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## Leader confirms advising Ahmadinejad not to run for president

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — In comments on Monday, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei implicitly confirmed that he had advised former President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to stay out of the

2017 presidential race, citing concerns over "polarization" of the Iranian society. "I didn't tell him don't run, I said it's not in your own or the country's best interests to run," the Leader said.

A week ago, Fars news agency published a note by its former director Mehdi Faza'eli letting slip that Ahmadinejad had been advised by the Leader not to run for the next year's presidential election. →2

## Larijani: U.S.-backed truce in Syria just a ruse

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian Parliament speaker

Ali Larijani stressed on Monday that the U.S.-backed ceasefire in Syria has proven to be an "American ruse" as it benefits terrorist groups in the country. "Bombing the Syrian army position, the Americans showed that they are siding with the terrorist current and their counterterrorism motto is a sheer lie," Larijani said in a joint press conference with his Syrian counterpart Hadi Khalaf Abbas.

On September 9, Washington and Moscow announced a plan to bring about a ceasefire in Syria which took force three days later.

However, the truce was practically dead as Damascus refused to extend the deal due to an airstrike by the U.S. air force on September 17 which left more than 80 Syrian soldiers dead and more dozens injured.

The Russian army said in a statement that two F-16 and two A-10 jets had entered the Syrian airspace from Iraq to carry out the attacks, according to Press TV.

The Iranian parliament speaker rejected remarks made by some regional countries that they are seeking a more democratic Syria through stirring tension in the country, saying, "It is impossible to deepen democracy in a country through creating tension." →2

## Iran marks World Tourism Day

By Afshin Majlesi

President Hassan Rouhani has said the administration is taking steps one by one toward the promotion of tourism industry and the country's current political situation is ripe for attracting more tourists.

Rouhani made the remarks in a ceremony to mark the World Tourism Day in Tehran on Monday.

"The promotion of tourism will be beneficial to economy, culture, as well as domestic and foreign policy," IRIB quoted Rouhani as saying.

Thanks to its various and numerous aspects, [the promotion of] tourism can be a rapid way of creating jobs for the youth, he added.

Rouhani attached importance to a vast yet sustainable expansion of tourism sector for generating jobs and ramping up the investment flows.

The country has been seeking a comprehensive yet balanced development at least over the past century, meanwhile he also expressed his gratitude for the Iranian armed and security forces.



© Tehran Times/Leila Ghodratablahi Fard

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## Japan's Marubeni to finance €320m petchem projects in Iran

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Japan's integrated trading and investment business conglomerate, Marubeni, has signed a €320 million short-term (usage) agreement on financing petrochemical projects in Iran, IRNA reported on Sunday.



The agreement was signed between Iran's Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC) and Japan's Marubeni insured by Japanese NEXI Nippon Export and Investment Insurance.

No further details have been released on the agreement.

Another contract with the same value and increasable to €640 million is being finalized and will be formally signed in the near future between the two sides, the report added.

Iran now has a production capacity of 60 million tons of petrochemical products per year and plans to increase the figure to 120 million tons by 2026.

## Iran insists will back Syria until final victory

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — A top advisor to the Supreme Leader said on Monday that Iran's support for Syrian government will continue until a final victory is achieved, IRNA reported.

"We strongly support the Syrian government and President Bashar al-Assad," said Ali Akbar Velayati in a meeting with Syrian Parliament Speaker Hadiya Khalaf Abbas in Tehran.

He stressed that Tehran and Damascus share common views on the Syrian conflict and have been expanding their strategic relations since the victory of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran. →2

## Hillary has more chances to win election: Harvard professor

Peter A. Hall says Trump 'is focused on his own celebrity'

**INTERVIEW**  
By Fateme Mohammadipour

**TEHRAN** — Peter A. Hall, a political scientist at Harvard University, believes that "due to racist policies of Trump, Hillary Clinton has more chances for winning" the presidential election.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Hall says, "It has been difficult for Trump to expand his support beyond a core of white working and middle class voters at a time when almost a quarter of the electorate is Hispanic or African American."

Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were to face each other on Monday night local time (Tuesday morning AEST). Probably it will be the most widely viewed presidential debate in history.

In what follows, the academ-

ic figure answers a number of questions on the U.S. presidential election.

**■ According to Data Targeting, a polling company, third party candidates have a good chance in the November elections. What is your opinion?**

A: It is true that a majority of American citizens seem to be motivated



**"Although criticism of the (nuclear) deal is bound to figure in the rhetoric of the election, a sober president, even if it is Donald Trump, is likely to see the advantages of preserving this deal."**

to vote against the candidate of the competing party rather than for the candidate they prefer and the unpopularity of Trump and Clinton should increase the vote for third party candidates. But history suggests that those candidates will not come close to a winning majority. The open issue is whether they will reduce

the votes for Clinton or Trump more, thereby giving the other candidate an advantage.

**■ What is your prediction of the presidential elections? Which candidate has a better chance of winning the election?**

A: At this point, either Clinton or Trump could win this election. Clinton has a small lead in the opinion polls and my own guess is that she will win the election because it has been difficult for Trump to expand his support beyond a core of white working and middle class voters at a time when almost a quarter of the electorate is Hispanic or African American. But accidents happen in politics and we have two months in which any number of events could push the electorate toward or further away from Trump. →13

## "Being Born" to compete in Tokyo festival

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian director Mohsen Abdolvahab's drama "Being Born" will go on screen at the 29th Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF), which will be held in the Japanese capital from October 25 to November 3.

The film tells the story of a couple, who are struggling financially when the wife finds out she

is pregnant with their second child. So they opt for an abortion.

The festival also plans to commemorate the recently-deceased Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami by screening his short film "Take Me Home" and his fellow director Seifollah Samadian's documentary "76 Minutes and 15 Seconds with Abbas Kiarostami".



## Zarif: U.S. vows not to punish banks that engage Iran

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that the U.S. has promised not to punish European banks that facilitate transactions with Iran.

Zarif made the remarks in an exclusive interview with the Tokyo-based Kyodo News Agency published on Saturday.

Zarif, who is in New York for the UN General Assembly, said he received assurances from his U.S. counterpart John Kerry that greater efforts would be made to allay the undue concerns of European banks.

"The U.S. says they encourage everybody outside U.S. to engage in business with Iran. Of course, we believe that was not sufficient, so we asked them to take further action to convince and actually remove the concerns of foreign institutions, particularly banks, about working with

Iran," Zarif pointed out. Tehran remains to be critical of the big global banks as they have failed to reestablish financial ties with the Islamic Republic following the implementation of the nuclear deal between Iran and P5+1.

The nuclear deal, officially called, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), requires complete removal of sanctions against Iran and full political and economic engagement with the country.

But the Western governments, especially the United States, have so far refrained from providing assurances to global banks that engagement with the Islamic Republic is quite safe.

According to the JCPOA, which went into effect on January 16, Iran is obliged to slow down its nuclear activities.

## Facebook 'blocks accounts' of Palestinian journalists

Editors from two Palestinian news publications based in the occupied West Bank say their Facebook accounts were suspended last week and that no reason was provided, alleging their pages may have been censored because of a recent agreement between the United States social media giant and the Israeli government aimed at tackling "incitement".

Last week, four editors from the Shehab News Agency, which has more than 6.3 million likes on Facebook, and three executives from the Quds News Network, with about 5.1 million likes, reported that they could not access their personal accounts.

Both agencies cover daily news in the occupied Palestinian territories. Nisreen al-Khatib, a translator

and journalist at the Quds News Network, told Al Jazeera that the publication believes the account suspensions were triggered by an agreement between Facebook and Israel earlier this month, in which they agreed to jointly combat what Israeli claims is "incitement" by Palestinians on social media.

Al-Khatib said that the news agency asked Facebook for an explanation on why the accounts had been suspended "for no reason".

Facebook replied on Saturday with an apology, saying the suspension had been "accidental".

The three suspended accounts of Quds News Network journalists were unblocked over the weekend by the networking site, she said. (Source: Al Jazeera)

## Oman launches new shipping routes to Iran

By Mahnaz Abdi

**TEHRAN** — The Omani minister of commerce and industry, Ali bin Masud Al Sunaidy, and the governor general of Iran's Hormozgan province, Jaseem Jaderi, on Sunday officially inaugurated new direct shipping routes from two Omani ports to the Iranian port of Shahid Bahonar.

Oman's National Ferries Company (NFC) will operate four weekly journeys on the new routes.

Al Sunaidy said that the launching of the marine route (Khasab-Bandar Abbas) aims to transport goods between the two countries in two hours. He added that goods may be then transported to Shinas, Diba and then to Muscat, Times of Oman reported on Sunday.

**■ 'Access to regional markets'**

On the sidelines of the inaugural ceremony, Mojtaba Khosrotaj, the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO), told reporters and journalists that Iran sees Oman a gateway to access to other regional countries and also Oman considers Iran, specially Hormozgan province, an entrance to Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries.

So, a major part of such cooperation between the two countries is to lay the ground for the development of the North-South Transit Corridor, the official noted, adding that there is no doubt that both countries want to take advantage of this strategic status.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the head of TPO said that launching of this line brings local and regional advantages for the people, in a way that when people go to the other country and see the advantages of that country, it can positively affect the promotion of bilateral ties.

**■ 'Promotion of exports to Oman'**

In a meeting with some trade officials of Hormozgan province, which was held in the governorate building of the province on Sunday morning, Khosrotaj said that Iran's exports to Oman is low and it should be promoted considering the country's potentials. →4



**MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**



**'Defense cooperation between Iran, Pakistan inevitable'**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The president of defense Pakistan Army's National Defense University believes that defense cooperation between Tehran and Islamabad is crucially important and inevitable.

In an interview with IRNA published on Monday, Lieutenant General Nazir Ahmed Butt said both countries need to have closer understanding in defense and military fields.

"We are in fact already very late in this regard; we need to start from training exchanges, then we can include joint defense production, sharing technologies, and then military exercises," he said.



**Army puts into operation new military equipment**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Iranian Ground Forces put into operation three of their newest military equipment on Monday.

The items were showcased during a ceremony in Tehran to commemorate the day in which the city of Abadan in Khuzestan province was liberated from the Iraqi occupation in 1981, Mehr reported.

The three items put into display by the ground forces included unmanned-remote controlled-armed robots called Nazir, remote-controlled bulldozers, and the multi-parameter smoke generator systems called Sattar.



**Two Iranian MPs to head New York for women's summit**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Two female members of the Iranian parliament (Majlis) are going to travel to New York to attend a conference on women, Nasim reported on Monday.

The news was announced by MP Zahra Saidi Mobarakeh, who said the decision was made during a session of the Women's Committee of the Majlis on Sunday.

Accordingly, the members of the committee selected MPs Zahra Saei and Somayeh Mahmoudi to attend the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women.



**Iran frees Homa Hoodfar**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran has freed Iranian-Canadian professor Homa Hoodfar, the Foreign Ministry spokesman announced on Monday.

"The retired professor was freed for humanitarian reasons such as [concern for] her health condition," ISNA quoted Baharm Qassemi as saying.

The diplomat added that Hoodfar had gone to Oman and from there to Canada.

Hoodfar was arrested in Iran in June 2016. Websites close to the Iranian government stated that she had met charges of collaboration on soft revolution plans orchestrated by foreign governments.



**Iran police launches elite women division**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Iranian police have set up a women's division within its Special Forces.

The news was announced on Monday by Brigadier-General Hassan Karami, commander of NAJA Special Forces, IRNA reported.

"The pillars and commanders of the forces were drawn from the official personnel of the police, but the rank and file are honorary police," he said.

"They undergo due education and various courses, one of which was carried out recently which consisted of parachuting."



**Russia confirms purchase of 38 tons of heavy water from Iran**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The director of Russia's State Corporation on Atomic Energy, Rosatom, confirmed on Monday that Iran has delivered 38 tons of heavy water to Russia as part of a sale agreement between the two countries.

"I can inform the respected colleagues that 38 tons of Iran's heavy water have been delivered in two flights on September 13 and 20," Sergey Kirienko told a plenary of the International Atomic Energy Agency on Monday, Sputnik reported.

# Larijani: U.S.-backed truce in Syria just a ruse

Syrian parliament speaker says Syria and Iraq would have fallen without Iran's help

➔ "The remarks are made by countries which have not held even one single election in their countries," he further said.

On uprooting terrorism, Larijani called for a more concerted effort by the global community, rapping the West's double standards on the issue of terrorism.

"The roots of terrorism must be withered. The West cannot act on the basis of double standards, countering terrorism in their home countries on the one hand, and fueling terrorism in Syria on the other hand."

**Hadiya Khalaf Abbas: Not for Iran's backing, Syria and Iraq would have fallen**

Hadiya Khalaf Abbas, for her part, hailed the Iranian people and officials for fully backing Syria, noting that Damascus could not have been able to resist pressure from foreign-backed terrorists without Tehran's backing.

According to Khalaf Abbas, Syria is



Syrian Parliament Speaker Hadiya Khalaf Abbas (L) talks to reporters in a joint press conference with Ali Larijani.

going through a militancy sponsored by more than 80 countries.

She said the conflict has devastated historic monuments and inflicted heavy losses on her country.

The top Syrian parliamentarian also dismissed U.S. allegations that the aerial attack on Dayr al-Zawr had been a mistake, underscoring that American military aircraft had been flying over the area for about 45 minutes.

Khalaf Abbas said the Syrian government is in possession of documents that prove Americans launched the airstrikes to assist Daesh terrorists, noting that Washington has acted against Syria any time government forces have made gains against the Takfiri militants.

Syria has been gripped by a bloody foreign-backed militancy since March 2011. Over the past few months, the Takfiri militants have suffered major setbacks as the army has liberated several areas.

## Leader confirms advising Ahmadinejad not to run for president

➔ The Leader said he was commenting so because Ahmadinejad's contest of the election would breed polarity in the country.

"Polarization will ensue if you run (for president)," the Leader said he had told Ahmadinejad.

Over the past months, there were speculations by Iranian media outlets and figures that Ahmadinejad might run for the incoming presidential election.

Sadegh Zibakalam, a university professor, had told Ahmadinejad was one of the two figures, the other was Major

General Soleimani, who could challenge Rouhani in the 2017 presidential election.

Ahmadinejad's two presidential terms were peppered with controversial events and subjective law enforcements.

During the period, the Iranian economy was grounded by unprecedented inflation rates, 40 percent by one account, considering deteriorating relations with

the outside world.

Politicians have hailed the advice, asking the "unpredictable Ahmadinejad," to "take seriously" the Leader's comments.

"Mr. Ahmadinejad did his utmost in the past to polarize the society and caused numerous unnecessary tensions," said Kazem Jalali, a senior parliamentary figure.

"I hope Mr. Ahmadinejad takes the

Leader's advice seriously."

Akbar Ranjbarzadeh, a member of the presiding board of the parliament, has also urged Ahmadinejad to respect the Leader's advice.

"All need to adhere to the Leader's remarks because it is in the interest of the country not to polarize the atmosphere," Ranjbarzadeh said. Ahmadinejad has already been engaged in delivering speeches in different cities across the country in what politicians have described as premature attempts to do canvassing for the next presidential election.

**"Polarization will ensue if you run (for president)," the Leader said he had told Ahmadinejad.**

## No agreement on Syria without Iran: Qassemi

BY: Marjan Golpira

**TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry said on Monday that no agreement on Syria will succeed without Tehran's partnership, insisting that there is no military solution to the Syrian conflict.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi also said the ceasefire in Syria had been merely "a tactic to buy time for terrorists and provide them with arms and logistics".

Under such conditions, a truce would be abortive, Qassemi said.

He also dismissed allegations by Saudi Arabia and some other Arab countries in Persian Gulf region that Iran is interfering in Yemen, calling them "irrelevant" and "propagandistic".

"Saudi Arabia plays a destructive role in the region and we hope they get a lesson from Saddam Hussein and not follow in his footsteps."

Qassemi said Saudi Arabia itself has trespassed the international borders of Yemen as a sovereign nation and is killing innocent people there.

Saudi Arabia has been incessantly pounding Yemen since March 2015, with the UN putting the toll at 10,000. The offensive was launched to reinstate former president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi and undermine Ansarullah.

Qassemi said the Saudi government is playing the blame game for its defeat in Yemen and trying to find a way to justify its acts in the country.



**A new chapter with Canada can open up**

He also said in case Iran and Canada resolve their differences in the next few months, a new chapter will open up in their relationship.

**Foreign Ministry spokesman says, "Saudi Arabia plays a destructive role in the region and we hope they get a lesson from Saddam Hussein and not follow in his footsteps."**

"A consulate in Canada is highly valuable to Iran" as many Iranian emigrants live in that country, he said, adding Canada also seeks to reopen its embassy in Tehran.

In 2012, Ottawa closed its embassy in Tehran for yet unspecified reasons.

On U.S. President Barack Obama vetoing a bill that could allow family members of 9/11 victims to sue the Saudi government, Qassemi said this shows that the U.S. employs a series of double standards.

On the reason behind Obama rejecting the bill, the NPR, National Public Radio, wrote, "... The Saudis vehemently oppose the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act, or JASTA. The Saudis have threatened to dump hundreds of billions of dollars in U.S. assets that could possibly be frozen by any American judge hearing a lawsuit. Lawmakers from both parties have chosen the interests of the Sept. 11 families seeking justice over those of the House of Saud."

Fifteen out of the nineteen of the attackers involved in September 11 terror attacks were Saudi nationals.

**Foreign Ministry calls on UAE to stop 'unsubstantiated' remarks**

On UAE ownership claims over the three Iranian islands of Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunbs in the Persian Gulf, Qassemi called on the UAE to stop making "unsubstantiated" claims.

"The islands are an integral part of Iran's soil over which no country can make ownership claims."

## Top commander praises Rouhani, Zarif for their stand in New York

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Commander of Khatam-ol-Anbia Air Defense Base has praised President Rouhani and his Foreign Minister Zarif for their courageous stance in New York.

Addressing a gathering of veterans on the occasion of the Sacred Defense Week in Semnan, Brigadier General Farzad Esmaili said the "courageous" speech of President Rouhani during UN General Assembly manifests Iran's rationality and might, ISNA reported on Monday.

Rouhani visited New York last Tuesday to participate in the 71st annual session of the United Nations General Assembly and hold talks with senior of-

ficials of some other countries attending the meeting.

"In Dr. Rouhani's speech, his adherence to all of the Islamic Revolution's values and principles were manifested," said the senior military official.

