up a mouth-watering return fixture in Abu Dhabi.

All eyes will be on striker Mehdi Taremi, who scored six times in Group D as Persepolis finished runners-up behind Al Hilal but ahead of Al Rayyan and Al Wahda, before they overcame Lekhwiya in the last 16.

The Iranian international forward has not found the back of the net since the group stage, but the arrival of Nigerian Mensha and the presence of Ali Alipour and Vahid Amiri goes some way towards easing the burden on the prolific marksman. Captain Jalal Hosseini, meanwhile, returns from suspension.

(Source: the-AFC)

Iran must invest to avoid World Cup disappointment - Queiroz

Hong Kong (Reuters) - Iran coach Carlos Queiroz has urged the country's authorities to commit more funding to the preparations for next year's World Cup finals or risk elimination in the group stages yet again.

Queiroz's side became the first team from Asia to book their ticket for Russia in June and next summer's tournament will be the fifth time Iran have appeared at the World Cup finals.

In 1978, 1998, 2006 and 2014, the three-time Asian champions failed to advance to the knockout phase of the competition and Queiroz fears a similar outcome next year if funding issues are not addressed immediately.

"The situation basically is the same as in the past," Queiroz told Reuters.

"We have the federation trying to do their best. But unfortunately in Iran, and I think all over the world, when you struggle with financial support it's always very difficult to implement a program.

"We qualified three months ago and at this moment there is no reason for us not to have a clear plan and a consistent budget in order to make decisions. If you copy the preparations of the last four World Cups, you don't go anywhere. It's a simple conclusion," he added.

Queiroz's comments echo a recent statement issued by seven Iran players on Instagram, in which they called on the authorities to emulate South Korea in mobilizing the country "from top to bottom" for the World Cup campaign.

The Portuguese coach presented his preparation plans to the Iran's football federation soon after they qualified but only two friendlies have been arranged so far.

Iran will play Togo on Sept 29 before taking on World Cup hosts Russia six days later.

Queiroz believes it is crucial that his team plays more matches against top quality opposition ahead of the finals, something that will only happen if the purse-strings are loosened.

"Based on my personal connections I was able to bring this friendly game against Russia," said Queiroz.

"Russia are the host nation and have accepted to play against Iran and this is huge in terms of international impact and reputation, but we cannot rely on my personal contacts and relationships.

"If you want to play good friendly games, money talks in football. You cannot ignore this situation." Queiroz has stressed the Iranians need to take a more professional approach to their preparations or risk more disappointment on the game's biggest stage and a widening of the gap with the top footballing nations.

"My short term target is to be sure we have an outstanding, unique and challenging World Cup preparation and I will try my best to be different," said Queiroz.

"How many World Cups have Iran participated in? Four. This is the fifth World Cup. What did the four World Cups teach us?



"If you want to be in the second stage you must be different. Different in your preparation, ambitious, creative, use your imagination to see how you can in 10 months make this team improve.

"In order to be different I need to put all of my energy into this first goal.

"How can we convince the federation and the people who have the responsibility to support us that we must be different? We cannot be like Portugal because they started 45 years ago.

"We cannot be like Germany, they started 55 years ago, France 55 years ago. How can we in 10 months reduce this gap? That's my first job."

Italy and Iran to meet on day 1 of Grand Champions Cup

Italy and Iran will meet each other on the first day of the 2017 FIVB Men's World Grand Champions Cup, just like they did on the first day of the 2017 FIVB World League. The match on Tuesday in Nagoya will be their second encounter in the history of the World Grand Champions Cup.

Head-to-Head

- These nations will meet for the second time at the World Grand Champions Cup. In 2013, Iran beat Italy in five sets -

3-2 (26-24, 16-25, 25-23, 23-25, 15-12).

- Italy have won each of their last four competitive matches against Iran, all in straight sets. Their last meeting came at the 2017 World League, when Italy recorded a 3-0 home win over Iran in Pesaro.
- Iran last beat Italy at world level at the 2014 World Championships, when they claimed a 3-1 first round victory.

Italy

- In 1993, Italy won the inaugural edi-

tion of the World Grand Champions Cup and also participated in the 2005 (3rd) and 2013 (3rd) editions.

