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Hariri dismisses claims Iran building 'missile factories' in Lebanon

POLITICS TEHRAN — Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri has rejected claims by the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Iran is establishing plants in Lebanon to build missiles, saying the Tel Aviv regime is carrying out "deception campaigns."

In an interview with French daily Le Monde published on Friday, Hariri said Israel "knows very well there are no missile factories in Lebanon." **→2**

Over 2,600 homes burned in Rohingya-majority Rakhine

The Myanmar government says over 2,600 houses have been burned down over the past week in the Rohingya-majority areas of the country's northwest, which have been the scene of one of the deadliest outbreaks of violence against the persecuted Muslim community in decades.

"A total of 2,625 houses from Kottakau, Myinlut and Kyikanpyin villages and two wards in Maungtaw were burned down," the state-run Global New Light of Myanmar said on Saturday. **→13**

Iran lauds S. Africa's Palestine policy



Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani greets her South African counterpart Baleka Mbete (left).

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Zarif: Iran to fortify ties with the world in next 4 years

POLITICS TEHRAN — Mohammad Javad Zarif who has succeeded to win the confidence of the parliament and the trust of the president to again lead Iran's foreign policy has said Iran will expand comprehensive relations with the outside world in the next four years.

"Comprehensive interaction with the world is in our mind and hopefully the next

four years will be the years of expanding all-out ties with the world given the fact that the JCPOA [the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action] has facilitated Iran's interaction with other countries," he said in an interview with dolat.ir published on Saturday.

He said that it is essential to have relations and interaction with the outside world, not just one region, in order to have a "successful foreign policy." **→2**

Imam Musa as-Sadr still lights the way

By Raed H. Charafeddine

Not many people can leave a long, lasting impression on us for life, yet Imam Musa As-Sadr was certainly an exception. It is undeniable that the radiant legacy of Imam Musa As-Sadr is unlikely to lose its brilliance any time soon. Indeed, there are many lit lanterns in the skyline of humanity, but we yearn to a lantern which glows with creativity and authenticity, holds a treasury of values and noble attitudes and creates colors of life too wide-ranging to be encompassed here... but perhaps we may be successful in finding a few of them. As the thirty-ninth memory of the absence of Imam As-Sadr and his two companions dawn upon us, the question presents itself: What effect did this absence have on the Lebanese, Arab and international scenes? Or, if I may rephrase: Do we need Imam As-Sadr?

The answer to this question came from Bishop Michael Abras, the Tyre Greek Catholics Archbishop, who said:

"In the conflicts today, the human need arises, more than any time, for As-Sadr's thought. That thought of constant peace, glowing wisdom and the power of tolerance. That thought of deep insight which crosses all borders for the service of humanity, equality between all mankind and building a society which is cosmopolitan, homogeneous, united, undivided and free from wrangles."

Lebanon is probably the greatest victim of As-Sadr's absence. For in this small country, the Imam's genius manifested itself in his capability to penetrate the various and often contradictory parts of society. This country, an oasis of coexistence where 18 sects live together, and which was meant to be a cultural example to be followed, proved that Imam As-Sadr can never be forgotten. Yet, ever since he stood in its churches in 1975, delivering speeches and holding meeting for the sake of the essence of humanity, this experiment was ultimately fruitless, and was never repeated so far. **→6**

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Military chief says ground offensive against Iran impossible

POLITICS TEHRAN — Mohammad Baqeri, the armed forces chief of staff, said on Saturday that offensive against Iran especially on the ground will be rather impossible.

Even "unwise" leaders in the West know that any such conflict would have huge costs for them, he said at an air defense exhibition.

In an indirect reference to the U.S., the major general said the "Westerners are well aware that carrying out attacks against Iran will have dire consequences for them".

He added, "Even if they would control the start of an aggression, they would not have a say about its end and they won't even be able to limit the war to Iran's borders."



Zarif expresses condolences over deadly bus crash

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif issued a message on Saturday expressing sorrow over the death of students in a bus crash in southern Iran.

A bus rollover early on Friday killed seven schoolgirls, their teacher, and the driver. 34 others were also injured.

The incident happened on a road linking the city of Bandar Abbas, Hormozgan province, to the city of Darab, Fars province, both in southern part of Iran.

The bus was carrying 45 middle school and high school female students who were going on a science camp.



Rouhani congratulates Vietnam on national day

POLITICS TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani of Iran sent a message his Vietnamese counterpart Tran Dai Quang on Friday congratulating Vietnam National Day.

"I sincerely congratulate the national day of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to your Excellency and the people of your country," Rouhani said.

He also expressed hope that relations between the two countries would be expanded. "I hope we would witness expansion of ties and cooperation between the two countries in all areas of politics, economic and culture."

He added, "I wish your Excellency health and success and the people of Vietnam prosperity and felicity."



Nikki Haley has no document against Iran: Bernie Sanders

POLITICS The foreign policy advisor to Senator Bernie Sanders has said the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley has no document against Iran.

"A valid inspection request requires credible info on illicit activities, not just 'why can't I look there?' Haley offered none, has none," Matt Duss tweeted on Thursday.

Duss made the remarks as the International Atomic Energy Agency released its newest report, confirming once again that Iran is complying with its commitment under the July 2015 nuclear accord.

"Iran adhering to nuclear deal with world powers, UN watchdog says," Duss said in a separate tweet.



Iran sympathizes with flood-stricken South Asians

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi has expressed sympathy with India, Nepal and Pakistan over the loss of hundreds of lives as a result of heavy floods.

Monsoon rains and heavy flooding in parts of South Asia during last month left nearly 1,470 people dead and affected over 43 million others.

According to Press TV, death toll provided by the Britain-based Oxfam charity group shows that so far 1,170 people have been killed in India, 143 in Nepal, and 140 in Bangladesh.



Iran, Australia hold human rights talks

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran and Australia held their first round of human rights talks in Canberra on August 24, ISNA reported on Saturday.

The Iranian team was headed by Zahra Pishgahi-Fard, the Foreign Ministry director general for human rights and women's affairs. The Australian side was also led by Lachlan Strahan, the first assistant secretary of Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

National approaches to the issue of human rights and international mechanisms of human rights were discussed in the meeting, the news agency said.

Ex-White House expert: U.S. reputation at risk in IAEA

POLITICS TEHRAN — Unnecessary demands on Iran by Donald Trump's administration have put the reputation of the U.S. at risk at the International Atomic Energy Agency, a former White House expert has said.

The remarks by Richard Nephew came after the UN nuclear watchdog released its new quarterly report on Iran's nuclear program on Thursday. The report said that Iran has remained within key limits on its nuclear activities based on the 2015 nuclear deal, internationally recognized as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

It was the third report since Donald Trump took the helm at the White House in January 2017.

The report was released one week after Nikki Haley, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, visited the IAEA headquarters in Vienna to press the UN body to seek access to Iran's military sites, a demand falling outside the mechanism clarified in the JCPOA when a question arises about the commitment of a party to the deal.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Saturday that the "degree of monitoring" is clearly obvious in the JCPOA.

"Important story. US pressure or not, UN nuclear watchdog sees no need to check Iran military sites," Nephew wrote



on his tweeter page, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Nephew was the White House sanctions expert on Iran during the Barack Obama administration.

"A really sad aspect of this whole debacle in waiting is that the United States has spent the best part of 15 years repairing its rep with the IAEA and others when it comes to issues like nuclear intelligence,"

Nephew added.

Trump, who during his election campaigns vowed to tear up the multilateral deal, has assigned a team of his close confidants to invent a pretext to find Iran non-compliant to the nuclear deal in order justify U.S. withdrawal from the agreement which has been endorsed by the UN Security Council.

Nephew, now a senior research scholar

at the Center on Global Energy Policy at Columbia University, went on to say that "this was not an easy thing to do. Restoring credibility and trust on these matters took time, consistent accuracy and humility."

He added, "To see it all go to hell and for no good reason is upsetting."

Nephew also warned that in future cases when credibility is needed, the U.S. would be disappointed.

After Haley's visit to Vienna, Western and IAEA officials said the Trump administration has no evidence to prove suspicious nuclear activity in Iranian military sites.

"Haley is not reported to have presented any new evidence about suspicious activity at any Iranian site, nor named any military base she believes should be investigated," according to the Guardian.

Nephew's warning is not the only one about Trump's approach towards the deal. Experts have already warned about the consequences of attempts by the Trump administration to provoke international bodies to play down Iran's commitment to the nuclear agreement.

Former CIA official David Cohen had recently warned that politicizing the "international open source information" by Washington would undermine the utility of such reports, referring to Trump's attempts to kill the nuclear deal.

Larijani lauds South Africa's stance on Palestine
South Africa pushing for Iran's membership at BRICS, Mbete says

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani on Saturday praised South Africa's stance on defending the Palestinian people's rights.

Larijani made the remarks during a joint press conference with South African National Assembly Speaker Baleka Mbete in Tehran.

Larijani also said the visit to Tehran by the South African parliament speaker will help expand bilateral relationship.

The Iranian parliament speaker also insisted on the need for cooperation between Tehran and Pretoria in the campaign against terrorism.

For her part, Mbete said her country will make efforts to bring Iran to the club of BRICS which includes Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

She said during the visit by the South African pres-

ident to Tehran in April 2016 the issue of Iran's membership in BRICS was raised and "we are interested in Iran's membership... and believe that by inclusion of new countries" the bloc will see more economic development.

She added her country is aware of that Iran's strategic situation in the region with an 80 million population and that Iran has made great advances in many areas including education.

She also said there are good parliamentary relations between Iran and South Africa. She invited Larijani to visit South Africa.

■ Rouhani says Iran firm to expand ties with South Africa

During a separate meeting with the top South African lawmaker on Saturday, President Hassan Rouhani also said Iran is determined to strengthen ties with African

countries especially South Africa.

Rouhani said that the two countries' parliaments play important role in enhancing relations.

"Tehran welcomes expansion of cooperation with Pretoria in economic area and energy sphere," the president added.

Rouhani also highlighted the importance of expanding banking ties between the two countries.

Rouhani also said, "Iran and South Africa can make valuable efforts in line with serving international peace and stability and the interests of the developing countries through cooperation at global stage."

Mbete also called for closer cooperation with Iran at international level to boost peace and friendship in the world.

She also called for expanding relations in various areas.

Zarif: Iran to fortify ties with the world in next 4 years

1 → The chief diplomat also said that Iran has always sought good neighborliness in the region.

"Our policy is based on dialogue and mutual respect with neighbors," he asserted.

He added, "We should have a safe and powerful region. We believe that our region can gain power through reliance on the people and relations and coordination among regional countries."

The neighboring countries to Iran can look at Iran as a "powerful neighbor" which is seeking interaction and

cooperation, he noted.

Asked on the crisis in Syria, Zarif said there is no military solution to the six-year old conflict.

"Crises in our region, especially in Syria and Yemen, cannot be settled militarily. The only solution is a political one which is based on involving people in determining their future."

The foreign countries should not decide about the future of the people in the region

and should just facilitate efforts to achieve "political solution" to the regional crises, the foreign minister insisted.

He added that terrorism and extremism are international threats and the world is duty bound to counter them.

Commenting on U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley's push for inspection of Iran's military sites, Zarif said that Haley is not informed about text of the July 2015 nuclear agreement, officially called the Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"The JCPOA is totally clear and the extent of inspections is decided in it," he said.

Last week, Haley visited Vienna to urge the International Atomic Energy Agency to seek access to Iranian military sites.

Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia - finalized the text of the nuclear agreement on July 14, 2015. The deal went into effect on January 16, 2016.

"The JCPOA is totally clear and the extent of inspections is decided in it," Zarif says.

Hariri dismisses claims Iran building 'missile factories' in Lebanon

1 → During a meeting with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in al-Quds (Jerusalem) on August 28, Netanyahu had claimed that Iran was "building sites to produce precision-guided missiles... in both Syria and in Lebanon."

Avigdor Lieberman, the Israeli minister of military affairs, also echoed Netanyahu's accusations in a meeting with Guterres, saying Iran was "working to set up factories to manufacture accurate weapons within Lebanon itself."

Later, Israeli media outlets claimed that Hariri had raised "objections" and was acting to stop the alleged



factory construction.

In the Le Monde interview, the Lebanese prime minister rejected the allegation altogether.

"The Israelis are used to conducting campaigns of deception," Hariri asserted, according to the Press TV.

As another case in point, Hariri dismissed Israeli claims surrounding the Hezbollah resistance movement, saying, "They say Hezbollah controls Lebanon, and that is not true. Hezbollah is present. It's in the government and it has support in the country. But this doesn't mean Hezbollah controls all of Lebanon."

Saudi team to visit Iran soon: report

A Saudi diplomatic delegation is set to go to Iran to assess damages to the kingdom's diplomatic missions in Tehran and Mashhad, the Kuwaiti daily Al Jazeera reported on Saturday, citing Iranian sources close to the foreign minister.

The delegation will fly to Tehran following Eid al-Adha, the daily said, Gulf News reported.

The Saudi assessment team was initially scheduled to fly to Tehran two months ago, but the visit was postponed over differences between the Saudis and the Iranians regarding the program of the delegation and the meetings it would have with Iranian officials, the source said.

The Saudi delegation wanted to meet judges and officials in charge of following up the attacks on the embassy in Tehran and the general consulate in the north-eastern city of Mashhad, but the Iranian foreign ministry said it could not arrange the meetings, according to the source.

relations with Iran in January 2016 following the twin attacks on its diplomatic missions by Iranians protesting the execution of a Saudi cleric among 47 prisoners.

According to the source, tension between the two countries eased considerably recently during the preparations for the pilgrimage this year when Iranian Hajj officials and diplomats met Saudi officials to discuss arrangements for would-be Iranian pilgrims. The Iranian delegation reportedly commended in their report to the authorities the "highly positive" positions of the Saudis during the talks.

An Iranian delegation is expected to visit Saudi Arabia following the mission by the Saudi assessment team amid hopes that the exchange of visits would mark the start of a new chapter in the relations between the two countries, particularly as bilateral contacts would be open and direct instead of via third parties.

China hails Iran-IAEA cooperation

China has hailed Iran's commitment to the 2015 nuclear deal, as verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), urging all parties to continue to honor their contractual obligations.

The IAEA is tasked with monitoring Iranian compliance with the landmark deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The atomic agency has verified continued Iranian compliance in its latest report, which has been sent to IAEA members and obtained by the media.

Addressing a regular press conference on Friday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said, "China has noted the latest report submitted by the IAEA director general, which once again confirmed Iran's compliance with the JCPOA."

"China welcomes that and commends the efforts made by Iran and the IAEA," Hua said, adding, "We hope that all relevant parties could carry on with their im-

plementation of the JCPOA, and that the IAEA could continue honoring its obligations with an objective, unbiased, and professional attitude."

The IAEA report comes as the United States — a party to the deal that seems to want to withdraw — has been attempting to portray Iran as being in violation of the agreement.

It also came shortly after the US pressed the IAEA to request access to Iranian military sites for inspections, an attempt that was meant to undermine the deal. US Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley flew to IAEA headquarters in Vienna last week to personally lobby with the nuclear agency.

That attempt fell flat as the IAEA report came out, and IAEA officials — aware of US intentions to politicize the issue — later anonymously told Reuters that the agency was not going to request access to Iranian military sites.

(Source: Press TV)

Time to 'rethink' Turkey relations, says Merkel

Germany declines Turkish request to freeze Gulen assets: Spiegel

German chancellor Angela Merkel says it may be time to rethink relations with Turkey, after two more German citizens were detained there.

The German foreign ministry says they were arrested in the southern resort of Antalya on Thursday.

They say Turkey is now holding 12 Germans on what it calls political grounds.

A ministry spokesperson said diplomats had not been able to contact Turkey, who are yet to comment on the arrests.

Chancellor Merkel said that, in most cases, the detentions had "no legal basis" and added that her government would "perhaps have to rethink" its policies towards Turkey.

Relations between the two countries have deteriorated since Turkey arrested a Turkish-German journalist in February.

In July, the German foreign ministry warned its citizens that they faced arbitrary arrest in Turkey under the state of emergency imposed there after a failed coup last year.

Meanwhile, Germany has rejected a formal request from Turkey to freeze assets of members of the network of U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, accused by Ankara of orchestrating last year's failed coup, Germany's Spiegel magazine reported on Saturday.

The move is likely to worsen already strained ties between the two NATO allies after Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Friday Germany should react decisively to Turkey's detention of two more German cit-

izens on political charges.

Without naming its sources, the magazine said the Turkish government had asked the Foreign Ministry in Berlin at the end of April to freeze the assets of the Gulen organisation and its members in Germany. It attached a list with 80 names, it said.

The German government officially rejected the request at the end of June, telling Ankara there were no legal grounds for Germany's financial watchdog BaFin to crack down on the Gulen movement and its supporters, the report said.

The Foreign Ministry in Berlin declined to comment.

The report also said that the number of Turkish extradition requests sent to Germany had jumped to 53 since the beginning of the year, already exceeding the total in the whole of 2016.

Turkey's private Dogan news agency said Turkish authorities had detained two German nationals on Thursday over suspected links to last year's failed coup attempt.

Dogan said the two German citizens of Turkish origin were detained at the Antalya airport, a popular Mediterranean tourist destination, over alleged links to the Gulen organisation.

It said the two suspects, identified only as K.A. and S.A., were transferred to the provincial police headquarters.

Turkish officials were not immediately available for comment, with the celebrations for the Muslim festival of Eid causing delays in contacting officials.



Twelve German citizens are now in Turkish detention on political charges, four of them holding dual citizenship. Among these is German-Turkish journalist Deniz Yucel, who will have been in detention 200 days on Friday.

The detentions have further strained ties between Germany and Turkey after relations hit a low when President Tayyip Erdogan said Merkel's Christian Democrats were enemies of Turkey and called on Turks in Germany to vote against major parties in this month's elections.

Social Democrat Martin Schulz, Merkel's main challenger in Sept. 24 elections, and other German politicians have urged the German government to issue a formal travel warning to raise the pressure on Turkey.

Such a step could mark a significant setback for Turkey, which already saw the number of foreign visitors drop to its lowest level in nine years last year.

Bookings from Germany accounted for some 10 percent of Turkey's tourists this year.

(Source: agencies)

Putin won't attend UN General Assembly

Russian President Vladimir Putin will not attend this month's United Nations General Assembly in New York, Russian news wire quoted his spokesman as saying on Saturday.

U.S. President Donald Trump, a frequent critic of the United Nations, will seek to gather global support for reforming the world body when he hosts an event at UN headquarters in New York on Sept. 18, a day before he formally addresses the 193-member organization.

It was not immediately clear if Putin had planned to attend the event initially. (Source: TASS)

U.S., South Korea agree to revise missile treaty in face of North Korean threats

U.S. President Donald Trump agreed with South Korean President Moon Jae-in to revise a joint treaty capping the development of the South's ballistic missiles, Moon's office said on Saturday, amid a standoff over North Korea's missile and nuclear tests.

Trump also gave "conceptual" approval to the purchase by the South of billions of dollars of U.S. military hardware, the White House said.

The South wants to raise the missile cap to boost its defenses against the reclusive North, which is pursuing missile and nuclear weapons programs in defiance of international warnings and UN sanctions.

"The two leaders agreed to the principle of revising the missile guideline to a level desired by South Korea, sharing the view that it was necessary to strengthen South Korea's defense capabilities in response to North Korea's provocations and threats," South Korea's presidential Blue House said.



Impoverished North Korea and the rich, democratic South are technically still at war because their 1950-53 conflict ended in a truce, not a peace treaty. The North regularly threatens to destroy the South and its main ally, the United States.

North Korea sharply raised regional tension this week with the launch of its Hwasong-12 intermediate-range ballistic missile that flew over Japan and landed in the Pacific.

That followed the test launch of two long-range ballistic missiles in July in a sharply lofted trajectory that demonstrated a potential range of 10,000 km (6,000 miles) or more that would put many parts of the U.S. mainland within striking distance.

North Korea has been working to develop a nuclear-tipped missile capable of hitting the United States and has recently threatened to land missiles near the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam.

South Korea's development of its ballistic missiles is limited to range of 800 km (500 miles) and payload weight of 500 kg (1,100 pounds) under a bilateral treaty revised in 2012.

South Korea has said it wants to revise the agreement to increase the cap on the payload.

The two countries agreed to the cap as part of a commitment to a voluntary international arms-control pact known as the Missile Technology Control Regime, aimed at limiting the proliferation of missiles and nuclear weapons.

The two leaders pledged to continue to apply strong diplomatic and economic pressure on North Korea and to make all necessary preparations to defend against the growing threat by the North, the White House said.

The White House did not mention the voluntary bilateral agreement but said the two leaders agreed to strengthen their defense cooperation and South Korea's defense capabilities.

Trump "provided his conceptual approval of planned purchases by South Korea of billions of dollars in American military equipment", the White House said.

Trump, who has warned that the U.S. military is "locked and loaded" in case of further North Korean provocation, reacted angrily to the latest missile test, declaring on Twitter that "talking is not the answer" to resolving the crisis.

North Korea defends its weapons programs as necessary to counter perceived U.S. aggression, such as recent air maneuvers with South Korean and Japanese jets.

(Source: Reuters)

2 German cities evacuating residents before bomb disposals

Residents in two German cities are evacuating their homes as authorities prepare to dispose of World War II-era bombs found during construction work this week.

About 21,000 people have been ordered to leave their homes and workplaces in the western city of Koblenz as a precaution before specialists attempt to defuse the 500-kilogram (1,100-pound) U.S. bomb Saturday afternoon.

Among those moved to safety are prison inmates and hospital patients.

Officials in the financial capital Frankfurt, meanwhile, are carrying out what is described as Germany's biggest evacuation, though similar operations are common even 72 years after the war ended.

More than 60,000 people have been ordered to leave a radius of 1.5 kilometers (nearly a mile) around the site where the 1.8-ton British bomb will be disposed of Sunday.

(Source: AP)

Next round of Syria peace talks set for Sept. 14-15 in Astana

The next round of negotiations between representatives from the Syrian government and foreign-sponsored armed opposition besides delegates from Iran, Russia, and Turkey as mediators will take place between September 14 and 15 in Kazakhstan.

"According to the information from the guarantor states, during the upcoming meeting they plan to review several documents covering the work of de-escalation control forces, and continue work on agreeing the make-up of control forces in Idlib," the Kazakh Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Friday.

The statement said that Iran, Russia and Turkey, which serve as guarantor states in the peace process, plan to map out de-escalation zones in Syria's militant-held northwestern province of Idlib, the central province of Homs and the Eastern Ghouta area outside of the capital Damascus, and exchange viewpoints on other matters such as prisoner exchange.

Kazakhstan's capital city of Astana has hosted five rounds of peace talks for Syria since January. The negotiations are aimed at bringing an end to the foreign-backed militancy in the violence-battered Arab



country, which began in March 2011.