General Esmaili further linked Iran's military might to the Sacred Defense era, saying that learning from that era's lessons has led to groundbreaking scientific and military achievements for the Islamic Republic.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Esmaili lauded Iran's political strength. He went on to say, "The fact that some world powers are attempting to isolate Iran proves

that the Islamic Republic is one of the political and military powers in the region."

Touching upon the JCPOA – a nuclear deal that was clinched between Iran and six world powers – the commander of Khatam-ol-Anbia Air Defense Base said the Islamic Republic's insistence on its rights shows the country's strength.

General Esmaili further expressed his admiration for Iranian foreign minister's remarks in New York. "Dr. Zarif's powerful remarks are the embodiment of the strength granted to us through our martyrs' blood and their families."

Foreign Minister Zarif, who is in New

York, have also been holding talks with senior officials of other countries.

In an interview with the Council on Foreign Relations, a New York-based think tank, on Friday, Zarif responded to a threatening remark by U.S. Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump, who had said he would shoot the Iranian ships out of the Persian Gulf.

"Our soldiers and our sailors are a few miles away from our coasts. Yours, Americans, are several thousand miles away. And then they get upset when our boats tell them not to get into our [territorial] waters, that you are approaching Iranian borders, that... you encroach upon our sovereignty," Zarif said.

## Iran insists will back Syria until final victory

➔ The top official noted that the two sides have been improving their mutual relations and have managed to overcome many difficulties together.

"Some 80 countries, most of which being Western states and reactionary Arab countries in the region"

have been fanning the flames in Syria since the crisis broke out in 2011, however, they paid a big price for their action, he stated.

Since the Syrian government and nation have been standing against the Zionist regime these countries inflicted great losses on the country, Ve-

layati added.

He also emphasized that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Leader of the Islamic Revolution, has put the issue of supporting Syria on Iran's plan of action and that the government has also provided the necessary support in this regard.



# U.S. congressional leaders vow to override Obama's veto of 9/11 bill

The United States congressional leaders from both political parties have vowed to swiftly override President Barack Obama's veto of legislation that allows victims of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to sue Saudi Arabia.

In his veto message, Obama said Friday that the "Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act" or JASTA, which was passed in Congress on September 9, would be "detrimental" to America's national security interests and its key alliances.

The legislation "does not enhance the safety of Americans from terrorist attacks, and undermines core U.S. interests," Obama said, adding that the victims' families will not be able to gain justice through the bill either.

Some lawmakers called immediately for Congress to override the veto, which requires a two-thirds vote.

"It's disappointing the president chose to veto legislation unanimously passed by Congress and overwhelmingly supported by the American people," said Senator John Cornyn, a Republican from Texas.



"Even more disappointing is the president's refusal to listen to the families of the victims taken from us on September 11, who should have the chance to hold those behind the deadliest terrorist attack in American history accountable," Cornyn said.

Senator Charles Schumer, a Democrat from New York and a sponsor of the bill, also criticized Obama's veto, calling it "a disappointing decision that will be swiftly and soundly overturned in Congress."

"If the Saudis did nothing wrong, they should not fear this legislation. If they

were culpable in 9/11, they should be held accountable," he said.

U.S. presidential nominees Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton said they would have signed the bill. Trump, the Republican nominee, called the veto "shameful."

On Wednesday, the European Union (EU) called on Obama to veto the bill, warning that it would "put a burden on bilateral relations between states."

The House of Saud regime has strongly opposed the bill, threatening to sell off \$750 billion in American assets if it becomes law.

Of the 19 hijackers that allegedly carried out the attacks, 15 had Saudi Arabian nationality and available evidence suggests that some of them were linked to high-ranking Saudi officials.

Official 9/11 investigations have long been described by politicians and experts as a series of whitewashes aimed at concealing the roles that the Saudi regime and American intelligence agencies played in coordination with the Israeli regime during the period leading up to the terrorist attacks.

(Source: Press TV)

## Two injured after gunman goes on shooting rampage near Paris



A shooting at a Paris supermarket has seen at least two people injured sparking an armed siege involving French SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics) teams.

French police officials said the suspect started shooting near a supermarket to the west of the capital.

Two people were said to be critically injured in the shooting which happened at around 11.45am local time (10.45am BST) on Monday.

Reports said the gunman was in his 60s or 70s and had fired shots in front of a supermarket in Port-Marly, a suburb to the west of Paris.

Elite police are currently stationed outside a building where the suspect is holed up, officials said.

According to local TV the man was known to police for violent behavior, had a criminal record and was a regular customer of the supermarket.

He is understood to have pulled up outside the shop in his car, taking aim at a female cashier aged 57-years-old before targeting a 73-year-old man.

Reports said the suspect barricaded himself inside his apartment and a rifle was found in his car.

French security services have been braced for an attack since coordinated shootings and bombings rocked Paris last November.

However there is no indication that today's shooting was in any way terrorism-related.

(Source: Express)

## Lavrov: West not fulfilling obligations on Syria



Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says Western countries are not living up to their obligations on Syria.

Lavrov also said the United States wanted to put forward additional conditions before implementing a deal on Syria to end the conflict.

The foreign minister further said Russia would demand a very thorough investigation into a strike on an aid convoy in Aleppo last week.

The United Nations said at least 18 trucks in a 31-vehicle convoy were destroyed last Monday. The airstrike killed around 20 people, including one staff member of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

U.S. officials have oscillated between blaming the Syrian government and

the Russian military for an aid convoy attack which both sides deny.

Russia has called for an independent investigation into the attack, saying an armed U.S. drone was in the vicinity of the humanitarian aid convoy that was hit by the airstrike.

Lavrov earlier said that the humanitarian situation in Syria would not be improved without eradicating the terrorist groups fighting against the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

He criticized Washington for not doing enough to rein in militants in Syria to protect the truce deal, saying continued violations of the ceasefire by militants made it "senseless" for Damascus to stick to the agreement.

(Source: Press TV)

## Bombing, violent clashes kill nine soldiers in southeast Turkey

A roadside bomb attack and violent clashes with militants have claimed lives of at least nine Turkish soldiers across Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast, security sources say.

In the first incident, at least three soldiers were killed and eight others injured after suspected militants from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK/Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê) detonated an explosive device that had been planted on a highway in Kurdish-dominated Mardin Province, on Monday.

The Turkish military authorities have launched an operation to hunt down "fleeing terrorists" across the troubled region.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the attack, but Turkish sources say it was carried out by

PKK's militants.

Separately, six Turkish soldiers were killed and one was injured during fierce clashes with PKK militants at a check point near a prison in the Uludere district of Sinak Province.

The Turkish military meanwhile said eight PKK militants were "neutralized" on Sunday in the ongoing ground and air operations in Hakkari province near the Iraqi border.

According to military, at least 320 PKK militants have been killed in Hakkari since the operations began several weeks ago.

Turkish military forces have been conducting ground operations as well as airstrikes against PKK positions in

Turkey's troubled southeastern border region and Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region over the past year.

Turkey's southeastern region has been the scene of violence since the collapse of a ceasefire between the government and PKK militants in July 2015.

According to a latest toll given by Turkish media, more than 600 members of the country's security forces and over 7,000 PKK militants have been killed since the collapse of the truce.

The PKK, which has been calling for an autonomous Kurdish region since 1984, has since carried out several attacks on police and military posts in the largely Kurdish region.

(Source: Press TV)

## Jeremy Corbyn backs investigations into British troops, calls for Armed Forces to be scaled back

Jeremy Corbyn backed investigations into British troops who served in Iraq and called for the Armed Forces and intelligence services to be scaled back, prompting a furious response from his own party.

MPs and former ministers sharply criticized the Labour leader after he backed the Government's investigations into alleged abuses committed by British troops in Iraq and Afghanistan, which have been described as a "witch hunt".

Speaking at Labour's conference in Liverpool Corbyn also said that Britain should no longer have a "huge land-based defense force" and said that MI6 should not be allowed to recruit new spies, despite the growing threat to the country from terrorists.

The Labour leader's comments came amid growing public anger over the treatment of British veterans, thousands of whom are facing "unfounded" claims

about their conduct during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Iraq Historic Allegations Team (Ihat) is investigating almost 1,500 allegations of mistreatment and unlawful killing of Iraqis while a separate inquiry, Operation Northmoor, is looking at more than 550 allegations of abuse in Afghanistan dating back to 2005.

Corbyn was asked by the BBC's Andrew Marr program whether he agreed with Tony Blair, the former Labour prime minister, who on Sunday condemned the investigations into British soldiers.

However, Corbyn declined and said: "I have spoken to a number of soldiers who served in Afghanistan and Iraq. I recognize the awful conditions they were asked to serve under and the difficulties they had with that."

"But I do think there has to be a recognition that we have signed up to international law on the behavior of troops."

He added: "So I think there has to be investigation. Saying never to prosecute, I think, would be a step too far."

The Secret Intelligence Service is set to recruit an extra 1,000 spies, but Corbyn said it was unclear why MI6 needed the boost.

"I don't necessarily think that's particularly necessary," he said. "There has to be security for everybody but I'm unclear as to why they want to be so much bigger."

Dan Jarvis, a former British Army Major and Labour MP, told the Telegraph: "The UK's service men and women are amongst the very best in the world. One of the many things that makes them such is how highly they value the Law of Armed Conflict; as well as recognizing the importance of the law, service personnel also understand the requirement for it to be policed."

"However, the current investigatory system has led to too many vexatious

claims against service personnel. This has come at tremendous cost to them, their families and indeed the public purse."

John Speller, a former Labour Armed Forces minister, told the Telegraph: "Unfortunately it shows he is out of touch with Labour policy - as he was over the renewal of the Trident nuclear deterrent."

"The Labour Party is proud of the Armed Forces that draws its membership from many of our communities and supporters."

John Woodcock, the chair of Labour's backbench defense committee, added: "Jeremy Corbyn was right to say that no one should be above the law but it is abhorrent to see this wave of tank chasing lawyers seeking to leach off soldiers who were serving their country in an incredibly hostile environment."

(Source: The Telegraph)

## U.S. intellectuals call for boycott of Israeli settlements

More than 70 American intellectuals and academics have circulated an open letter, calling for targeted boycott of Israeli settlements and the products originating from them.

The signatories publicized the letter through The New York Review of Books magazine, Israeli paper Ha'aretz reported.

They called on the United States government to "exclude settlements from trade benefits accorded to Israeli enterprises, and to strip all such Israeli entities in the West Bank from the tax exemptions that the Internal Revenue Service currently grants to American nonprofit tax-exempt organizations."

They, however, stopped short of urging such punitive measures against Israeli entities located elsewhere within the Palestinian land which Israel occupied in 1967, when it seized the West Bank and East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Ever since the occupation, the territories have been dotted with 120 settlements. There is international consensus that these settlements have been constructed on occupied territory, and are therefore illegal. The United Nations shares a similar stance.

Though not hosting settlements, the rest of the Palestinian land has been interspersed with numerous checkpoints, which severely restrict the Palestinians' freedom of movement.

Tel Aviv, meanwhile, imposes recurrent wholesale sieges on Palestinian towns and villages, claiming that the residents had resorted to violence.

The Americans, though, said the rest of the Palestinian land which is settlement-free but still under Israeli occupation should not come under "an economic, political or cultural boycott."

■ Clinton tells Netanyahu she's against UN imposing solution to Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Meantime, U.S. Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton has told Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that she opposes a United Nations-brokered solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, pledging to fight efforts to "delegitimize" the Tel Aviv regime.

The former U.S. secretary of state and Netanyahu met at a hotel in Manhattan, New York, on Sunday evening, hours after the Israeli PM's meeting with Clinton's Republican rival, Donald Trump.

During the meeting, Clinton endorsed the two-state solution for the ongoing conflict in Palestine, but also expressed "her opposition to any attempt by outside parties to impose a solution," including the UN Security Council, her campaign said in a statement. Clinton doubled down on "her commitment to countering attempts to delegitimize Israel, including through the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement," the statement further read.

The BDS movement was initiated in 2005 by over 170 Palestinian organizations that were pushing for "various forms of boycott against Israel until it meets its obligations under international law."

Since then, thousands of volunteers worldwide have joined the BDS to help promote the Palestinian cause.

The former first lady also backed Washington's military support for Tel Aviv, saying that a "strong and secure Israel" was vital to the U.S. Washington has been providing the Israeli regime with \$3.1 billion annually since 2007, under a 10-year agreement with the administration of former president George W. Bush. The figure was recently raised to \$3.8 billion for the next decade.

Earlier in the day, Netanyahu went to the Trump Tower in New York City to meet with the billionaire businessman.

During the 90-minute meeting, Trump promised Netanyahu that he will "recognize Jerusalem (al-Quds) as the undivided capital of the state of Israel," the candidate's campaign said in a statement. He described East al-Quds, occupied by Israel since 1967, as "the eternal capital of the Jewish people."

Like Clinton, Trump backed America's military support for Israel, hailing it as an "excellent investment for America."

Netanyahu, who was being accompanied by Israeli ambassador to Washington Ron Dermer during the meetings, thanked both candidates for their "friendship and support for Israel."

(Source: agencies)

## Four Saudi forces killed in Yemen retaliatory attack on Najran

The Yemeni army and popular committees have launched a retaliatory artillery attack against a Saudi military base in the kingdom's southwestern province of Jizan, killing at least four soldiers.

According to Yemen's al-Masirah news website, Yemeni forces fired artillery shells at the military base of Abadiyah in Jizan on Monday, killing four Saudi forces.

Also on Monday, the Yemeni artillery shells hit the Saudi military base of Bahtit in the same province.

The artillery attacks are carried out in retaliation for Riyadh's relentless airstrikes on the impoverished nation of Yemen.

The kingdom's warplanes on Monday pounded the district of Niham, east of the capital, Sana'a, and Dhubab in the southwestern province of Ta'izz.

The House of Saud regime fighter jets also bombed the districts of Baqim, Munabbih and Razih in the northwestern province of Sa'ada.

On Sunday evening, Riyadh's air raids targeted a residential building in Sahar district in the same province, killing 10 people and injuring eight others.

In a separate development, Yemeni forces killed and injured several Saudi-backed militants, including commanders, in an ambush in Yemen's province of Jawf early on Monday.

The mercenaries were ambushed in an area in the district of Khabb & Sha'af in Jawf.

The House of Saud regime has been incessantly pounding Yemen since March 2015, with the United Nations putting the toll at 10,000. The offensive was launched to reinstate Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, a staunch Saudi ally who has resigned as Yemen's president.

(Source: Press TV)



## Inflation rate hits 8.8% in Iran: CBI

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Central Bank of Iran (CBI) announced the inflation rate for the 12-month period ended in the last day of the sixth Iranian calendar month of Shahrivar (September 21) stands at 8.8 percent, compared to the same period of time last year, IRNA reported on Monday.

On June 14, Finance and Economic Affairs Minister Ali Tayyebnia said the country planned to reduce the inflation rate to a single digit by the coming two months.

The goal was achieved in the third Iranian calendar month of Khordad (ended on June 20) when the inflation rate hit 9.5 percent.

Curbing inflation was one of the major promises by Iranian President Hassan Rouhani during his presidential campaign. Under the previous administration, inflation skyrocketed to cross 44%.

Tayyebnia also noted that the government is to institutionalize growth in the country's economy in a move to reach the five-percent economic growth which has been envisaged in the country's budget plan for the current Iranian calendar year (began on March 20).

The official believes that removal of the West-led sanctions against Iran's economy provides many opportunities for the country to achieve sustainable economic growth.

## Iran's central bank allows issue of credit cards for first time

The Central Bank of Iran allowed the country's financial institutions to issue credit cards for the first time in Iran's history, local ISNA news agency reported, citing the Central Bank head, Valiollah Seif.

According to ISNA, the cards will be issued with the credit limits of \$3,000, \$10,000 and \$15,000. It will be possible to use them both for purchases in stores and online.

"It would be wrong to think that these cards will be quickly adopted by the banking network," the agency quoted Seif as saying.

The credit cards are set to be issued in the number depending on applications received by the banks. The Central Bank's decision comes after in January, the European Union, the United Nations, and partially the United States lifted their sanctions against the Islamic republic after the International Atomic Energy Agency verified Tehran's compliance with a nuclear agreement reached in July 2015. The lifting of the sanctions cleared the way for Iran to bolster its oil production and economy. (Source: Sputnik)

## Gold slips on firm dollar; market focuses on U.S. debate outcome

Gold prices edged lower on Monday as the dollar firmed, though the market is focused on the outcome of the U.S. presidential debate later in the day, that could see investors buying more of the metal as a hedge against financial uncertainty.

Spot gold slipped 0.1 percent to \$1,336 an ounce at 0719 GMT. U.S. gold futures slid 0.2 percent to \$1,339.9 an ounce.

"If Trump is perceived to have an improved probability of winning the presidential race, that is likely to be supportive of the gold prices, so we could see (gold) prices rallying in the short term amid higher volatility," said NAB analyst Yvonne Lai.

The first U.S. presidential debate between Republican Donald Trump and Democrat Hillary Clinton will take place at 0100 GMT on Tuesday, with investors looking for indications of who could win the race to lead the world's biggest economy.

"With Trump closing the gap with Clinton, the uncertainty is likely to keep gold underpinned," said Alex Thorndike, senior precious metals dealer, MKS PAMP Group.

The dollar index, which measures the greenback against six major currencies, was up 0.05 percent at 95.521.

"We expect gold to continue to hold its recent \$1,330 - \$1,340 range in the lead up to the presidential debate," MKS PAMP Group trader Sam Laughlin said in a separate note.

Boston Federal Reserve President Eric Rosengren said on Friday that he believed interest rates should be raised gradually now and warned that a fall in the unemployment rate below its sustainable level could derail economic recovery in the United States. (Source: Reuters)

## Bank of America to cut Asia investment banking jobs: sources

Bank of America is set to cut about two dozen investment banking jobs in Asia, including some top dealmakers, sources told Reuters, as a slowdown forces western banks to cut costs.

The job cut plan comes after Reuters reported on Friday that Goldman Sachs is planning to cut almost 30 percent of its 300 investment banking jobs in Asia outside Japan, in response to a fall in activity in the region.

Some bankers handling client coverage and deals will be made redundant, starting this week, with cuts expected in Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan, BofA's big centers in Asia, the sources said, adding that the total number has not been finalized.

Bank of America's cuts will account for a small portion of its total Asia corporate and investment banking staff, and are part of an annual cost trimming, one of the sources said.

A Hong Kong-based spokesman for Bank of America, which last year posted a roughly three percent drop in its Asia net income, declined to comment. The sources declined to be identified as the information is not public. (Source: Reuters)

# Oman launches new shipping routes to Iran

For example, Oman has imported \$141 million of wheat and \$29 million of barley in 2015, while Iran's exports of the cereals to the Sultanate have been just \$4.5 million and \$6.3 million, respectively, he mentioned.