- Italy have won just one of their last four World Grand Champions Cup matches, the 3-0 win over Japan in 2013.
- Italy have lost five of their 15 World Grand Champions Cup matches, including four in five sets.
- Italy, silver medalist at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, lost to Belgium in the quarterfinals

of the 2017 European Championship.

Iran

- Iran will make their third appearance at the World Grand Champions Cup, after finishing fifth in 2009 and fourth in 2013.
- Three of Iran's four wins at the World Grand Champions Cup have come in five sets.
- Iran have lost just one of their last four World Grand Champions Cup matches, the 0-3 defeat against Russia in 2013.

(Source: fivb.org)

Iran freestyle wrestlers claim 4th place at Cadet World Championships

Young Iranian freestyle wrestlers have put an acceptable end to their campaign at the 2017 Cadet World Championships in Greece, and finished fourth at the conclusion of the prestigious international sporting event.

On Sunday, Iran's Mehdi Akhbar Eshghivasoukolaei outperformed Kanata Yamaguchi from Japan 6-0 in the final bout of the 54-kilogram weight section at the Ano Liosia Olympic Hall in the Greek capital city of Athens, and won the yellow metal.

Ukraine's Vladyslav Ostapenko defeated Mexican rival Roberto Alejandro Blanco 5-4, and finished on the third place.

Russian wrestler Imam Ganishov also overcame India's Himanshu Kumar 3-2, and settled for a bronze.

Later in the day, Meysam Enayatollah Zaree and Seyyed Mehdi Seyyedabasi Hashemijouybari had to be satisfied with a bronze medal each in the 76-kilogram and 100-kilogram categories respectively.

Earlier in the tournament, Iranian wrestler Abbas Ali Foroutanrami lost to his Russian opponent Alan Bagaev 1-1 in the final showdown of the 85-kilogram weight category, and collected the silver medal.

Mohammad Ashghar Nokhodilari also downed Masaki Sato from Japan 5-2 in the 69-kilogram weight division, and snatched the bronze medal.

The Russian cadet freestyle wrestling team collected 73 points and was named the top-ranked squad.

The US outfit claimed the second place with 66 points, while third-place Azerbaijanis got 61 points. The Persians tallied 53 points at the high-status event.

The 2017 Cadet World Championships started on September 4 and wrapped up on September 10.

(Source: Press TV)

World wrestling legend says she loves Iranian wrestling

Kaori Icho, four-time Olympic champion in women's freestyle wrestling said she loves Iranian way of wrestling.

"I love the Iranian men's national wrestling team because of their professional techniques," the ten-time world champion said in an exclusive interview with IRNA.

Kaori noted that she has always followed the Iranian wrestling competitions and learned from them.

"Despite the Iranian men's national wrestling team high position in wrestling, the Iranian women team is not prepared for attending the international events," the Japanese champion who is in Iran to hold a training course for the Iranian women wrestling team.

"Everybody in the Iranian women wrestling team is trying very hard, but they need to improve their stamina and physical fitness," she noted.

"Technique is important, but physical fitness is much important," Kaori said, noting that the Iranian women wrestling team is gradually improving.

"I loved wrestling from the early years of my life, I have an older brother and a sister who are professional wrestlers and I started the wrestling when I was three or four years old," she said while elaborating on her personal efforts for becoming a champion.

Kaori is a Japanese freestyle wrestler and four-time Olympic Champion, winning gold in 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016. Icho was undefeated between 2003 and 2016. On 29 January 2016 at the Golden Grand Prix Ivan Yarygin 2016 Icho lost to Orkhon Purevdorzh of Mongolia. This was her first loss after a long domination.

She is the first female in any sport to win individual-event gold at four consecutive Olympics. On October 20th, 2016, she was awarded the People's Honour Award by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for her achievements, the second wrestler to receive the highest award, after Saori Yoshida in 2012.

(Source: Irna)

Iranian fencers earn 3 medals at Thailand Open Fencing Championships 2017

Iranian fencers have demonstrated outstanding displays of skills and agility at the 2nd edition of TFF Minime Series & Thailand Open Fencing Championships 2017, and collected four medals at the international event.

On Sunday, Mohammad Rezaei Taadi lost to his opponent in the final contest of men's individual epee at Fashion Island Shopping Mall in the Thai capital city of Bangkok, and received the silver medal.