The talks in Astana have been going on in tandem with another series of talks, held in Geneva and brokered by the UN.

UN Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura has sought to unify the opposition for a substantive round of negotiations in October, after hosting seven rounds of largely unsuccessful talks in Geneva.

The announcement comes as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's troops have been making sweeping gains against militants and consolidating their control over sprawling areas across the country.

On Friday, the Syrian president traveled to the recently-liberated town of Qarat, located about 100 kilometers (62 miles) from Damascus, to participate in prayers for the Eid al-Adha (the Feast of Sacrifice), which marks the culmination of the annual Hajj pilgrimage.

Last month, Syrian army soldiers and fighters from the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement liberate Qarat during a joint weeklong offensive to oust Daesh Takfiri terrorists from the strategic and mountainous region of Qalamoun close to the border with Lebanon.

■ Syrian militants release captured pilot

Separately, foreign-sponsored Takfiri militants have released a Syrian government pilot, whose Soviet-built jet fighter aircraft had crashed in the country's southernmost province of Suwayda, where Syrian government forces, backed by fighters from allied popular defense groups, continue to gain ground in their fight against foreign-sponsored Takfiri militants.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the pilot, whose identity was not immediately available, was freed on Friday, along with over 30 other captured soldiers.

On August 15, a spokesman for Western-backed Jaish Osoud al Sharqiya militant group alleged that Takfiri terrorists had shot down a Syrian MiG military jet in a desert area near the border with Jordan.

"It was downed in Wadi Mahmoud in eastern Sweida countryside. The wreckage fell in the area and we think the pilot has dropped in a parachute. The search is going on to find him," Saad al-Haj claimed.

(source: SANA)

Russia, digesting U.S. diplomatic retaliation, pledges 'harsh' response

Workers clear out of Russian consulate in San Francisco

Russia said it would respond harshly to any U.S. measures designed to hurt it, a day after the United States told Moscow to close its San Francisco consulate and buildings in Washington and New York.

The warning, from Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, came as Russia said it was weighing a response to the U.S. move that will force it to shutter two trade missions in the United States as well as the San Francisco consulate by Sept. 2.

"We'll react as soon as we finish our analysis," Lavrov told students in Moscow. "We will respond harshly to things that damage us."

Separately, a top Kremlin aide complained the U.S. demarche pushed bilateral ties further into a blind alley and fuelled a spiral of tit-for-tat retaliatory measures.

U.S. President Donald Trump took office in January, saying he wanted to improve U.S.-Russia ties which were at a post-Cold War low. But since then, ties have frayed further after U.S. intelligence officials said Russia had meddled in the presidential election, something Moscow denies.

Trump, himself battling allegations his associates colluded with Russia, grudgingly signed new sanctions on Moscow into law this month which had been drawn up by Congress.

When it became clear those measures would become law, Moscow ordered the



United States to cut its diplomatic and technical staff in Russia by more than half, to 455 people.

Lavrov hinted on Friday that Russia might look at ordering further reductions in U.S. embassy staff, suggesting Moscow had been generous last time by allowing Washington to keep "more than 150" extra people.

He said Russia had cut the U.S. numbers to tally with the number of Russian diplomats in the United States, but that Moscow had generously included more than 150 Russian staff who work at Russia's representation office at the United Nations.

Lavrov said Moscow still hoped for bet-

ter relations and blamed Trump's political foes for the deteriorating situation.

"I want to say that this whole story with exchanging tit-for-tat sanctions was not started by us," Lavrov said.

"It was started by the Obama administration to undermine U.S.-Russia relations and to not allow Trump to advance constructive ideas or fulfil his pre-election pledges."

Barack Obama, then outgoing president, expelled 35 suspected Russian spies in December and seized two Russian diplomatic compounds. President Vladimir Putin paused before responding, saying he would wait to see how Trump handled Russia.

(Source: agencies)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Iranian trade delegation to embark for Slovakia, Austria in mid-Nov.

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Tehran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) plans to dispatch a trade delegation to Slovakia and Austria in November 12-17, TCCIMA portal reported.

The delegation, to be headed by the TCCIMA's Vice Chairman Mehdi Jahangiri, will comprise of company representatives active in various areas like textile, machinery and industrial equipment, automotive and auto parts, mining and related machinery, oil and gas, power plants and renewable energy, aircrafts, as well as electronics.

Current euro level not a threat for European firms

CERNOBBIO, Italy (Reuters) — The current level of the euro is not threatening the performance of European companies, Pierre Moscovici, Europe's Economic Commissioner said on Saturday.



Speaking on the sidelines of the Ambrosetti business conference in northern Italy, Moscovici said the strength of the euro also depended on monetary policy, adding he trusted the "leadership and vision" of European Central Bank President Mario Draghi.

"One must stay calm...the current level of the euro clearly does not prevent our companies winning market shares, being strong, performing and competitive, and exporting," he said.

Australia's heritage bank halts investor lending for real estate

One of Australia's biggest customer-owned banks, Heritage Bank Ltd., has temporarily stopped accepting new loan applications from property investors as it seeks to comply with regulation limiting how much it can expand its investment lending book.

The Toowoomba, Queensland-based mutual is freezing lending to new investor customers as it looks to meet stricter lending conditions put in place by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority. Regulators have grown increasingly concerned about the risks posed by high and rapidly rising home prices in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, which have fueled record levels of household debt.

"Heritage has experienced a sharp increase in the proportion of investment lending in our new approvals recently," the lender said in a statement on Friday. "We need to manage our investment lending portfolio carefully to ensure we stay within the caps APRA has placed on growth in investor and interest-only lending."

Heritage's move follows a similar decision by Credit Union Australia to place property investment lending on ice following soaring demand for these loans, according to a report in the Australian Financial Review on Saturday. The two companies control around 1.5 percent of the total property lending market in Australia, the newspaper said.

Heritage's decision to halt investor lending took effect on Friday. "We will monitor our approvals and loan portfolio in coming weeks and review that decision as needed," the lender said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Number of Chinese projects in Russia's far east to double over 2 years

MOSCOW (Sputnik) — The number of Chinese investment projects in the Russian Far East will be doubled over the next two years due to the activities of the Russian center for attracting and supporting Chinese investments, Aleksander Osipov, the first deputy minister for the development of the Russian Far East, told Sputnik on Friday.

In July, Russia's Far East Investment and Export Agency and China Overseas Development Association signed an agreement providing for the establishment of a collaborative center for attracting and supporting Chinese investments in the Russian Far East as early as October 1.

"The work of the center for attracting Chinese investments will lead to a significant increase in investments from China. In two years, the number of Chinese projects in the Far East will grow at least twofold," Osipov said.

According to the first deputy minister, the center should provide a comfortable service for those who have interest in investing. He noted that it is necessary that both the Russian and Chinese sides were taking suitable measures to support their projects.

"The mechanism has already been created, but we need to achieve its efficient operation in practice. And the possibilities of the Far East are such that the volume of Chinese investment can be doubled and redoubled for many years," Osipov added.

Iran's aquaculture ranks 1st in Middle East

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran ranks the first in the Middle East in terms of aquaculture production, IRIB reported on Saturday quoting Iran's Fisheries Production and Trading Union Secretary General Ali-Akbar Khodaei as saying.

Putting the country's aquaculture production at 320,147 tons, Khodaei also said that Iran ranks the 17th in the world in this due.

The official said with producing 45.4 million tons of different types of fisheries through aquaculture, China stands at the first place in the world.

He also put Turkey with producing 234,000 tons and Pakistan by producing 148,000 tons of fisheries through aquaculture in the second and third places, respectively, in the Middle East after Iran.

Over 1.05 million tons of fisheries was

produced in Iran during the past Iranian calendar year, (ended on March 20), according to Hassan Salehi, the head of Iran's Fisheries Organization.

The official said the country exported \$412 million of fisheries in the past year.

Isa Golshahi, Fisheries Organization's director general for quality improvement, processing, and market development, has said that fishery export up to \$450-\$500 million has been planned for this year.

After the implementation of nuclear deal with world powers in January 2016, Iranian government has focused on development of domestic fishery industry to attract foreign investments and increase the country's share of the international market, the head of Fisheries Organization said in February.

In this due, related negotiations have



been done with some foreign countries such as France, Romania, Finland, Italy, China, Vietnam, Russia, and Thailand, he added.

Monthly crude oil exports from Iran up 9.3% in August: data

ENERGY TEHRAN — Iran's crude oil exports reached 2.135 million barrels per day (bpd) in August, a 9.3 rise from its previous month, Oilprice.com reported citing energy data provider Kpler.

According to the report, Iranian crude oil exports rose by 182,000 bpd in August from July.

The increases came at a time when most of the OPEC members cut their daily crude exports.

Based on the data provided by Kpler, Iran and Nigeria had the highest exports rate among OPEC



members in the mentioned month.

After the implementation of the nuclear accord (called JCPOA) in January 2016, Iran has been seeking to expand its target markets. Since then, oil exports to Europe have risen by more than 300 percent.

Also, according to the latest data released by Reuters, Iranian crude oil production increased by 100,000 bpd in August from July.

Exempted from the OPEC, non-OPEC curbs, Iran has increased its crude output to 3.79 million bpd in August from 3.78 million bpd in July.

Ceylon tea: A journey to the land of green magic

By Ebrahim Fallahi

Iran and Sri Lanka

Iran has been for long one of the top trade partners of Sri Lanka and the Southeast Asian country is counting on Iran for maintaining its share of the tea market in the Middle East.

However, since the imposition of western sanctions against Iran - which notably impeded the two-way trade - tea exports to Iran fell drastically compared to the pre-sanctions era.

After the implementation of the nuclear deal between Iran and world powers in January 2016 which lifted most of the sanctions on Iran, Sri Lankan tea exports received a significant boost, rising to \$154 million with a year-on-year growth of 16.8 percent.

In 2016, Iran overtook Russia as the top export destination for Sri Lankan tea, according to Sri Lanka Chamber of Commerce.

With Iran coming back to the world trade scene, Sri Lanka is once again eager to regain its share of the Iranian market as one of the biggest destinations for Ceylon tea.

In an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times, Sri Lanka's Minister of Plantation Industries Navin Dissanayake noted that there are still unresolved banking issues in trade with Iran and the Sri Lankan government has been working on these issues very strongly to get the payment problems sorted out.

"Although the U.S. has imposed some sanctions on



Iran but tea belongs to food products category and therefore it technically should not be sanctioned, so based on this fact we hope in near future we will be able to sort out some solution for this issue," Dissanayake said.

According to the minister, for the time being the payments between the two countries go through a third party bank which is acceptable for both sides.

Meanwhile, the head of Sri Lanka Tea Board Rohan Pethiyagoda told the Tehran Times that if the U.S. sanctions continue, the two countries will change their channel of trade to Euro and they will not conduct transactions in U.S. dollar anymore.

"In that case, the regular banking channels will take place through Euro rather than U.S. Dollar, and that is just about to get started," he noted.

Sri Lanka is currently exporting 29 million kilograms

of tea to Iran per annum and the Middle Eastern country is among the top three importers of Ceylon tea in the world.

Sri Lanka has already invited an Iranian delegation to visit the country as the two sides are looking forward for technical cooperation in the tea industry, the minister said.

"Iran can use Sri Lanka's years of experience in tea plantation and the country can help Iran with the technical aspects of tea industry...Sri Lanka Tea Research Institute, on the other hand, needs some funding to expand its research horizons, and Iran could contribute in this regard by establishing private, public partnership with TRI," Dissanayake explained.

In August, Iran's Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani met with his Sri Lankan counterpart Karu Jayasuriya in Tehran. During the meeting, the Iranian official asserted that Iran sought to enhance trade ties with Sri Lanka. "The two countries have a great potential for strengthening relations," he said.

Larijani called relations between the two countries constructive and progressive, adding that the visit could pave the way for further cooperation.

Referring to the exports of tea from Sri Lanka to Iran, Larijani said that the country would invest to develop technologies to cultivate tea in Iran.

Karu Jayasuriya, for his part, pointed to positive and growing relations between Iran and Sri Lanka, and said that the two nations have ever since maintained warm and friendly relations.

Kenya stocks plummet as Supreme Court rules presidential election was invalid

The Supreme Court of Kenya has overturned the result of the recent presidential election, meaning the contest will have to be re-run, leading to fears of unrest.

Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta won a second term in office on August 11 with a reported 54.3 percent of the vote, but the Supreme Court Friday ruled that irregularities and illegalities harmed the integrity of the election.

The ruling adds uncertainty to the Kenyan economy, according to Emma Gordon, senior East Africa analyst at risk consultancy Verisk Maplecroft.

As a result, the court has nullified Kenyatta's win and called for another presi-

dential election to be held within 60 days. Kenyatta will run against 72-year-old opposition leader Raila Odinga.

The ruling adds uncertainty to the Kenyan economy, according to Emma Gordon, senior East Africa analyst at risk consultancy Verisk Maplecroft.

"Investors will be concerned about the financial implications and the high risk of violence. With the possibility of the new election going to a second round and the result being contested again, political uncertainty could easily last the rest of the year," she said in a research note.

"Even if the process runs smoothly, investors will fear a re-run of 2007-08 violence until a winner is confirmed and the

losing side concedes."

Kenya's stock market tumbled on the news of the Supreme Court's decision. Shares on the Nairobi Securities Exchange fell by around 10 percent, triggering a brief halt to trading, according to Reuters. The country's currency, the shilling, also fell by 0.4 percent against the dollar following the ruling, while Kenya's 2024 sovereign dollar bond price fell 1.2 cents, Reuters reported.

David Chadwick, partner at legal services provider Mayer Brown, says the news highlights the political risks for companies investing in Africa.

"It is not uncommon, following a change in power, that the new govern-

ment might seek to declare an investor's contract invalid or revoke key permits or licences issued to the investor," he said in an email to CNBC.

"We have also seen numerous instances in the last few years, particularly following the downturn in the commodities market, of governments defaulting on their payment obligations under contracts with traders and other foreign companies."

Chadwick warned of other risks, such as capital controls or foreign exchange regulations preventing companies from repatriating profits, or assets being destroyed as a result of political violence.

(Source: cnbc)

Trump's economy is doing (slightly) worse than Obama's

By Matt O'Brien

President Trump has made the economy so much better that it has added 186,000 fewer jobs in his first seven months than it did in President Barack Obama's last seven months.

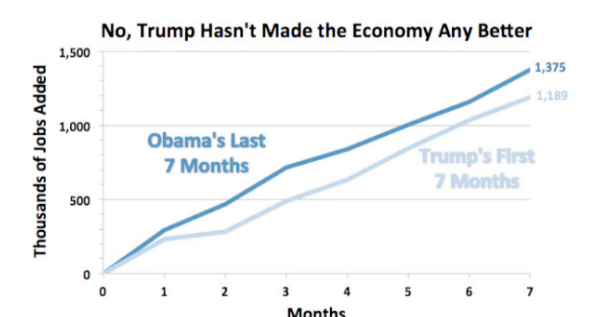
Indeed, the economy added only a disappointing 156,000 jobs in August and a disappointing 41,000 fewer jobs than we thought it had in June and July, and saw the share of 25- to 54 year-olds who should be in the prime of their working years who are in fact doing so fall a — here's that word again — disappointing 0.3 percentage points, erasing almost all of its progress since the start of the year. Oh, and wages aren't going up any faster; pay is growing the same 2.5 percent a year it was when Trump took office.

It shouldn't be surprising that the economy isn't doing any better under Trump, since Trump really hasn't done anything to make it better. There hasn't been a dollar of new infrastructure spending, let alone the trillion that Trumps since-departed ideological consigliere Steve Bannon promised.

And despite the administration's tax cut bravado, it's looking pretty iffy whether it will get that done either. (That's because Trump wants, more than anything, to cut corporate taxes, but, due to legislative rules, even a temporary corporate tax cut has to be paid for — and Republicans don't agree on any way to do that.)

The economy, then, is still just chugging along as it has been for the last six years now. Nothing has changed. Even the relatively weak numbers in August are probably just a blip rather than the beginning of something bad. What those do tell us, though, is that there are still quite a few more people who want to work than you'd think there would be when the unemployment rate is only 4.4 percent. Which is to say that the recovery still has some room to run.

But in any case, it is fitting that Trump has tried to take credit for the same economy he said was a disaster as recently as nine months ago. That's just him running the government like a business — at least his own. After his casinos went bankrupt in the early 1990s, you see, Trump figured out that it was a lot easier to let other people put his name on



things they'd built rather than do so himself (Well, that and a lot of Wall Street banks wouldn't lend to him anymore). This is no different. Trump is just putting his name on a recovery that Obama put in place with his stimulus and his Federal Reserve picks.

I guess making America great again means keeping things like they were under Obama.

(Source: The Washington Post)

Harvey's wake tempers bullish outlook for U.S. oil output growth

Damage and delays from Tropical Storm Harvey will hold the U.S. oil industry back from achieving a targeted 10 million barrels per day of production anytime soon, according to analysts, a setback in America's fight for global market share with OPEC.

The storm, which flooded refineries, wells and pipelines across Texas, added to a string of problems oil companies already faced, like low crude prices and expensive engineering challenges at new shale wells.

Earlier this year, oil analysts and some company executives had anticipated that the United States could top the 10 million bpd mark by year-end. That would have been a 14 percent increase, taking U.S. output to a level not seen since the 1970s.

But then Harvey knocked out about a quarter of U.S. refining capacity and shuttered transport routes for crude, gasoline, diesel and other products. The storm's impacts sent gasoline prices soaring but also crimped demand for crude.

Bringing all that infrastructure back to normal operations could take weeks or months.

"Harvey is going to have a longer effect on the oil industry than anyone would have imagined," said Dan Katzenberg, an oil industry analyst at R.W. Baird & Co. "It's just a real mess on so many levels."

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries is frustrated that the storm has not pushed global prices higher, with one OPEC delegate telling Reuters, "It seems no event will move the oil price up much."

Slipping production after a major storm is not unprecedented: U.S. output slipped after Hurricane Dennis in 1999, Hurricane Ivan in 2004 and Hurricane Katrina in 2005, forcing a range of industry and government reactions.

On Friday, U.S. Energy Secretary Rick Perry said he had authorized the release of 4.5 million barrels from the U.S. Strategic Petroleum Reserve. The move, aimed at helping a handful of Gulf Coast refiners deal with local supply disruptions, will likely depress oil prices further.

***Financial strains
The Energy Information Administration (EIA) earlier this year had forecast that technological and process improvements would lift U.S. production sharply, leading some analysts and executives to predict 10 million bpd



by December.

But in recent months those expectations dimmed. Producers, showing signs of financial strain from the tepid oil prices, pared budgets for the year.

Companies also face problems with pressure imbalance and high natural gas levels at new shale oil wells in the Permian Basin, the largest U.S. oilfield.

The EIA on Thursday revised lower its data on U.S. oil production for June, saying it fell nearly 1 percent in the month to about 9.1 million bpd. Analysts called that a bad omen for the rest of the summer.

Harvey forced Exxon Mobil Corp, Royal Dutch Shell PLC, Marathon Oil Corp, Statoil ASA and other producers in the Eagle Ford shale region of Texas and the U.S. Gulf of Mexico to halt production and the drilling and fracking of shale wells.

More than a quarter of Gulf production went offline

due to the storm, according to government data. In the Eagle Ford shale, producers on Friday were still assessing damage, but most saw operations slow or grind to a halt.

"At this point, we're really waiting to see what the cumulative effect will be" from Harvey, said Paul Hesse of the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Exxon lost nearly 100,000 bpd of production, and Shell has so far lost more than 700,000 bpd.

ConocoPhillips, meanwhile, said it does not plan to reopen its headquarters, which abuts a Houston reservoir that nearly breached, until Sept. 11.

"That 10 million (bpd) level is just not going to happen in the next two years at least," said Anas Alhajji, an independent oil analyst and economist. "The impact of Harvey adds to existing woes."

(Source: Reuters)

China readies Yuan-priced crude oil benchmark backed by gold

The world's top oil importer, China, is preparing to launch a crude oil futures contract denominated in Chinese Yuan and convertible into gold, potentially creating the most important Asian oil benchmark and allowing oil exporters to bypass U.S.-dollar denominated benchmarks by trading in Yuan, Nikkei Asian Review reports.

The crude oil futures will be the first commodity contract in China open to foreign investment funds, trading houses, and oil firms. The circumvention of U.S. dollar trade could allow oil exporters such as Russia and Iran, for example, to bypass U.S. sanctions by trading in Yuan, according to Nikkei Asian Review. To make the Yuan-denominated contract more attractive, China plans the Yuan to be fully convertible in gold on the Shanghai and Hong Kong exchanges.

Last month, the Shanghai Futures Exchange and its subsidiary Shanghai International Energy Exchange, INE, successfully completed four tests in production environment for the crude oil futures, and the exchange continues with preparatory works for the listing of crude oil futures, aiming for the launch by the end of this year.

"The rules of the global oil game may begin to change enormously," Luke Gromen, founder of U.S.-based macroeconomic research company FTT, told Nikkei Asia Review.

The Yuan-denominated futures contract has been in the works for years, and after several delays, it looks like it may be launched this year. Some potential foreign traders have been worried that the contract would be priced in Yuan.

But according to analysts who spoke to Nikkei Asian Review, backing the Yuan-priced futures with gold would be appealing to oil exporters, especially to those that would rather avoid U.S. dollars in trade.

"It is a mechanism which is likely to appeal to oil producers that prefer to avoid using dollars, and are not ready to accept that being paid in Yuan for oil sales to China is a good idea either," Alasdair Macleod, head of research at Goldmoney, told Nikkei.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Iraq's August oil exports average 3.216m bpd: oil ministry

Iraq's oil exports slipped to 3.216 million barrels per day in August from 3.230 million bpd in July as no shipments were made from the northern Kirkuk field, the oil ministry said on Saturday.

All the volumes shipped in August came from the southern fields, it said in a statement. Kirkuk is the only field supervised by the government in the north.

The volume announced by the ministry accounts for shipments from the fields supervised by the central government in Baghdad, and does not include those from the autonomous Kurdish region in northern Iraq.

The average sale price in August was \$46.22 per barrel, generating \$4.6 billion in revenue, the statement said.

The bulk of Iraq's oil is exported via the southern terminals. Smaller amounts are shipped from northern Iraq via Ceyhan in Turkey.

(Source: Reuters)

Exxon Mobil plans \$200m investment in Argentina's Vaca Muerta

U.S. oil major Exxon Mobil Corp plans to invest \$200 million to boost natural gas output in Argentina's Vaca Muerta shale play, a spokeswoman told Reuters.

The company has asked the government of Neuquen province for a 35-year unconventional production concession in the Los Toldos I Sur block, the spokeswoman said. Exxon Chief Executive Officer Darren Woods informed President Mauricio Macri of the plans during a Thursday meeting at the presidential Pink House.