It comes also true about the other Iranian exported goods, as Oman imported \$77 million of tiles and ceramics in the last year, while Iran's share of the Omni market has been below \$1 million, the official added.

### 'Economic ties beyond trade, transit'

Economic ties between Iran and Oman is not just limited to the trade and transit cooperation, Mohammad Mohseni, the head of Shahid Bahonar Port Department, told the journalists on the sidelines of the inaugural ceremony.

For the time being, Iranian companies are participating in the tenders for implementation of different construction and development projects in Oman, the official added.

Among the other Persian Gulf states, Oman has always tried to preserve its friendly approach toward Iran and today Iran has a closer and more sincere cooperation with the Sultanate among the other Arab countries, he stressed.

Iran-Oman trade has witnessed noticeable growth over the past three years, according to Mohsen Zarrabi, the chairman of Iran-Oman Joint chamber of Commerce.

Zarrabi made the remarks on the sidelines of Oman's exclusive exhibition of businesses which opened at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds on Monday and will run until Friday with the participation of 64 Omani



Omani Minister of Commerce and Industry Ali bin Masud Al Sunaidy and Governor General of Iran's Hormozgan Province Jassem Jaderi cutting the ribbon for launching a shipping line between Iranian southern port of Shahid Bahonar and two Omani ports on Sunday

companies active in the fields of handicrafts, petrochemicals, plastic, medical equipment, electricity and electronics, agriculture, furniture and cosmetics.

For the time being, the Omani companies are serious in developing industrial, trade and investment ties with the Iranian companies.

## RCF ropes in FALAT to set up 1.3MT urea plant in Iran

Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers has formed JV with Gujarat State Fertilizer Corporation (GSFC) and Faradast Energy Falat Company (FALAT) for the development of 1.3 million ton (MT) urea plant at Chabahar in Iran. The project entails investment of 65 billion rupees. The product will be shipped back to India.

RCF CMD Manoj Mishra told Business Standard, "Both RCF and GSFC together have proposed to hold 51% while the balance 49% by FALAT. "However, the talks are currently underway."

Further, the company plans to expand the production capacity at the Thal plant situated in Raigad district with an investment of 55 billion rupees. "RCF will set up one single stream Ammonia plant of

2,200 tons per day and one single stream urea plant of capacity of 3,850 tons per day at the existing site in Thal. The project awaits cabinet approval," Mishra noted.

According to Mishra, RCF along with Coal India, GAIL India and Fertilizer Corporation of India will set up a fertilizer complex comprising 2,200 tons per day ammonia plant and 3,850 tons per day urea plant at Talcher in Odisha. "Coal gasification route is being explored as feed stock. A joint venture company Talcher Fertilizer Ltd has been incorporated to execute the project which entails an investment of 80 billion rupees. RCF has picked up 29% equity worth 10 billion rupees," he said.

Mishra informed that the JV company

has engaged Project & Development India Ltd and has issued expression of interest for the selection of coal gasification technology and it hopes to complete the process in next two months.

Moreover, RCF is spending 10 billion rupees on energy efficiency in Trombay and Thal plants. "There will be massive reduction in energy which will make us profitable in future time to come. We expect the benefits of the same should start coming by 2018-19," he noted.

This apart, RCF is investing 1.98 billion rupees on sewage treatment plant at Trombay plant.

Mishra hoped that RCF with the ongoing expansion in and outside India aims to achieve turnover of 150 billion rupees

by 2021-22.

Meanwhile, Mishra said RCF's net profit dipped to 1.912 billion rupees in 2015-16 against 3.226 billion rupees in 2014-15, a 40.62% fall. "Profit has taken a hit as we have made a provision of 1.81 billion rupees as an abundant precaution and responsible accounting for use of ATM gas for non urea purposes. We feel that this is not correct recovery as ours is an integrated unit where urea, PNK and industrial unit produce in a single complex. We have placed our story to them, case to inter ministerial committee, let us see. Had this provision not made our profit would have been same as last year," he added. (Source: Business Standard)

## Iran's non-oil trade over \$42.14b in H1

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Iran's non-oil trade exceeded \$42.14 billion in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 21), recording a positive balance, IRIB news reported on Sunday.

According to Iran's custom administration, the country's non-oil exports reached \$21.706 billion in the first half of this year, registering a 5.99 percent rise compared to the same period last year.

Iran's worth of non-oil imports stood at \$20.308 billion during the mentioned time, a 2.61 percent drop from the figure of last year's first six months.

During the said period, gas condensate was reported to be the main export product with a total value of \$3.496 billion although the commodity recorded a 12.85 percent fall year-on-year, followed by Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

Moreover, during the mentioned period a total value of



\$8.698 billion of petrochemical products were exported from the country which indicates a 22.4 percent growth compared to the first half of last year.

The main imported items during the first six months of the

current Iranian year included corn, soybeans, rice, automobile parts and different types of vehicles.

China is still the biggest buyer of Iranian goods so that in the first six months of this year the total value of Iran's exports to China reached \$3.998 billion registering a 1.92 percent rise over the same period last year; China is followed by the UAE, Iraq, Turkey and South Korea in the list of top importers from Iran.

The country's foreign trade statistics during the first six months of this year indicates an increase in imports of German goods.

Germany sent \$1.122 billion worth of goods to Iran in the first half with a considerable rise of 26 percent compared to H1 last year.

Germany is number five in the list of top exporters to Iran following China, the UAE, South Korea and Turkey on the top.

## German business morale shrugs off Brexit to hit 28-month high

German business morale rose far more than expected in September, reaching its highest level in more than two years, a survey showed on Monday, signaling that executives had brushed off concerns about Brexit that had weighed on their mood last month.

The Munich-based Ifo economic institute said its business climate index, based on a monthly survey of 7,000 firms, rose to 109.5 from an upwardly revised 106.3 in August, the biggest monthly increase since

July 2010.

"Companies are clearly more optimistic about the months ahead. They are also more satisfied with their current business situation," Ifo head Clemens Fuest said in a statement. "The German economy is expecting a golden autumn."

A separate index measuring corporate expectations in Europe's biggest economy over a six-month horizon rose to 104.5. This was the highest reading since November 2015, suggesting many firms were not

expecting economic headwinds.

"The Brexit shock has been digested for now," said Ifo economist Klaus Wohlrabe, adding that German executives appear to have overcome the "small amount of uncertainty" created by Britain's decision in June to leave the European Union.

A breakdown of the headline figure showed that sentiment had improved significantly in construction, manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing.

The economy has been driven by ris-

ing state spending linked to the influx of a record number of migrants last year, higher private consumption and a flourishing construction sector - all supported by record low interest rates.

However, industrial production fell the most in 23 months in July while exports unexpectedly posted their steepest drop in nearly a year, adding to evidence that manufacturing is losing momentum as overseas demand, particularly from Asia, wanes. (Source: Reuters)

NEWS IN BRIEF



UK banks approve fewest mortgages since January 2015 in August: BBA

The number of mortgages approved by British banks in August fell to its lowest level since January 2015, the British Bankers' Association said on Monday.

The figures extended a slowdown which began shortly after the start of this year ahead of the introduction of a new tax on homes bought by landlords in April and Britain's referendum on its membership of the European Union in June.

British banks approved 36,997 mortgages for house purchases last month, 21 percent lower than in August 2015.

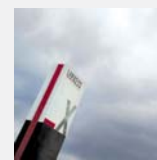


Carige eyeing state guarantee in €900m bad loan sale

Banca Carige is considering using a state guarantee to sell 900 million euros (\$1 billion) in bad loans, two sources close to the matter said on Monday, as Italian banks seek to tackle a major source of weakness for their balance sheets.

Carige targets selling 1.8 billion euros in bad loans by the end of 2017 under its business plan. Its chief executive said in June roughly half that amount would be sold this year.

The Genoa-based bank is working with adviser Banca IMI on the bad loan sale, the sources said, confirming a press report.



Germany's Lanxess to buy U.S. chemical firm Chemtura for \$2.7 billion

Lanxess AG is to buy U.S. specialty chemical company Chemtura for 2.4 billion euros (\$2.69 billion) including debt in the German company's largest ever takeover, moving it further away from its main synthetic rubber business.

Lanxess's offer of \$33.50 per share is a premium of about 19 percent to the Philadelphia-based company's share-price close on Friday.

The world's largest synthetic rubber maker will use existing funds and new debt to buy Chemtura, Lanxess said in a statement, describing the deal as its largest ever acquisition.



# OPEC unlikely to clinch oil deal until November, analysts say

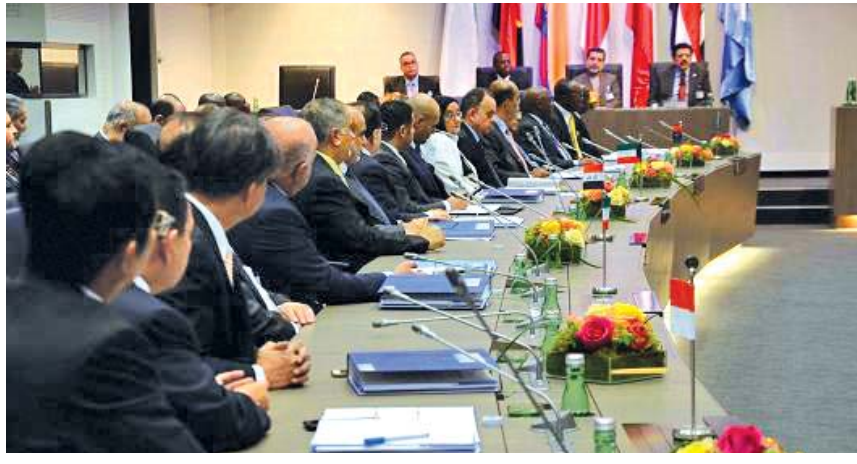
Oil producers are unlikely to settle on any kind of deal in Algeria this week, setting the stage for more volatility in oil prices and postponing hopes for an end to the current supply glut until November.

OPEC members gather in Algiers for the International Energy Forum starting Monday and are expected to hold informal talks following the two-day event. Algeria's oil minister Nourredine Bouterfa has warned prices could drop back into the \$30 per barrel range if officials walk away empty handed, but that appears to be the most realistic scenario.

No real decisions will be made regarding an output deal but oil ministers are likely to say they are making progress, a move that effectively postpones any decision making until OPEC's official meeting on November 30, Matt Smith, director of commodity research at Clipperdata, told CNBC's "Squawk Box".

Indeed, any potential deals are only likely to occur at the official policy meeting in November, echoed Mitul Kotecha, head of Asia FX and rates strategy at Barclays.

Brent crude futures were slightly higher at \$46.31 a barrel during early Asia trade on Monday after losing nearly 4 percent in the



**No real decisions will be made regarding an output deal but oil ministers are likely to say they are making progress, Matt Smith, director of commodity research at Clipperdata, told CNBC.**

previous session.

"Expectations have painted the group into a corner not to walk away empty-handed, markets have sufficient cynicism not to

expect a concrete deal," Mizuho Bank analysts said in a Monday note.

"The most stirring headline will be an announcement of emergency OPEC meet-

ing after the forum as this might signal that some kind of deal may be close. We see potential for knee-jerk tests of \$50 for oil prices."

Efforts to reach an agreement on output cuts have been complicated by the lifting of international sanctions against Iran, with the country planning to sell more oil abroad. Saudi Arabia has agreed to lower production only if Iran agrees to do the same, Reuters reported last week, but it remains to be seen if Tehran will be on board.

Riyadh's goal in Algiers is to build a consensus on production that could be drafted into a formal agreement at the November policy meeting, but any output freeze that excludes Iran would be ineffective, noted Azlin Ahmad, crude oil editor at Argus Media.

Iran currently produces around 3.6 million barrels a day but aims to increase that figure up to 4 million.

Strategists widely agree that political discussions are the only way for members to reach a deal.

"If the market is left on its own to balance without a freeze deal, prices won't move from \$40-50 range so that will question the credibility of OPEC to control the market," Ahmad continued. (Source: CNBC)

## Oil rises as OPEC meets, volatility hits post-Doha high

Oil rallied on Monday as the world's largest producers gathered in Algeria to discuss ways to support the market, with nervous trade driving volatility to its highest since exporters met in April.

Skepticism about any deal being reached has prompted money managers to cut their bullish bets to a one-month low last week, when prices fell by nearly five percent, dented by signs Saudi Arabia and Iran were making little progress in achieving a preliminary agreement to freeze production.

Members of the Organization of the Pe-

roleum Exporting Countries are meeting informally on the sidelines of the International Energy Forum in Algeria from Sept. 26-28, where they will discuss a possible deal to limit output.

Brent crude futures rose 73 cents to \$46.62 a barrel by 1052 GMT (11.52 a.m. BST), having rallied from a session low of \$45.74, while U.S. crude prices rose 54 cents to \$45.02 a barrel.

Implied volatility, one gauge of how much the oil price moves, rose to its highest since April 18, when a meeting in Doha among OPEC members to discuss an out-

put freeze ended in an impasse and the price hit a low just above \$40 a barrel.

Unplanned outages across OPEC countries still amount to around two million barrels per day, according to SEB commodities strategist Bjarne Schieldrop, which will make it difficult for members that are pumping close to capacity to make way for the potential return of that shuttered output.

"They will come away with nothing, because it is too difficult. How can they decide a freeze when Libya is on the doorstep of returning production, or Nigeria for that matter?" Schieldrop said.



"I expect Algeria and Venezuela to keep pushing for a deal - it's imperative for them to keep the price up," Barratt said.

(Source: Reuters)

## IKCO and Peugeot JV, a Model for All Industries in Iran

With the execution and finalization of international contract inked between Iran and six world's major powers dubbed "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)", which took effect in Jan. 2016, a great number of prestigious international companies and producers expressed their readiness to make huge investment in Iran's lucrative market. Broadly speaking, a wide spectrum of worldly renowned companies and economic enterprises made up their mind to grab available competitive advantages for investing in Iranian car market.

In a recent year, talks and negotiations were held for the conclusion of contract and outset of joint cooperation between Iranian and Western companies, some of which bore fruition and put into effect officially. But the first cooperation between Iranian and foreign companies, which was put into effect after the implementation of "JCPOA", was joint-venture cooperation made between Iran Khodro Industrial Group (IKCO) and French "Peugeot" Company.

With due observance to the said issue, IKCO clinched a significant contract in line with meeting demands of industrial sector of the country.

The type, form, provisions and contents of the contract was designed in such a way that it was taken as a role model for other contracts especially in the field of car industry. As mentioned in above, talks between IKCO and French "Peugeot" Company led to the establishment of a joint company as joint venture, so that it is considered as the first officially contract signed in international level.

### Iran's Potential for Production

Potential capabilities and available facilities in Iran have turned the country into a leader in the region. However, Iran's industrial sector is leader in the region. Easy and cheap access to the production inputs such as manpower and/or raw materials and also natural resources are of salient investment attractions in

Iran. In addition, excellent strategic and geographical location of Iran, benefited from proper water and land (amphibious) borders with regional countries as well as existence of large population in both Iran and neighboring countries, as many as more than 400 million people, etc. have turned into a production hub for Western and foreign companies.

As listed among world's top 10 countries in terms of rich mineral resources, Islamic Republic of Iran has excellent situation in West Asia and can bring about maximum value added inside the country besides helping boost national wealth. In general, Islamic Republic of Iran enjoys unique and excellent condition in terms of provision of research and development (R&D) manpower, observing requirements of international standards.

### France's 1st Direct Investment in Iran

Unique and specific condition of Iran, as mentioned in above, has brought about comfort of investors in line with obtaining significant profit in Iran's lucrative market. On the other hand, giant strides have been taken by Iranian car manufacturers for obtaining technical knowhow and knowledge in the field of manufacturing car. For being turned into a prestigious car manufacturer, IKCO has taken effective steps in clinching contract with world's leading car manufacturer, the issue of which has been put atop agenda. Accordingly, the first contract after implementation of "JCPOA" was concluded between IKCO and France's "Peugeot" Company dubbed "IKAP" as joint-venture project.

With its long experience in Iran's car market, "Peugeot" Company has full familiarity with the taste and requirement of Iranian customers and is after to get lion's share in Iran's car market. Given the above issue, this prestigious French company has devised a long-term planning for having strong presence in both Iran and regional car market. Since

"Peugeot" Company lacks regional hub and production site, it follows up joint-venture car production with Iran Khodro Industrial Group (IKCO) seriously.

### Parts Manufacturing Sector to Be Boomed Significantly

Participation of country's car part manufacturers and their accession to world's supply chain of "Peugeot" are of salient and important topics of contract clinched between the two contracting parties i.e. IKCO and France's "Peugeot" Company, the issue of which will be supervised by the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade. Generally, indigenizing production of car parts will be put into effect in coming years i.e. almost three years after joint-venture cooperation of the two sides in this field.

For this purpose, a joint meeting was held between senior officials of the two sides in order to materializing objectives and enforcing joint-venture cooperation of mutual part manufacturers.

It should be noted that the joint meeting was held for second time in the presence of 65 French car part suppliers along with chief executives of "Peugeot" company as well as 140 Iranian car part manufacturers.

In this two-day seminar, it was emphasized that 200,000 cars would be manufactured in joint-venture company set up by the two sides entitled "IKAP" annually coupled with transferring technical knowhow and knowledge of French company.

Under the agreement made in this regard, three best-selling models of car will hit Europe's market in the first phase of this contract. It is obvious that high quality, production optimization and high productivity and also presenting suitable services have been cited as the main criteria for the selection of parts manufacturers in joint-venture production of products.

According to the chief executive of SAPCO, high capability of part manufacturers in financing for production growth and also taking advantage of world's modern technologies should be taken into consideration by parts manufacturers.

### Export of Car Part Concurrent with Exporting Product

Export of joint-venture "IKAP" Company's products, which is considered as one of the main provisions of contract concluded with France's "Peugeot"

Company in line with materialization of objectives of resistance economy, has paved suitable ways for car part manufacturers in world's supply chain. Given the above issue, production of high-quality part with fair and competitive price have been cited as requirements for exporting car parts.

"Fair and reasonable price" and "quality of products" were highlighted by two contracting parties, based on which, chief executives of the two companies placed their special emphasis on selecting part manufacturing companies based on the said two components.

According to the chief executive of "IKAP" Company, he said: "Benefiting from production and technology resources, taking advantage of available potentials and capabilities of the two holding companies and using capability and potential of the most experienced manpower, etc. the company is after getting lion's share in car market besides creating profitability."