Iranian female athletes Fatemeh Zare' and Anousha Shahabi also overcame their Asian rivals in the women's contests, and received silver and bronze medals respectively.

The 2nd edition of TFF Minime Series & Thailand Open Fencing Championships 2017 kicked off on September 9, and will conclude on September 17.

The epee is the modern derivative of the dueling sword used in fencing. As a thrusting weapon, the epee is similar to a foil, but has a stiffer blade, which is triangular in cross-section with a V-shaped groove called a fuller, has a larger bell guard, and is heavier.

There are no rules regarding priority and right of way in the epee competitions, and the entire body is a valid target area.

(Source: Press TV)



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Managing Director: Ali Asgari
Editor-in-Chief: Mohammad Ghaderi

Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895
editor@tehrantimes.com
Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000
Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450
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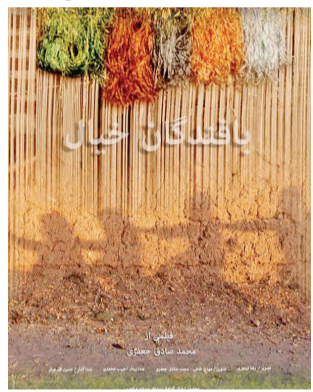
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P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



NEWS IN BRIEF

“Weavers of Imagination”
named best doc at Liff
India Awards

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian filmmaker Mohammad Sadeq Jafari’s “Weavers of Imagination” was picked as best documentary film at the Liff India Awards in India, the organizers announced last week.



“Weavers of Imagination” produced at Iran’s Documentary and Experimental Film Center tells the story of several blind carpet weavers who spend happy times when they get together.

Indian movie “Lathe Joshi” by Mangesh Joshi won the best film award. Joshi also won the best director award for the film.

Productions in the fields of literature, information, film, television and theater are honored at Liff India Awards, which is held in Lonavla, a region near Mumbai.

LA festival to screen
Iranian shorts

A R T TEHRAN — Two Iranian short movies will go on screen at the 1st edition of the Hub Film Festival, which will run in Los Angeles on September 23 and 24.

“The Man Who Wasn’t Here” by Ata Mojabi and “Samar” by Kaveh Jahed will compete with the movies from the U.S., Canada, Germany, France, Norway and Spain.

“The Man Who Wasn’t Here” is about a man who lives on a dark planet called Cinema where everything has turned into still frames. Now he wants to move around again as in a movie.

Gyllenhaal taps courage
of Boston bombing survivor
for “Stronger”

TORONTO (Reuters) — Jake Gyllenhaal put his “heart and soul” into “Stronger”, a film about Jeff Bauman, who lost his legs in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, and in the process found inspiration and a special kinship with Bauman.

Based on Bauman’s memoir by the same name, the film directed by David Gordon Green centers around his difficult journey toward walking again, his struggle with post traumatic stress, and his bewilderment and reluctance to being called a “hero”.

“No matter what you’ve been through in your life, Jeff shows you that can get through it,” Gyllenhaal said after the film’s premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival on Friday.

“To me, I couldn’t think of a better movie to put my heart and soul into.”



Actor Jake Gyllenhaal and author Jeff Bauman leaving a press conference to promote the film “Stronger” at the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) in Toronto, Canada September 9, 2017. (Reuters/Fred Thornhill)

Gyllenhaal, whose production company Nine Stories chose “Stronger” as its first film, said he was faced every day with the fact that he probably could not do what Bauman did and called him one of the strongest people he knew.

Gyllenhaal admitted to being intimidated when he first met Bauman, knowing the impossibility of matching the reality of Bauman’s experience. But as they spent time together, he quickly saw a connection and why Green cast him for the part.

“We have a lot of similarities,” said Gyllenhaal, but “the friendship came from asking the hard questions. And we continue to do that together.”

A simple query about what shoes Bauman wore the day of the bombing led to an explanation of how he saw his feet and shoes lying on the ground after the explosion. “That was the moment where I realized how brave he was,” said Gyllenhaal. “To face that - again, talking about what strength is? It’s in those little moments.”

Gyllenhaal said he is often asked when he will play a super hero. “I finally kind of have. To me, that’s how I feel about him.”