Attracting investment to the Belgium-sized Vaca Muerta play, one of the world's largest unconventional gas reserves, is a key priority for Macri's busi-

ness-friendly administration as it seeks to boost local energy production in order to reduce costly imports.

Last year, Exxon said it could invest more than \$10 billion in shale projects over 20 to 30 years in the region. In January, Macri reached a deal with unions and companies to lower very high labor costs and attract investment, though executives note that logistics costs remain high.

Exxon's Argentine subsidiary owns 80 percent of the Los Toldos I Sur block and is the operator, while Argentine oil company Tecpetrol SA and province-owned Gas y Petroleo de Neuquen each control 10 percent.

(Source: Reuters)



Petrobras hikes fuel prices after Harvey

Brazil's state-controlled oil company Petroleo Brasileiro SA has hiked gasoline and diesel prices twice for September to match price spikes in U.S. prices caused by Hurricane Harvey.

The storm roared into Texas, crippling ports along the U.S. Gulf Coast and flooding oil refineries, resulting in about 21 million barrels of gasoline and distillates in lost production as of Wednesday.

Petrobras, as the company is known, has raised gasoline prices for this month by 4.2 percent and 2.7 percent, while raising diesel costs by 0.8 percent and 4.4 percent in two announcements on Thursday and Friday.

As a result, the company, which has promised not to price below international parity, practically hit the ceiling for daily gasoline readjustments, according to a new policy set in July aimed at giving Petrobras greater pricing flexibility to recoup market share lost to competitors.

Under this policy, a meeting of the Group's Executive Market and Prices (GEMP) must be called to evaluate new pricing changes if monthly accumulated adjustments exceed 7 percent.

However, experts said that Petrobras' gasoline prices for refineries are



still behind the international market.

U.S. fossil fuel reference prices RBC1 soared more than 13 percent on Thursday to a two-year high before the September contract expired on the same day. On Friday, the first October contract closed down 2 percent.

"By our estimates, the lag in Brazil is still 8 to 9 percent. Petrobras has room to increase prices, but, it seems to be gradually raising them now, to slowly lower them afterwards," said Banco Pine commodities analyst, Lucas Brunetti.

Similarly, Tarcielo Rodrigues, director

of the marketing agency Bioagencia, who sees a lag of 10 percent, said Petrobras may want to be cautious to pass on international spikes in prices if they seem to be short-term.

"It doesn't make a lot of sense for (Petrobras) to hike a lot now after this extreme event, if supplies coming later will be much cheaper."

Petrobras declined to comment on whether a meeting of GEMP, which includes Chief Executive Officer Pedro Parente was planned to evaluate prices.

(Source: Reuters)

Vestas joins with Tesla to combine wind turbines with batteries

Tesla Inc. has partnered with Vestas Wind Systems A/S to figure out how to combine wind turbines and batteries, socking away power during breezy times to use when the air is still.

This partnership is part of a wider global program run by Vestas, the world's biggest wind-turbine maker. It's seeking to add energy storage to its wind farms and is working with a number of other battery makers on about 10 projects in total.

Vestas announced its new focus on storage at its latest annual general meeting in April, and the partnership with Tesla

was first reported by Denmark's Borsen newspaper. Chairman Bert Nordberg has said Vestas is seeking a new competitive edge amid consolidation in the industry and after it surpassed General Electric Co. last year to take the biggest market share in the U.S.

"Across a number of projects, Vestas is working with different energy storage technologies with specialized companies, including Tesla, to explore and test how wind turbines and energy storage can work together in sustainable energy solutions that can lower the cost of energy,"

Vestas said in a statement on Friday. The broader program started in 2012 with a project in Lem-Kaer, Denmark, with a test project to combine wind turbines and batteries. Vestas said it plans to commission additional projects worldwide.

Tesla has recently begun to seek new applications for its batteries beyond its electric cars and Powerwall battery units. Chief Executive Officer Elon Musk signed a deal with the South Australian government in July to build a giant energy storage facility to help balance the grid.

(Source: renewableenergyworld.com)



N.I.O.C
1396.2462



National Iranian Drilling Company

Public Calls For Quality Evaluating Of Tender(First Publish/Seconed Publish)

One-Stage(compressed)

TENDER GUARANTEE		ESTIMATED VALUE (Ria)	Subject of Tender	Tenders Portal Reg. No.	TENDER NO. / INDENT NO	No
Euro	Rial					
3,869	150,000,000	3,000,000,000	Pressure transmitter for mud logging units	1.497.857	Tender No.: fp/05-96/041 Indent No.: 9645035	1

Brief discription of subject:
National Iranian Drilling Company(NIDC) address pasdaran Blev., Airport Saqare, Ahvaz, Iran hereby intends to purchase its requirements from qualified and interested tenderers through one-stage public tender (compressed) upon following terms and conditions:

A) Qualitative evaluation of tenderer:
The evaluation is based on article (J) implementing regulations of the law of tenders and also carried out base on worksheets qualitative evaluation inquiry in the tender documents. Minimum acceptable point of quality is 60.

B) Preparation of tender documents:
Purchasing of documents:
In order to receive the tender documents, 510,000 Rials should be paid to SIBA account number 2174652205004 of NIDC in Bank Meli Iran and providing the original deposit receipt.
Notice: According to N.I.D.C technical and commercial committee rule, the limitation for job referrals in procurement field is four active and in process contract.
Receiving of documents:
Tenderers must be obtain the quality evaluation documents along with tender documents maximum ten days after the date of second publication in person at the following address: Hall No.:113, 1thfloor, Foreign Procurement Dept., National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN
Notice: Only the real or legal persons who apply to purchase and recieve tender ducments from foreign procurement department in due date and participates in tenderwill be known as tenderer from tender committee.

C) Delivery of envelopes of bids and call quality evaluating:
Tenderers shall submit simultaneously envelopes of bids including bank guarantees(A), financial offer(C) and stamped and signed of tender documents(B) along with qualiaicaion worksheets in form of software in CD and documentary within 40 days from last day of document recived deadline to the following address: Hall No.:107, 1thfloor ,Tender Committee, Building operations, National Iranian Drilling Company, Airport square, Ahvaz, IRAN.
Notice: The deadline for the refusal of bidders participation in the the tender is the last day of determined for submission of bids.

D) Tender Guarantee:
Type of guarantee:
A)Bank guarantees or guarantees issued by non-bank institutions that have activites licensed by the Central Bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran.
B) The original cash deposit receipt paid to National Iranain Drilling Company.
Duration of credit guarantee & quotation:
This duration should be valid for 90 days and extendable maximum For one time in initial credit amount.
More on this & other tenders is accessible by click on. WWW.NIDC.IR

Foreign Procurement Dept
National Iranian Drilling Company

تهران تایمز : نوبت اول ۹۶/۱۲ نوبت دوم ۹۶/۱۳

Imam Musa As-sadr still lights the way

1 → In a country where the south suffers under occupation, war devours the sons of the one homeland, deprivation marginalizes and excludes, and corruption infects all the reaches of society... the Imam made a long history of confrontation and struggle: a strike to remove deprivation, protests, rallies and visits to distressed areas. At a time when Lebanon was turning into a war zone, while the voice of reason fell on deaf ears, the Imam –among others- tried to attract the people who maintained their living conscience in an attempt to stop the bloodshed. We can only ask: How far are we today from such attitudes and values?

The Imam always considered himself an integral part of the Arab family, and he left a lasting mark on every Arab country he visited. It is impossible here to cite all of the Imam's journeys, but a quick look to his travels will help us understand the extent of the predicament caused by his absence. Having settled in Lebanon, the Imam went to Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Jordan and Mauritania to lecture, explain, coordinate, and carry Lebanon's concerns and the Arab World. In total, the Imam went on 94 journeys where he employed his relations and capabilities to close the gaps between several parties concerning various issues, hoping to end the crushing Lebanese Civil War. Furthermore, with the Imam's absence, Palestine not only lost a voice but a protector who had dedicated everything to its cause.

The world now is filled with violence and war. Rejection, hatred and enmity directed at religious, ethnic and racial minorities is proof that latent fears are still embers raging under the ashes, capable of exploding at any moment. Yet, there was someone who moved these embers and transformed them into positive energy based on the principles of "a common humanity means harmony between us", and "Lebanon, in its human reality, is called to perform a cultural role in the world through a sublime level of coexistence, and through its role in the Arab-European dialogue". That was the Imam, who began before anyone else, so he attended the Papal Coronation in 1963, lectured in France on peace and beliefs in 1974 and visited Africa to inspect the affairs of the Lebanese community there and consolidate relations of the expatriate Lebanese with their second homelands. So, out of care for the human being, who is the Divine Trust on this earth, the Imam never hesitated to travel all over the world to bring sides close through a language of dialogue and mutual understanding.

Today, and with rising global clash between cultures, religions and sects, involving an enlightened figure such as Imam As-Sadr is an absolute necessity to build a base of coexistence in accordance with human values rather than religion, language or race.

The Arab aphorism says: "In a dark night, the full moon is sorely missed". This is true indeed, but we don't miss the full moon now, we direly need it to shed light in darkness.

And now, as we toil in this dark night, the question is how we can take back our full moon? How do we resolve this predicament? The total solution to actively following up the issue of the absence of the Imam and his two brethren is to secure means of supporting the official follow up committee, and for the committee to study effective means which fit the obstacles facing its work. Nonetheless, we can cite the following examples, ideas and suggestion in this respect:

1- The Lebanese government should implement what was mentioned in the ministerial statement ratified by the parliament with respect to the support of the follow up committee.

2- The League of Arab States should exert pressures on Libya to cooperate in this issue, bearing in mind that Libya did little to help with this issue in contrast to the many promises in this respect.

3- The committee should continue to appeal to international parties (organizations or states) to access information from witnesses and suspects, and to endeavor to open Libya for work and investigation and apply an inspection plan for places which were not revealed and where the detention may occur and continue to occur.

4- The committee should not spare any means to reach its objectives, even if it was through individuals and friends.

5- All stakeholders should provide support for the committee so that it can have more time for its work, and provide appreciation for what its members did so far.

6- The Islamic Republic of Iran has an active role through which it can support the committee through coordination and getting access to states and parties relevant to the case.

7- A media plan should be developed to provide the current issue with more exposure in Arab, Islamic and international spheres, and with a level worthy of the Imam's sacrifice as a caller for dialogue and peace, and the founder of resistance against Israel.

8- National consensus concerning this issue must be maintained in Lebanon. Normalization of relationship with Libya must be prevented unless its government cooperates with us.

9- The principles of this issue must be consolidated into the public opinion so that it would be affected by rumors and dubious narratives which have neither proof nor logic.

10- Each opportunity to enter Libya to activate investigations in it must be used and attended. Libyan judges and security forces are to be encouraged to give priority for this case, as the crime of kidnap where time is of essence should not be delayed.

Raed H. Charafeddine has been the First Vice-Governor at Banque du Liban, Lebanon's central bank, since April 2009. Mr. Charafeddine is also a visiting lecturer in world-renowned Universities.

His speeches focus on topics related to Central Banking and on Arab Countries in Transitions specifically on the monetary, economic, financial, social and cultural aspects. He is also a contributor to many national and international forums on the issues of governance, human and organizational development, civil society, and interfaith dialogue. Charafeddine is, too, a lifelong activist in the areas of social justice, women empowerment, interfaith dialogue, and institutional, human and economic development.

'In everything I do, I aim to strengthen democracy', says Merkel

Angela Merkel is running for a fourth term in office. DER SPIEGEL speaks with the chancellor about the addiction of power and her attempts to win back voters on the right.

■ Ms. Chancellor, we would like to speak with you about power, but also about the nepotism engendered by power. Most politicians are aware that influence and power can sometimes be like a drug. Have you become addicted?

A: I hope not. No.

■ Late former Chancellor Helmut Kohl proved unable to relinquish power and missed his opportunity for a dignified retirement. His fourth term in office wasn't good for the country or the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Are you nevertheless stumbling into the same trap as Kohl?

A: Until November of last year, I thought extensively about whether I should run again. In no way did I view the decision as self-evident, and concluded that, to the degree it is possible to determine such a thing, I have the necessary strength and that I am still curious - about people and about how life and the country are changing, and about the challenges that politics present. I think that is decisive, that you don't think you already know everything.

■ On Sunday, the first and only televised debate between you and your center-left Social Democratic (SPD) challenger Martin Schulz will take place. The broadcasters had wanted to include a studio audience to liven things up a bit, and they wanted more latitude for the moderators. If you are so dedicated to freedom of the press, why did you reject all of those innovations?

A: This TV debate is important to me, which is why I expressed my willingness to participate in such a debate in the first place. It presents an opportunity for millions of viewers to see for themselves the kinds of politics Martin Schulz and I are offering for the next four years. It is standard that the formal modalities of the show are discussed with the broadcasters. Since the debates in 2009 and 2013, there has been a well-tested structure for the show, one that will once again be applied this year. It allows Martin Schulz and myself to hold a discussion with each other and I am looking forward to it.

■ The campaign would have been much livelier if there were more than one televised debate. Why were you against that?

A: Because the campaign in the media takes place in many different formats, such as in citizen's forums or town-hall shows. And because we don't have a



presidential system in Germany, people vote for parties instead of specific candidates. From the perspective of smaller parties, even one single televised debate is a detested anomaly, because only the lead candidates from the conservatives and the SPD take part.

■ Your concern for the smaller parties is touching.

A: The plurality of our campaign formats, including the televised debates, reflect that we in Germany don't directly vote for a person like in the United States or in France, but for parties. We have a different system.

■ Why do you rely on German military planes to travel to your campaign appearances?

A: I also take advantage of the ability to fly with helicopters belonging to the federal police force, and both privileges are consistent with rules that have been in place for decades. A chancellor must be accessible at all times and be in a position to execute their duties as best they can. I must have the ability to immediately return to Berlin if necessary. There are also security considerations. Of course, the party must bear the costs of these flights in accordance with the rules, and the Budget Committee in German parliament is also aware of these things. Everything is transparent. In 2005, when I was the challenger to Chancellor Schröder, who was able to take advantage of military aircraft, I used a plane belonging to a private company and didn't take advantage of the legally guaranteed ability as party chair to likewise use military aircraft.

■ Let's continue on the subject of nepotism for just a moment. Matthias Wissmann, with whom you once served in Helmut Kohl's cabinet, is president of the German Association of the Automotive Industry. Eckart von Klæden, who used to serve in the Chancellery as a state minister, is now Daimler's chief lobbyist. Your former head of strategic planning in CDU party headquarters, Joachim Koschnick, became head lobbyist for Opel for a time and is now once again managing your campaign. Another top party official, Michael Jansen, is now a lobbyist for VW ...

A: ... and don't forget: Thomas Steg, former deputy government spokesman and a member of the SPD, is also working for VW.

■ Ms. Merkel, in the U.S., the president shows disdain for the judiciary and for the media - and, more broadly, for democratic values. Is democracy losing momentum around the world?

A: I hope not. For my part, in everything I do, I aim to strengthen democracy in Germany and beyond. The United States is also a strong democracy. As we are seeing in Poland, for example, and also in Hungary, it is important that we have counterweights in democratic systems, and I believe they are still strong in America.

■ When Barack Obama was here in November, he referred to you as a guarantor of democracy and also as a defender of Western values. But since you have been chancellor, voter turnout has been historically low. How can

you explain that?

A: Happily, recent state elections have seen higher turnout than in previous elections. When people have the impression that an important decision must be made, they go out and vote. And voter turnout in general elections tends to be much higher than in state elections.

■ Ever since you have been chancellor, turnout has stalled. Some say that you have lulled democratic debate to sleep. Do such accusations bother you?

A: To be more precise, turnout in 1998 was 82.2 percent, in 2002 it was 79.1 percent, in 2005 it was 77.7 percent, in 2009 it was 70.8 percent and then it climbed again in 2013 to 71.5 percent. I am predicting that turnout will rise once again this year. For me, a campaign is the opportunity to present my party's ideas about our country's future. In interviews and at campaign appearances, I speak exhaustively about these ideas, about the challenges facing us and about the political solutions we propose. Campaigning is more than just attacking and insulting one's opponent. People see how quickly the world is changing and that we are facing huge problems and uncertainties. And now they are deciding which parties and which politicians they would like to work with in shaping the future.

■ The CDU always said that immigration has to be carefully controlled. Is the rise of the AfD not an inevitable consequence of your policies?

A: In the summer of 2015, we were faced with an extremely difficult humanitarian situation. I am convinced that our reaction was reasonable and correct. But because the CDU stands for orderly and controlled immigration, we have begun addressing the causes of flight and combatting migrant smuggling - and we have taken corresponding measures in the form of the EU-Turkey deal.

■ Do you believe there was ever a moment when you left too much room for the AfD on the right wing of the political spectrum?

A: No. If you take a look at our domestic security policies, for example, you will see that we have done everything necessary within the framework of our values.

■ Do you see it as a compliment when people say that you are the best Social Democratic chancellor that Germany has ever had?

A: If I listen to the SPD's chancellor candidate, it doesn't seem as though I have earned that title. But seriously: Voters have no use for such categorizations. They rightly expect us to do our work as best as we possibly can. And that is what I am doing.

The surprising reality of the ISIS threat

Last month, the Pew Research Center released the results of a survey asking the citizens of 38 countries to name a major threat to their nation. This is the last in a special series of op-eds that also appear in Fareed's Global Briefing looking at the top perceived threats among Americans. You can sign up for the Global Briefing newsletter here.

Pew's latest survey suggests that despite the battlefield advances in the fight against ISIS, the group still casts a significant shadow, at least over the citizens of most of the 38 countries surveyed. That kind of wariness is warranted. The group isn't going away -- and despite all the talk of lone wolf attacks, terrorist plots in the West are far more organized and coordinated than many realize.

A common misperception about ISIS-related terror is that the group's fortunes exist in inverse proportion to the square mileage of territory it controls. Carnage on the streets of London, Istanbul, Brussels, Paris and now Barcelona, according to this conventional wisdom, represents the death throes of a medieval enterprise which is crumbling in Syria and Iraq.

By taking out ISIS's administrative centers, revenue streams and willing executioners -- and therefore the symbolic strength represented by all of the above to galvanize new members abroad -- exportation of terrorism will similarly wither away.

■ ISIS's foreign operations

Yet such thinking ignores the long history of ISIS's foreign operations, which have outlasted the ups and downs in its real estate holdings and have long predated the establishment of the so-called "caliphate."

The founder of the organization, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, nearly exploded a chemical bomb in central Amman, Jordan, in 2004, the year before he orchestrated a grisly series of bombings in hotels in that city, an event Jordanians still consider their own 9/11.

A decade ago, European security services uncovered and thwarted a number of Zarqawist plots to bring terror to the continent, even as the warriors of ISIS's predecessor network were escalating sectarian civil war in Iraq and nowhere near being strategically routed.



A common misperception about ISIS-related terror is that the group's fortunes exist in inverse proportion to the square mileage of territory it controls.

And well before ISIS lost the Kurdish city of Kobani, in a campaign that marked the initiation of the U.S.-led coalition's war in Syria and the beginning of its military downfall, the organization had been dispatching agents into Europe for the purpose of building up cells and minting a new rank-and-file of Western-born operatives who needn't have ever stepped foot outside their native countries.

This campaign, essentially ISIS's foreign policy doctrine, was built on the initial success of its terrorist nation-building. And it was wholly in keeping with the group's well-advertised total war against the West -- a war that was always meant to be fought not only in the deserts of the Middle East, but in the boulevards of Europe and the United States.

In fact, the true headquarters of ISIS's foreign operations planning, at least for attacks in Europe, was the Syrian city of al-Bab, in Aleppo province. The Turkish military, backed by Syrian rebels, retook it in February,

a contingency that has not much disrupted the spate of knifings, bombings and vehicular homicides linked to known ISIS associations in Europe.

The now-dead ISIS spokesman Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, who was also the senior-most official in charge of Syria, issued his infamous injunction, instructing all true believing Muslims living the West -- sometimes known as the "gray zone" -- to murder American, European, Australian and Canadian innocents by any means necessary.

Yet while it's true that Adnani was looking to inspire those with no discernible connection to his organization, the "lone wolf" species of terror plot has actually seldom existed in Europe. What may first appear to be the work of a wannabe or fellow traveler individually radicalized by ISIS ideology, later turns out to have been more carefully orchestrated and staffed operation run by domestic networks that have existed for years.

This was certainly the case with the Christmas marketplace attack in Berlin last year, perpetrated by Anis Amri. It also increasingly seems to be the case with last week's Barcelona atrocity.

Alexander Meleagrou-Hitchens, the research director at the Program on Extremism at George Washington University, and a specialist on terror in the West, said: "only six out of 38 plots in Europe between 2014 and 2016 were truly planned and carried out by lone actors."

Even in the United States, he added, around one fifth of the 38 ISIS-inspired domestic plots and attacks between March 1, 2014, and March 1, 2017, involved some form of communication with what he calls "virtual entrepreneurs" -- online case officers employed by ISIS to instruct and provide logistical support for prospective attackers.

ISIS has also built up an array of offshore outposts, what it grandiosely calls wilayats, or provinces, to ensure its survival beyond the demise of its pseudo state. See Afghanistan, Libya, Russia, Yemen, the Sinai Peninsula, Indonesia and the Philippines. This means that despite the Pentagon's cheerleading, even the fall of Raqqa -- the group's so-called capital -- won't mark the end of the ISIS threat to Europe or the United States.

(Source: CNN)

Trump has changed on Russia and Afghanistan: Robert Jervis

By Javad Heirannia

TEHRAN — Robert Jervis, the Adlai E. Stevenson professor of international politics at Columbia University, believes "It does indeed appear that Trump has changed, especially on Russia and Afghanistan."