€400 billion investment as joint venture between IKCO and France's "Peugeot" company is a giant stride towards development of industrial cooperation between the two countries, he said, adding: "With turning Iran into a regional hub for joint production of car, the result of this investment will lead to the production of wealth, increase in national revenue and development of car manufacturing industry of the two countries of Iran and France."

In the end, Chief Executive of "IKAP" Company said: "Contract concluded between IKCO and France's "Peugeot" Company is not limited to this company, rather, it belongs to all sectors of industry and Iranian society. Relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God, the management of the company will welcome constructive complaints and proposals in line with materializing most economic objectives of car industry in the country."

By: A.Saeidi





## Leading the way on the refugee crisis

Less than a week after the opening of one of the two UAE-sponsored refugee camps in Greece, this country has announced its plan to host 15,000 Syrian refugees over the next five years. The UAE will be the first country in the Persian Gulf to host Syrian refugees.

Anwar Gargash, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, put it succinctly when he tweeted: "Repercussions of the war in Syria will continue for years to come. The human toll and suffering is unprecedented. The UAE affirms its commitment."

This move should not be surprising, as the UAE is a generous donor to humanitarian cause and has expressed its support for the people of Syria since day one of the conflict raging for more than five years. The government announced during the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May that it will double its contributions by 2020 and allocate 15 percent of its projected budget to provide assistance to the most vulnerable and needy in the world.

After funding humanitarian programs in refugee camps elsewhere, hosting Syrians in this country is a logical next step. Almost 5 million Syrians have fled to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and Iraq, and 6.6 million have been displaced within Syria, according to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Over the past five years, the UAE has provided more than US\$750 million. It has also been supporting efforts by the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees.

The Emirates Red Crescent has always been there, setting up refugee camps and distributing money, clothes, food and water, as well as books and supplies for schoolchildren.

These efforts have been recognized by many world leaders, most recently Andre Vallini, the French minister of state for development, who applauded the "tremendous efforts" made by the UAE in the field of humanitarian aid.

The decision to host Syrian refugees confirms the UAE's commitment to develop its aid programs and adapt to new realities. The prolonging of the refugee crisis has meant that more and more countries have to step up to the plate, and the UAE has set a good example for countries in this region to follow. The responsibility for displaced persons is a shared one.

(Source: The National)



By Denis Simonneau

Alain Le Roy, who served as the United Nations undersecretary-general for peacekeeping operations and secretary-general of the European External Action Service, has extensive knowledge of international affairs and peacekeeping missions. After leaving his post in Brussels this month, he answered questions in a written interview with Al-Monitor.

Born in February 1953, Le Roy started his career as an engineer in the oil exploration and production industry. He then moved to the French public service. In 1995, he became the UN deputy special coordinator for Sarajevo and continued as UN regional administrator for Kosovo. He was the European Union special representative to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in 2001-2002, and returned to the French government in 2002 as director for economic and financial affairs in the French Foreign Ministry. He then served as the French ambassador to Madagascar in 2005-2007, and ambassador in charge of the Union for the Mediterranean project. In 2008, Le Roy was appointed UN undersecretary-general for peacekeeping operations. In this capacity, he supervised many operations all over the world. After serving as the French ambassador to Italy in 2011-2014, he worked the last two years as secretary-general of the European External Action Service (EEAS). Now that he has been succeeded by Helga Schmid of Germany, Le Roy gives us his views at a time when the EU faces a critical moment, not only because of the decision by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union, but also because of tense discussions on its future, on migration and on security issues in particular.

**■ As former head of the [EEAS], what do you consider to be the first priorities of the EU external policy?**

A: Our wider region has become more unstable and more insecure. The crises within and beyond our borders are affecting directly our citizens' lives. In challenging times, our first priorities are a common vision, a joined-up approach and ways to act together with credibility. This is the aim of the Global Strategy for European Foreign and Security Policy presented by the High Representative Federica Mogherini to European heads of state and government last June. In this Global Strategy, Europe's neighborhood remains a key strategic priority, and this includes the Middle East.

**■ Did you have the instruments and fi-**

# Veteran French diplomat: EU should play greater role in resolving Syria crisis



Alain Le Roy

**The Syrian crisis has become the world's worst humanitarian disaster.**

**nancial resources to drive your actions?**

A: As the EU member states are saying, "The EEAS, while still a relatively new organization on its way to full maturity, has achieved significant progress in developing into a modern and operational foreign policy service, has increasingly demonstrated its capacity to add value on policy and to strengthen the EU's response to global challenges, and has become a stable feature of the institutional makeup of the European Union." Working closely with the EU member states, the European Commission and the European Parliament, we now have the political and economic means to drive our actions.

**■ Is the sharing of responsibilities**

**between the council, the member states, the commission and the EEAS clear and satisfactory?**

A: Yes, I believe it is the case. There were enormous challenges in the beginning, but now — five years after the Lisbon Treaty — the sharing of responsibilities is clear.

**■ Do you believe that the decision by the UK population to leave the EU could have any negative impact on the EU external policy?**

A: For sure it will have an impact, as the UK is obviously a very important player in the EU. But the new UK government has already told us that they want to remain as close as possible to the EU's

external policy. For sure, we will find ways to associate them as closely as possible. We need them.

**■ As far as the Middle East is concerned, what do you see as the main achievements of the EEAS?**

A: The EU has many delegations in the Middle East run by the EEAS, and a dedicated EU special representative for the Middle East peace process, through which the EU undertakes a range of activities — political, economic and practical.

The EU continues to work with its Israeli and Palestinian counterparts along with the Quartet and other stakeholders in the region and beyond in order to make progress toward a just and lasting peace based on a two-state solution. The EU is the largest donor to Palestinian state-building efforts aiming at a Palestinian state based on the rule of law and respect of human rights.

In response to the continuing conflict and its consequences both inside Syria and in neighboring countries, the EU and its member states are implementing a comprehensive EU regional strategy for Syria, Iraq and the Daesh threat.

**■ Is the EU a contributor to the resolution of the crisis in Syria? In what way?**

A: The EU is an active member of the International Syria Support Group and, in my opinion, should play a more important role than it does today in the resolution of the crisis. The EU is a very important actor in the assistance field and remains a close partner and supporter of UN special envoy Staffan de Mistura. The EU stands ready to provide support to stabilization and reconstruction once a political transition has started.

The Syrian crisis has become the world's worst humanitarian disaster. The EU and its member states are the largest donor and have mobilized over 6.4 billion euros (\$7.15 billion) in humanitarian aid as well as stabilization and development assistance since the conflict began, to those affected by the conflict inside Syria and refugees and host communities in neighboring countries, especially Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan. In December 2014, the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis was established.

**■ Do you believe that Turkey is a key partner in this conflict and could contribute to soothe the situation?**

A: Turkey is an EU candidate country and a very important partner for the EU. We work closely together on a range of common challenges, including to contribute a solution for the Syrian conflict, to which Turkey can bring a lot.

(Source: Al Monitor)

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By Gareth Porter

Another U.S.-Russian Syria ceasefire deal has been blown up.

Whether it could have survived even with a U.S.-Russian accord is open to doubt, given the incentives for al-Qaeda and its allies to destroy it. But the politics of the U.S.-Russian relationship played a central role in the denouement of the second ceasefire agreement.

The final blow apparently came from the Russian-Syrian side, but what provoked the decision to end the ceasefire was the first ever U.S. strike against Syrian government forces on 17 September.

That convinced the Russians that the U.S. Pentagon had no intention of implementing the main element of the deal that was most important to the Putin government: a joint U.S.-Russian air campaign against the Islamic State (ISIL) militant group and al-Qaeda through a "Joint Implementation Centre". And it is entirely credible that it was meant to do precisely that.

#### ■ Withdrawal from Castello Road - or not?

The Russians had a powerful incentive to ensure that the ceasefire would hold, especially around Aleppo.

In the new ceasefire agreement, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov had negotiated an unusually detailed set of requirements for both sides to withdraw their forces from the Castello Road, the main artery for entry into Aleppo from the north. It was understood that the "demilitarization" north of Aleppo was aimed at allowing humanitarian aid to reach the city and was, therefore, the central political focus of the ceasefire.

The Russians put great emphasis on ensuring that the Syrian army would comply with the demilitarization plan. It had established a mobile observation post on the road on 13 September. And both the Russians and Syrian state television reported that the Syrian army had withdrawn its heavy weaponry from the road

# How the Pentagon sank the U.S.-Russia deal in Syria – and the ceasefire

early on 15 September, including video footage showing a bulldozer clearing barbed wire from the road. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also reported the Syrian army had withdrawn from the road.

But al-Qaeda's newly renamed Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (previously the al-Nusra Front) had a clear incentive to refuse to comply with a move that could open the door to a U.S.-Russian campaign against it. Opposition sources in Aleppo claimed that no such government withdrawal had happened, and said that opposition units would not pull back from positions near the road. On the morning of 16 September, the Syrian army moved back into positions on the road.

Kerry and Lavrov agreed in a phone conversation that same day that the ceasefire was still holding, even though humanitarian aid convoys were still stalled in the buffer zone at the Turkish border because of the lack of permission from the Syrian government, as well as uncertainty about security on the route to Aleppo.

But Kerry also told Lavrov that the U.S. now insisted that it would establish the Joint Implementation Center only after the humanitarian aid had been delivered.

#### ■ U.S. policy clash

That crucial shift in U.S. diplomatic position was a direct result of the aggressive opposition of the Pentagon to Obama's intention to enter into military cooperation with Russia in Syria. The Pentagon was motivated by an overriding interest in heading off such high-profile U.S.-Russian cooperation at a time when it is pushing for much greater U.S. military efforts to counter what it portrays as Russian aggression in a new Cold War.

At an extraordinary video con-



**Al-Qaeda's newly renamed Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (previously the al-Nusra Front) had a clear incentive to refuse to comply with a move that could open the door to a U.S.-Russian campaign against it.**

ference with Kerry immediately after the negotiation of the ceasefire agreement was complete, Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter strongly objected to the Joint Center – especially the provision for sharing intelligence with the Russians for a campaign against ISIL and al-Qaeda.

Obama had overridden Carter's objections at the time, but a New York Times story filed the night of 13 September reported that Pentagon officials were still refusing to agree that the U.S. should proceed with the creation of the Joint Implementation Centre if the ceasefire held for seven days.

The Times quoted Lt Gen Jeffrey L. Harrigan, commander of the United States Air Forces Central Command

least 62 Syrian troops and wounded more than 100.

The Pentagon soon acknowledged what it called a mistake in targeting, but the impact on the ceasefire deal was immediate. Syria accused the U.S. of a deliberate attack on its forces, and the Russians similarly expressed doubt about the U.S. explanation.

On Monday 19 September, the Syrian government declared that the seven-day ceasefire had ended. And that same day, a major UN humanitarian aid convoy was being unloaded in an opposition-held town West of Aleppo when it was attacked, killing more than 20 aid workers. U.S. officials accused Russia of an air strike on the convoy, although the evidence of an air attack appeared slender, according to a Russian defense ministry spokesman.

It is not difficult to imagine, however, the fury with which both Russian and Syrian governments could have reacted to the U.S. blows against both the Syrian army and the deal that had been sealed with Washington. They were certainly convinced that the U.S. air attack on Syrian troops was a clear message that the Pentagon and U.S. military leadership would not countenance any cooperation with Russia on Syria – and were warning of a Syrian campaign to come once Hillary Clinton is elected.

Attacking the aid convoy by some means was a brutal way of signaling a response to such messages. Unfortunately, the brunt of the response was borne by aid workers and civilians.

#### ■ Mistake or strategy?

The evidence that the U.S. deliberately targeted a Syrian military facility is, of course, circumstantial, and it is always possible that the strike

was another of the monumental intelligence failures so common in war.

But the timing of the strike – only 48 hours before the decision was to be made on whether to go ahead with the Joint Implementation Centre – and its obvious impact on the ceasefire make a tight fit with the thesis that it was no mistake.

And to make the fit even tighter, Gen Harrigan, the USAFCENT commander who had refused to say that his command would go ahead with such cooperation with Russia, would almost certainly have approved a deliberate targeting of a Syrian facility.

USAFCENT planners are very familiar with the area where it bombed Syrian troops, having carried out an average of 20 such strikes a week around Deir Ezzor, a DOD official told Nancy A Youssef of The Daily Beast.

Pentagon officials acknowledged to Youssef that the USAFCENT had been watching the site for at least a couple of days, but in fact they must have been familiar with the site, which has apparently existed for at least six months or longer.

Yet no one has been able to explain how USAFCENT could have decided that a target so close to a Syrian government airbase in that government-controlled city was an ISIL target.

Obama was strongly committed to the general strategy of cooperation with Russia as the key to trying to make headway in moving toward a ceasefire. But that strategy was based on a refusal to confront U.S. regional allies with the necessity to change course from reckless support for a jihadist-dominated opposition force.

Now that the strategy of the past year has gone up in flames, the only way Obama can establish meaningful control over Syria policy is to revisit the fundamental choices that propelled the U.S. into the sponsorship of the war in the first place.

(Source: Middle East Eye)

Gareth Porter is an independent investigative journalist and winner of the 2012 Gellhorn Prize for journalism.



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**T**OURISM TEHRAN — The Niavaran Cultural Historical Complex, covering an area of about eleven hectares, is composed of several landmark buildings, museums and monuments constructed in the 19th and 20th centuries during the Pahlavi and late Qajar eras.



Ahmad Shahi Pavilion within the Niavaran Cultural Historical Complex

History of the palace complex stretches back to about 280 years ago when Fath-Ali Shah of the Qajar Dynasty ordered for a summer residence to be built over the then countryside area of the capital. The two-story Ahmad Shahi Pavilion is one of the highlights of the complex.

The main palace of the complex was originally erected for the purpose of royal ceremonies and gatherings. However, it later turned into the residence of the second king of Pahlavi king, Mohammad Reza Shah and his family.

With an area of 9,000 square meters, the palace is entirely adorned with magnificent plasterwork, mirrorwork, and tilework. Its architecture boasts a blend of pre and post Islamic art.

Its beautifully decorated and fully furnished interior features loads of art works such as precious paintings and sculpture by Iranian and foreign artists.

Here is a select of comments that visitors to the historical complex have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

■ **"An insight into the life of the last Shah"**

Of the many royal palaces in Tehran, this one is my favorite. Whilst it may lack the formal grandeur of the Golestan Palace, it does however give visitors an insight into the everyday life of the Shah and his family... (Duncan W. from Thailand, visited September 2016)

■ **"Worth the visit"**

The most modern of all palace complexes in Tehran. Niavaran was the main evidence of the last Shah of Iran... The actual palace structure is beautiful - the external tile work was outstanding in its precision. (Danamawlai from Hong Kong, visited July 2016)

■ **"Lovely setting and tour"**

A great visit and you gain a little more sense of Persian history and especially the Shah and his family. Tickets are sold for various buildings - we did the main Palace and the house next door. Both were very interesting. Gardens attractive to walk round and a good coffee shop in the grounds. (Geraldine from the UK, visited May 2016)

■ **"Go for it!"**

I really enjoyed quick visit to this complex (we had limited time but thought we should at least run through it). It was a rainy day but that did not affect the visit a great deal. There are several buildings where Iranian royals use to reside. You can see various very precious items and artefacts (advice you to have a guide who will give you more information or small details from that time life)... (Samira S. from Bosnia and Herzegovina, visited November 2015)

**NOTABLES**

**Al-kashi: Muslim astronomer and mathematician**

Al-kashi, in full, Ghiyath al-Din Jamshid Masud al-kashi who was born in the Iranian city of Kashan in c. 1380 is ranking among the greatest mathematicians and astronomers in the Islamic world.

The first event known with certainty in al-kashi's life is his observation of a lunar eclipse on June 2, 1406, from his hometown kashan.

His earliest surviving work is Sullam al-sama (1407; "The Stairway of Heaven"), an astronomical treatise dedicated to a local vizier. He dedicated the Mukhtasar dar 'Ilm-i hay'at (1410-11; "Compendium of the Science of Astronomy") to Iskander (executed in 1414), the sultan of Isfahan and Fars (both now located in Iran) and a member of the Timurid dynasty.

Al-kashi produced his greatest mathematical works after his arrival in Samarkand. In 1424 he completed the Risala al-muhitiyya ("Treatise on the Circumference"), a computational masterpiece in which he determined the value of  $2\pi$  to 9 sexagesimal places.

In the introduction al-kashi observes that a small error in the estimated value of  $\pi$  results in a large error when calculating the circumference of enormous circles, such as the celestial sphere. In order to calculate the size of the universe with an error smaller than the width of a horse's hair (a standard Persian unit of measurement  $\cong 1/36$  inch), al-Kāshī used a polygon with  $3 \times 228$  sides to estimate  $\pi$ .

His best-known work is the Miftah al-hisab ("Key of Arithmetic"), completed in 1427 and also dedicated to Ulugh Beg. This encyclopedic work instructs in the solution of a wide range of problems from astronomy, surveying, and finance through the use of arithmetic—defined by al-kashi as "the science consisting of basic rules to find numerical unknowns from relevant known quantities." The pedagogical excellence of the Miftah al-hisab is attested by the numerous copies made of it over the following centuries.

Al-kashi was murdered outside the Samarkand observatory on June 22, 1429, probably on the command of Ulugh Beg.

(Source: Britannica Encyclopedia)

**Iran marks World Tourism Day**

Tourism can lead to rapid job creation for the youth

➔ The president added that through constructive interactions with the world "we have proved Iranphobia to be unsubstantial."

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani pointed to variety of attractions that the country boasts of including its natural beauties, rich cultural heritage, ethnic diversity, religious rituals, as well as a wealth of customs and traditions.

He also reminded that Iran is amongst the top ten countries in terms of the quantity of historical heritage and natural attractions.

Another speaker, Iranian Vice President Masoud Soltanifar announced that over the past years the country has witnessed a jump of 10 percent in tourist arrivals.

"Iran aims to meet 20 million international tourist arrivals by 2025," Soltanifar who also presides over Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization (CHTHO) said.

During a video message playback, United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) Secretary-General Taleb Rifai said "All of the world's citizens have the right to experience the incredible diversity this planet has to offer."

Therefore, it is highly important that all countries and destinations, as well as the industry, promote accessibility for all in the physical environment, in transport systems, in public facilities and services and in information and communications channels."