For Bauman, the real heroes are those who helped him over the years. “I lost something, but my heroes picked me up,” he said.

In a Facebook post on Friday, Bauman said he saw his life accurately played out in the film, and that the movie’s Toronto opening gave him closure. He was a different person and in a better place, he wrote.

“Everyone is fighting their own private battles without half of the support that I have had,” he wrote. “My hope is that they walk away feeling lifted and inspired.”

“I Was a Deer” illustrator wins
Golden Apple at Bratislava biennial

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian designer Narges Mohammadi has won a Golden Apple for her works in the book “I Was a Deer” at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava in Slovakia.

Winners were announced on Saturday by a jury composed of Iranian illustrator Ali Buzari and eight other artists from other countries, as well as a jury of seven children.

“I Was a Deer” by Ahmad Akbarpur is about a deer that has been severely injured. The deer knows that it must flee from the royal hunters.

Ludwig Volbeda from the Netherlands won the Grand Prize of the biennial for his collection “The Birds”.

Maki Arai from Japan, Ji-min Kim from South Korea, Ana Desnitskaya from Russia and Daniela Olejniková from Slovakia were other winners of Golden Apple.

A wide variety of programs have been arranged for the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava, which opened on Friday. It will run until October 29.



This illustration by Iranian illustrator Narges Mohammadi from Ahmad Akbarpur’s book “I Was a Deer” won a Golden Apple at the Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava in Slovakia.

“Parting” crowned best at Sydney
Persian filmfest



A scene from “Parting”

A R T TEHRAN — “Parting”, a joint production of Iran and Afghanistan by Navid Mahmudi, won the Golden Gazelle Award for Best Feature Film at the 6th Persian International Film Festival in the Australian city of Sydney, the organizers announced on Sunday.

The film is about teenage lovers Nabi and Fereshteh who are separated by her family’s flight from Afghanistan. After years apart, Nabi decides to find Fereshteh and risk the hardship of flight and resettlement in Europe with a hope of a better life.

“Breath” by Narges Abyar received an honorable mention from a jury of the Australian cineastes Rebecca Barry, Ben Ferris, Jennifer Peedom and Rosemary Blight, and the Australia-based Iraqi actor and writer Osamah Sami.

“Save Me” by Mohsen Nabavi was named best short film, while “Not Yet” by Arian Vazirdaftari received an honorable mention.

The four-day festival reviewed New York-based Iranian filmmaker Amir Naderi’s movies “The Runner” and “Monte” in a special program.

In addition, a seminar was organized on the renowned Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami on the sidelines of the event.

The Persian International Film Festival was established in 2011 to promote films from Iranian cinema and the Persian-speaking world.

Ferris, Jennifer Peedom and Rosemary Blight, and the Australia-based Iraqi actor and writer Osamah Sami.

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Spicy skits bring an Emmy for
Melissa McCarthy

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Melissa McCarthy won an Emmy on Sunday for her spoofs of former White House spokesman Sean Spicer on “Saturday Night Live” in television sketches that went viral.

With slicked back hair and wearing ill-fitting suits, McCarthy played Spicer, whom she dubbed Spicely, as an enraged man who attacks the media, craves the praise of his boss, and rides a motorized speaker’s podium.

McCarthy on Sunday was named best guest actress in a comedy series for her impressions. The star of “Bridesmaids” and “Mike & Molly” was not at the ceremony in Los Angeles to accept the award.

Spicer quit his post as White House communications director in July after six months of stormy encounters with the media that, along with McCarthy’s sketches, turned him into a figure of ridicule.

NBC’s “Saturday Night Live” went into television’s Emmy awards this year with 22 nominations, reflecting the renewed popularity of the satirical sketch show and its most-watched season in 23 years.

Alec Baldwin also is in the running next week for an Emmy for his impressions of U.S. President Donald Trump on “Saturday Night Live,” while the show’s Kate McKinnon has been nominated for her roles as losing Democratic presidential contender Hillary Clinton



Actress Melissa McCarthy poses for photographers on the red carpet as she arrives for the TIME 100 Gala in Manhattan, New York, April 26, 2016. (Reuters/Shannon Stapleton/File Photo)

and Trump White House aide Kellyanne Conway.

On Sunday, “Saturday Night Live” also picked up an Emmy for comedian Dave Chapelle’s stint as guest actor and host.