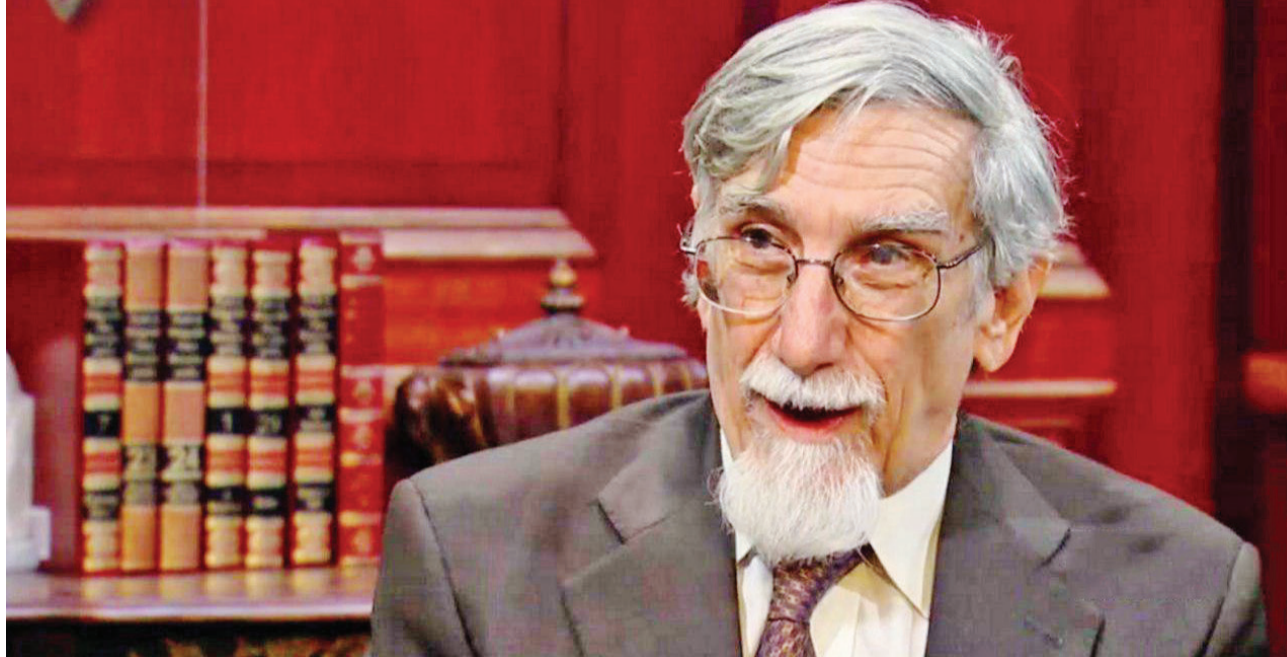
"I think it is an error or at least an exaggeration to label Syria a 'civil war'; it really is an international war on Syrian territory (with heavy Syrian participation)," Jervis tells the Tehran Times.

Following is the full text of the interview:

■ **The theoretical basis for Barack Obama's foreign policy was that the US didn't have the power and influence of the past; thus Washington had to be careful and selective in which problems it should interfere. Insisting on domestic policy, Trump was even tougher than Obama in the very first steps of his presidency. So how it came that suddenly Trump changed his isolationist stance for an interventional one?**

A: It does indeed appear that Trump has changed, especially on Russia and Afghanistan. In the latter case, I think much of the reason is his willingness to defer to "his generals." His own knowledge is very limited, and so when they tell him that the results of pulling out would be dreadful, he cannot come up with reasonable objections. Now that he has fired Steve Bannon, he doesn't have anyone in the White House who will argue for a less activist policy.

On Russia, again all is generals and



much of the "foreign policy establishment" wants to be tough, and the charges that Russia supported him in the election make it more difficult for him to adopt a conciliatory position, although I think he still wants to do so, and might try to act on this at some point.

■ **In the new world order (since 1990s), the competition for more influence and power in both regional and international arenas has heavily increased. Isn't this worldwide competition a reason why the Middle East crises including in Syria, Yemen and Iraq have lasted so long? A reason for**

the presence of the US and Russia in the region? (However, Russians are more in Syria rather than anywhere else in the region.)

A: The role of the external powers is certainly crucial in these three conflicts. Indeed, I think it is an error or at least an exaggeration to label Syria a "civil war"; it really is an international war on Syrian territory (with heavy Syrian participation). Of course this is true of many civil wars. The role of the US in Syria and Yemen is less important than the role of Russia and the regional powers, however.

■ **We hear that the Middle East has turned into a competition field for regional and international powers; hence the hope for any peace deal hangs in balance. It is said that these so-called big powers, for the sake of their own interests (including arms sales), prefer the conflict management rather than conflict resolution. So, when does it happen to the Middle East to enjoy the blessing of the peace?**

A: I don't see peace in the foreseeable future. The internal disputes, the Shia-Sunni rivalry, and the estrangement between Russia and the US all are bad news for the region.

Humanities flourish when societies go through periods of self-questioning: philosopher

By Jalal Heirannia

TEHRAN — Charles Taliaferro, a professor of philosophy at St. Olaf College, says "the humanities tend to flourish when societies go through periods of self-questioning and turmoil, on the one hand, and go through periods of prosperity on the other."

In an interview with the Tehran Times, the professor also says "the humanities can make a population more aware of its history, traditions, and creatively engage in communication across cultures as we face future challenges."

Following is the text of the interview:

■ **What is the relation between the prosperity of the humanities and political development in a country?**

A: If by the humanities we include the study and practice of history, literature and the arts, philosophy, languages, theology and religious studies, and the like, the humanities seem to prosper in countries in which there is significant literacy, a free press, and an ethos in which members of a society are expected to take citizenship seriously. In some contexts, such as ancient Greco-Roman culture, the study of the humanities was thought to be the special province of the elite, whereas with the emergence of the university in late Medieval Europe, the humanities broadened to bolster clergy, and to serve future leaders, clergy. In the modern

era, the humanities have been seen as a vital matrix whereby persons come to understand their history, their potential roles in the life of the broader political, economic, and religious communities.

■ **In which society will the humanities grow better?**

A: This is not clear, but there may be reason to think that, paradoxically, the humanities tend to flourish when societies go through periods of self-questioning and turmoil, on the one hand, and go through periods of prosperity on the other. On the first, one can locate the golden age in Ancient Greece of creative artistry and thought after the disastrous Peloponnesian war, and one can also see Renaissance humanism flourishing in response to the menace of tyranny, whereas the golden age of Islamic philosophy, thought, scholarship, art can be seen in great glory until the Mongol invasion and the siege of Baghdad in the 13th century.

■ **Why are some countries seeing great developments in sciences but weakness in the humanities?**

A: Great question. In parts of Europe and North America, there is a perception that training in the humanities is less likely to prepare students for an economically prosperous life. It is assumed by many that training in the natural and social sciences (such as economics) will better prepare persons for a life in business, law, medicine, industry, trade, and so on.



While some of the statistics are indeterminate --there is significant data that persons with backgrounds in the humanities have been highly successful over a broad range of professions-- there is a noticeable diminishment of enrollments in the humanities at colleges and universities today. Being a professor in the humanities, I probably should not be expected to be neutral on such matters, but I do find this shift worrisome for the overall health of a modern society in which training in the humanities can make a population more aware of its history, traditions, and creatively engage in communication across cultures as we face future challenges. There is so much we can learn from history, and we ignore such lessons at our peril.

Macron is afraid of the future

By Mohsen Sadraei

The sharp decline in the popularity of the French president has alarmed the authorities of the Elysees Palace. Emmanuel Macron, who thought he would become a popular politician in France, is now cutting back on popularity in polls.

This could increase the possibility of the French president's defeat in the next election. In other words, the fate of Nicolas Sarkozy and Francois Hollande may be waiting for the young French president.

As Guardian has reported, Most French voters are now dissatisfied with Emmanuel Macron's performance, a dramatic decline for a president who basked in a landslide election victory less than four months ago.

A poll, conducted by Ifop for newspaper Le Journal du Dimanche (JDD), showed the president's "dissatisfaction rating" rising to 57%, up from 43% in July. 40 percent expressed satisfaction with the centrist leader -- down 14 points from July.

The figures are the lowest for any French president after four months since 1995. An overview of recent polls in France suggests that Macron will have a hard way to revive its lost popularity.

Most French citizens are now dissatisfied with Macron and his presence at the Elysees Palace. Many French citizens, both Socialist and Republican



supporters, preferred to vote for Macron in the second round of presidential elections this year to prevent the victory of Marin Le Pen. However, Macron did not use this opportunity well.

Macron's unacceptable behavior in recent months and his controversy with military commanders in France and beyond, his particular security and economic behaviors have led French citizens to not look favorably at Macron's presence at the Elysees Palace.

Macron has faced many challenges since coming to presidency. He has had strong parliamentary disagreements about the reform of labor law.

The issue of reducing defense

spending has also been a concern for Macron. In such a situation, Macron seems to be worried about the polls in his country. Macron was faced with the maximum support of his citizens in his first month at the Elysee Palace, but now this maximum protection has become minimal.

This minimal protection can also be reduced further in the future. The winners of the process are Marin Le Pen and other French national front leaders. They consider themselves the main rival of Macron. Right now, the two Socialist and Republican parties are in a difficult situation, and their political revival is almost impossible in the near future.

Thus, Marin Le Pen hopes to succeed in the next presidential election.

Exposure by French government officials with recent polls can be considered. French government spokesman Christophe Castaner said the ruling party was going through a tricky time, but added that displeasing some people was a price worth paying if the government wanted to push through reforms.

"Yes, we are encountering difficulties, but you cannot just spend your time only looking at polls when you're in government. We are there to transform the country. Our country needs us to take risks, and we are taking risks," Castaner told BFM TV.

Macron may be in the Hollande state in the presidential election of 2022. The former president of France has decided not to participate in the 2017 presidential election due to his sharp decline in polls. The Ifop poll showed the cumulative drop in Macron's popularity ratings since May was bigger than that of previous Socialist president François Hollande over the same period.

Finally, Macron will have difficult years in the Elysee Palace. Recent polls in France show well that he needs to do a lot to satisfy the people. The main question here is whether Macron will succeed in achieving this goal? Will he go k to the Elysees Palace in 2022 again or become France's third most defeated president?

The United States and Britain must claim part-ownership of Yemeni Strife

By Hossein Askari

Both countries have lent their support to forces that have destabilized the region and violated human rights.

Americans and Britons must face the unpleasant fact that their governments are complicit in the humanitarian disaster in Yemen, a disaster that is shaping up to be the worst since the Holocaust. CARE estimates that 20 million people are in need of emergency assistance and 5,000 people are being infected with cholera each day. The eventual number of casualties could top two million.

Saudi Arabia's indiscriminate bombing in Yemen, using American and British arms and munitions and with all manner of support (intelligence and military advisors) from the U.S. and Britain, are widely considered to be war crimes. No matter how hard the U.S. tries to blame the disaster on others, independent observers point the finger at Saudi Arabia and its two principal backers -- the U.S. and Britain. Yes, Saudi Arabia is giving Yemen economic aid in an effort to cover its crimes from the view of the world, but what cynical hypocrisy!

Saudi Arabia's crimes go beyond Yemen. The crimes of the minority Sunni government in Bahrain under Saudi direction and support have been labeled crimes against humanity. Again, it is the U.S. and Britain whose arms and munitions have empowered these crimes.

As if all this were not enough, Saudi Arabia has turned against its own Shia citizens inside Saudi Arabia with a vengeance. In Eastern Saudi Arabia, the village Awamiyah has been under siege for four months, blockaded and shelled by Saudi forces, and with a number of its citizens imprisoned, tortured and beheaded over the last two years, citizens who were engaged in peaceful protests but had been conveniently labeled terrorists.

The 32 year-old day-to-day ruler of Saudi Arabia, Mohammad bin Salman, is the "brains" behind these atrocities that the U.S. and Britain are supporting in order to sell more arms. In doing so, the U.S. and Britain are complicit in these crimes.

President Trump has allegedly told the rulers of Saudi Arabia that the U.S. will not pressure them on the issue of human rights and that they are free to do as they wish. And of course the "War on Terror" provides the narrative to hide these crimes from the American and British people. But in a time of instant news, Americans and Britons have a feeble excuse if they do not take their respective governments to task.

The U.S. and Britain are now ridiculed when they claim their support for human rights and democratic governance and decry movements toward dictatorship as in Venezuela. For how can anyone believe such pretensions when the U.S. supports Saudi Arabia, the country behind these crimes and the country with just about the worst human rights record on the planet? No matter how much favorable publicity for Saudi Arabia the U.S. and Britain spew out, their credibility and soft power is evaporating fast.

The victims of these crimes, their families and friends clearly see Saudi, American and British duplicity for what it is and they will never forget. Companies, lobbyists, academics and others who support Saudi crimes will find themselves on the wrong side of history. The world will gradually open its eyes and be ashamed of how it was silent and Saudi Arabia, the U.S. and Britain will be held accountable in the court of public opinion with ominous blow-back.

(Source: Huffpost)

Structure of intl. system 'multipolar'

By Payman Yazdani

Describing the New World Order, Cyr said the term was mostly used after the end of cold war. To describe the post cold era situation and the spirit of the cooperation between two super powers both Mikhail Gorbachev and George Herbert Walker Bush used New World Order term.

Initial definitions and preferences of the New World Order brought up by Gorbachev included a wide range of issues and were mostly idealistic, but his capabilities to insist on them were very limited due to internal crises in former Soviet Union. Contrary to Gorbachev's viewpoint, Bush's viewpoint didn't include a wide range of issues and was more realistic.

Touching upon US leadership power, Cyr said Robert Cohen, a leading theoretician of neoliberal institutionalism believes that the US hegemonic power has begun to decline after 1970s. While the US leadership power has decreased, he believe all international regimes created after Second World War would continue to remain

"Hegemony" is a heavy word, he added, favored by academics, but not so much by policymakers, who face the challenge of actually trying to cope with the real world. The US was dominant economically from the 1940s into the 1960s, but that was also a time when collective anxiety over communism and war was greatest, and Americans felt particularly challenged.

Discussing the multipolarity, Cyr noted that multipolar is another term more popular with academics than others. The Cold War world was generally multipolar except for the nuclear weapons stockpiles of the U.S. and USSR. Even at the nuclear level, the nuclear monopolies ended respectively in the 1950s (not counting Britain as independent of the US) and 1960s respectively.

"Relatively open competitive economic markets actually encourage and benefit from pluralism. The US initiated the Marshall Plan after World War II for humanitarian reasons but also for reasons of self-interest - if Europe remained devastated, there would be no customers for capitalism," he underlined.

Is Liberia's Sirleaf really standing up for women?

By Robtel Neajai Pailey and Korto Reeves Williams

In a public statement earlier this month, Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf - Africa's first woman elected head of state - vowed to campaign actively for female candidates running in presidential and legislative elections in October. While her pronouncement may appear praiseworthy, it is too little, too late.

In this year's high-stakes elections - the country's third since the end of a devastating 14-year armed conflict - only 163 out

of 1,026 (16 percent) approved candidates are women, including one running for president in a crowded field of over 20 men. This represents only a marginal increase since 2005 and 2011, when women accounted for 14 percent (110/762) and 11 percent (104/909) of candidates, respectively.

During a meeting earlier this month with 152 female contenders, Sirleaf lamented the abysmally low number of women in elected office. In 2005 when she triumphed over footballer-turned-politician George Weah in a duel for the presidency,

only 13 women were elected to the national legislature. That number dropped to eight in 2011, when the president secured a second mandate to lead Liberia. There is a strong likelihood that fewer women will win seats come October 10.

■ Patriarchal political system

This is as much Sirleaf's doing as it is a reflection of Liberia's acutely patriarchal political system. In the past 12 years, she has done next to nothing to position women favorably to win votes. In 2009, when female politicians petitioned Sirleaf to

support a woman in her party during a by-election to replace a deceased female senator, she campaigned instead for a man (the candidate Sirleaf supported eventually lost to a woman from the opposition).

Though a 2014 elections law amendment encourages political parties to increase their representation of women in leadership roles, Sirleaf's own Unity Party ranks below smaller, less-prominent parties in fronting female candidates this year. →13

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Ways your diet should change after 40, according to nutritionists

Registered dieticians dish up their best advice for staying fit and healthy for decades to come.

By Perri Ormont Blumberg

As you've ventured into your 40s, you may have noticed that your energy crashes more quickly than it used to. Or maybe you've gained a few pounds around your middle—despite the fact that your diet has remained basically unchanged for as long as you can remember.

It's not your imagination. As women near their 40s, basal metabolic rate decreases, estrogen levels dip, and blood vessels decrease in elasticity. These factors make it harder to stave off belly fat, and also increase the risk of heart disease, cognitive decline, and osteoporosis, says nutritionist Maggie Moon, author of *The MIND Diet*. "The good news is that what we eat—something we all do each day—can make a big and lasting impact."

Here are some simple tweaks you should make to your diet in your 40s that can help you stay lean and healthy—for life:

■ Up your calcium intake.

"As estrogen production decreases in aging women, it becomes harder to absorb calcium," explains nutritionist Rebecca Scritchfield, author of *Body Kindness*. And since the risk for osteoporosis increases with age, this nutrient is vital for your health. "Women over the age of 50 should aim for roughly 1,200 milligrams of calcium daily, and women in their 40s should shoot for around 1,000 milligrams calcium per day." That comes out to about three to four daily servings of calcium-rich foods—and this doesn't only mean things like yogurt, cheese, and milk. Many cereals and plant-based milks (like almond or soy) are fortified with calcium, and dark leafy greens like kale, spinach, and collard greens are other great options.

■ Eat more protein.

This is key for both meals and snacks; basically, you want to have protein on your plate whenever you eat—no excuses. You lose muscle mass as you get older, and protein (along with weight lifting) helps you preserve and enhance lean muscle, making it a particularly key nutrient. "Interestingly, research suggests your body can use protein more effectively for muscle-building when you include protein-rich foods throughout your day," explains nutritionist Christy Brissette, president of 80 Twenty Nutrition. As a general rule of thumb, make a protein-rich food a component in every snack and strive for 30 grams of protein at every meal. That means you'll need about four ounces of chicken, fish, lean meat, or plant-based protein like lentils, beans, or soy. "For snacks, include an ounce of nuts, two tablespoons hummus or nut or seed butter to meet your protein needs," adds Brissette.

■ Cut back on sodium—especially sneaky sources of it!

"Bloating is very common during menopause, and a high-sodium diet can not only exacerbate bloating but also be a major contributor in the first place. This



As estrogen production decreases in aging women, it becomes harder to absorb calcium, and since the risk for osteoporosis increases with age, this nutrient is vital for your health.

is where label reading is key; don't rely on how salty a food tastes," advises Andy Bellatti, a Las Vegas-based nutritionist and the strategic director of Dietitians For Professional Integrity. "Many people don't realize, for example, that a serving of salted peanuts contains the same amount of sodium in a slice of bread or a cup of milk." Unexpectedly, many salt-loaded offenders often lurk in the baked goods aisle.

■ Eat two weekly servings of oily fish.

Hormonal changes occur as you approach menopause that increases your risk of heart disease, while diets rich in omega-3 fatty acids have been shown to reduce your risk of cardiovascular disease. So if you haven't already, it's time to befriend omega-3-rich fish like salmon, mackerel, sardines, trout, and herring. "EPA and DHA are omega-3s found in fish and fish oils that you need to keep your brain, heart, and eyes healthy as you age," Brissette says. Aim for two palm-sized servings per week. Another reason to eat more fatty fish: "As you get older, your skin produces less vitamin D in response to the sun. Oily fish is an excellent source of vitamin D, so it's another win for nutrition in your 40s," Brissette says.

■ It's officially time to try quinoa.

If you haven't jumped aboard the quinoa (an edible starchy seed that's considered to be a whole grain) bandwagon, now's the time. "It's more important than ever to choose the whole grains. Refined grains lead to energy crashes which, in turn, lead to sugar cravings and overeating that will quickly lead to weight gain," says Tammy

Lakatos Shames and Lyssie Lakatos, authors of *The Nutrition Twins' Veggie Cure*. In fact, a study published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* showed that dieters who ate whole grains lost more belly fat than those who ate refined grains. Bonus: Quinoa also offers protein and fiber which work together to keep energy levels steady and ward off crashes.

■ Eat more leafy greens.

We know, we know, veggies = no-brainer. But leafy greens, in particular, are important to incorporate into your diet as you approach midlife. "Several studies have shown stronger resistance to cognitive decline with high veggie intake, with the best protection from leafy greens. One of my favorites is lacinato kale. Cut it into thin ribbons (called 'chiffonade') and massage it for at least five minutes with a good quality olive oil, and add it to a farro salad with diced plums and almonds," Moon says. "Yum! Another easy way to get your greens? Toss a handful into a morning smoothie or fold them into scrambled eggs or your go-to omelet."

■ Eat more soy.

Don't let myths turn you off from nutrient-rich options like edamame, tofu, soy milk, and tempeh. "While many women may be concerned with the risk of breast cancer in eating too much soy, there is little evidence to support this is true," Scritchfield explains. "These foods are rich in plant estrogens which can help reduce hot flashes." And they've also been shown to lower the risk of heart disease and osteoporosis.

■ Eat your meals and snacks earlier in the day.

Night owls, listen up! According to a 2017 University of Pennsylvania study, even when two groups of people ate the same number of calories, those who ate later in the day (i.e., noon to 11 PM) were more likely to weigh more and have elevated cholesterol and insulin levels compared to those who ate most of their food earlier in the day, Amer says. These factors can increase your risk of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease, and you may find that eating earlier helps boost your energy levels, as well.

■ Make balsamic vinegar a go-to.

This common pantry staple can be a boon for your health. "Balsamic vinegar contains powerful flavonoids called anthocyanins (the same type found in blueberries), which can help reduce the risk of hypertension and heart disease," Bellatti explains. "[These compounds] protect arteries from damage caused by damaging free radicals." And you don't need to limit your balsamic intake to only salads, try adding a drizzle of balsamic over whole grain side dishes, roasted vegetables.

■ Eat fat to lose fat.

To firm up and keep those excess pounds off for good, you may need to add more fat to your diet—but it has to be the right kind, Moon says. "A recent study of nearly 9,000 women over 40 found that the closer they stuck to the healthy-fat-packed, famously heart-healthy Mediterranean diet, the leaner they were." A Mediterranean diet tends to center around omega-3 rich fish along with olive oil, nuts, and plenty of fruit and vegetables.

(Source: prevention.com)

How aging affects your feet

By Catherine Moyer

Aging takes its toll on your feet and ankles as it does with the rest of your body. Taking good care of ourselves is the best way to ensure good health into our senior years. But we usually don't think of our feet until something goes wrong. Given the amount of stress we put on our feet in a lifetime, it's easy to see why certain foot problems seem unavoidable. In addition, to wear and tear, there are natural changes that occur with the aging process that affects foot health, making problems like swelling and certain skin conditions more prevalent.

■ Common skin problems of aging feet

Skin changes occur gradually occur with aging. They include: decreased skin cell turnover, decreased collagen production, and thinning of the skin, with a decrease of the fatty layer beneath. These changes bring about several typical foot problems, which deal with extra stress from weight-bearing.

■ Dry skin of the feet

Dry skin, especially on the soles of the feet, is a problem that may require a daily application of a moisturizer to prevent cracking or an itchy rash. The decreased fatty layer beneath the skin means reduced cushioning on the sole of the foot, which also contributes to cracked heels and calluses due to extra stress on the skin. In addition, the decreased fat pad on the sole of the foot may contribute to an increased sensitivity to pain due to that loss of cushioning. More: Coping with Dry, Cracked Feet

■ Seborrheic Keratosis

One common skin condition that affects older adults is called seborrheic keratosis.

Seborrheic keratoses are lesions that are darker than the surrounding skin and are slightly raised, appearing as if they could easily be scratched off. Seborrheic keratosis is

a benign skin lesion that usually does not warrant medical care, although the lesions can become itchy. However, the skin cancer melanoma can also have a similar presentation, specifically, the brown-to-black coloration.