Iran selected "Tourism for All, All for Tourism" as motto of the celebration this year. The procedure may simply hint at



President Hassan Rouhani addresses attendees at a ceremony celebrating the World Tourism Day held at the IRIB International Conference Center in northern Tehran on September 26, 2016.

tourism as an exemplar public-welfare sector; yet it suggests everyone to take a role in supporting it.

Iran plans to lay the ground to attract further Muslim tourists who are bound by picking the Halal tourism, considering the figures that the annual global turnover of such tourism industry reaches \$150 billion, the CHTHO deputy director Morteza Rahmani-Movahhed announced earlier this month.

A subcategory of traveling, Halal tour-

ism is geared toward the specific needs of Muslim individuals who seek to abide by the Islamic rules.

Soltanifar along with Education Minister Ali-Asghar Fani unveiled the emblem of "Fellow traveler", an innovative scheme that seeks to promote tourism codes among Iranian students.

Under an agreement signed by the CHTHO deputy director, Morteza Rahmani-Movahhed, and the deputy education minister, Hamidreza Kaf-

ash earlier this month, the approach aims to heighten the students' awareness of travelling in general as well as providing further insight as to historical, religious, and natural heritage of the country.

At the end of the meeting, the organizers also honored a wide range of top-most activists in the tourism industry such as hoteliers, tour guides, travel agents, drivers, web masters, journalists, mass media executives, artisans.

**New flights to Iran help ancient destination come in from the cold**

By Sarah Marshall

It was once considered out of bounds, but British Airways' decision to launch direct flights positions Iran as one of the hottest destinations to visit in 2017.

"Our data shows Iran is already on the radar as the UK's second most affordable long-haul country to fly to after the UAE," says Andrew Shelton, managing director at Cheapflights.co.uk.

"Now British Airways is back in Iran, other airlines may follow - Air France relaunched their service in April this year - and flight prices may fall further."



A view of the historic Golestan Palace, a major tourist destination in the heart of Tehran

BA's Tehran flights will operate daily from London Heathrow this winter.

The reopening of the Iranian embassy in London, lifting of sanctions, and the relaxing of travel advisories earlier this year have already resulted in rising bookings.

G Adventures (gadventures.com), which offers a 14-day Discover Persia tour from £1,599/€1,889pp (land only), has reported that sales are up 200pc year-on-year.

Rachel Wasser, the company's global product manager, cites "magnificent mosques, diverse history and unrivalled hospitality" as drawcards for the country.

Admittedly, access to Iran is still restricted, making escorted group tours the easiest option for travel. British citizens do require a tour guide, although this doesn't necessarily have to be one approved by the state (as is the case for Americans). Brits also have the freedom to use Iran's public transport.

Meanwhile, Irish visitors are advised to exercise "a high degree of caution" in Iran by the Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade. Tourist visas are granted through the Iranian consulate in Dublin (72 Merrion Square, 01 288-0252; €40).

Usit (usit.ie) and Sunway (sunway.ie) are among the Irish tour operators offering travel packages to Iran, with 14-day prices from €1,754pp (Usit).

Although Iran continues to be the focus of ongoing controversy, an agent with the direct-to-local Evaneos travel platform (evaneos-travel.com) Fatemeh, says:

"While it is no secret that a number of

its neighboring countries are experiencing varying degrees of instability, Iran itself has remained a very safe place, and there is no reason why tourists should feel that a trip here poses them any sort of threat."

Instead, she says the main chal-

lenge facing the country is meeting demand for hotel rooms - although increasingly tours are incorporating homestays.

Regent Holidays (regent-holidays.co.uk) for example, which has been running trips to Tehran for several years, include nights





in local houses as part of the 14-day Highlights of Northern Iran tour, starting from £3,385/€3,999pp with flights.

In the next 12 months, tourism is set to grow in Iran, and the chances are more tours and flight routes will soon follow.

(Source: Independent)


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# Hybrid material opens the door to new possibilities in graphene applications

Many scientists consider graphene to be a wonder material. Now, a team of researchers at the Technical University of Munich (TUM) has succeeded in linking graphene with another important chemical group, the porphyrins.

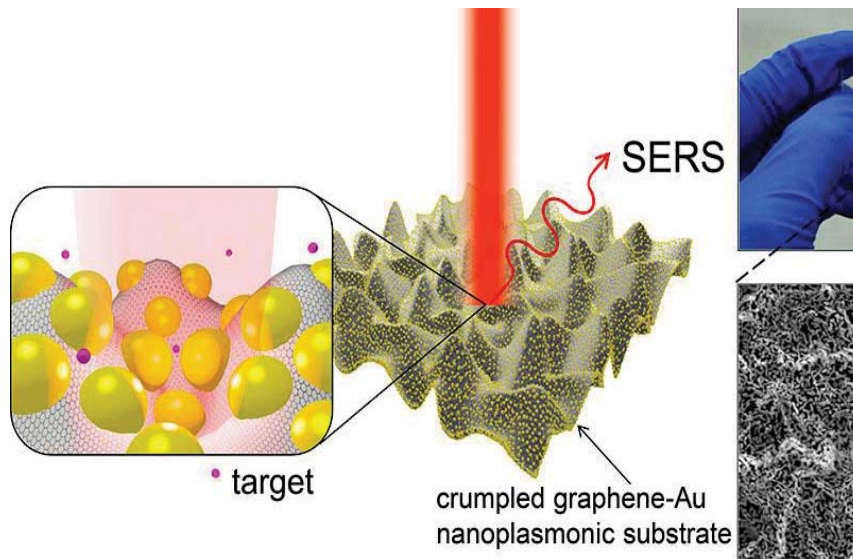
Porphyrins are well-known because of their striking functional properties which for example play a central role in chlorophyll during photosynthesis. These new hybrid structures could also be used in the field of molecular electronics, catalysis or even as sensors.

Hardly any material is currently receiving as much attention in research as graphene. It is flexible, extremely thin and transparent, while at the same time it has very high tensile strength and conducts electricity, ideal prerequisites for a wide variety of application areas.

However, using graphene to capture solar energy or as a gas sensor requires other specific properties as well. These properties can be achieved by fusing functional molecules with the carbon layer.

## Wet-chemical methods

In previous research, scientists were primarily concerned with wet-chemical methods for attaching the molecules to the surface of the material. Together with his colleagues, Molecular Engineering at Functional Interfaces Professor Wilhelm Auwärter decided to take a different ap-



proach: They were able to link porphyrin molecules to graphene in a controlled manner in an ultra-high vacuum using the catalytic properties of a silver surface on which the graphene layer rested.

When heated, the porphyrin molecules lose hydrogen atoms at their pe-

riphery and can thus form new bonds with the graphene edges.

"This method creates a clean and controllable environment," explains Professor Auwärter. "We can see exactly how the molecules bond and what types of bonds occur." Here the researchers use the latest

in modern atomic force microscopy to depict the chemical structure of individual molecules, the atomic "skeletons", so to speak.

For the first time the scientists have succeeded in attaching functional molecules to the edges of graphene covalently, i.e. with a stable chemical bond. "We want to modify only the edges of the material; this way the graphene's positive properties are not destroyed," says Auwärter.

The researchers chose the porphyrin molecules as the partner for graphene because of their special properties. "For example, porphyrins are responsible for transporting oxygen in hemoglobin," he continues. The molecules change their properties depending on which metals are at their center and can take on various different tasks, e.g. specifically bonding with gas molecules such as oxygen and carbon dioxide.

In the future this new method may make it possible to bond other molecules to graphene as well. The researchers also want to take even better control of the reaction, achieving targeted modifications by attaching molecules to carbon nanostructures such as graphene ribbons. These nanostructures are of central importance in electronic applications.

(Source: nextbigfuture.com)

**Using graphene to capture solar energy or as a gas sensor requires other specific properties as well. These properties can be achieved by fusing functional molecules with the carbon layer.**

## Opposed to GMOs? Are Monsanto's new CRISPR crops any better?

Monsanto, the agricultural biotech company whose creation of genetically engineered and modified crops has long made it a magnet for controversy, has now licensed the use of CRISPR-Cas genome-editing technology. In an announcement, Monsanto has revealed it had reached an agreement with the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. The new licensing agreement, Monsanto said in its release, "will deliver a wide array of crop improvements to global agriculture."

So what exactly is clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats (CRISPR)? In essence, it's a tool that allows scientists to exchange a couple letters of an organism's genetic code (either an A, G, C, or T), and replace it with one that is somehow beneficial for a specific purpose. And this, technically, is not the same as creating a GMO.

A GMO sees a plant's genes swapped with DNA from an entirely different organism, which often gives people the heebie-jeebies. But with CRISPR, everything is much more precise.

While the Broad Institute, considered a leader in the

realm of CRISPR genome-editing technologies, has previously allowed academic institutions and non-profits to use its techniques, the Monsanto deal marks the "first time that the Broad Institute has issued a license for agricultural use."

## Genome-editing research

The "license to CRISPR-Cas from the Broad Institute provides access to an exciting tool for our growing body of genome-editing research," said Tom Adams, Ph.D., biotechnology lead for Monsanto. "Genome-editing technology is complementary to our ongoing discovery research and provides an incredible resource to further unlock our world-leading germplasm and genome libraries."

Adams told the New Scientist that access to CRISPR will help Monsanto create crops that are more fruitful and harder, yielding more output and better resisting disease and environmental stresses. "Getting more productivity out of less acres with less inputs is clearly a critical thing for humanity," he said. "And gene editing is another tool that can help us accelerate that."

Of course, not everyone is thrilled about the notion



of gene editing entering our food source. There are, of course, some restrictions on the licenses that the Broad Institute granted Monsanto. For example, the company can't make infertile seeds (which would force farmers to continually purchase new ones every year), and Monsanto will also be limited in terms of how it modifies tobacco products.

But like it or not, this may just be the future of food.

(Source: Digital Trends)

## African elephants 'suffer worst decline in 25 years'

The number of African elephants has dropped by around 111,000 in the past decade, a new report released Sunday at the Johannesburg conference on the wildlife trade said, blaming the plummeting figures on poaching.

The revelation, the worst drop in 25 years, came amid disagreement on the second day of the global meet over the best way to improve the plight of Africa's elephants, targeted for their tusks.

With Namibia and Zimbabwe, wanting to be allowed to sell ivory stockpiles accrued from natural deaths to fund com-

munity elephant conservation initiatives, Zimbabwe's Environment Minister Oppah Muchinguri rejected the "imperialistic policies" of opposing countries, branding them a "clear infringement on the sovereign rights of nations."

Both Namibia and Zimbabwe boast healthy elephant populations and their desire to sell the stockpiles is supported by South Africa.

"We need to be considerate as we make these decisions," Muchinguri told a news conference.

"CITES should be there to facilitate us

to succeed in our conservation programs rather than these imperialistic policies," she added, saying she was speaking on behalf of the southern African region that is home to three-quarters of the savannah jumbo population.

## Booming illegal wildlife

A booming illegal wildlife trade has put huge pressure on an existing treaty signed by more than 180 countries -- the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Thousands of conservationists and

government officials are in Johannesburg for the 12-day gathering, seeking to hammer out new international trade regulations to protect a vast array of different species, with several proposals on whether to tighten or ease controls on the ivory trade on the agenda.

"We have been keeping this ivory for nine years and we're hoping this moratorium will be lifted so that we are able to sell this ivory or to produce jewelry, artefacts for the benefit of our people," Muchinguri said.

(Source: AFP)

## Renault "TALISMAN" Unveiled in Tehran

Renault "TALISMAN" was unveiled in Tehran in Tehran Vahdat Hall on Sunday Sept. 25.

The base price for this luxury car is 1 billion and 650 million rials while full option version of the car is priced at 1 billion and 750 million rials, Chief Executive of Negin Khodro Company Eng. Jamshid Hosseini announced.

The sedan will be manufactured in 10 beautiful colors, seven colors of which have been selected for Iran, he said, adding: "This luxury car will be sold to public as of next week."

The length of the car is measured at more than 4,850 mm which is a bit larger than its rival car models,

he maintained.

It should be noted that the car has been manufactured in cooperation with NISSAN and Renault companies as joint venture within the framework of "CMF-CD" basis.

A couple of weeks ago, chief executive of Pars Khodro Company had announced that new models of "Renault" and "Nissan" cars will be manufactured in the country, he opined.

In the end, Chief Executive of Negin Khodro Company Eng. Jamshid Hosseini said: "With the studies made in this regard, it is decided that Renault Company will introduce one passenger car to Iranian car market every year."



## Honorary Citizenship of Isfahan Dedicated to Dr. Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi for Her Endeavors in Globalization of Crafts of Isfahan

Honorary citizenship of Isfahan is dedicated to Dr. Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi for her endeavors in the globalization of crafts of Isfahan.

According to Media Communication Department of Isfahan Municipality, in the inauguration of World Crafts Council, held September the 25th, 2016 in Isfahan, the Head of the Asia-Pacific region of the World Crafts Council was awarded the honorary citizen of Isfahan by mayor of the city.

The background of this meeting, which is held every four years in one of the member cities, goes back to 70 years.

More than two hundreds of managers and elites of Crafts of different countries and many of Iranian artificers attended

this World Meeting which has happened for the first time in Iran and Isfahan.

Since 2013, Dr. Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi, has been the head of the Asia-Pacific region of the World Crafts Council. She has a post-doctoral degree from the Department of Islamic Art of Harvard University with a specialization at the history of Fine Arts and Architecture. She got her Ph.D. degree in History of Islamic Art and Architecture.

Having activities in various fields of crafts, Dr. Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi has been influential in presenting Crafts of Isfahan to the world. Due to her activities and supports, Isfahan became the glob-



al city of Crafts and this year hosted this event. By the Mayor of Isfahan, Dr. Jamalnejad and by Isfahan City Council Head, the honorary citizenship of Isfahan was dedicated to Dr. Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi by the presence of Vice President, Head of Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and

Tourism organization, senior managers of Crafts and artificers, Dr. Ghada Hijjawi-Qaddumi was selected as an honorary citizenship of Isfahan.

The 18th General Assembly of World Crafts Council kicked off in Isfahan on Sunday morning in presence of Vice-President and Head of Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO).

Around 200 international characters from 90 countries have attended the assembly.

The WCC is a subsidiary of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The general assembly will work for four days.

## SpaceX test-fires 'Raptor' rocket that will take humans to Mars

SpaceX has done its first test of the Raptor rocket engine that will take humans to Mars as early as 2024, Elon Musk said in a series of tweets. It was fired at the company's McGregor, Texas facility on a stand that can handle the extreme thrust.

Musk said the "production Raptor goal is a specific impulse of 382 seconds and thrust of 3 MN (680,000 pounds)," more than three times that of the current Falcon 9.

With nine of the methane-fueled motors, the Red Dragon will be far more powerful than any current rocket. It'll eventually lift the Mars Colonial Transporter, loaded with 100 tons of cargo, toward the red planet. The company plans to launch an unmanned craft to Mars by 2018 and get humans there by 2024. That's an ambitious target, especially considering its recent launchpad mishap.

Elon Musk will give a speech today at the International Astronautical Conference in Mexico, titled "Making Humans a Multiplanetary Species." He's expected to unveil the design of the Mars Colonial Transporter and overall plan for colonizing the Red Planet. Musk will also reportedly talk about the budget and try to convince government and the scientific community to help pay for the undertaking. After the recent disaster, a successful test-firing of the Raptor will no doubt help his cause.

Steve should have known that engineering was not for him when he spent most of his time at university monkeying with his 8086 clone PC. Although he graduated, a lifelong obsession of wanting the "solitaire" win animation to go faster had begun.

(Source: Engadget)

## Warming waters threaten baby lobsters: study

Baby lobsters might not be able to survive in the ocean's waters if the ocean continues to warm at the expected rate.

That is the key finding of a study performed by scientists in Maine, the state most closely associated with lobster. The scientists, who are affiliated with the University of Maine Darling Marine Center and Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences, said the discovery could mean bad news for the future of one of America's most beloved seafood treats, as well as the industry lobsters support.

The scientists found that lobster larvae struggled to survive when they were reared in water 5 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the temperatures that are currently typical of the western Gulf of Maine, a key lobster fishing area off of New England. Five degrees is how much the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change expects the Gulf of Maine's temperature to warm by the year 2100.

The paper appears this month in the scientific journal ICES Journal of Marine Science. It could serve as a wake-up call that the lobster fishery faces a looming climate crisis that is already visible in southern New England, said Jessica Waller, one of the study's authors.

"There has been a near total collapse in Rhode Island, the southern end of the fishery, and we know our waters are getting warmer," Waller said. "We are hoping this research can be a jumping off point for more research into how lobsters might do over the next century."

Right now, the country's lobster catch is strong, prices are high and steady and the industry is opening up new markets in Asia, where a growing middle class is hungry for one of America's seafood status symbols.

(Source: Santa Fe New Mexican)

## Stephen Hawking gives out another warning against contacting aliens

Stephen Hawking has recently warned humanity against contacting aliens or inviting them to our planet. This is the second such reminder that the celebrated physicist has issued out against the perils of contacting extraterrestrial life or alerting them to our presence in the Solar System.

The warning came in a half hour online film 'Stephen Hawking's favorite places', where the physicist talks about travelling to a potentially habitable exoplanet located 16 light years away. As per Hawking, the planet called Gliese 832c could host intelligent life.

Hawking stated that we should be able to detect if intelligent life has evolved on Gliese 832c, and one day in the future could also receive a signal from it or a similar exoplanet. However, humanity, in turn, should be cautious about answering back because the situation of meeting an advanced civilization would be similar to the encounter between Christopher Columbus and Native Americans, which did not turn out well for the latter.

This is not the first time that Stephen Hawking has issued a warning against exposing our presence to aliens. According to the physicist, advanced aliens are like nomads who are on the lookout for planets to conquer and colonize.

Furthermore, as per Hawking, in their quest to harvest our planet, aliens could also wipe out humanity just like a colony of ants. The scientist has previously also mentioned that in human history, more advanced cultures have mistreated and massacred those who were less technologically advanced, so why would aliens be any different.

(Source: Science World Report)





I loved him before I met him! I try my hardest to be the best but I always feel like a failure. I hope one day my son looks back and realizes all I did was in the best interest for him and his future  
Christopher Gonzales

NEWS

2017 Muslim Women Summit to be held in Istanbul

Istanbul will host the 2017 Muslim Women Summit, the president of the Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies (TASAM) revealed Saturday while attending this year's gathering in Kuala Lumpur.

Suleyman Sensoy told Anadolu Agency that a declaration on the 2017 summit and the organization's secretariat moving to Istanbul would be made later during the "Muslim Women: Soft as Silk, Strong as Iron" summit and exhibition in the Malaysian capital.