“Saturday Night Live” is broadcast on NBC, a unit of Comcast Corp.

Awards for the major Emmy categories, including best TV comedy and drama series, will be handed out on Sept.17 in a televised ceremony hosted by comedian Stephen Colbert.

Four art elites receive lifetime achievement awards at Iran Cinema Celebration

A R T TEHRAN — The organizers of the 19th edition of the Iran Cinema Celebration honored four influential figures in Iranian cinema for their lifetime achievements in a special ceremony on Sunday night.

Director Kianush Ayyari, actor Sirus Ebrahimzadeh, composer Hossein Alizadeh and film expert Mohammad-Hassan Khoshnevis received lifetime achievement awards during the ceremony organized at Eyvane Shams Hall.

“I cannot find adequate words to say how pleased I am,” Ebrahimzadeh said after accepting his award.

“These awards convince the younger generation that patience and diligence will not be fruitless,” he added.

“These awards also give the opportunity to the honorees to review the ups and downs of their past lives in order to learn the previous lessons of their lives,” stated Ebrahimzadeh who began his acting career with Ali Hatami’s “Hassan the Bald” in 1970. He is also a man of letters with works such as “A Little Request”.



Stands set up at Eyvane Shams Hall in Tehran show pictures of the art elites (left to right) Mohammad-Hassan Khoshnevis, Hossein Alizadeh, Kianush Ayyari and Sirus Ebrahimzadeh honored for their lifetime achievements during the 19th Iran Cinema Celebration on September 10, 2016. (IRNA/Abdollah Heidari)

In his acceptance speech, Khoshnevis, the former director of the Iran Film Archives, said,

“A cultural figure should be very familiar with the history of his/her own country,” and asked

cultural figures not to hold out much hope that governments will make breakthroughs in the cultural fields.

Ayyari accepted his award from directors Afireza Davoodnejad, Morteza Razaqarimi, and Hassan Fathi and producer Fereshteh Taerpur, who also commented about him.

“I was so pleased by the comments,” said Ayyari and congratulated Iran’s National Day of Cinema.

Veteran actor Amin Tarokh, musician Mohammad Sarir and director Homayun Asadi appeared on stage to present Alizadeh an award.

“It’s hard to work in the field of music in Iran, but the work in this area never caused a disturbance, because I was a lover who was searching for his missing love and nothing could stop me,” said Alizadeh who composed music for many memorable movies such “Love-Stricken” by Ali Hatami.

“I feel proud to work in Iranian cinema,” he stated.

Each honoring was followed by a performance by the Iranian-rock fusion band Pallet.

Damon, Clooney defend black family’s portrayal in ‘Suburbicon’

TORONTO (Reuters) — The African-American family struggling to fit in to an all-white suburb in 1950s America in the George Clooney-directed dark satire “Suburbicon” was intentionally portrayed in a one-dimensional way, actor Matt Damon said on Sunday.

The film, based on a script written by Joel and Ethan Coen, stars Damon and Julianne Moore and depicts the violent efforts of the neighborhood’s white residents to oust a black family, the Meyers, after blaming them for a deadly break-in.

The film has received mixed reviews since its world premiere in Venice earlier this month, with some critics hammering its superficial treatment of the black characters.

“The Meyers family, you never know them, right, and that’s the point,” Damon told a news conference at the Toronto International Film Festival. “Because the town didn’t get to know them, they just freaked out.”

Moore added: “They blamed them for absolutely everything and then you see us in our little house quietly going about our dirty

business.”

Moore plays both Damon’s wife and her sister, who hatches a plot with Damon’s character Gardner Lodge to stage a home invasion and get rid of the wife to start a new life together.

The film lands at a time of deep unease over race in America after white supremacists clashed with anti-racism protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia last month, leaving one dead.

“Its bigger problem is a timely subplot

about violent racism among white Americans that comes off as a mishandled afterthought,” Hollywood Reporter said.

Film site Collider added that by depriving the Meyers of individual voices and having them “stand in for all black families, Clooney turns them into a cardboard cutout.”

“We wanted it to be entertaining, we didn’t want it to be a documentary and we didn’t want it to be an ‘eat your spinach’ piece of filmmaking,” Clooney told the news conference.