Melanoma can and does affect the feet, even though this area of the body is not usually thought of as a high sun-exposure area. Any time a skin lesion appears to change in color, size, or shape, it's always best to have it evaluated by a physician.

■ Stucco Keratosis

Another common skin lesion of aging that frequently affects feet is the stucco keratosis. These also have a bumpy, stuck-on appearance, but are skin-colored or lighter. The name stucco keratosis comes from their texture, which resembles a stucco surface. Stucco keratoses are common on elderly skin, particularly on the tops of the feet and ankle areas. They can be treated with OTC exfoliation products and creams, but tend to come back.

■ Toenail changes for aging foot

Toenails usually become thicker and more brittle with age, making them more difficult to cut. One reason that nails become thicker is because their growth slows over time, mostly due to hormonal changes in the body. Other causes of toenail thickening include hypothyroidism and inadequate circulation to the limbs from peripheral artery disease (PAD). Onychomycosis, which is a fungal infection of the toenails, is another common cause of toenail thickening.

■ Orthopedic problems as you get older

Many people notice that, as the years go by, their shoe size or foot shape changes.

It's not uncommon for someone to experience an increase in shoe size by a half-size or more as they age. This happens because of the changes that occur in the body's ligaments and tendons through the aging process.

Tendons and ligaments gradually lose strength and their ability to «spring back», which can amount to a decrease in arch height of the feet, increasing foot length slightly and requiring an increase in shoe size. Age-related tendon and ligament changes may also increase the risk of injuries such as tendonitis, tendon tears, or muscle strains.

■ Arthritis

Arthritis is another reality of aging. Osteoarthritis is what we think of as wear-and-tear arthritis: that inevitable consequence of years of stress on the joints. The ankle joint, subtalar joint, and the big toe joint (first MTPJ) are three joints that frequently develop arthritis. Symptoms associated with bunions and hammer toes may worsen over the time due to the progression of arthritis within those toe joints. Another joint problem that can develop in older adults is gouty arthritis. Gout is a metabolic disease that often manifests as intense arthritis symptoms at the big toe joint.

When observing an X-ray of an elderly patient, we sometimes see signs of decreased bone mineral density, indicating the possibility of osteoporosis. This is especially true for female patients, who may be unaware that they are at risk for a fracture due to this change in bone health. Often, it's the long bones of the foot (metatarsals) that will show signs of decreased bone mineral density on a foot X-ray.

■ Circulatory changes - foot and ankle swelling

One of the most common foot and ankle problems of aging is swelling. The cause of the swelling can be elusive, especially if it's not associated with an injury. Leg vein problems are a common cause of swelling and usually occur in a single limb at a time. Cardiovascular disease, certain medications, and hormonal changes are possible causes of swelling that occur in both limbs.

(Source: verywell.com)

The winners of 2017 Noor Student Competition honored in closing ceremony

On September 1st, coinciding with the Eid al-Adha, the closing ceremony of the second round of Noor Student Competition; Recognition of Prof Jackie Ying successfully took place at the "Hozehe Honari - Andisheh Hall" in Tehran. The winning students and top educational centers were honored and praised for their achievements. The Noor Student Competition 2017 has been named after Prof Jackie Ying, one of the prominent scholars of the Muslim world in science and technology. Jackie Ying was also one of the laureates of The Mustafa (pbuh) Prize 2015 - the science and technology award - for her achievement in the field of Bio and Nanoscience. Among attendees were Sorena Sattari, Chairman of Policymaking Council of the Mustafa (pbuh) Prize; Mahdi Saffarinia, Secretary of the Council and guests include winners and their families and academic figures.

The 2017 winners were selected based on their efforts, initiative, and creativity and attractiveness of submitted works. 50 selected works will enter a TV-broadcast contest and they will be broadcast in turn within a TV program.

"Noor Student Competition provides opportunities for students to develop in theoretical and sophisticated sciences such as mathematics, physics and chemistry. Being recognized, scientific breakthroughs, expanding the boundaries of knowledge and to be known as a future scientist in the Islamic world are intended objectives and accomplished effect of Noor Student Competition" Said Mahdi Saffarinia in his speech in this ceremony.

Pointing out that Noor Student Competition allows students to be familiar with different sciences, Saffarinia added: "during this event they find chance to learn team working which itself is basically very valuable."

5109 students in form of 2194 groups took part in second round by sending a sum of 1194, one -minute films of their scientific experiments. The participants were allowed to compete in all fields of science including physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics and astronomy.

The annual Noor Student Competition, launched in 2016 by the Mustafa (pbuh) Science and Technology Foundation (MSTF), to recognize and cultivate young students' talents as well as promote scientific cooperation between educational centers. The first round of this competition due to the 1000th anniversary of authoring 'The Book of Optics' by 'Ibn al-Haytham' was held in commemoration of this eminent Muslim scholar.

Anger management: 10 tips to tame your temper

By Mayo Clinic staff

Keeping your temper in check can be challenging. Use simple anger management tips — from taking a timeout to using "I" statements — to stay in control.

Do you fume when someone cuts you off in traffic? Does your blood pressure rocket when your child refuses to cooperate? Anger is a normal and even healthy emotion — but it's important to deal with it in a positive way. Uncontrolled anger can take a toll on both your health and your relationships.

Ready to get your anger under control? Start by considering these 10 anger management tips.

■ 1. Think before you speak

In the heat of the moment, it's easy to say something you'll later regret. Take a few moments to collect your thoughts before saying anything — and allow others involved in the situation to do the same.

■ 2. Once you're calm, express your anger

As soon as you're thinking clearly, express your frustration in an assertive but non-confrontational way. State your concerns and needs clearly and directly, without hurting others or trying to control them.

■ 3. Get some exercise

Physical activity can help reduce stress that can cause you to become angry. If you feel your anger escalating, go for a brisk walk or run, or spend some time doing other enjoyable physical activities.

■ 4. Take a timeout

Timeouts aren't just for kids. Give yourself short breaks during times of the day that tend to be stressful. A few moments of quiet time might help you feel better prepared to handle what's ahead without getting irritated or angry.

■ 5. Identify possible solutions

Instead of focusing on what made you mad, work on resolving the issue at hand. Does your child's messy room drive you crazy? Close the door. Is your partner late for dinner every night? Schedule meals later in the evening — or agree to eat on your own a few times a week. Remind yourself that anger won't fix anything and might only make it worse.

■ 6. Stick with 'I' statements

To avoid criticizing or placing blame — which might only increase tension — use "I" statements to describe the problem. Be respectful and specific. For example, say, "I'm upset that you left the table without offering to help with the dishes" instead of "You never do any housework."

■ 7. Don't hold a grudge

Forgiveness is a powerful tool. If you allow anger and other negative feelings to crowd out positive feelings, you might find yourself swallowed up by your own bitterness or sense of injustice. But if you can forgive someone who angered you, you might both learn from the situation and strengthen your relationship.

■ 8. Use humor to release tension

Lightheartening can help diffuse tension. Use humor to help you face what's making you angry and, possibly, any unrealistic expectations you have for how things should go. Avoid sarcasm, though — it can hurt feelings and make things worse.

■ 9. Practice relaxation skills

When your temper flares, put relaxation skills to work. Practice deep-breathing exercises, imagine a relaxing scene, or repeat a calming word or phrase, such as "Take it easy." You might also listen to music, write in a journal or do a few yoga poses — whatever it takes to encourage relaxation.

■ 10. Know when to seek help

Learning to control anger is a challenge for everyone at times. Seek help for anger issues if your anger seems out of control, causes you to do things you regret or hurts those around you.

(Source: mayoclinic.org)

Iranian, Thai exquisite carpets on show at Bangkok exhibit

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Collections of superb silk d e s k carpets handcrafted by Iranian and Thai weavers have been put on show at a four-day exhibition, which opened to the public at Bangkok's Gaysorn Village on Thursday.



Iranian Ambassador Mohsen Mohammadi delivers a speech during the opening ceremony of the carpet exhibit in Bangkok, August 31, 2017.

The exhibit is aimed to deepen Thai - Iranian ties with handicrafts in particular and to draw public attention to sericulture. It also features rugs with elaborate motifs that bear special techniques in production, the National News Bureau of Thailand reported.

A delicate Persian pictorial rug depicting the late King Bhunibol Adulyadej -- the ninth monarch of Thailand -- was highly welcomed by Thai officials and visitors when it was unveiled during the opening ceremony of the expo, IRNA reported.

The event is a collaboration between the Iranian Embassy; Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mining and Trade; the Thai Airways International; the World Crafts Council - Asia Pacific Region as well as the ASEAN Handicraft Promotion and Development Association, the bureau said.

Iran exported \$89 million of hand-woven carpets during the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21- July 22, 2017), showing an increase of 3.7 percent year on year.

Barcelona tourism bounces back after attacks

MADRID (Reuters) — Tourism in Barcelona has bounced back after the Islamist militant attacks that killed 16 people in Catalonia in August, Spain's energy and tourism minister Alvaro Nadal said on Thursday after meeting with sector representatives in the city.

Growth in flights to Barcelona, one of Europe's most popular tourist city destinations, dipped a little after the attacks but was now rising again, he said.

"Very few days have passed and we're already seeing the recuperation," he said. "The initial shock is normal and always happens in these situations, but it has been much less than in comparable cases."



ROUND THE GLOBE

Sukur Cultural Landscape

The Sukur Cultural Landscape is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located on a hill above the village of Sukur in the Adamawa State of Nigeria, along the country's border line with Cameroon.

Sukur is an ancient settlement with a recorded history of iron smelting technology, flourishing trade, and strong political institution dating back to the 16th century.



Natives of Sukur, Nigeria are seen in an undated photo.

The landscape is characterized by terraces on the farmlands, dry stone structures and stone paved walkways. The terraced landscape at Sukur with its hierarchical structure and combination of intensive and extensive farming is remarkable.

In addition, it has certain exceptional features that are not to be found elsewhere, notably the use of paved tracks and the spiritual content of the terraces, with their ritual features such as sacred trees.

The Palace of the Hidi (Chief) is nestled on a hill dominating the villages below. The revered position of the Hidi as the political and spiritual head of the community is underscored by the magnificent dry stone architectural work of his palace, in and around which is a concentration of shrines, some ceramic.

The villages situated on low lying ground below the Hidi Palace have their own characteristic indigenous architecture. Among its features are dry stone walls, used as social markers and defensive enclosures, sunken animal (principally bull) pens, granaries, and threshing floors.

(Source: UNESCO)

Yazd on traveler's radar after getting UNESCO status

TOURISM TEHRAN — Tour operators working in Iran and even abroad have lauded the inclusion of Yazd on UNESCO World Heritage list, as a privilege that helps to put the historic city on traveler's radar worldwide.

The UN cultural organization annually expands its list of heritage sites, and this year's class of inductees, announced in July, offers both stimulation for travelers, with a rich and varied group of intriguing sites, and a reminder, especially with its remote and more vulnerable picks such as Yazd that developed an underground water system in the far past and still maintains its traditional Persian architecture and Zoroastrian temples.

Stretching between two deserts, the ancient city of Yazd in the central Iranian plateau has a fascinating history most notable for its reputation along the caravan routes as a silk weaving center.

"In terms of architecture, original temples, gardens and mosques, a lot of things [in Yazd] are traditional and intact," said Annie Lucas, the vice president of Mir Corporation, which guides trips in Iran, the New York Times reported on Friday.

Ms. Lucas pointed out that Iran has recently resumed issuing travel visas to Americans, which were halted earlier this year, seemingly in response to President Trump's travel ban. Mir's 12-day trip to Tehran, Shiraz, Isfahan and Yazd starts at



Tourists visit a Zoroastrian tower of silence and its adjacent fire temple in Yazd, central Iran.

\$5,995 a person.

According to the Washington-based Mir Corporation, a tour of Yazd includes visits to the Zoroastrian towers of silence

and fire temple, the Dowlat-Abad Garden, the Friday Mosque and Alexander's Prison.

The World Heritage program aims to

identify and protect cultural and natural sites around the world that demonstrate "outstanding value to humanity," according to UNESCO website.

Bam citadel's giant gateway regaining former glory

HERITAGE TEHRAN — Restoration work on the giant gateway of Arg-e Bam, a quake-stricken UNESCO-registered citadel in south-eastern Iran, will be completed in October, said the Bam and its Cultural Landscape project manager.

"Currently, restoration for Arg-e Bam's main entrance has entered its final stage," Mehr quoted Afshin Ebrahimi as saying on Wednesday.

The renovation work will be capped by installing an exquisite wooden door, which is made based on original designs with an expectation of slight modifications, Ebrahimi said.

Two other gateways to the adobe citadel have already been fully restored, the official reminded, adding there are thirteen restoration workshops inside the citadel and three outside at the moment.



An undated photo depicts ancient Bam citadel undergoing renovation in south-eastern Iran.

The massive fortress and its environs were almost completely brought down to earth due to a devastating earthquake on

December 26, 2003.

Restoration of the [whole] citadel will be completed within the next two years,

Mahmoud Vafaei, the head of the provincial office of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization, announced earlier this month.

"Roughly 70 percent of the site will be restored in total, since [UNESCO] regulations oblige us to ensure that the impact of the earthquake remains visible," Vafaei added.

Bam and its Cultural Landscape is located on the southern edge of the Iranian high plateau, in Kerman Province, close to the Pakistan border. It's highly regarded as an outstanding example of an ancient fortified settlement.

According to UNESCO, the origins of the citadel can be traced back to the Achaemenid period (6th to 4th centuries BC) and even beyond. The ensemble was on crossroads of important trade routes as well in its heyday sometime between 7th to 11th centuries.

Yakhchals: Ancient structures used to make and preserve ice in deserts across Iran

Though they look like giant clay beehives, these structures in the deserts of Persia were used to make something much more needed and much harder to come by there than honey in ancient times: ice.

Yakhchals, ancient evaporation coolers, came into being around 400 BC. The giant conical structures allowed ice to be made and collected during the colder months and used throughout the year for things like preserving food and making faloodeh, a traditional Persian frozen dessert made with thin noodles and semi-frozen syrup.

Different design features kept different yakhchals cool, from spiral structures to wind towers and vents. Some yakhchals had holes near the bottom, to keep cool air flowing into the vast underground portion of



Picture depicts a mudbrick yakhchal in Yazd, central Iran.

the structure where the ice was made and kept, and holes near the top through which hot air would be funneled out.

Walls were often built to keep the water shaded as it was channeled into the yakhchals so it would freeze faster. Yakhchals also served as places to store ice that was brought down from nearby mountains and often food as well. The extremely thick waterproof and heat resistant walls were made of a special mixture of sand, clay, egg whites, lime, goat hair, and ash called sarooj.

Many of these monuments to ancient Persian ingenuity are still around today, hundreds of years later. One of the easiest to find is the one near the Narin Castle in Meybod, central Iran, but there are also some in Iranian cities like Yazd and Kerman. (Source: Atlas Obscura)

Want to take great travel pictures? Jimmy Chin has advice

The professional photographer and filmmaker Jimmy Chin, 43, originally began taking photos as a means to support his mountain-climbing habit. As an adventure photographer, he has since accompanied the climber Ed Viesturs and the filmmaker David Breashears to the top of Mount Everest, trekked unsupported across 300 miles of the Chang Tang Plateau in Tibet and was a member of the first American team to ski down from the top of Everest.

His work has been published in National Geographic and The New York Times Magazine, and his film "Meru," documenting his pioneering ascent up Meru Peak in the Himalayas with two other climbers, won the Audience Award at the Sundance Film Festival in 2015. The following are edited excerpts from a conversation with Mr. Chin.

Q: What do photography and adventure have in common?

A: There are similarities in the sense that you might have an objective to climb or to shoot and you need to do homework, to research, to prepare and to know the tools that are best suited for the job. On a more existential level, it's about taking risks and trying new things and problem-solving and finding new ways to approach something. In photography, it would be trying to get a photo no one's ever seen before. You have to have vision and be inspired.

Q: What's your approach to capturing the perfect image?

A: It's a mix. You have to have some ideas and a vision for certain images you want to capture, but you can't get so focused on the outcome that you miss what's right in

front of you. It's good to have an idea to get you out of bed and out the door to kind of give you some motivation. But some of the best work that I do is serendipitous or spontaneous, and with travel photography you need to be really open to trying different things, maybe having an idea and going out to capture it, but really looking around, even behind you. That's what makes it fun. It's about being a traveler and exploring, getting out of your comfort zone and looking at things in new ways, which is why we travel in the first place.

Q: What's the best way to get a subject to relax when photographing people?

A: It depends on how much time you have. The great photojournalists embed and commit time to creating that comfort and space. Some can do it in 30 seconds because of the way they move and who they are and their personality and how they put people at ease. It's ultimately about building trust, because you're totally moving into somebody's space. When you disappear to them, that's probably the most appropriate, nicest model of trust, when they've given in and let you do your thing. When you don't have as much time, you still need to build trust and rapport even if it's just eye contact and a smile. If you don't speak the language, be respectful. Oftentimes you can hold camera up and present it while looking at them as if to say, is it O.K. to shoot?

Q: What's the most versatile lens to carry?

A: If you want a little more latitude while traveling, a 24-70-millimeter lens is great. If you want a kit with only two



The photographer Jimmy Chin on a shoot in Turkey lenses and you're traveling a lot you can add a 70-200-millimeter. That gives you wide angle and telephoto. If I was traveling for a year and could only bring two lenses, that's what I would choose.

Q: Any favorite places that are highly photogenic?

A: I've spent incredible time in the Sahara and, of course, the Himalayas. Jackson, Wyo., where I live, is amazing and beautiful and it has a distinctly different look and feel in each season. There's winter versus summer, wildlife, adventure, climbing, skiing, kayaking. Because there are so many activities, there's a lot to shoot. It's kind of a stunning playground. That's the thing about travel. I'm basically always trying to get home. (Source: The New York Times)

China unveils design for next-gen maglev train

A Chinese technology company has announced it has begun research on a next-generation maglev train that could reach a theoretical top speed of 4,000 kilometers per hour, thereby cutting travel time between Shanghai and Beijing from the current 4.5 hours to just 15 minutes.

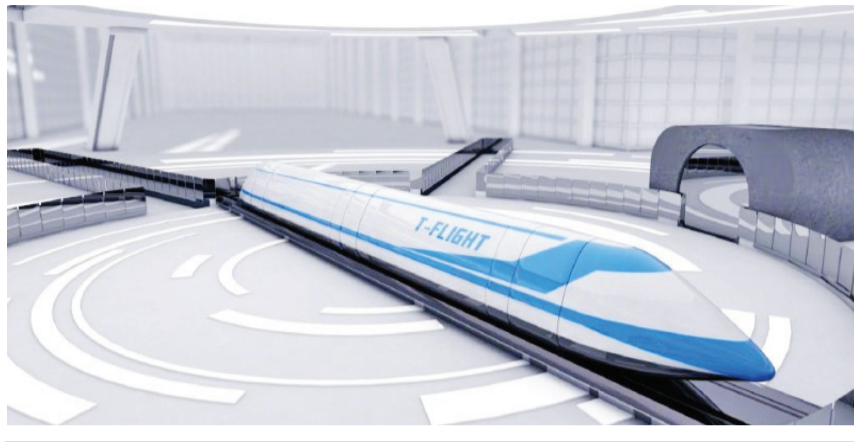
The China Aerospace Science and Industry Cooperation (CASIC) made the astounding announcement Wednesday, releasing a proof-of-concept video in which passenger capsules equipped with cutting-edge maglev technology travel inside vacuum tubes in order to reduce friction.

CASIC deputy general manager Liu Shiquan described the development of the new technology as being in separate stages, first making trains that can achieve a maximum speed of 1,000 kilometers per hour, then 2,000 kilometers per hour, and eventually 4,000.

■ A prototype train

Called "T-Flight," the prototype is less like a traditional train and more like a "bullet" propelled along the length of its journey by magnet levitation technology.

The video even provides a few details, notably that the passenger capsule is 35.8 meters long, 2.24 meters high and 2.12 meters wide. The capsule is not



Called "T-Flight," the prototype is less like a traditional train and more like a "bullet" propelled along the length of its journey by magnet levitation technology.

linked like a train to other capsules, and appears to hold maybe two dozen passengers at most.

China has already been working on a high-speed train that could reach potential speeds of 600 kilometers per hour. However, Chinese Academy of Engineering bullet train expert Liu Youmei recom-

mended that, under current conditions, high-speed trains should not exceed 400 kilometers per hour due to increasing operational costs, adding that ultra-fast trains should only be used for demonstrating new concepts and technologies rather than commercial operation.

If these plans seem too good to be

true, we'll need to remind ourselves of previous large-scale Chinese technological ambitions that crashed after soaring high on well-hyped ambitions.

■ High-speed trains

But even without considering the straddle bus and the Great Beijing Wheel, China has made some incredible claims involving its high-speed trains that haven't yet been followed through, namely that it was going to build an underwater tunnel to the USA as well as one underneath Mount Everest.

At the same time, China isn't shy about undertaking highly ambitious major engineering projects, to put it mildly. China is currently building a 12 kilometer-long tunnel underneath the Great Wall of China while also actively considering building a 2,300 kilometer-long high-speed rail route to the European Union that stretches through the entirety of Russia.

The CASIC announcement comes as China relaunches its "Rejuvenation" line of high-speed trains with a higher maximum speed of 350 kilometers per hour, making them the fastest in the world. Some reports suggest China may make its high-speed trains reach even faster speeds of up to 400 kilometers per hour.

(Source: thebeijing.com)

Why are some leaves massive and others minuscule?

There's the massive fan-like leaves of the palm, the skinny prongs of the fern, the mid-sized hand-shaped leaves of the buckeye, and more. But why leaves take such diverse forms have long remained a mystery to scientists.

Past researchers suggested that water availability and risk of overheating determines leaf size. But as Helen Briggs at the BBC reports, a new study published in the journal *Science* suggests it's a bit more complicated.

The idea of water availability and leaf shape can be traced to the 19th and early 20th century Danish botanist Eugenius Warming who hypothesized that high precipitation in the tropics allows things like palm fronds and banana leaves to grow to enormous sizes, writes Ian Wright, first author of the study, for *The Conversation*.

■ Large leaves

That idea was refined in the 1960s and 1970s when scientists figured out that large leaves can overheat in the summer. To prevent this from happening, they rely on transpiration cooling — the leaf-equivalent of working up a sweat.

But researchers still couldn't adequately explain everything, such as the abundance of large-leaf species that dominate in the searing heat of the tropics or the tiny leaves of plants who live in cooler parts of the world.

To sort out these contradictions, a global team of scientists analyzed the leaves of 7,670 plants from latitudes and

ecosystems all over Earth, according to a press release. By taking into consideration average daytime and nighttime temperatures, rainfall and humidity, the researchers found a series of rules that govern the maximum size of leaves.