He described the woman's initiative as having been developed under the World Islamic Forum's nearly eight-year "institutionalization process".

He stressed that its efforts are aimed at "not simply adhering to a Western perspective on problems faced by women in the Muslim world, but creating values based on our own references, institutionalizing critical thinking and continuing civil society initiatives".

Referring to the "Istanbul" awards that will be granted for excellence in various field during this year's summit, he said the name of the ceremony held special significance.

Underlining the Turkish city's role in history and contemporary times, as well as its material and spiritual connotations, Sensoy said, "we regard Istanbul as the heart of the Islamic world".

Thousands of participants from across the world gathered for the summit hosted in the Malaysian capital Sept. 23-25.

Turkey was represented by TASAM -- among the event's organizers -- as well as the deputy minister of the country's Family and Social Policies Ministry, Mehmet Ersoy, who gave a speech on opening day.

Speaking to Anadolu Agency earlier, he lauded the gathering as an opportunity to express and share ideas at a time when the Muslim world needs unity and solidarity.

The summit aims to champion efforts to empower women and provide a platform for sharing their ideas and experiences. Its objective is to create extensive synergy and networking among NGOs around the world for the pursuit of global prosperity.  
(Source: Daily Sabah)

RECIPE OF THE WEEK  
School cafeteria peanut butter cookies

"The best sublime peanut butter cookies ever! Relive the best part of the school cafeteria without having to go back to school. This large batch is best suited for institutional cooking using a 40 to 60 quart mixer. Dough may be stored in buckets for up to a week, and baked fresh daily."

Ingredients:

- 10 pounds shortening
- 10 pounds white sugar
- 8 pounds brown sugar

- 40 eggs
- 10 pounds peanut butter
- 14 pounds all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup baking soda
- 5 teaspoons salt

Directions:

Preheat a convection oven to 325 degrees F (165 degrees C). Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a large bowl, cream together the shortening, white sugar and brown sugar until smooth. Mix in peanut butter



until well blended. Scrape down the sides of the bowl with a plastic scraper between additions. Add eggs 5 or 6 at a time, mixing well after each addition. Scrape down bowl, and mix for a minute. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; gradually mix into the dough until fully incorporated. Scrape down the sides of the bowl one more time, and be sure the bottom has mixed evenly.

Scoop out dough using an ice cream scoop, or roll into 2 inch balls. Place cookies 3 inches apart on the prepared baking sheets. Press down lightly with a fork to make a criss-cross pattern.

Bake for 7 minutes in the preheated oven, until the edges are lightly toasted. Allow cookies to cool on the baking sheet for at least 5 minutes so they do not crumble.

One woman's lonely struggle against famine in Yemen

After two years of war in Yemen and a Saudi-led blockade lasting 18 months millions of people are slowly starving - some are already dying for lack of food. One doctor in the Red Sea port city of Hudaydah is doing all she can to save them.

In her 20 years as a doctor Ashwaq Muharram has never seen things so bad.

"I'm seeing the same thing I used to watch on TV when the famine unfolded in Somalia," she tells me. "I never thought I would see this in Yemen."

For years Muharram worked for international aid organizations, but most of them left when the fighting began in March 2015, and those that remain have drastically curtailed their activities.

So she now distributes medicine and food out of her own pocket, using her car as a mobile clinic.

I spent two weeks with Muharram, visiting towns and villages near Hudaydah, and witnessing things that I too never thought I would see in Yemen.

Hudaydah, controlled by Houthi rebels who took over most of the country in 2014, was until recently the entry point for 70% of Yemen's food imports. Now, not only is it under blockade, it has been pummeled by airstrikes carried out by the Saudi-led coalition - the port itself smashed, an entire tourist resort on the beach completely destroyed.

The bombs and the blockade pose a double threat to Muharram's patients.

"If you don't die from an airstrike, you're going to die from being ill and from starvation," she says. "And the hardest way to die is dying from starvation."

Having loaded up the car with medicines, we drive to Beit al-Faqih, 100km (60 miles) south-east of Hudaydah. The village was once prosperous, growing bananas and mangoes for export but today the exports have stopped, most workers have lost their jobs, and the fruit we see loaded on to donkeys by colorfully dressed women is for most Yemenis simply unaffordable.

It is here that we meet a mother with a lactose-intolerant toddler, Abdulrahman, who weighs no more than a six-month-old baby.

"How old is he?" I ask her.  
"Eighteen months," she says. "He should be walking and talking by now."

She immediately breaks down into tears. Abdulrahman needs a special type of milk that was once available everywhere in Yemen but has not been seen since the destruction of the port at Hudaydah and the start of the blockade.

"We looked in every single pharmacy. All said it was nowhere to be found," says the mother.

Muharram tells the mother she will help her - before quickly realizing this is a promise she may not be able to keep. She knows the boy will die without the milk, but getting hold of it will be a huge challenge.

"I've myself looked for this milk before, and it is nowhere to be found," she says.

Her own family has faced similar problems. After the war began, her husband fell ill and his heart began to fail; it was a heart infection and he was in urgent need of medication.

"I ran into Sanaa's main cardiac hospital, but as a doctor I knew what they were about to tell me - that they were out of supplies, and there was nothing they could do to help me," she says.

"I'm a doctor myself, my husband was dying in front of me and there was nothing I could do..."

Muharram breaks down.  
Image caption Ashwaq Muharram: "I am tired as a doctor, as a mother, as a wife"

Her husband eventually left for Jordan, taking their two children with him to safety. They had already stopped going to school.

"I am tired as a doctor, as a mother, and as a wife," she tells me.

Driving back into Hudaydah, tents line the pavements. Out of the window, I can see a man having a shower - with his clothes on - in the middle of the street, as barefoot



children run around him, chasing one another. These are Yemenis who have fled to Hudaydah from areas where the conflict is at its fiercest.

"The rich are now the middle class, the middle class are now the poor, and the poor are now starving," says Muharram.

Media caption The BBC's Nawal al-Maghafi visits an area of Yemen where major aid agencies can no longer operate "Some of these people had a life like you and me, and now look." She points at the people on the pavement. "They have lost everything."

We stop to talk to a mother we have spotted on the street with three children.

She says the family once lived in Haradh, near the Saudi border, far to the north. They spent months in a refugee camp with little access to food or medicine, but then the camp was bombed. The woman's husband died in the attack.

As we sit on the pavement talking, coalition jets return, flying low above us.

Yemenis are trapped. More than three million people out of a population of 27 million have left their homes. Meanwhile, all ports have been closed by the Saudi-led coalition, preventing anyone from leaving. What's more, many countries that once welcomed Yemenis without a visa have since closed their doors to them.

Travelling with Muharram from one village to the next, again and again we come across children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. To put it bluntly, they are starving.

Malnourishment affects the immune system and makes children far more likely to fall ill. But at the same time it is becoming more difficult for them to get treatment. Many of the country's hospitals have had to close, either because of bombing or the lack of medical supplies.

The children's ward of Hudaydah's central hospital is so full, there are two or three children in every bed.

We meet four-year-old Shuaib, whose grandfather has borrowed money from neighbors to travel to the hospital. The boy has been suffering from diarrhea and fever, but doctors have had to tell the grandfather there is nothing they can do. "None of the antibiotics we have can treat the kind of bacteria he has," the hospital manager tells us.

As Shuaib lies there, his body growing colder by the minute, his grandfather holds his hand and weeps.

An hour later, Shuaib is dead. I watch as the grandfather, silently crying, covers his little body with his headscarf and carries him home to the boy's mother.

Yemen is a country under siege. Two years ago, Houthi rebels and their allies - an army faction loyal

to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh - took control of most of the country, including the capital, Sanaa. The government was forced to flee. Saudi Arabia says it intervened at the request of the government. For 18 months a Saudi-led coalition, backed by the U.S. and the UK, has been at war with the rebels.

No end in sight for war in Yemen (March 2016)

Muharram herself is inconsolable. "Who is responsible for Shuaib's death?" she asks. "The war is responsible! But he will be considered a victim of hospital neglect. Thousands like him are dying. Do they have to be killed by an airstrike to be acknowledged as victims of this war?"

As we leave the hospital, news arrives that a hospital run by Doctors without Borders (MSF) in the nearby city of Abs, has been shelled by coalition planes.

"They are bombing hospitals, why?" Muharram fumes. One reason is that Saudi Arabia accuses Houthi rebels of using hospitals to store arms.

The next day, I visit the MSF hospital. As I walk through the ruins of the children's ward, I find a scene of devastating poignancy - a paper party hat and the remains of a birthday cake and candles scattered across the floor.

ty of Abs was hit by an air strike last month - 11 people were killed

"The children were having a birthday party before the airstrike hit," explains Dr Yahya al-Abisy, the hospital manager.

In total, 19 people died in the strike - and the Abs governorate no longer has a hospital. In a statement, the Saudi government denied deliberately targeting civilians and humanitarian supplies. It also said it was the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Yemen.

The next day, Muharram finally receives some good news. A friend has found a way, at considerable cost, to get young Abdulrahman some life-saving milk from Saudi Arabia. Six days later, Muharram receives it and immediately rushes to his house.

Having witnessed nothing but despair for two weeks, it is incredible to see, at last, one happy ending. Abdulrahman takes his milk bottle and swiftly drinks it to the last drop, his mother crying as she watches.

"You've brought happiness into my home" she tells Muharram, wrapping her arms around her in a loving hug.

Though Ashwaq Muharram was able to save a child's life, more than million other children continue to starve across Yemen. Twenty out of 22 governorates are on the brink of famine. Unless something is done very soon to end their suffering, the country could lose an entire generation.  
(Source: bbc.com)

IN FOCUS Tehran Times/ Majid Haghdoust



Girl students, holding the flag of Islamic Republic, of Iran stand in lines at the school yard. Attending at Narjes high school in southeast of Tehran, President Rouhani, accompanied by Education Minister Ali Asghar Fani, announced the official opening of schools in new Iranian school year on Saturday.

Swiss politicians want hijabs banned from passports

A Swiss politician is calling for women to be banned from wearing hijabs in their passport photos.

Currently, in Switzerland head coverings are banned in general - but headscarves and turbans are allowed if they are worn for religious purposes. The policy is the same in the UK.

But Walter Wobmann, a member of the right-wing populist Swiss People's Party, has described this as 'unequal treatment'.

"It is unacceptable that you can wear a hijab in a photo but not a cap," he told the Swiss newspaper Blick. "This is not a question of religious freedom, but of equal treatment."

Despite insisting that it is not a question of religion, Wobmann's previous proposals appear to have disproportionately targeted the Islamic community - and the SPP is notorious for demonizing Muslims.

For example, he campaigned heavily for the banning of both minarets and the burka in Switzerland.  
(Source: metro.co.uk)



Terrorists from Ahrar al-Sham (Islamic Movement of the Free People of the Levant), a hardline terrorist group, are planning to use white phosphorus in an attack on civilians to later blame it on Syrian armed forces, Syrian United Nations envoy Bashar Ja'afari told a UN Security Council emergency meeting on Sunday.

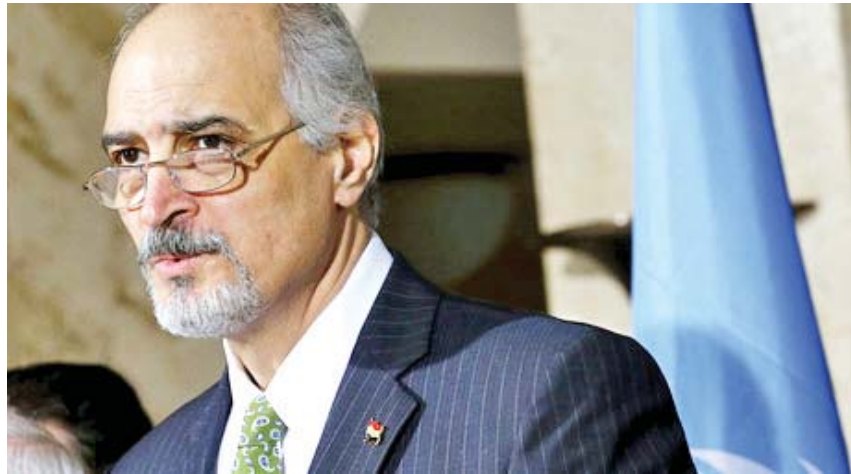
"I have information that Ahrar al-Sham terrorists intend to mount attacks on civilian population using white phosphorus for the sake of fabricating accusations against the Syrian state and its army," the diplomat said at the meeting as cited by TASS.

To falsify the evidence and make their claims sound more credible, the terrorists plan to pose as Syrian army troops as they deploy the banned substance, Ja'afari said, adding that imposters are going to put on Syrian army uniforms and film the whole incident on camera. He did not elaborate on the source of the intelligence.

White phosphorus is an extremely poisonous toxic agent able to inflict severe burn injuries and is banned from use in civilian areas, according to international law. It is only legitimate to deploy the chemical to create a smokescreen, make signals, or markings for friendly troops. The United States has repeatedly used this loophole to use white phosphorus during Middle Eastern campaigns while claiming the indiscriminate weapon is only used as a smokescreen for advancing troops. Most recently, U.S. military deployed white phosphorus shells in Iraq, saying they were used to "obscure" Kurdish fighters' offensive against the extremists.

Speaking of the alleged upcoming provocation, Ja'afari mentioned the suspicious activity by American experts, who, he claimed, had visited one of the

## 'Ahrar al-Sham plans to launch chemical attack on civilians and blame it on Syria govt.'



chemical munitions depots in the rebel-held town of Saraqib in the northwestern Idlib province. Upon examining the site, the experts departed Syria for Turkey, he claimed.

For its part, Syria has been acting in full compliance with the UN Charter and international law on warfare, Ja'afari said, repelling accusations of alleged use of incendiary weapons by the Syrian forces.

"We condemn the statements of several UN representatives that we are using banned weapons or targeting the civilian population," he said, pointing to the fact that the UN, at the same time, is turning a blind eye to the use of chemical weapons by rebels.

In March, Ahrar al-Sham terrorist group along with a string of other armed opposition groups were accused by shelling the predominantly Kurdish Sheikh Maqsood neighborhood of Aleppo with yellow phosphorus by Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG/Yekineyen Parastina Gel?) fighters.

Ahrar al-Sham terrorists also committed a bulk of violations that contributed the ceasefire failure in Syria, according to the Russian military. The group, which is believed to be allied with al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra), has rejected the latest ceasefire, but is still not officially recognized as terrorist by U.S.-led coalition despite Russia's repeated requests.

"Not long ago, the Americans at last sent us a list of organizations which they consider to be part of the ceasefire and which should not be targeted. In one of the first positions there is Ahrar al-Sham," Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in interview to Sputnik earlier in September, adding that it "seems the Americans are listing a part of a terrorist structure, which is recognized as such by the UN, as an organization loyal to them."

While the meeting was focused on the escalation of hostilities in Aleppo, where the Syrian armed forces are conducting a large-scale anti-terror operation in the eastern part of the embattled city, the United States, British and French representatives have demonstratively walked out from the meeting before the Syrian envoy was about to give Syria's government prospective on the issue.

In his turn, Ja'afari slammed the countries for disrupting the peace process in Syria by carrying out airstrikes at Syrian army positions.

"Several UN member states should stop lying to themselves and to the whole world," he said.

Despite the repeated violations of the ceasefire by the rebels, Syria is ready to breathe life in the stalled intra-Syrian talks and renew the negotiations but only with those forces who are "genuine patriots of their country and not acting on orders from abroad and receive money there."

The Syrian envoy pointed out that Syrian government take all possible measures to ensure the civilian population would not suffer from the offensive, asking them to keep away from terrorist positions. However, the militants "do not let the civilians leave Aleppo and use them as [human] shields," the envoy said. (Source: RT)

## Tel Aviv regime ramps up aggression against Palestinians

The Israeli military continues with its campaign of aggression and intimidation across the occupied Palestinian territories, unleashing a new wave of attacks, arrests and home demolitions.

In the latest developments on Monday, military forces arrested at least 19 Palestinians in separate raids across the occupied West Bank and al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Israeli forces raided the northern West Bank city of Jenin and arrested six people, including a member of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas. A young man was also detained in the central city of Bethlehem, located about 10 kilometers south of al-Quds, Arabic-language Safa news agency reported.

In Nablus, Israeli troops arrested a young man, identified as Marcel Salhi, after storming his house in Ein Beit el Ma refugee camp. Skirmishes broke out between local residents and Israeli soldiers in the aftermath of the raid, with the latter firing stun grenades as well as tear gas canisters to disperse the crowd.

Israeli forces also arrested several citizens in al-Issawiya neighborhood of al-Quds, as well as the towns of al-Ramm and Abu Dis.

In the southern West Bank city of al-Khalil (Hebron), located 30 kilometers south of al-Quds, Israeli soldiers closed two workshops, claiming that they were being used to make weapons.

Also on Monday, Israeli military forces razed a Palestinian house in Bethlehem and arrested a 22-year-old man, identified as Ahmed Bassam al-Sheikh.

Separately, illegal settlers set fire to a Palestinian house under construction in the northern West Bank village of Burin, situated 7 kilometers southwest of Nablus.

The occupied territories have witnessed increased tensions ever since Israeli forces imposed restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshippers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East al-Quds in August 2015.

Nearly 250 Palestinians have lost their lives at the hands of Israeli forces since the beginning of last October. (Source: Press TV)

## Iraqi forces thwart ISIL attack south of Mosul

Iraqi army troops have managed to repel an attack by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorists on a recently liberated town to the south of Mosul.

The Iraqi Defense Ministry said in a statement on Monday that the army had thwarted an ISIL attack on the town of Qayyarah, killing scores of terrorists, Iraq's Al-Forat news agency reported.

Based on the report, 32 vehicles belonging to the terrorists were also destroyed in

the operation. An unspecified number of ISIL terrorists also fled the area.

Iraqi forces recaptured the northern town of Qayyarah from the grip of ISIL in late August.

Qayyarah, which fell to ISIL in 2014, lies on the western bank of Tigris River, some 60 kilometers south of Mosul, the last remaining bastion for ISIL in the north of Iraq.

Iraqi forces have been preparing for a major offensive to liberate Mosul. Prime

Minister Haider al-Abadi has, time and again, pledged that Iraqi troops will win back the city by the end of this year.

Meanwhile, Iraqi troops repelled another ISIL attack in the province of Salahuddin (Saladin Governorate), north of Baghdad, early on Monday.