■ A new framework

"We came up with a new framework to model the way leaves should vary in their temperature, in the relationship to the site climate," Wright tells Briggs. "What we've been able to show is over perhaps as much as half the world the overall limits to leaf size are much more set by the risk of freezing at night than the risk of overheating during the day."

As Alice Klein at *New Scientist* reports, avoiding nighttime freezing or daytime overheating is a balancing act between two factors: the amount of surface area a leaf has that it can use for transpiration (sweating) and the size of its boundary layer, an area of still air immediately surrounding the leaf that acts as insulation.

Because large leaves have thicker insulating boundary layers, it's more difficult for them to absorb heat at night, making them more susceptible to cold temperatures. The boundary layer also makes them unsuited for desert climates, where the insulation puts them at risk of daytime overheating. But large leaves can survive in the tropics because with abundant water they are able to take advantage of transpiration to cool off.

(Source: Smithsonian)



40th Round of Nationwide Holy Quran Competitions Kicks Off

The 40th round of Nationwide Holy Quran Competitions was inaugurated in Urmia at Hosseiniyeh of Sarallah on Sept. 2 in the presence of Hojjatolislam Mohammadi Leader's Representative and Head of Endowment and Charity Affairs Organization, Ayatollah Qoreysi Leading and Outstanding Interpreter of the Holy Quran, Representative of

people of West Azarbaijan Province in the Experts' Assembly, senior provincial managers and directors as well as a number of reciters, memorizers, juries and members of Quranic community of the country.

After recitation of some verses from the Holy Quran, the ceremony was performed by Hamed

Valizadeh international reciter of the Holy Quran, religious display of Hazrat Ebrahim, as directed by Seyyed Javad Hashemi.

It should be noted that the inaugural ceremony of 40th round of Nationwide Holy Quran Competitions can be received via Intl. Quran Radio and Quran Network channels, the report ended.

SAMSUNG Electronics Co. Unveils New Versions of Wearable Gadgets

SAMSUNG Electronics Company unveiled its new versions of three wearable gadgets as follows: Gear Sport (a beautiful and multifunctional watch designed for the fitness and resistant against water dubbed "waterproof"), Gear Fit2 Pro (an updated version of sports wristband with GPS connectivity and also smart capabilities) and Gear IconX (the second generation of SAMSUNG's wireless headphones).

The new series of Samsung devices

were designed to help users have a healthier and a more balanced life, the report added.

With regard to "Gear Sport" Device designed by Samsung Electronics Company, it is worth mentioning that "Gear Sport" is a beautiful multifunctional smart watch which is used for active lifestyle and a balance life.

Of the other specifications of this smart watch, it should be referred to: Get motivated to move more, eat better,

and live a healthy life. The Gear Sport tracks your fitness and diet, keeping you on the right path to reach your goals. It's as stylish as it is functional.

Smart watch makers seem to have figured out that its fitness tracking capabilities that will convince people to slap a smart device on their wrist. Samsung's embracing that trend whole-heartedly with the Gear Sport, a new addition to its smart watch line, the report ended.



Bank Pasargad and South Korea's Exim Bank Ink Cooperation Agreement

A long-term financing contract was inked between chief executives of Iran's Bank Pasargad and South Korea's Exim Bank in line with generating employment and helping improve the country's economy, the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

As one of top 12 banks in the country, Bank Pasargad is ready to finance infrastructural projects of domestic compa-

nies within the framework of a deal worth eight billion euro concluded between the two countries, the report added.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been drawn up according to a contract inked between Central Bank of Iran (CBI) and South Korea's Exim Bank.

Given the above issue, many development and production projects will be launched in the country as a result of

conclusion of MOU, the issue of which will leave very constructive and positive impact on country's economic growth.

It is obvious that positive and favorable performance of the bank in the years of operation has boosted rank of the bank in international level, the issue of which has been at the focal attention of many foreign finance and credit associations.

It is worth mentioning that management of the bank expresses its readiness to provide all foreign currency services such as visible Letters of Credit (L/Cs), foreign exchange services, dealing (buying and selling) currency accounts and also issuing various types of currency guarantees and services related to the export of goods, etc., the Public Relations Dept. of the bank ended.

Iranian researchers develop new herbal medication to treat bedsores

Iranian researchers have managed to develop a medicine, named the "New Derm" that could treat bedsores.

Millions of people worldwide catch numerous diseases on a daily basis most of whom, after undergoing a period of treatment, regain their health and come back home. However, those patients who are bedridden in hospital, or at home, for a while face the risk of developing bedsores, also known as pressure sores, and are required to think of finding a bed-sore treatment or prevention method.

Treatment Bedsores — also called pressure sores or pressure ulcers — are injuries to skin or underlying tissues resulting from prolonged and continuous pressure on the skin. People most at risk of developing bedsores and, thus, in need of bed-sore treatments are those with a medical condition that limits their ability to change positions, requires them to use a wheelchair or confines them to a bed for a long time.

Bedsores occur due to pressure being applied to soft tissues resulting in the formation of clots in the capillaries carrying blood to the skin which, per se, leads to the formation of dead skin cells. Annually, 2.5 million people worldwide get bedsores. Pressure sores are painful and their medical treatment is very costly. Time is of the utmost importance for patients suffering from bedsores.

In case the bed-sore treatment period is lengthy, the ulcers may spread (from one area) to other areas and make the healing process very difficult.

The ointment contains herbal elements, with antibacterial and antifungal impacts as well as sore healing and damaged tissue reconstructing properties, which play a significant role in bed-sore treatment. process. (Source: ifpnews.com)

Are humans smarter than apes?

Humans have not fairly measured ape intelligence, so we don't really understand how smart they are, a team of researchers has asserted.

The authors claim that tests are biased such that they measure performance more than they measure actual aptitude, according to a paper in the journal *Animal Cognition*. Among the problems that make it difficult to test an ape's intelligence in an equitable manner to humans is how differently apes and humans are prepared for experiments — specifically in their background.

This team compares the difference between humans and apes to the differences between different groups of humans. With people, factors like health and education, tied to economics, play a role in how well someone performs on a test designed to measure intelligence.

"We now know that intellectual performance in our species is a function of gene-environment interactions: impoverished environments have systematically deleterious effects on mental development," the study says.

Similarly, people who are raised to be more familiar with certain concepts will perform better when tested on them.

This connects to apes because, for example, in some studies apes that had lived in isolation, in ways that would not give them much exposure to human non-verbal cues, were tested on their social skills against children who had lived their whole lives with exposure to those cues. Therefore the human children would be better versed in those social cues going into the experiment and have an advantage.

"Yet, today, researchers routinely report in the most prestigious journals claims that human children, even as young as 12 months of age, are inherently superior in social intelligence — the skilled negotiation of social interactions — to our nearest living relatives, the great apes," the researchers say. (Source: IBT)

Team finds 66-million-year-old triceratops fossil

A Colorado scientist says he's "over the moon" after a construction crew in the city of Thornton reportedly stumbled upon a triceratops fossil last week.



The construction workers were breaking ground for a new fire and police building when they encountered an obstruction in the dirt, *The Denver Post* reports. After a crew member pointed out that it could be a fossil, paleontologists from the Denver Museum of Nature and Science were called in to investigate.

Joe Seritch, the museum's curator of dinosaurs, arrived at the site Monday and discovered to his delight that the workers had indeed unearthed something remarkable.

"My heart was racing," Seritch said in a statement posted on the city of Thornton's website. "I realized it was a pretty important dinosaur find."

Seritch believes the crew uncovered parts of a skull and skeleton of a triceratops. He says it's "one of only three" triceratops skulls ever found in the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains. Most fossils found in the Front Range are about 10,000 to 12,000 years old, he said, but the bones discovered in Thornton appear to be much, much older.

"This dinosaur has been laying here for at least 66 million years," Seritch said. "I'm over the moon right now about this dinosaur fossil."

Construction at the fossil site has reportedly been halted as scientists search for any other fossils potentially awaiting discovery. "A lot of times (fossils) will be plowed up and they won't be recognized," Seritch said. "We're really lucky in this case that it was recognized as fossils and we got the call." (Source: Huffinton Post)

Man 'filmed slitting a kangaroo's throat' could face two years in prison for killing protected wildlife

A man allegedly filmed slitting a kangaroo's throat while his friend looked on and laughed has been charged with killing protected wildlife and could face up to two years in an Australian jail.

The video of the killing, which went viral on Chinese social media, shows a man with a large knife strolling up to the already injured kangaroo as it snarls and struggles to get to its feet.

In an act described as "abhorrent" by Australian officials, the man grabs the animal's tail, places his foot on its hind quarters and slashes at its neck about 18 times.

His friend, filming the killing on a smartphone, can be heard laughing. The man killing the kangaroo can reportedly be heard saying in Mandarin: "Just face it, that's your fate. Let me finish this as quickly as I can."

The video, thought to have been filmed somewhere in the Australian bush, closes with the man sitting down to rest from his exertions, his bloodstained knife clearly visible.

After the video was viewed almost 4 million times and Chinese internet users condemned the cruelty, officers from the Australian state of Victoria's Department of Environment Land Water and Planning (DELWP) arrested a 43-year-old man in Melbourne's eastern suburbs.

The man, arrested on Wednesday night and reported to be from Shenyang city in north-east China, has now been charged with one count of destroying protected wildlife, an offence which upon conviction carries a maximum penalty of two years in jail.

The DELWP issued a statement which revealed: "Evidence including firearms, knives and mobile phones was also seized from the property."

"The man was granted bail and will appear at Ringwood Magistrates Court at a later date."

DELWP Compliance Operations Manager Glenn Sharp added: "We take all alleged cases of animal cruelty very seriously."

"The wildlife offences captured in this video are particularly abhorrent."

"We'd like to thank members of the public who came forward with information about the alleged offences and enabled us to act quickly in response."

The kangaroo killed in the video appears to have been an Eastern Grey Kangaroo, a species which along with all other native Australian wildlife is protected in the state of Victoria under the Wildlife Act 1975.

Under the act, the penalties associated with killing or destroying protected wildlife range from \$7,928 Australian dollars (£4,861) to \$38,056 (£23,335) and/or six to 24 months' imprisonment.

(Source: Independent)

LEARN ENGLISH

Soccer

A: Welcome back, soccer fans. My name is Rick Fields and, as always, I am joined by my commentating **wingman**, Bob Copeland.

B: And we're **on the brink** of soccer history today, as Ecuador and Brazil are tied one-one as we begin the second half of the 2022 World Cup!

A: The ref calls the players for the **kick off**, and here we go! Ecuador quickly passes the ball to the midfield, but, ohhh, it's **out of bounds**.

B: That will be a **throw in** for Brazil. Adriano has the ball and makes a long pass to Robinho, and the ref has called him **offside**.

A: **No question about it**. He was offside **by a mile!** We have a **goal kick** for Ecuador. Edison Mendez heads it to Valenica, he shoots! **Deflected** by the **defender** and we have a **corner kick**.

B: Delgado takes the corner. We have a foul! Oh no, Dida, the goalkeeper, has **fouled** the Ecuadorian player! He gets a yellow card and that will be a **penalty kick!**

A: This is the perfect opportunity for Ecuador to get ahead in this match and become World Champions! He gets ready for the kick. He shoots! And he...

Key vocabulary

wingman: a person who provides help, support, or protection

on the brink: at a critical point

tied: having the same score

kick off: the first movement or kick of the ball to begin the game

out of bounds: outside the area that is allowed for play

throw in: action of throwing the ball onto the field with your hands to restart the game

offside: a position on the opponent's part of the field where you are not allowed to be

no question about it: there is no doubt, it is correct

by a mile: a lot

goal kick: when the goalie kicks the ball to re-start play

deflect: if someone or something deflects something that is moving, or if it deflects, it turns in a different direction

defender: person who prevents the other team from getting near the net

corner kick: when a player kicks the ball from a corner after a penalty

foul: illegal action committed against a player

penalty kick: a kick against only the goalkeeper as a reward for a foul

Supplementary vocabulary

goalkeeper: person who prevents the ball from going into the net (BrE)

match: game (BrE)

pitch: soccer field (BrE)

championship: final game in a series that determines the overall winner

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Candlelight tribute held for schoolgirls killed in bus accident

SOCIETY TEHRAN — People **d e s k** lit up candles Friday night in sympathy with families of the schoolgirls who were killed as the bus carrying them rolled over early morning the same day.

The bus with 45 female students on-board heading from the city of Bandar Abbas to the city of Darab, southern Iran, crashed at about 4 a.m. local time, killing 7 students, a teacher, and the driver's assistant.

Some received outpatient care and didn't sustain any serious injuries, however, 13 were transferred to the hospital.

According to the deputy health minister Iraj Harirchi, unfortunately one of the students suffered major injuries to the face, two lost limbs, and two others picked up spinal injuries.

As per the police report, the crash was caused by the drowsy driver.

The time of the accident and the fatigued driver's incompetence in controlling the bus which were the main causes of the crash have raised some questions. This has urged the traffic police and the Education Ministry to decide to draw up new guidelines regarding students' use of transport fleet.

Over a phone conversation with Education Minister Mohammad Bat'haei, President Hassan Rouhani has called for immediate action and following up on the issue.

"We would certainly find those at fault and we do not overlook any mistakes,"



the minister said.

As Harirchi has put, some 15,900 people die in road crashes annually in Iran and about 768,000 get injured, half of

them are hospitalized. "In other words, 0.5 percent of Iranians are admitted to hospitals due to road accidents per annum," he added.

He further regretted the fact that 70 to 90 percent of the accidents are caused by human errors and that one individual die in an accident every 30 minutes.

UK citizens are taking air pollution monitoring into their own hands

A growing number of citizens are monitoring local air quality because of fears official figures are not capturing "dangerous" levels of pollution.

The environmental charity Friends of the Earth has said 70 local groups are now using their testing kits and noted a "surprising" increase in people taking monitoring into their own hands.

Oliver Hayes, a Friends of the Earth air pollution campaigner, said:

"We've been surprised by the high demand for our air monitoring kits. 4,000 people have used them in less than a year, uncovering worrying levels of pollution in urban and rural areas alike."

"Most people seem understandably keen to learn about air quality where they live, work, or where their children go to school. But more than 70 local Friends of the Earth groups have used multiple testing kits to uncover a more detailed picture of pollution, often in places lacking much in the way of official monitoring stations."

Dr. Benjamin Barratt, senior lecturer in air quality science at King's College London, agreed that the numbers doing this had risen.

"Air pollution has moved from being seen as an environmental concern to a health concern but it's both, of course," he said. "As a health concern people are more worried about their own families and their neighborhoods so that has led to a rise in people monitoring air pollution for those reasons."

Barratt says he hopes local work, if done correctly, can help inform decision-making and provide evidence about local situations.

Air Apparent UK, a project in Bristol monitoring local area quality, has been running their work through the Luftdaten website, an open data project that gives advice on how to get monitoring kits and lets people upload their findings online.

Sam Prince, 38, from Bristol said that three UK sites



feature on the website at the moment but he has built a further six that will appear soon, and a Leeds resident is also building a monitor that will be added in coming months.

Prince said: "A growing number are doing it ... not necessarily in the same way. I know a guy in Bristol who bought a wearable monitor from the US for \$200 and that lets him cycle through Bristol on his commute and shows the pollution levels."

He added: "More people are tracking air quality partly because there is very little local data ... You'd think that in a first world country we would be well covered with sensors but there is hardly anything. The air pollution could be good where I am now and 300m down the street it could be bad."

"The data from the government is useless as far as I am concerned ... so people are trying to collect more evidence to show the big problem of air quality. What I want to build is a map showing the pollution levels all over Bristol so you could avoid a certain street or area, for example, if you were cycling to work."

Other local groups who have started monitoring air

quality include Clean Air Eastbourne in East Sussex and Clean Air Chorley in Lancashire. Residents in Lancing and Shoreham, West Sussex, have also teamed up to explore air pollution levels.

Another concerned group of Catford residents set up their own air monitoring tubes in July 2017 and say the results show "dangerous" levels of pollution.

Ted Burke of Clean Air Catford said they found that the air pollution levels were almost double the legal level in some locations in the area, including next to a number of primary schools.

"We have noted dangerous levels of pollution in some areas. We are now calling on the council to sort it out, want to work with them and know more about what they are doing already," Burke said.

In Eastbourne, local resident Robert Price said it was finding out that his home town was among the most polluted in the country that got him monitoring air pollution.

"I wanted to get my own data to see if the air was bad where I live. I've been running it for a month now, and three of the past seven days alone have breached World Health Organization guidelines. UK/EU limits for particulate air pollution require a year's worth of data."

He added: "Since starting monitoring the air quality where I live, numerous people have been in touch via social media asking how to get involved. I formed Clean Air Eastbourne, and members have contributed to buy another seven sensors to put up around the town."

Price said that he was motivated by concerns of what air pollution might be doing to his young family and their health. "We need data to know what the condition of the air we breathe is like ... If this data isn't being tracked, how can we know if there is a problem or not? Building and running our own sensors helps give us this information. This is a matter of vital importance and if the government won't monitor it properly we must step in."

(Source: The Guardian)

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

روحانی: محیط زیست دچار مشکل شود، سلامت جامعه و امنیت اجتماعی در خطر می‌افتد

به گزارش ایسنا، حجت الاسلام و المسلمین دکتر حسن روحانی روز یکشنبه و همزمان با آغاز هفته منابع طبیعی و آبخیزداری و روز درختکاری، پس از کاشت یک نهال، روز درختکاری را مناسبتی حائز اهمیت توصیف کرد و گفت: اگر محیط زیست ما دچار مشکل شود، سلامت جامعه و مسایل اجتماعی و حتی امنیت اجتماعی در خطر می‌افتد.

رئیس جمهوری تصریح کرد: امروز حیات ما وابسته به محیط زیست است و موضوع محیط زیست و حفاظت از آن دیگر به هیچ وجه مسأله‌ای تشریفاتی و فرعی نیست.

روحانی با بیان اینکه امروز فشار زیادی روی منابع آب، زمین و هوا وجود دارد که باید این فشار از روی منابع طبیعی برداشته شود، خاطر نشان کرد: راه کم کردن این فشار، بهره‌گیری از تکنولوژی‌های جدید، اعمال مدیریت صحیح و ارتقاء بهره‌وری است.

ENGLISH PROVERB

Good things come to him who waits

■ **Explanation:** if you are patient you will get what you want

■ **For example:** Fred: Why is it taking you so long to get dinner ready? Can't you hurry up? Ellen: Good things come to him who waits.

PHRASAL VERB

Do without

■ **Meaning:** to live or do something without a particular thing

■ **For example:** I don't have any sugar so you'll have to do without.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Best of one's ability

■ **Explanation:** when someone does something to the best of their ability, they do it as well as they possibly can

■ **For example:** I felt nervous all through the interview, but I replied to the questions the best of my ability.

Over 2,600 homes burned in Rohingya-majority Rakhine

UN suspends food aid to refugees in Myanmar

1→ The report blamed the so-called Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), which is said to be defending Rohingya Muslims, for the fires in Rakhine villages.

The Rohingya Muslims fleeing the violence to Bangladesh, however, insist that a campaign of arson and killings by the Myanmar army aimed at forcing them out of the country is responsible for the carnage and destruction in the area.

New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW), which analyzed satellite imagery and accounts from Rohingya fleeing to Bangladesh, also said Myanmar's forces deliberately set the fires.

"New satellite imagery shows the total destruction of a Muslim village, and prompts serious concerns that the level of devastation in northern Rakhine state may be far worse than originally thought," said the organization's Deputy Asia Director Phil Robertson.

Nearly 58,600 Rohingya Muslims have fled into neighboring Bangladesh from Myanmar, according to the UN refugee agency, as aid workers there struggle to cope.

The ARSA claimed responsibility for last week's coordinated attacks on Myanmar army posts, which led to further clashes and a major clampdown by the country's notorious military forces.

The skirmishes and ensuing army crackdown have killed at least 400 people and led to evacuation of more than 11,700 "ethnic residents" from the area, government officials said, referring to the non-Muslim population of northern Rakhine.

It marks a dramatic escalation of a



conflict that has simmered since October, when similar but much smaller attacks on military posts prompted a brutal army response dogged by allegations of rights abuses.

Meanwhile, new arrivals in Bangladesh carrying their belongings in sacks were setting up crude shelters or trying to squeeze into available shelters or homes of local residents near the Naf river separating Myanmar and Bangladesh on Saturday.

"The existing camps are near full capacity and numbers are swelling fast. In the coming days there needs to be more space," said UNHCR regional spokeswoman Vivian Tan, emphasizing that more refugees were expected.

The Rohingya are denied citizenship in Myanmar and considered as illegal immi-

grants, despite their roots that date back centuries. Bangladesh is also growing increasingly hostile to Rohingya Muslims, more than 400,000 of whom live in the impoverished South Asian country after fleeing Myanmar since the early 1990s.

Food aid suspended

The development comes as the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) has suspended aid works in Myanmar's Rakhine State amid the intensifying violence and a surging death toll among the Rohingya Muslim community.

"We are coordinating with the authorities to resume distributions for all affected communities as soon as possible, including for any people newly affected by the current unrest," the WFP said in a Saturday statement.

The suspension of food assistance op-

erations would affect 250,000 internally displaced and "other most vulnerable populations," the statement added.

Aid agencies, including the WFP, are routinely accused of a pro-Rohingya bias by government officials.

The government has also accused WFP of allowing their rations to fall into the hands of Rohingya "fighters."

The WFP has denied such allegations.

Genocide

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan says the killing of hundreds of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar during the latest wave of violence that erupted a week ago was "genocide."

Almost 400 people have died in Myanmar's Rakhine state since the country's army stepped up a military crackdown on the Rohingya last week, making it the worst wave of violence against the persecuted minority in decades, new official figures have shown.

"There is a genocide there. They remain silent towards this... All those looking away from this genocide carried out under the veil of democracy are also part of this massacre," Erdogan said in Istanbul on Friday.

The Turkish president said the issue would be discussed in detail in the upcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly in mid-September in New York.

Erdogan's comments came as UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres called on Myanmar's military forces to show "restraint," warning that a "humanitarian catastrophe" was looming in the west of the country.

(Source: agencies)

Syrian army gains in ISIL's last central Syria bastion

Syria's army and its allies have advanced further against the ISIL (Daesh) terrorist group in the central part of the Arab country.

The joint forces, backed by Russian airpower, have been pushing against the terrorists near the main road linking the cities of Homs and Aleppo in order to secure the road. On Friday, they ousted Daesh from the village of Uqairabat in the area.

The War Media, associated with the Lebanese resistance movement of Hezbollah, whose fighters have been helping the Syrian army, said on Saturday that the combined push succeeded in liberating more villages there.

The area is currently the scene of intense fighting, the outlet added.

Facing intense pressure, Daesh has been retreating to the western Syrian city of Dayr al-Zawr. The terrorist group has been moving its members as well as heavy weaponry to the area to prevent it from recapture by the Syrian government in the face of crushing defeats elsewhere in Syria as well as in neighboring Iraq.

On Tuesday, the Russian Defense Ministry said the terrorists' movement toward Dayr al-Zawr showed Daesh recognized "the fact that the staging area around Dayr al-Zawr is the last stronghold of the international terrorists on Syrian soil."

Daesh started a campaign of terror against Syria and Iraq in 2013 and 2014. Since two years ago, however, it has suffered debilitating blows at the hands of national armies in the two countries.

Iran has been offering advisory military support to both the Syrian and Iraqi governments. Russia, too, has been assisting Damascus by launching an aerial bombardment campaign in Syria.

The areas liberated from Daesh terrorists measure roughly 3,000 square kilometers (1158 square miles) and straddle the provinces of Homs, Dayr al-Zawr, and Hama, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported on Friday.

The recaptured territory comprises the strategic al-Beshri mountain range, a strategic stronghold for-



merly held by Daesh terrorists.

Having established its firepower over the mountains, the Syrian army can now step up its attacks against the Takfiri terrorists in many towns and villages in Dayr al-Zawr's western countryside.

(Source: SANA)

'Send Merkel home', says right-wing rival in constituency battle

Vowing to "shove her off the throne", Leif-Erik Holm of the hard-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) is mounting a robust challenge to Chancellor Angela Merkel in her constituency as she seeks re-election on Sept. 24.

Merkel, 63, has held the northeastern district bordering the Baltic Sea since she entered parliament in 1990, though she grew up in Templin - due south and in the next state. Holm, 47, a self-styled "local boy", says he wants to "send Merkel home".

"Merkel was very popular here, that's true. But times have changed," he told Reuters, saying her decision in 2015 to leave German borders open to more than a million migrants would cost her. "People are asking 'what is she doing?'"

Merkel won the constituency with 56 percent of the vote at the last national election, in 2013. Now, the AfD is emboldened in the district after beating her conservatives into third place in the wider northeastern region of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern last year.

"Merkel has failed in a lot of people's eyes and they are looking for an alternative," said Holm, a former presenter at a local radio station.

Merkel's conservatives enjoy a hand-



some lead over rivals nationally and Germany's mixed electoral system means that even in the unlikely scenario Holm does beat her, she will still win a parliamentary seat from a list of candidates who top up those elected directly from constituencies.

But second place is a real possibility for Holm, said Jan Mueller at Rostock University: "He cuts a moderate profile."

AfD co-chair Frauke Petry says the constituency is "a prestige target" for the party. Marking it as her turf, Merkel spent a full day touring the district on Thursday, promising no repeat of the 2015 refugee influx and taking every opportunity to pose for 'selfie' photos with voters and their children.

As she made her way through a crowd of some 200 people for a rally in the picturesque town of Greifswald, a plane flew

overhead trailing a banner reading: "Vote AfD". When she spoke, a handful of protesters tried to drown her out with whistles.

"I don't think Germany's future will be built with whistles -- that isn't going to work," said Merkel, appealing to the crowd to vote her in for another four years.

"I need your support!" she said to loud applause.

Salim Jarrah, 42, who came to Germany from Lebanon 21 years ago and runs a restaurant in the town, said Merkel was doing a good job of running the country.

"Who could do better?" Jarrah, now a German citizen, told Reuters after presenting Merkel with flowers. "She's likeable."

In Rovershagen, some 50 miles (80 km) to the west, Merkel was met with a more hostile reception when she arrived for a walkabout at a shopping center.

"Merkel must go!" shouted one protester. "Go home, traitor!" said another.

Hartmut Jahnholz, an AfD supporter from nearby Rostock, said she had not fulfilled her oath to protect the German people.

"Just the opposite," he said in Rovershagen. "She opened the borders, that's all she's done."

(Source: Reuters)

Man 'filmed slitting a kangaroo's throat' could face two years in prison for killing protected wildlife

12→ Under the act, the penalties associated with killing or destroying protected wildlife range from \$7,928 Australian dollars (£4,861) to \$38,056 (£23,335) and/or six to 24 months' imprisonment.

In common with many other parts of Australia, the Victoria State Government does allow kangaroos to be killed in areas where they have become a crop pest or pose a threat to humans because of issues like the risk of traffic accidents.

Such culling, however, can only be carried out where non-lethal control methods are considered ineffective or impractical. And in Victoria anyone seeking to control kangaroos on their property - either lethally or non-lethally - must apply to the state government for an "Authority to Control Wildlife".

The Victoria State Government also stipulates that where killing is necessary "Shooting is considered to be the most

effective and humane method" and should be done "in accordance with the National Code of Practice for the Humane Shooting of Kangaroos and Wallabies".

In Australia as a whole there are an estimated 500 million kangaroos in the wild. Human intervention including land clearance has resulted in an abundance of grass and a relative absence of predators, allowing the kangaroo population

to grow to the point where many farmers regard them as a pest.

Official statistics show that more than 1.5 million kangaroos were killed in 2015, and in 2013 it was estimated that about 90 million kangaroos and wallabies had been lawfully killed in the previous 20 years, with some of the meat being sold in supermarkets or restaurants.

(Source: Independent)

Is Liberia's Sirleaf really standing up for women?

8→ The over glorification of Sirleaf as a feminist icon is particularly troubling since her 12-year presidency has actually served the interests of a small, elite group of women and men in politics and thus upheld long-standing patriarchal norms in Liberia.

This is in part due to Sirleaf's lukewarm response to a gender equity in politics bill similar to the ones that propelled women in Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa to high public office. When in 2010 the Liberian women's legislative caucus sponsored an act mandating that women occupy at least 30 percent of political party leadership with a trust fund established to finance their electoral campaigns, Sirleaf did not actively support the proposed law and it was never ratified. When a less radical bill allotting five seats for women in special legislative constituencies was rejected as «unconstitutional» by largely male legislators this year, Sirleaf remained conspicuously silent.

In high-level political appointments, Sirleaf has also failed women. Although she hired a few female technocrats for executive positions in previous years, only four of her 21 cabinet officials are women, with the strategic ministries of finance, public works, education and commerce led by relatively inexperienced and underqualified men.

Women's empowerment crusade

Despite these glaring missteps, much has been touted about Sirleaf's crusade for women's empowerment before and after assuming the presidency, with a Nobel Peace Prize win in 2011 serving as the ultimate stamp of approval.

Sirleaf's cheerleaders may have some, but not complete, cause to celebrate. Her administration has built or renovated hundreds of markets across the country for thousands of female informal traders called «market women» - the Liberian president's largest voting constituency.

Sirleaf has also instituted policies to protect women and girls from male aggression - including the implementation of the most comprehensive anti-rape law in Africa, with the establishment of a fast-track special court to deal specifically with gender-based violence.

Despite the existence of the court, however, there remain gaps in access to justice for Liberian women and girls, including the lack of viable forensic facilities. Liberian authorities' recent failure to swiftly investigate and prosecute the alleged rape of a 13-year-old girl by a sitting member of the national legislature is a clear example of the Sirleaf administration's inability to address sexual violence.

Liberia's dual legal system - customary and statutory - has also presented significant challenges in implementing the rape law. Furthermore, a decade after the court was set up to expedite gender-based violence cases, it remains in the capital, Monrovia, and inaccessible to most women across the country.

Moreover, the person nominated by Sirleaf in May and approved by the legislator to head the court, Serena Garlawolu, has gone on record endorsing female genital mutilation (FGM), saying the practice «is not a violation of anyone's rights culturally». Liberian women's rights activists petitioned to criminalize the harmful procedure, but the proposed ban was omitted from a recently passed Domestic Violence Act.

While Sirleaf's record on socioeconomic empowerment of women remains contested, her record on enhancing the political stature of Liberian women is woefully inadequate. Her brand of femocracy - a term coined by Nigerian feminist scholar Amina Mama - has severely stifled women's political participation.

Mama makes an important distinction between feminism and femocracy, arguing that while feminism attempts to shatter the political glass ceiling, femocracy deliberately keeps it intact. Her 1995 preoccupation with African first ladies as femocrats remains relevant now that Africa can boast of women presidents, including Sirleaf and former Malawian head of state Joyce Banda.

The over-glorification of Sirleaf as a feminist icon is particularly troubling since her 12-year presidency has actually served the interests of a small, elite group of women and men in politics and thus upheld long-standing patriarchal norms (pdf) in Liberia. This is particularly evident in Sirleaf's defense of nepotism (she has appointed three of her sons to top government positions), failure in fighting corruption and continuous recycling of mostly male government officials. Other development challenges which have intersectional feminist linkages to women's abilities to participate fully in politics at community and national levels have either been compromised or ignored, including the right to education for young women and girls free of sexual coercion and exploitation.

Having recently gone on record rejecting feminism as «extremism», Sirleaf has publicly distanced herself from the very movement that got her elected in the first place. In her 2005 campaign, Sirleaf aggressively evoked her gender as an alternative to the previous throng of authoritarian and brutal male leaders. Twelve years later, the euphoria of electing Liberia's first female head of state - twice - has completely lost its luster.

Sirleaf and others like her have demonstrated that a woman's assumption of the highest political office in a country does not inevitably result in gender equity. Her legacy on women's political participation, in particular, is characterized by an individualistic approach that betrays the hard-fought gains made by women's rights movements across the globe.

Though the international media machinery continues to hoist Sirleaf up as the matron of women's rights, she is far less deserving of this title. That Liberia currently has no viable female presidential candidate is a glaring indictment of her two terms in office.

In a recent presidential debate, four male candidates presented very concerning responses to questions about how they would address gender-based violence in Liberia. If the first female president in Africa was not able to resolve this quagmire, we have little confidence that the bevy of men vying for the presidency will succeed.

(Source: Aljazeera)

Mexico qualify for World Cup with win over Panama

Mexico became the first CONCACAF side to qualify for the Russia World Cup on Friday when an Hirving Lozano goal gave them a 1-0 win over Panama at the Azteca stadium.

They secured the points thanks to the 51st minute substitute, who scored with a header just two minutes after replacing Juergen Damm.

"I got the chance to score and were now in the World Cup finals," Lozano said. "I feel great. We've achieved our objective, now we need to keep working."

The Mexicans lead the six-team group with 17 points with three games to play and cannot now finish outside the top three spots that guarantee a place in Russia next June.

The Mexicans are three points ahead of second-placed Costa Rica and nine points clear of the United States and Honduras.

The U.S. and Honduras meet on Tuesday, which guarantees that Mexico can not be overtaken for one of the top three places in the group.

The fourth-placed team goes into a play-off with a side from the Asian confederation.

The qualification is Mexico's seventh in succession and 16th overall, more than any other countries bar Brazil, Germany, Italy and Argentina.

The team managed by Colombian Juan Carlos Osorio navigated the 'Hexagonal group' unbeaten after seven games and although they have failed to score many goals they have conceded just two and never looked in danger of missing out.

"The initial objective was to reach the World Cup finals without any frights," assistant coach Luis Pompillo Paez said in reference to their struggle four years ago when they qualified only after beating New Zealand in an inter-continental playoff.

(Source: Reuters)

Messi contract under threat after terrible Barca transfer window

Barcelona must convince Lionel Messi they are ready to spend in future transfer windows or risk the player not signing his new contract.

Messi's contract expires next summer and, while he has verbally agreed to sign a new, the Argentine is yet to put pen to paper.

Manchester City were linked with a £275million move for Messi earlier this summer.

That deal never happened and Messi is said to be keen to remain at Barca.

However, he is far from impressed at how the Nou Camp club handled the transfer window.

According to Spanish newspaper El Pais, Messi could stall on signing the new contract until he is given assurances that Barca will strengthen in future windows.

The club reluctantly sold Neymar to PSG in a £200m deal last month but struggled to reinvest the funds.

Ousmane Dembele came in as their club-record signing at £138m. But Barca failed to sign Philippe Coutinho, Marco Verratti, Kylian Mbappe and Angel Di Maria.

The club only won the Spanish cup last season, missing out on the title and Champions League to rivals Real Madrid.

El Pais claim Messi will not sign the new contract if he is told that Barca aren't looking to invest heavily in the playing squad.

(Source: Daily Star)

I'd rather watch football, says dejected Isner after U.S. Open exit

John Isner would rather spend his nights watching American football than follow the progress of his last remaining compatriot Sam Querrey at the U.S. Open.

The 10th seeded American, who was knocked out 6-4 6-3 7-6(5) in the third round on Friday by German Mischa Zverev, also added he was baffled at his poor form at night in his home grand slam.

"I struggle playing at night at this tournament," Isner told reporters. "I don't think I've ever won a match at night here. Haven't lost many matches in the day, so... I don't know. It sucks. You want to play better out there. I just didn't."

Isner, who had treatment on a sore neck, never looked comfortable on Arthur Ashe Stadium against an opponent who bothered him by rushing to the net.

"It's what he does. He makes it tough. I'm not Djokovic or Murray hitting passing shots or something," the 32-year-old said. "So it's tough. Very frustrating, for sure."

Querrey is now the last American in the men's draw and Isner said he would not be following his compatriot's progress.

"I'd rather watch football," he said bluntly.

(Source: Reuters)

Madrid confirm Ceballos suffered neck sprain against Italy U21

Real Madrid have confirmed midfielder Dani Ceballos suffered a neck strain during Spain Under-21's clash with Italy on Friday.

Ceballos left the pitch in the second half of the 3-0 win in Toledo after a heavy challenge, and was taken to hospital after reportedly feeling sick and dizzy.

The 21-year-old underwent mandatory tests which showed he had suffered a minor neck injury.

Ceballos will travel with his team-mates back to Madrid on Saturday and his condition will continue to be monitored over the next 48 hours.

Albert Celades' side are due to meet Estonia in a European Under-21 Championship qualifier on Tuesday in Tallinn, but it remains unclear whether Ceballos will travel.

Since his move to Madrid from Real Betis in July, Ceballos has made one substitute appearance for Zinedine Zidane's side - in the Supercopa de Espana second leg.

(Source: Goal)

Paris-St Germain investigated by Uefa over Financial Fair Play

Uefa has opened a formal investigation into Paris St-Germain as part of its "ongoing monitoring" of clubs under Financial Fair Play (FFP) regulations.

European football's governing body introduced FFP 'break-even' rules in 2013, requiring clubs to balance their spending with their revenue.

PSG more than doubled the world record transfer fee when they spent 222m euros (£200m) to sign Neymar last month.

They have signed Kylian Mbappe on loan, and could pay £165.7m for him in 2018.

PSG have been owned by the Gulf state of Qatar, via its Qatar Sports Investments fund, since 2011.

The French club made a profit of 10m euros (£9.2m) on revenue of 520.9m euros (£389.6m at the time of conversion) in the 2015-16 financial year, according to the most recent figures published by Deloitte.

The six-time French champions have failed to meet FFP rules before - receiving a fine, a spending cap and only being allowed to register 21 players for the Champions League in 2014.

Uefa's FFP regulations were approved in 2010 and the first assessments began the following year.

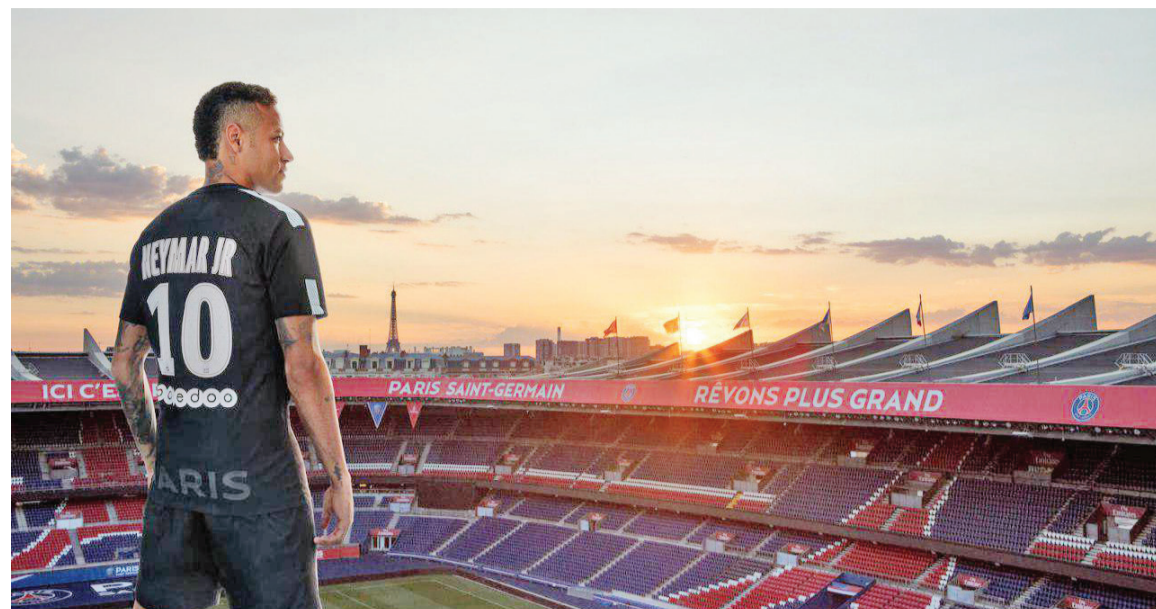
The 'break-even' element states clubs can spend 30m euros more than they earn over a three-year period.

A Uefa statement said the investigation into PSG would "focus on the compliance of the club with the break-even requirement, particularly in light of its recent transfer activity".

It added: "In the coming months, the investigatory chamber of the Uefa club financial control body will regularly meet in order to carefully evaluate all documentation pertaining to this case.

"Uefa considers financial fair play to be a crucial governance mechanism which aims to ensure the financial sustainability of European club football."

In a statement PSG said: "The club is surprised by this



approach given that it has constantly kept Uefa informed about the financial impact of all players' operations carried out this summer, even though it wasn't obliged to do so. The club is very confident in its ability to demonstrate that it will fully comply with Financial Fair Play rules for the fiscal year 2017-2018.

"Deputy CEO Jean-Claude Blanc met with UEFA experts including Andrea Traverso, responsible for Uefa Financial Fair Play, for more than three hours on 23 August at Paris St-Germain's headquarters, where he demonstrated that the operations carried out with FC Barcelona and in progress at that time with AS Monaco followed the rules of Financial Fair Play for the financial year 2017-2018.

"On 31 August, the club's general management again

had exchanges with UEFA Financial Fair Play management to provide a more detailed account of how the transaction with AS Monaco would be integrated into the club's accounts for this season, in terms of amortization and payroll, in compliance with French accounting standards.

"Furthermore, as for the summer of 2017, the club has already completed outgoing player transactions that helped improve club results by more than 104 million euros for the 2017/2018 season.

"The club also reminds, if necessary, that it has under contract many high valued players allowing the club to generate very significant capital gains in the next two transfer windows (January and June) of 2018."

(Source: BBC)

Cristiano Ronaldo net worth: You'll be shocked by size of footballer's fortune

Cristiano Ronaldo is one of the most famous football players in the world and currently plays for Real Madrid, but not only is the Portuguese professional well known, he is very well paid - although you may still be shocked by the sporting star's fortune.

Cristiano Ronaldo, 32, earns a very generous £30.8million (\$40million) salary a year.

He has played professionally since his teenage years, commanding a high salary from the beginning.

The then Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson saw Ronaldo play in 2003 and signed him to the club, making him the first Portuguese player to join the team.

His first contract was for one year, and he commanded £9.5million (\$12.24million).

In 2007 he signed a five year £23million (\$31 million) extension with Man United which would pay him roughly £92,000 (\$120,000) per week. This contract made him the highest paid member in the team's history.

Ronaldo stayed with Manchester United until 2009, when he headed over to his current team Real Madrid on a

lucrative contract.

He was paid £19million (\$25million) a year, although this has since risen significantly according to CelebrityNetWorth.com.

But it is off the pitch that Ronaldo has managed to really bump up his already considerable fortune.

In November 2016, it was announced he had signed a \$1billion (£772million) lifetime contract with Nike.

Specific terms of the deal aren't known but it is rumoured Ronaldo received a £77million (\$100million) signing bonus.

On top of this, he has endorsement deals with Tag Heuer, Saco Brothers (a suit company) and Monster headphones.

He also works with Armani, replacing David Beckham as their male face, and Castrol, Coca Cola, KFC, Emirates and Konami.

So what is his net worth? According to CelebrityNetWorth.com, the soccer ace is worth £308million (\$400million).

This makes him the richest active football players in the world, beating others such as Messi and Neymar.

Sport is one of the most lucrative careers in the world, and as well as football, boxing can net stars millions.

(Source: Express)



Barca put off by Coutinho's 200 million euro price tag

Barcelona abandoned their hopes of signing Philippe Coutinho from Liverpool after the Merseyside club demanded 200 million euros for the Brazil attacking midfielder, the Liga side's director Albert Soler said on Saturday.

The Spanish transfer window shut on Friday night, with Barcelona failing to add to their signings of Ousmane Dembele, Nelson Semedo, Gerard Deulofeu and Paulinho, despite coach Ernesto Valverde stating publicly he wanted a stronger squad after losing Neymar to Paris St Germain for a world record fee of 222 million euros.

According to reports in the Spanish media, Barca made a late bid to try and land Angel Di Maria from PSG although their main target remained Coutinho, who Liverpool coach Jurgen Klopp repeatedly insisted was not for sale.

"Late last night Liverpool priced the player we wanted at 200 million euros, and we decided we would not do it," Soler told a news conference on Saturday.

"It's a sign of the new era of football, one which isn't led by clubs. Something has to change, we won't play along with

this new way of understanding football. We didn't want to risk the patrimony of the club, a club of 150,000 members which needs to be managed coherently and responsibly.

"We are in a market where you pay 50 million for a goalkeeper. We will not play along with a market that may not have lost its way entirely, but something has changed. This board will not put the club at risk."

Liverpool could not immediately be reached for comment.

Soler said Barca's main problem in trying to acquire new players was that other clubs were trying to get more money out of them following Neymar's world record sale.

He also said football was changing as now wealthy countries, rather than the clubs themselves, were calling the shots.

"PSG came to us with 222 million (for Neymar) and that meant everyone knew we had money. When you go to the market and you have a lot of money, the demands made of you are extortionate. We found ourselves in unbelievable situations," added Soler.

(Source: Eurosport)



Maria Sharapova hits back at Caroline Wozniacki after win

Maria Sharapova said she would "play in the parking lot" if required after winning her third match on Arthur Ashe Stadium at the US Open.

The Russian, 30, beat 18-year-old American Sofia Kenin 7-5 6-2 in the third round in New York.

Fifth seed Caroline Wozniacki had been critical of the decision to put Sharapova on the stadium court as she needed a wildcard after a doping ban.

"I don't make the schedule," said Sharapova, the 2006 champion.

"I'm a pretty big competitor. If you put me out in the parking lot of Queens in New York City, I'm happy to play there.

"That's not what matters to me. All that matters to me is I'm in the fourth round. Yeah, I'm not sure where she is..."