Security sources have told Iraq's Al-Sumaria news website that an ISIL attack on the city of al-Zawya in Salahuddin has been repelled, adding the terrorists suffered heavy losses in the clashes. (Source: Press TV)

The news comes as the Iraqi army killed some 141 ISIL terrorists in several military operations across the country on Sunday.

Violence has plagued the northern and western parts of Iraq ever since ISIL launched its offensive in June 2014, and seized territory. Iraqi army soldiers and fighters from allied Popular Mobilization Units (al-Hashd al-Sha'abi) are seeking to win back militant-held regions in joint operations. (Source: Press TV)

## Azerbaijanis vote on boosting president's powers

Azerbaijanis have started voting in a controversial referendum on boosting presidential powers, with opposition and rights groups denouncing the proposed amendments as a move to expand President Ilham Aliyev's grip on power.

If passed, the referendum would extend the president's term in office from five to seven years, would introduce a new position of first vice president - who would become the country's second most powerful leader, instead of the prime minister as is the case now.

The proposed constitutional changes also allow the president to call snap leadership elections at will, and easily dissolve parliament.

Polls opened in the referendum at 0400GMT on Monday and were to close 12 hours later.

Opposition groups staged mass protests in the run-up to the referendum, accusing Aliyev of trying to extend his family's control over the oil-rich former Soviet republic.

The Council of Europe's constitutional law experts



said the draft modifications of the constitution "would severely upset the balance of power by giving unprecedented powers to the president."

Amnesty International said "the amendments will lead to violations of the right to freedom of association." "The referendum has been accompanied by arrests and intimidation," the rights group said in a statement.

"Those who have attempted to criticize and campaign against these proposals have faced assaults and harassment by the authorities."

Ilham Aliyev, 54, has led the country since his father Heydar, a former Communist-era leader, died after a decade in power in 2003.

He last won a landslide election victory in 2013 despite observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe pointing to significant problems with the vote, with the next elections to be held in 2018.

He can stand for an unlimited number of terms after a disputed referendum in 2009 scrapped the two-term limit on presidential mandates.

Azerbaijan, wedged between Iran and Russia on the Caspian Sea, has sought to position itself as a modern European state.

It hosted the Eurovision Song Contest in 2012 and this year hosted its maiden Formula One race in Baku. (Source: agencies)

## Colombia and FARC prepare to sign historic pact

FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia/Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia), Colombia's biggest rebel movement, will sign a historic peace accord with the government on Monday aimed at ending a war that has lasted five decades and killed 220,000 people.

The pact will be signed by Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos and a rebel fighter known by the alias Timochenko, in the city of Cartagena, in a process that took more than four years to finalize.

Fifteen South American presidents, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and United States Secretary of State John Kerry, are scheduled to witness the signing ceremony. More than 2,500 guests have been invited to wear white as a sign of peace, and Santos will add his signature to the 297-page accord with a pen made from a recycled shell used in combat.

The signing ceremony will not officially close the deal, though. Colombians are being given the final say on endorsing or rejecting it in an October 2 referendum.

Opinion polls point to an almost-certain victory for the "yes" vote, but some analysts warn that a closer-than-expected finish or low voter turnout could bode poorly for the many challenges the country faces implementing the ambitious agreement.

Under the terms of the deal, rebels who lay down their weapons and confess to rights abuses will be spared jail time and allowed to provide reparations to their victims by carrying out development work in areas hit hard by the conflict.

The government has also committed itself to addressing unequal land distribution, which has been a longstanding FARC demand harkening back to its roots as a peasant army in 1964, and the administration has agreed to work with the rebels to provide alternative development to tens of thousands of families that depend on the cocaine trade.

San Vicente Del Caguán's Mayor Humberto Sanchez, of the conservative Center Democratic Party, which opposed the talks, said that locals were wary.

Among the most controversial parts of the agreement is an attempt to judge the potential war crimes of both rebels and government forces.

If the referendum is passed, FARC's roughly 7,000 fighters will start moving to 28 designated zones where over the next six months they are meant to turn over their weapons to UN-sponsored observers.

Analysts say the rebels were forced to the negotiating table after being pushed to the edge of Colombia's vast jungles by a decade-long, U.S.-backed military campaign that claimed the lives of a number of its top commanders.

Negotiations, which had been expected to take a few months, stretched over more than four years.

The process was fraught with challenges, from the military's killing of FARC's then top commander, known as Alfonso Cano, shortly after he authorized a secret backchannel with the government to the rebels capture of an army general who until a few months ago was a trophy prisoner.

The National Liberation Army (ELN), Colombia's second largest rebel group, said on Sunday that its fight with the government would stop until the referendum. ELN leaders have previously expressed their wish to engage in their own peace process with the Colombian government. (Source: agencies)

## Syria ready to support formation of unity govt.: FM

Syria says it is ready to engage in initiatives that could lead to the establishment of a unity government in the war-torn country.

In an interview with Lebanon-based al-Mayadeen TV aired on Monday, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem said the Damascus government has proposed a political roadmap that could put an end to more than five years of war in the country.

He said Damascus would support the idea of holding a referendum on a new constitution followed by parliamentary elections and the formation of a unity government.

Muallem said, however, that a main obstacle to the political settlement of the conflict in Syria was the support provided by governments like the United States, Britain and France and their allies in the Middle East to terrorists operating in the Arab country.

He accused the three Western countries of convening a meeting of the United Nations Security Council on Sunday to support terrorists in Syria.

The top Syrian diplomat said the truce deal brokered by Moscow and Washington two weeks ago is still viable. He, however, blamed the United States military for the collapse of the ceasefire by mounting a deliberate attack on Syrian armed forces positioned in a military base east of the country.

He said the attack two weeks ago the army positions on Tharda Mountain in Dayr al-Zawr was deliberate and in coordination with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists who "rushed to take control of the area only one hour after the aggression."

Washington has never been sincere in its calls for peace in Syria; otherwise it would have pushed its "agent states such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Turkey" into complying with the truce, Muallem said.

Over the past few days, Syria has managed to make gains against terrorists north of the country as it pushes ahead with an operation to fully liberate the city of Aleppo from militants.

On September 9, Russia and the United States agreed on a milestone deal on the Syrian crisis after some 13 hours of marathon talks in the Swiss city of Geneva. (Source: Press TV)

## Hillary has more chances to win election: Harvard professor

➔ **Donald Trump's remarks about Putin and Saddam Hussein led 50 former security officials of the Republican Party to call him a dangerous person and said they do not support him. Do you yourself consider Trump as a dangerous man?**

A: In my view, Donald Trump lacks the policy experience and judgment necessary to be a good president. He is focused on his own celebrity. That would make him an unpredictable president, if not a dangerous one.

➔ **Hillary Clinton has recently criticized Trump for supporting the idea of carrying weapons. What is your opinion?**

A: There is no doubt that the widespread ownership of weapons leads to

more deaths than the U.S. would otherwise have. However, there is a culture that values hunting and the ownership of guns for personal protection that is strong in many parts of the country. I think Clinton is showing real courage in opposing the 'gun lobby' but it may well cost her some votes.

➔ **What are the priorities of the American people in the presidential election?**

A: The opinion polls show that the issues Americans consider most important in this election are the economy - broadly understood as the issue of how to secure better jobs and rising incomes - and terrorism which reflects the prominence terrorist attacks at home and abroad have had in the media. However, there are divisions among the electorate about which issues are most significant.

**"In my view, Donald Trump lacks the policy experience and judgment necessary to be a good President. He is focused on his own celebrity. That would make him an unpredictable President, if not a dangerous one."**



## Mexican GP promoters would welcome more U.S. races

Mexican Grand Prix organisers hope U.S. company Liberty Media's takeover of Formula One will boost their event by expanding in the region and eventually creating a North American season similar to Europe's run of races.

Liberty, owned by cable TV mogul John Malone, agreed this month to take control of the global sport in a deal expected to lead to expansion in the U.S. market that Formula One has struggled to crack.

«When we are trying to build new audiences and bring new fans and create a new fan base, it does get a little complicated,» Mexican Grand Prix marketing director Rodrigo Sanchez told Reuters.

«We wish we could have more and more races on prime time on our side of the world and I think the only way we will get that is if, collaboratively, there start being more races in the region in general.

«It would be great to basically consolidate Formula One in North America.»

Formula One currently has three North American races -- in Montreal, the Texas state capital Austin and Mexico City. There is also one in South America, the Brazilian Grand Prix at Sao Paulo's Interlagos circuit.

Canada's Circuit Gilles Villeneuve has been on the calendar since 1978, although the contract has yet to be extended beyond next year, and this year was scheduled between Monaco and Azerbaijan.

Mexico returned to the calendar last year after a 23-year-absence while the United States has tried out 10 different venues over the years and had no race between 2007 and 2012, when Austin made its debut.

Europe has a block of races, Canada apart, running from May to September.

«We need to keep promoting Formula One... amongst the entire continent. We don't have the luxury as a geographic region that some of the other areas have,» said Sanchez, whose Oct. 30 race is paired with Texas.

«It's well known that there is just a European part of the season. Having more races within your geographic area, it definitely helps to build a good fan base.

«There really hasn't been any longevity or consistency in the events, whether they change cities or disappear for a few years and come back, especially in the United States,» added Sanchez, whose race has a contract to 2019.

Formula One's new chairman Chase Carey, an American, has said he sees the United States as a big long-term growth area.

The sport's 85-year-old chief executive Bernie Ecclestone has long talked about adding a race on the west and east coasts, with a return to Las Vegas considered most likely and Miami also mentioned.

Sanchez said this year's race was 90 percent sold out and expected a full house come race weekend. Last year's race day crowd was put at 135,000 with a three-day attendance of 336,000.

Mexico currently has two drivers on the starting grid, Force India's podium-chasing Sergio Perez and Haas F1's Esteban Gutierrez, who has yet to score this season.

The 12th corner of the Hermanos Rodriguez circuit has been renamed after local hero Adrian Fernandez, now an ambassador for the race, who was runner-up in the U.S. CART series in 2000 and ran his own team.

There are also plans to improve the podium ceremony by allowing more of the crowd onto the track.

«You look at Monza and it's just a beautiful picture of that front stretch full of people. So hopefully we can create something special this year,» said Sanchez.

(Source: Reuters)

## Tottenham join drive to promote youth football in China

Tottenham Hotspur became the latest club to join the soccer drive in China as the Premier League side will take part in a year-long initiative to develop the game at grassroots level in the Asian country.

The London club's global coaching team will follow methods used at their academy to provide 42 physical education teachers an insight into coaching at the elite level, which will help train 8,000 primary and middle school students in Guangzhou.

«We understand the importance of football development in China and, given our track record, we are perfectly placed to harness the talent and passion for the game in China to help develop young players who could become future stars of the game,» Grant Cornwell, head of global coaching, told the club's website (www.tottenhamhotspur.com)

In addition, 40 children - both from Guangzhou and underprivileged areas of China - will visit the United Kingdom for the Jaguar China-UK Football and Cultural Exchange in November, and will undergo a week of intensive training at Tottenham's training centre.

Chinese companies are increasingly interested in buying stakes in European soccer clubs not only as profitable investments, but also as a way to help President Xi Jinping's bid to raise the profile of the sport.

(Source: Reuters)



# Madrid face Dortmund Champions League rematch, Leicester host Porto



PARIS — AFP Sports looks ahead to Tuesday's Champions League action as last year's winners Real Madrid go to Borussia Dortmund and Premier League champions Leicester City host Porto looking to claim a second win in as many games (all kick-offs 1845 GMT):

### ■ Group E At Monaco Monaco (FRA) v Bayer Leverkusen (GER)

Former runners-up Monaco will be looking to build on their impressive opening win over Tottenham Hotspur when they welcome Bayer Leverkusen to the Stade Louis II. The principality club have not lost in four previous meetings with Leverkusen, beating them home and away in the group stage two seasons ago. Leonardo Jardim's side are fresh from beating Angers 2-1 to go top of Ligue 1. It was their eighth win in their last nine games but they were without Radamel Falcao in that game after he suffered concussion in last Wednesday's 4-0 defeat at Nice. Leverkusen, who drew 2-2 at home to CSKA Moscow on matchday one, are mid-table in the Bundesliga but they travel to the Mediterranean coast on the back of a 3-2 win at Mainz on Saturday, in which Javier 'Chicharito' Hernandez scored a hat-trick. Karim Bellarabi is out until the end of the year with a groin injury.

### ■ At Moscow CSKA Moscow (RUS) v Tottenham Hotspur (ENG)

Tottenham will look to kickstart their European campaign in the Russian capital after losing 2-1 to Monaco at Wembley last time out. Mauricio Pochettino's side go to Moscow for the first time and do so in second place in the Premier League after a 2-1 weekend win at Middlesbrough in which Son Heung-Min scored twice. Moussa Sissoko could miss the game after suffering concussion at the weekend and a depleted Spurs are already without striker Harry Kane while also having major doubts over Mousa Dembele, Eric Dier and Danny Rose. CSKA came from two goals down to draw

in Leverkusen last time out to set them up nicely for their first Champions League game in their new 30,000-seat stadium. Leonid Slutsky's side drew 1-1 at home to Krasnodar at the weekend with a goal from giant Ivorian striker Lacina Traore, who once had a spell at Everton.

### ■ Group F At Dortmund, Germany Borussia Dortmund (GER) v Real Madrid (ESP)

One of the most highly-anticipated showdowns of the group stage sees reigning champions Real Madrid head to Germany to take on 1997 winners and 2013 runners-up Dortmund at the Signal Iduna Park. Both teams are expected to progress to the last 16 and both won their opening matches, albeit in contrasting circumstances. While Dortmund romped to a 6-0 win away at Legia Warsaw, Real needed two late goals to come back and beat Sporting 2-1 at the Santiago Bernabeu. Madrid won 3-2 on aggregate when the teams last met in the quarter-finals in 2013/14, but they have been beaten on their last three visits to Dortmund and they do not have a good record in Germany, with just four wins from 29 trips. Zinedine Zidane's side -- for whom Pepe is set to return -- are still unbeaten this season but have drawn their last two La Liga games at home to Villarreal and away at Las Palmas. Dortmund, meanwhile, have won four on the bounce in all competitions, scoring 20 goals in the process, and are unbeaten in 24 home Bundesliga games, equalling a club record, after defeating Freiburg 3-1 on Friday. Marco Reus is among the long-term absentees for Dortmund.

### ■ At Lisbon Sporting (POR) v Legia Warsaw (POL)

These sides are expected to be fighting it out for third place and a Europa League berth in the new year and both lost their opening matches. Jorge Jesus' Sporting were unlucky not to take something from their trip to Madrid and will be favourites at the Estadio Jose Alvalade, where they

beat Estoril 4-2 on Friday with Dutch summer signing Bas Dost scoring twice as they stayed second in the Portuguese league behind leaders Benfica. Jesus serves a touchline ban against Legia, who have changed coach since their humiliating home loss to Dortmund. A 3-2 home defeat to Zaglebie Lubin brought an end to Besnik Hasi's brief reign in the dugout. Former player Jacek Magiera is the new coach of a team who have won just once in seven games.

### ■ Group G At Copenhagen FC Copenhagen (DEN) v Club Brugge (BEL)

The Group G outsiders meet in the Danish capital with Copenhagen looking to build on a 1-1 draw away to FC Porto last time out. Stale Solbakken's side are unbeaten in seven European outings already this season and are four points clear atop their domestic league after defeating AGH Aarhus 2-0 at the weekend with goals from the Paraguayan forward Federico Santander and Kasper Kusk. In contrast to their hosts, former European Cup runners-up Club Brugge have had a poor start to the season and were brushed aside by Leicester City, losing 3-0 on matchday one. Since then they have won three in a row in all competitions, though. They also won 4-0 when they last went to the Parken Stadium two seasons ago in the Europa League. Bjorn Engels and Lior Refaelov miss the trip due to injury.

### ■ At Leicester, England Leicester City (ENG) v FC Porto (POR)

The Premier League champions get set for another historic moment as they host two-time European champions Porto in the first ever Champions League game at the King Power Stadium. Claudio Ranieri's team lost 4-1 at Manchester United on Saturday, their third league defeat already this season. However, a 3-0 win in Bruges was an ideal start to their European campaign and Porto have lost and failed to score on each of their last four visits to England. They will be familiar with

the threat of Leicester's record signing Islam Slimani from his time in Portugal with Sporting. Andre Silva scored twice as Porto beat city rivals Boavista 3-1 at the weekend. Maxi Pereira is expected to be fit for Nuno Espirito Santo's side, who were held at home by Copenhagen after beating Roma to reach the group stage.

### ■ Group H At Seville, Spain Sevilla (ESP) v Lyon (FRA)

These two teams should fight it out to go through to the last 16 along with Juventus. The Spaniards will fancy their chances of taking three points at the Sanchez Pizjuan. Europa League winners in each of the last three years, they held Juve in Italy in their group opener and are looking good under new coach Jorge Sampaoli. A 3-1 defeat at Athletic Bilbao on Saturday ended a six-game unbeaten run, though, for a side that features half a dozen French players. Lyon beat Dinamo Zagreb 3-0 at home in their opener but have won just once in five in Ligue 1 outings and are without injured top scorer Alexandre Lacazette for the trip. Their only win in last season's group stage came in Spain, against Valencia.

### ■ At Zagreb Dinamo Zagreb (CRO) v Juventus (ITA)

The Italian champions, runners-up in 2015, did not get off to the best start as they were held to a goalless draw by Sevilla but they will be expected to get a win under their belts in Croatia against one of the weakest sides in the competition. The Turin giants have injury worries too, with Kwadwo Asamoah and Daniele Rugani joining Medhi Benatia and Claudio Marchisio on the sidelines in the wake of the 1-0 weekend win at Palermo. Marko Pjaca could play, though, against the team he left in the summer -- he played for them and scored twice in the win over Vardar Skopje in the second qualifying round. Dinamo, who beat Arsenal at home last season, have bounced back from a run of three straight defeats with back-to-back domestic wins.

(Source: AFP)

## 'He's a little man, full stop' - Francesco Totti's wife slams Roma boss Luciano Spalletti

Francesco Totti's wife has surprisingly ranted about Roma coach Luciano Spalletti, branding him a "little man" for the way he has treated her husband.

Ilary Blasi was particularly unhappy with the way Spalletti sent the 39-year-old Totti home from training after being upset at an interview the legendary forward gave to RAI television.

Spalletti was reportedly annoyed at the striker saying he was not given enough respect at Roma and sent the club hero home from the club's Trigoria training ground.

Blasi made it clear that Totti merely wanted to be given more respect at the club and cast Spalletti as unreasonable and insensitive.