Former world number one Wozniacki was beaten in the second round on Wednesday, having been scheduled on court five and later moved to court 17.

Sharapova has played all three matches on Arthur Ashe Stadium, finding her form in the second set against Kenin to reach the last 16.

She is playing her first Grand Slam event for 19 months after receiving a wildcard into the main draw, having returned from a 15-month doping suspension in April.



Injuries meant she had played just one match since May before Flushing Meadows, but she looks ready to contend for a sixth major title.

■ 'The goal is to keep winning matches'

Kenin, like Sharapova, was born in Russia and moved to the United States with her family as a child, and the pair had exchanged words in Russian in the locker room.

It was Kenin who went into the match as the higher ranked player at 139 in the world, with Sharapova seven places lower as she makes her way back up the rankings.

Kenin won the US Open wildcard play-off to earn her spot in the main draw and capitalised with two wins before testing Sharapova.

The five-time Grand Slam champion dictated for the most part but was rarely comfortable as a result of too many errors - 25 in the first set alone - and a dogged opponent.

Kenin fought back from 4-1 down in the first set to level, only for Sharapova to edge the set with a forehand in game 12 and so avoid a tie-break.

Sharapova was pegged back from 3-0 to 3-2 in the second set as well but, more in control of her game now, she made just three errors in seeing out the second set.

The victory means Sharapova should return to the top 100 after the tournament, ending the question around wildcards at the Grand Slams.

"The goal is to keep winning matches, obviously to keep improving," she said.

"Even when I was young, ranking is just not something that I've focused on or paid attention to. Even when I hadn't been number one in the world, it just wasn't really that big a goal of mine.

"The more matches you win, the more chances you have of getting a better ranking. That's my goal."

(Source: CNN)

Iran to play Italy at FIVB World Grand Champions Cup opener

S P O R T S Iran will kick off the 2017 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup with a match against Italy.

The match has been scheduled for September 12 in Nagoya, Japan.

The tournament will bring six teams in Nagoya and Osaka namely, Japan, Iran, the U.S., Brazil, Italy and France together from September 12 to 17.

The 2017 FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup will be the 7th staging of the FIVB Volleyball World Grand Champions Cup, a quadrennial international men's volleyball tournament organized by the Fédération Internationale de Volleyball (FIVB).

FIVB announced the four best ranked continents in the 2016 Olympic Games were eligible to participate in the tournament. South America, Europe, North America, and Asia confederations were eligible to send representatives.

The competition formula of the 2017 Men's World Grand Champions Cup is a single Round-Robin system. Each team plays against each of the five remaining teams. Points are accumulated during the whole tournament, and the final standing is determined by the total points gained.



Sara Khademalsharieh named Iran's flag-bearer in 2017 Indoor Games



S P O R T S Chess player Sarasadat Khademalsharieh will be Iran's flag-bearer in the Ashgabat 2017 Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games.

The competition will take place between September 17 and 27 in Turkmenistan's capital.

Khademalsharieh will bear Iran's flag in the opening ceremony at the newly built Olympic Stadium in Ashgabat.

All 45 member countries of the Olympic Council of Asia were invited to

compete at these Games. For the first time in the Asian Games will be attended by 17 Oceania National Olympic Committees. Oceania countries will be under full participation, so they will be eligible for medals.

Iran will participate in the competition with 214 athletes (148 men, 66 women), according to Asghar Rahimi, Iran delegation's supervisor.

Iran had sent 82 athletes to the 4th Indoor Games in South Korea.

West Ham's Slaven Bilic rejected Sanches, Krychowiak moves



West Ham joint-chairman David Sullivan has claimed that manager Slaven Bilic turned down the opportunity to sign Renato Sanches and Grzegorz Krychowiak.

Swansea and West Brom both pulled off impressive loan moves in the transfer market this week, with the Swans bringing in Sanches from Bayern Munich and the Baggies securing Krychowiak from Paris Saint-Germain.

Both players could have ended up

at West Ham this summer, according to Sullivan, only for Bilic to reject the chance to add them to his squad, which currently sits bottom of the Premier League table.

"Grzegorz Krychowiak and Renato Sanches were both offered to the manager before their switches elsewhere, but he told us that he is happy with the squad he has," Sullivan is quoted as saying by Sky Sports.

(Source: ESPN)

Syria on verge of World Cup fairytale

Against all odds, Syria's footballers have overcome more than six years of war to raise hopes of qualifying for their first ever World Cup.

Forced to play their home games away due to security concerns, Ayman Hakeem's Syria have embarrassed a succession of better-resourced opponents to sit third in Group A of Asian qualifying, behind leaders Iran and South Korea.

An unlikely win away to Iran on Tuesday coupled with defeat for South Korea by Uzbekistan in the final round would give Syria second spot and direct entry to the finals in Russia next year.

Even if results do not entirely go their way, Syria can still hold onto third spot and have a chance to qualify through two rounds of playoffs.

Political divisions threatened to gut the team early in the campaign, with players refusing to represent their country in protest over the actions of Bashar al-Assad's regime during the conflict.

But they have softened their stance, with veteran striker Firas Al Khatib ending his exile in March before Omar Al Soma was recently lured back to partner Al Hilal's Omar Khribin in attack.

Stadiums in Malaysia have offered sanctuary



throughout the final phase of qualifying, with only a handful of Syrian fans able to offer their compatriots support.

Despite being perpetually on the road, the results have continued to stack up.

On Thursday, they defeated Qatar 3-1 at Hang Jebat stadium in Malaysia, eliminating the rich Gulf state and 2022 World Cup hosts from the race to Russia.

Syria face a formidable task in Tehran against an Iranian side that has yet to concede a goal in this qualifying phase.

Carlos Queiroz's team have been imperious, booking their Russia ticket in June, but the Syrians are bolstered by the return of Al Soma, a player who could turn the tide in their favour.

Syria's most celebrated footballer due to his goal scoring exploits with Saudi club Al Ahli, Al Soma celebrated his return with victory over Qatar.

"Thanks to God, my return to the national team was good," he said after the game.

"I hope that we can bring joy to our people, who need such joy."

"I will give my best in the next match in order to win and hopefully we can qualify for the World Cup."

Along with the in-form Khribin, who struck twice against the Qataris, Syria could have the tools to unlock Iran's stingy defence.

Asian football is no stranger to war-affected nations making a big impact. Iraq won their first Asian Cup in 2007, at the height of the insurgency triggered by the United States-led coalition invasion in 2003.

(Source: Reuters)

Analysis: Korea Republic blanked by Iran as World Cup destiny goes to Matchday Ten

Seoul: Korea Republic's FIFA 2018 World Cup fate remains in the balance after they were held to a goalless stalemate by the 10-men of Islamic Republic of Iran in their penultimate qualifier in Seoul.

■ Koreans misfire

With Uzbekistan losing in China, a win for Korea would have taken them through to Russia 2018 as the second-placed side in Group A. But it was an opportunity that they let slip.

As the graphic below displays, the home side were unable to get a single shot on target. Of their eight efforts on goal, three were blocked and five sailed wide.

It wasn't just Korea who failed to create meaningful chances, visitors Iran also did not trouble the scoreline, as highlighted in the graphic below. Suspended star striker Sardar Azmoun has been the

spearhead for Team Melli's forward line and without him Iran lacked the same potency, tallying just one shot on target.

But having already qualified for Russia 2018 on Matchday Eight as Group A winners the onus was on their hosts, not Carlos Queiroz's men, to make the breakthrough – with Iran's seemingly impregnable defence securing yet another cleansheet.

■ Defensive Rock

One of the most impressive players in the Iranian backline at Seoul World Cup Stadium was 25-year-old centre-back Morteza Pouraliganji, who shone at the heart of the back four.

The Al Sadd player, who broke onto the international scene at the 2015 AFC Asian Cup, demonstrated his defensive solidity and illustrated his importance

to Team Melli's impressively miserly rearguard.

As his the graphic above indicates, Pouraliganji was present in the thick of the action where he made more clearances and recoveries than any other player on the pitch, as well as winning all of his tackles made.

■ Son fails to shine

In a match that was dominated by defence, it is unsurprising that the forwards struggled. In such a scenario, teams need their star attackers to provide a moment of magic and with Azmoun sitting out, all eyes were on Tottenham Hotspur talent Son Heung-min.

But, unfortunately for the Korea team and the bulk of the 60,000 fans in attendance, the Spurs man failed to get going. Just one off-target shot from outside

the area and a team low passing accuracy of just 54.5% from his 33 passes made was a disappointing return from Asia's most expensive footballer.

As the heatmap above shows, Son often found himself most involved on the left flank where he was matched up with Iran's flying fullback Ramin Rezaeian who was among Team Melli's most utilised players, with a team high of 61 touches, and was rather more involved in the action as his heatmap demonstrates.

With Korea now needing to go to Tashkent and record a victory to guarantee their place at a 10th FIFA World Cup finals, they will need to end a dismal run of away form and hope that Son, and his fellow forwards, rediscover their form in front of goal urgently.

(Source: the-AFC)

Siamand Rahman still hungry for further glory

World's strongest Paralympian Siamand Rahman is ready for another showdown in the world stage.

The World Championships will kick off in Mexico City less than a month.

The world's strongest Paralympian made history at Rio 2016 by breaking the 300kg barrier after lifting unprecedented 310kg in the men's over 107kg.

With two Paralympic golds and one world title under his belt, Rahman is still hungry for further glory, Paralympic.org wrote.

This year, a record number of around 360 powerlifters coming from 65 countries are travelling to Mexico City to compete at the Juan de la Barrera Olympic Gymnasium in Mexico City, from September 30-October 6.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Naft Abadan basketball club signs Steven Burt

Naft Abadan basketball team of Iran has signed 33-year-old guard Steven Burt.

Burt is a dual citizen owning American and Ukrainian passport. He played this summer at Gallitos de Isabela in Puerto Rican BSN league.

In three BSN games he recorded 12.7ppg, 1.7rpg, 9.0apg and 1.7spg.

Burt is quite experienced player. He managed to play on four different continents (Europe, Asia, Latin America and of course North America) in twelve different countries.

The 33-year-old player started his playing career at North-east Pennsylvania Breakers in USA and has played in China, Cyprus, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Turkey, Russia, Ukraine, Lebanon and now Iran.

(Source: Tasnim)

Iran complains over unfair distribution of referees in world wrestling

Iran's representative to the United World Wrestling (UWW) presiding board expressed complaint over the unequal number of referees in world wrestling.

Rasoul Khadem made his protest during the UWW meeting which was held on the sidelines of the World Championships 2017 in Paris.

Despite the fact that the number of gold medals in 2012 and 2016 games were 14 medals for Asia and 8 medals for US, 55 referees out of the total 91 referees who are supposed to judge international competitions are from Europe, 17 from Asia and the rest from other continents, Khadem complained.

He went on to say that the unjust number of the referees has caused a serious discrimination over technical status of referees in different continents. He added that number of the European referees are three times more than their Asian and five times more than their American counterparts.

Iran suggested formation of a council of referees which would be consisted of two representatives from Asia, Europe and America and two others from the Oceania and Africa along with three referees named by United World Wrestling, Khadem said.

He added that Iran's proposal was welcomed by non-European referees of the UWW presiding board.

According to Khadem decreasing the number of the European referees is a major challenge.

World Championships 2017 was held on August 21-26 in Paris.

(Source: Irna)

Barcelona fail in late bid for PSG forward Angel Di Maria

Barcelona failed to complete a sensational deadline-day move for Angel Di Maria, making a last-ditch effort to sign the Paris Saint-Germain midfielder after finally giving up on Liverpool's Philippe Coutinho, sources have told ESPN FC.

Coutinho has been Barca's priority throughout the summer but Liverpool's reluctance to sell forced them to explore alternative options, and at the 11th hour they attempted to push through a deal for Di Maria before the transfer window closed in Spain on Friday.

Barca had originally pulled out of a deal for the former Real Madrid and Manchester United man due to PSG's elevated demands, but UEFA's decision to open an investigation into the French club's spending re-opened talks.

However, sources say Barca, citing "a crazy transfer market," dropped out of a potential deal for a second time when PSG responded to their €40 million offer by asking for more than €60m.

Meanwhile, Diario Sport reported there was also a late enquiry made to Monaco for France midfielder Thomas Lemar, who a day earlier turned down a move to Arsenal after the clubs had agreed a fee around €95m.

But Monaco on Friday reportedly told Barcelona they wanted €120m for the highly rated 21-year-old.

The move for Di Maria was met with disillusion by Barcelona's fan base online -- and not just because of his Madrid past.

Supporters have not forgotten when Di Maria put his finger to his lips and told Camp Nou to be quiet after Edinson Cavani's goal had made it 5-3 on aggregate in the Champions League quarterfinal tie between PSG and Barca in March.

Barca famously came back to win the game 6-5 on aggregate, but Di Maria's gesture had left its mark.

(Source: Soccernet)

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NEWS IN BRIEF



"The Servant" praised at Armenian event

TEHRAN — "The Servant", an acclaimed animated movie from Iran, won an honorable mention at the Fresco International Film Festival in the Armenian capital of Yerevan last Thursday, the publicist of the movie announced on Saturday.

Directed by Farnush Abedi, the film is about a servant who becomes a master and a bug becomes his servant. After a while, the man understands that he has begun a game that has no rules.

Iranian shorts line up for Miami festival

TEHRAN — A lineup of nine Iranian movies will go on screen at the 16th Miami short Film Festival in the U.S. city from November 6 to 11.

The lineup includes "Birthday Night" by Omid Shams, "Not Yet" by Arian Vazirdaftari, "Numbness" by Milad Jarmuz, "Red Season" by Hassan Najmabadi and "Retouch" by Kaveh Mazaheri.

"The Man Who Wasn't Here" by Ata Mojabi, "The Servant" by Farnush Abedi, "Windows" by Mina Valizadeh and "Khayyam Khooni" by Ali Nikfar are also among the films.

Shrunken Matt Damon opens 74th Venice film festival

VENICE (Reuters) — Alexander Payne's "Downsizing", a satire about shrinking humans to five inches tall as a solution to over-population and global warming, opened the Venice film festival on Wednesday.

It kicked off days of screenings, parties and red carpet glamor at the world's oldest film fest on the historic lagoon city's Lido island.

The movie, starring Matt Damon and Kristen Wiig, tells the story of financially-strapped occupational therapist Paul Safranek and his wife Audrey who decide to be downsized - a process that is irreversible - so they can be part of the affluent "small community" where money goes a lot further.



Safranek is attracted by the idea of starting over, leaving problems behind and doing one's bit for the planet in the process.

But unlike the noble intentions that drove scientists to find a way to fight global warming, most of the people who sign up for the irreversible procedure are lured by the promise of being able to multiply their possessions and afford luxuries - from villas to diamond necklaces - they could normally only dream of.

Soon Leisureland - the glass-covered downsized community where Safranek and his wife decide to move - turns into a micro version of today's society, where corruption, wealth-disparity and people like Dusan Mirkovic, a party boy and smuggler of counterfeit goods played by Christoph Waltz, thrive.

Damon said films were the best vehicle to help humans empathize with each other, adding that despite its apocalyptic tone, "Downsizing" ultimately is an optimistic movie.

"At the end of the day there is the sense that we are all in this together ... I feel that is a very hopeful message in what is a very divided world," the 46-year-old American actor told journalists.

"Downsizing" is one of 21 U.S. and international features vying for Venice's Golden Lion that will be awarded on Sept. 9.

The Venice festival is considered a launching pad for the film industry's award season, having premiered Academy Award winners in its last four editions.

While "Downsizing" is set in America, Payne brings in characters from across the world to show how something like this phenomenon "would ripple around the world", the director said.

This is a new foray for the Nebraska-born filmmaker, whose past features - including "Nebraska" and "About Schmidt" - primarily focused on America's Midwest.

"Payne tackled some really big issues that humans are facing right now and the message was really boiled down to just living the moment, respect each other," said Hollywood Reporter film critic Ariston Anderson.

All the while Payne created an environment "where everyone is just really uncomfortable", Anderson added. "I watched it with terror throughout, it felt like a horror in disguise."

"Blockage" selected for Busan New Current

TEHRAN — The Iranian film "Blockage" will compete in the New Current category at the 22nd Busan International Film Festival (BIFF) in South Korea.

Nine other movies will be screened in the category dedicated to promising Asian filmmakers, the organizers have announced.

Directed by Mohsen Qarai, "Blockage" traces the overwhelming chaos that happens to a vicious, despicable man who works as a street vendor control officer.

"Aji" by Devashish Makhija and "Ashwathama" by Pushpendra Singh, both from India, are other entries for this section.

"End of Summer" by Zhou Quan and "One Night on the Wharf" by Han Dong China will represent Chinese cinema and "The Last Verse" by Taiwanese director Tseng Ying-Ting will be screened.

"Somewhere Beyond the Mist" by King Wai Cheung from Hong Kong has also been picked for the category.

The organizers also select "Last Child" by Shin Dongseok, "After My Death" by Kim Uiseok and "How to Breathe Underwater" by Ko Hyunseok from their homeland.

The U.S. director Oliver Stone will preside over the New Currents jury, whose members will include Iranian director Bahman Ghabadi, French cinematographer Agnès Godard, Filipino director Lav Diaz and Korean director Jang Sun-woo.

The festival will take place in the South Korean city from October 12 to 21.

Iranian filmmaker Reza Haeri's documentary "Sons of the Judge" has received a \$5000-cash prize from the BIFF Asian Cinema Fund that aims to help creative, talented Asian filmmakers realize their artistic vision.



Mohsen Kiai and Hamed Behdad act in a scene from "Blockage".

In addition, "Iran K9" a project by director Vahid BIFF Asian Project Market with 27 other projects from Vakilifar and producer Maryam Najafi will be shown at Asian countries.

Cologne theater to host troupes from Iran



A poster for "Monsieur Ibrahim"

TEHRAN — A theater troupe and a Persian music ensemble from Iran will be performing at Keller Theater in Cologne during October.

The performances will be held by Cologne-based Iranian director and playwright Alireza Kushk-Jalali's troupe and Barbat Ensemble on October 5 and 6, the theater has announced.

Kushk-Jalali will direct Ashkan

Khatibi and Reza Molai in "Monsieur Ibrahim" based on Éric-Emmanuel Schmitt's novel "Monsieur Ibrahim and the Flowers of the Koran".

Barbat features Puya Khoshravesh on kamancheh, Arman Sigarchi on barbat, Mani Khoshravesh on ney and Nima Khoshravesh on setar.

The group, which is composed of Persian musicians from the younger generation, will perform some of their own compositions.

Iran's "Melancholy" honored at Love Is Folly film festival



TEHRAN — Iranian director Morteza Atashzamaz's "Melancholy" won the Award of the Union of Bulgarian Film Makers at the 25th International Film Festival Love Is Folly in Varna, Bulgaria on Friday, the publicist of the movie announced on Saturday.

The film is about a young woman, Mina, who finally becomes pregnant after suffering several medical problems but she feels ignored by her husband, Hesam.

She finds out that Hesam is more concerned about the personal problems of his colleague Shirin, who has recently been divorced.

London festival picks movies from Iran

TEHRAN — Four Iranian films will go on screen at the 61st BFI London Film Festival, which will be held from October 4 to 15.

"Israfil" by Ida Panahandeh has been selected for the Love Section while Abbas Kiarostami's "24 Frames" will go on screen in the Create Section.

"Israfil" tells the story of Behruz, who has returned to Iran after 20 years to sell his properties and meet his fiancée Sara for the first time.

But attending the funeral of his friend's son, reminds him of his painful past and lost love.

"24 Frames" is Kiarostami's last



Hoda Zeinalabedin acts in a scene from "Israfil".

"La La Land"'s Chazelle partners with Netflix for Paris TV musical

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Damien Chazelle, the Oscar-winning director of hit movie "La La Land", has another musical in the works, this time a multilingual television series set in Paris.

Streaming company Netflix (NFLX.O) said on Friday it was teaming up with Chazelle on "The Eddy", an eight-part series that will be shot in France with dialogue in French, English and Arabic.

It described "The Eddy" as a musical drama set in contemporary multicultural Paris revolving around a club, its owner, the house band, and the chaotic city that surrounds them.

"I've always dreamed of shooting in Paris," Chazelle, 32, whose father is French, said in a statement.

The project marks the latest coup for Netflix, which has upended the television industry in the past five years by investing in bold original content that has attracted big names and won multiple awards.

Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos told Hollywood trade paper

Variety last month that the company plans to spend \$7 billion on television and film content next year.

"La La Land" a romantic musical set in modern-day Los Angeles about the dreams and challenges of a struggling young actress and a jazz musician, wowed audiences worldwide and won six Oscars in February, including for directing, music and for Emma Stone's lead actress role.

No casting was announced for "The Eddy," which will be executive produced by Chazelle, who will also direct two episodes. The music will be written by Glen Ballard, a six-time Grammy winner who worked on the Michael Jackson album "Bad" and Alanis Morissette's "Jagged Little Pill," Netflix said.

Chazelle's next project is a feature film about the life of U.S. astronaut Neil Armstrong, who was the first man to walk on the moon in 1969. Called "First Man," the Universal Pictures release is expected to arrive in movie theaters in October 2018.

Vivien Leigh's diaries recording Olivier romance up for auction

LONDON (Reuters) — Diaries and a ring tracing the love affair between "Gone with the Wind" star Vivien Leigh and Laurence Olivier are going up for auction in London next month, providing a glimpse into one of Hollywood's most notorious relationships.

"Told Leigh," wrote the British actress on June 10, 1937, recording the day she informed her husband, Leigh Holman, about the affair. "Left with Larry" is the hasty entry six days later.

The diaries, which carry an estimated auction value of 2,000-3,000 pounds (\$2,587-\$3,880), form part of Leigh's personal collection of jewelry, photos and paintings that is to be auctioned in London on Sept. 26, Sotheby's said on Wednesday. Leigh also made notes about her screen tests for "Gone with the Wind" and the day in January 1939 when she finally started filming. She went on to win an Oscar for playing petulant Southern belle Scarlett O'Hara in the American Civil War classic.

Leigh and Olivier began their affair

around 1936 when both were married to other people, according to Olivier's previously published love letters.

Because of the scandal of adultery and divorce, they married in secret in California in August 1940 at a low-key ceremony. A silver goblet gift from Katharine Hepburn, one of only four guests recorded at the wedding, is included in the auction.

A ring, inscribed with the words "Laurence Olivier Vivien Leigh Eternally" is expected to sell for up to 600 pounds (\$776).

Leigh and Olivier remained married for 20 years before divorcing in 1960. Leigh died in 1967 and Olivier died in 1989.

Other auction highlights include Olivier's annotated working copy of "Hamlet" from his 1948 film, a set of Leigh's monogrammed luggage and a first edition of Ian Fleming's first James Bond novel "Casino Royale," valued at up to 9,000 pounds (\$11,640).

The collection is being sold following the death of Leigh's only child, Suzanne Farrington, in 2015.