"All Francesco said in that interview which caused so much controversy was that he wanted to be respected," Blasi told Gazzetta dello Sport.

"He was right to do so -- at that time, they [Roma] were not showing him any. Francesco is not a controversial person, he only talks when he touches the ball.

"He was sent away from his own home, and you can write that. I may not know a lot about football, but that was surreal; science fiction.

"I couldn't believe it. You just don't do things like that. I would never have allowed myself to do such a thing."



"As soon as [Totti] arrived home, I told him that we would be going to the stadium that night anyway."

Blasi cited the reaction of the Roma fans, who unsurprisingly gave Totti a standing ovation after he was dropped for the Serie A clash with Palermo, as proving the support he had amid the controversy.

"That showed that the fans had not abandoned him," Blasi continued.

■ 'A little man'  
"Spalletti's a little man, full stop. It's the truth. He even

said some ridiculous things. At such a difficult moment in somebody's life when a lad is taking a huge step [towards retirement], there are ways in which you should behave."

"It's right that he looks to the future and tries to plan without him, but I think that's still difficult at Roma, but I wish him well. He certainly could have been more delicate and Spalletti certainly wasn't that and he did not know how to manage him on a human level.

"I judge people on this also, so I have to give him a low - a very low - rating."

"He [Totti] has got to feel [whether he can play on]. If he doesn't feel at ease, he would be the first to bury the hatchet. He's intelligent!"

### ■ OUR VIEW

On the surface of things, this is just a typical -- and fairly common -- spat between a player and the head coach. However, it is clear from Totti's standing within the game that this was always going to play out badly for Spalletti.

Such is the adoration for Totti from the Roma fans, Spalletti was inevitably going to be cast as the villain of the piece, but he is unlikely to be overly concerned by this latest criticism, particularly as he is presumably fully aware of his own stature.

(Source: Eurosport)



# Giantkillers go head-to-head



Although reaching the semi-finals of the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016 is an achievement in itself, the final four teams are now setting their sights on even higher targets. A win at this stage guarantees a place on the podium and puts title dreams within reach. After a long and strenuous tournament, the remaining sides must summon all their remaining strength if they are to take these final steps. FIFA.com looks ahead to the first semi-final.

## Match of the day

Iran-Russia, Coliseo Ivan de Bedout, Medellin, 19:00 (local time)

This match could be every bit as entertaining as the final, as it pits the Asian champions against the European runners-up. Both teams have overcome significant obstacles to reach the last four. Iran defeated tournament favourites and five-time world champions Brazil in the Round

of 16. Despite falling behind three times, twice by two goals, Team Melli managed to take the encounter to extra time and penalties, where they held their nerve to defeat the South Americans. They had a similar experience in the quarter-finals, where Paraguay led twice before Iran recovered to secure the win in extra time.

In contrast, Russia had to ensure they did not rest on their laurels after taking the lead. Despite giving away a three-goal advantage within a few minutes after half-time in their opening match against Thailand, the Eastern Europeans ultimately prevailed before negotiating their other games with relative ease. Having secured a long-awaited victory over perennial adversaries Spain in the last round after losing to the Iberians at both the last Futsal World Cup and February's Futsal EURO, Russia are becoming increasingly confi-

dent of winning their first world title.

## Player to watch

Eder Lima (Russia)

Eder Lima initially struggled for form in Colombia, four years after becoming top goalscorer in Thailand with nine strikes to his name. Nevertheless, the 32-year-old appears to be getting back to his lethal best as the competition enters its final stages, scoring twice against Spain to bring his tournament tally to six goals. Iran will need to get to grips with him if they want to survive against Russia.

## The stat

10 - While Iran have collected ten yellow cards in the tournament so far, more than any other team, only Farhad Tavakoli will miss the semi-final due to suspension. Luckily for the Asian side, all cards are disregarded after the quarter-finals, which means no player already

carrying a booking will play in the last four fearing that another warning will deny them the chance to play in the final. Despite Russia boasting a more reasonable total of six yellow cards in the tournament so far, their player Romulo will sit out the semi-final after seeing red in their last match.

## The words

"We've already contested plenty of friendlies against Russia, so we know how we have to play against them. To win, we'll need to stay calm right to the final whistle and stick to our gameplan."

Iran coach Mohammad Nazemalsharieh

## Match schedule

Semi-final, Tuesday 27 September 2016  
Iran-Russia (19:00, Medellin)  
Semi-final, Wednesday 28 September 2016  
Argentina-Portugal (19:00, Cali)

(Source: FIFA)

## Iran advances to AVC Cup semis



Iran's national B volleyball team defeated Japan in the 2016 AVC (Asian Volleyball Confederation) Cup for Men on Monday.

The Iranian team beat host Thailand 3-1 (25-22, 28-30, 25-20, 25-16) to book a place in the competition's semi-final.

Iran has already defeated Australia (3-1), Japan (3-0) and South Korea (3-0) in the event.

The team has been scheduled to face Japan on Tuesday while China meet Chinese Taipei in another semi.

The 2016 AVC Cup for Men is the 5th edition of the AVC Cup for Men, being played by top eight teams of the 2015 Asian Championship. It is being held in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand from 22 to 28 September 2016.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Iran's Minaei, Soleymani seize gold medals at Asian Beach Games



**S P O R T S** Masoud Minaei and Kaveh Soleymani from Iran claimed two gold medals in the 5th Asian Beach Games on Monday.

Minaei defeated Hung Truong Quoc from host Vietnam in the Men's Light Middleweight 67 - 71 kg.

Furthermore, Soleymani won the gold medal in the Men's Welterweight 63.5 - 67 kg after defeating Zhanibek

Kanatbayev from Kazakhstan.

Iran has participated in the Asian Beach Games with 33 athletes in nine sports.

Iran has won three gold medals, one silver and two bronze medals so far.

The 5th edition of Asian Beach Games opened in Da Nang, Vietnam, on September 24, and will run until October 3.

## Esmailpour, Iran's man for the occasion

Following Iran's quarter-final triumph, when coach Seyed Nazemalsharieh said "our winning factor is being able to maintain our composure to the very last minute", you wouldn't have been surprised if he was picturing the tall figure of Ahmad Esmailpour.

In all honesty, it's beginning to look like Iran's No3 is a fan of the dramatic. The Asian champions have knocked out two South American sides in two games, with both exiting the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016 courtesy of late interventions from his right foot.

While his winning penalty in the shootout with Brazil, following a pulsating 4-4 draw in the round of 16, was script-worthy stuff, his strike against Paraguay - coming just 22 seconds from another round of spot-kicks - was arguably even more dramatic. Locked at 3-3 following a cat-and-mouse encounter, with both pulling clear before being pegged back, a shot by Mahdi Javid was parried into his path.

"It was like something fell from the sky," he recalled to FIFA.com, picturing the ball skipping off the court and into his path. "It's a moment that I can't really describe. In that instance I was a little bit anxious, worried I might not take the opportunity, but all I was thinking about was connecting with the shot. I knew it could change the destiny of our team."

And that's what he's done in successive games, each celebrated in similarly ecstatic style. "They were both very sweet moments, and will remain as real



treasured memories forever"

Were they something less common from his hammer of a right, and his second goal not so dramatic, all the talk could easily have been about Iran's 1-1 leveller - a sweetly-struck missile that was laser-guided into the top corner from 12 metres. "It's not the first time I've scored a goal like that," he said with a knowing look.

Winding up his traction engine of a leg and attempting similar efforts all night - one of his main priorities - you can tell he loves the sight of the ball whistling into that top corner. "Everyone enjoys scoring spectacular goals like that," he added.

No doubt a feeling his team-mate Javid shares, having

struck a near-identical effort later in the game. But whose was better, Esmailpour's or Javid's? "That's for others to judge, it's not for me to say, but personally I enjoyed Javid's goal," he replied with a wry smile - one which morphed into a laugh when complimented on his diplomacy.

New heights in sight  
But Esmailpour's goals have more than just won them the games on the day, his last-gasp heroics have seen Iran equal their best-ever Futsal World Cup performance, dating back to a fourth-place finish in 1992. "It's been 24 years since we last reached the semi-finals, so our first aim was to equal that, which we've fulfilled, so the very least we want to achieve now is finish third and get a medal."

The obstacle they have to negotiate to exceed that target is Russia, a prospect that disappoints the rangy pivot - but not for a reason you might think. "Some of us had hoped to be facing Spain, because we're very driven to make amends for the mistakes we made in the opening game," he said, looking back to humbling start to the tournament.

"We believe the difference between the two teams is not reflected at 5-1. We would have like to have had that chance, but the next opponent is Russia and we're ready."

And having seen Spain's elimination ensure we will have a new champion crowned, why not Iran? "Certainly, that's what we're hoping for."

(Source: FIFA)

## A look at FIFA council Asian candidates' profile

As the FIFA Council elections come nearer, let The-AFC.com introduce the six candidates from Asia.

The elections will be held during the AFC Extraordinary Congress on September 27 Tuesday, in Goa, India.

### ZHANG JIAN

Age: 51

Country: China PR

Current Positions:

Member, FIFA Development Committee (2013 - Present)

Senior Vice President & General Secretary, Chinese Football Association (2013 - Present)

Football Background:

Chairman, Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Election Appeal Committee (2014 - 2015)

Member, AFC Legal Committee (2013 - 2015)

President, East Asian Football Federation (2014 - 2016)

### ALI KAFASHIAN NAEINI

Age: 62

Country: Islamic Republic of Iran

Current Positions:

Member, FIFA Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee

Vice-President, Asian Football Confederation (AFC) (2015 - Present)

Chairman, AFC Futsal & Beach Soccer Committee (2015 - Present)

Vice-President, Football Federation Islamic Republic Of Iran (2016 - Present)

Vice-President, West Asian Football Federation (2008 - Present)

Football Background:

Member, AFC Competitions Committee (2011 - 2015)

Member, AFC Social Responsibility Committee (2008 - 2011)

Member, AFC Ad-Hoc Committee for Member Associations (2008 - 2011)

President, Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran (2008 - 2016)

Chairman, Football Federation Islamic Republic of Iran Congress (2008 - 2015)

Chairman, Football Federation Islamic Republic Of Iran Congress (2001 - 2004)

### ZAINUDIN NORDIN

Age: 53

Country: Singapore

Current Positions:

President, Football Association of Singapore (2009 - Present)

Member, Asian Football Confederation Governance Reform Task Force (2016)

Member, ASEAN Football Federation Council

Member, ASEAN Football Federation Competitions Committee

Chairman, ASEAN Super League Committee

Football Background:

Deputy President, Football Association of Singapore (2008 - 2009)

Vice-President, Football Association of Singapore (2004 - 2008)

Council Member, Football Association of Singapore (2002 - 2004)

### MOYA DODD

Age: 51

Country: Australia

Current Positions:

Deputy Chairwoman, FIFA Committee for Women's Football and the FIFA Women's World Cup (2013 - Present)

Member, FIFA Legal Committee (2012 - Present)

Member, Organising Committee for the FIFA World Cup (2013 - Present)

Member, Organising Committee for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup (2013 - Present)

Chairwoman, FIFA Task Force for Women's Football (2013 - Present)

Member, Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Executive Committee (2007 - Present)

Chairwoman, AFC Women's Committee (2011 - Present)

Member, AFC Legal Committee (2009 - Present)

Board Member, Football Federation of Australia (FFA) (2007 - Present)

Chairwoman, FFA, Women's Football Committee (2007 - Present)

Member, FFA Legal Committee (2012 - Present)

Member, FFA Football Development Committee (2011 - 2016)

Football Background: Member (co-opted), FIFA Executive Committee (2013 - 2016)

Vice-President, AFC (2009-2015)

Member, AFC Asian Cup Australia 2015 Organising Committee (2011 - 2015)

Member, FFA A-League Committee (2010 - 2012)

### MAHFUZA AKHTER KIRON

Age: 49

Country: Bangladesh

Current Positions:

Member, FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Football Organising Committee

Member, Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Executive Committee

Member, AFC Women's Committee

Deputy Chairman, South Asian Football Federation Women's Wing (SAFF)

Football Background:

Member, FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Football Organising Committee

Member, Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Executive Committee

Member, AFC Women's Football Committee

Deputy Chairman, South Asian Football Federation Women's Wing (SAFF)

Football Background:

Member, FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup Football Organising Committee

Member, Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Executive Committee

Member, AFC Women's Football Committee

Deputy Chairman, South Asian Football Federation Women's Wing (SAFF)

### HAN UN GYONG

Age: 49

Country: DPR Korea

Current Positions:

Member, FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup Football Organising Committee (2013 - Present)

Member, Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Executive Committee (2013 - Present)

Member, AFC Competitions Committee (2015 - Present)

Vice-President, DPR Korea Football Association (2013 - Present)

Member, East Asian Football Federation (2014 - Present)

Chairwoman, DPR Korea FA Women's Committee (2012 - Present)

Football Background:

Member, AFC Women's Football Committee (2011 - 2015)

International Director, DPR Korea Football Association (2010 - 2013)

(Source: AFC)





### Poem of the day

Or far or near there is no halting-place  
Upon Love's road-absent, I see thy face.

Hafez

### Prayer Times

Noon:11:55 Evening: 6:12 Dawn: 4:33 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 5:57 (tomorrow)

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SEPTEMBER 26, 2016

## Arab singer Heysam working with Persian composer Khazeni for his debut album

**T A R T TEHRAN** — Tehran-based Arab singer Heysam Nur is collaborating with Iranian composer Peyman Khazeni for his debut album titled "Ja ar-Raheel" ("I Came to Leave").



Heysam Nur in an undated photo

Songs from Egyptian poet Farouk Gouida, Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani and the Palestinian poets Mahmoud Darwish and Ibrahim Tuqan have been selected for the album, Nur told the Persian service of ILNA on Saturday.

"Many singers in the Arab world have performed works from Qabbani and he enjoys great fame in the Arab world and other cultures," he said.

Nur also knows how to perform in Persian, but he has his own reason why he chose to sing in Arabic.

"Arabic is my mother tongue and this fact is my primary motivation for singing in Arabic," he noted.

"The second reason for this decision refers to my interest in the cultural and literary connections between the Iranian, Arabic and Islamic civilizations. The use of Arabic poetry among the few Iranian audiences draws me into an art and cultural challenge," he added.

He said that he has been working on the album since 2013 and it is expected to be released by the end of 2017.

Nur has previously worked with prominent Iranian composer Behzad Abdi in "Bilad ul-Islam wa z-Zaitoun" ("The Country of Islam and Olive"), a single song from Qabbani, which was broadcast from IRIB's Ofoq Channel on the eve of the International Quds Day this year.

# Shajarian album "Way of Love" unveiled 27 years after being recorded

**T A R T TEHRAN** — Mohammadreza Shajarian's album "The Way of Love", which the vocalist icon of Iranian traditional music had recorded with a number of legendary musicians in the Aref ensemble in 1989, was unveiled during a special ceremony in Tehran on Monday morning.

A large number of fans and Iran's art elites packed into Vahdat Hall a few hours beforehand to attend the ceremony hosted by veteran actor Parviz Parastui.

The unveiling ceremony began with reading by Parastui of a literary text for Shajarian.

Shajarian who is battling with kidney cancer was not able to attend the ceremony, but addressing him the text read in the end, "You have been eternal; Shajarian will never end."

The ceremony went on with performances by Shajarian's son, Homayun, who was accompanied by Kamkar brothers Bijan and Arjang, Babak Ghassali, Sohrab Purnazer and Ain Meshkian, the son late musician Parviz Meshkian, the composer of the album.

In a short speech made before the performance, Homayun said, "I do not deserve to be in this place, because my father with the cherished members of Aref should be sitting here to perform for you."

"Unfortunately, due to his particular condition and need for physiotherapy, father could not attend this event," he added.

Shajarian who spent several months in Sacramento, California, to receive treatment for his illness, returned home on September 16.



A music aficionado holds a copy of Mohammadreza Shajarian's 1989 album "The Way of Love" after being unveiled at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on September 26, 2016.

The disbanded Aref ensemble led by santur Pirniakan, Jamshid Andalibi, Mohammad Firuzi, and virtuoso Meshkatiyan was composed of Dariush the Kamkar brothers Ardeshtir, Bijan and Arjang.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

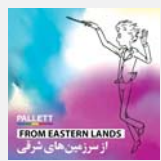


### Paintings by Chinese Muslim artists on display at Tehran exhibit

**T A R T TEHRAN** — An exhibition of paintings by Chinese Muslim painters Ali Lee-Gon and Saeid Li-Chuan opened at the Saba Art and Cultural Institute of the Iranian Academy of Arts on Monday.

The paintings are on the subjects of Islamic art, the Silk Road and nature in China.

The exhibit will be running until October 2 at the institute located on Mozaffar St., off Taleqani Ave. near Felestin Square.



### Iranian films win awards at Italian festival

**T A R T TEHRAN** — Four Iranian short films won awards at the third edition of the Festival Internazionale del Cinema Povero, which was held in the Italian city of Ispra from September 23 to 25.

Iranian animated film "Junk Girl" co-directed by Mohammad Zare' and Shalaleh Kheiri won the special jury prize while "From the Eastern Lands" by Sara Tabibzadeh received the award for the best soundtrack.

Sahar Khoshcheshman's "Angeles Are Dead" and Saman Hosseinpur's "Fish" received special mentions.

Iranian director Yusef Kargar, the director of acclaimed short film "Elegy", was on the jury panel of the festival.

## Pam Grier, Jessye Norman win Harvard's W.E.B. Dubois medals

**CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (AP)** — Actress Pam Grier and opera soprano Jessye Norman are among the recipients of Harvard University's 2016 W.E.B. Du Bois medals honoring those who have made significant contributions to African and African American history and culture.

Grier and Norman will be honored at the fourth annual Hutchins Center Honors on Oct. 6. Other medalists this year include hip hop artist and activist Lana "MC Lyte" Moorer, writer and producer David Simon and the 1966 Texas Western Miners men's basketball team, which was the first all-black starting lineup to win an NCAA national championship.

The awards are presented by the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University.

W.E.B. Du Bois was a civil rights activist, historian and sociologist.

## Poet Ali Musavi Garmarudi honored

**T A R T TEHRAN** — Veteran Iranian poet Seyyed Ali Musavi Garmarudi, famous for his Persian translation of Nahj-ul-Balagha of Imam Ali (AS), was honored during a ceremony held at the Owj Arts and Media Organization on Sunday.

The ceremony was attended by large number of literati and scholars including the Academy of Persian Language and Literature Director Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel and Hafez expert Bahaeddin Khorramshahi, Persian media reported.

In his short speech, Haddad-Adel, an old friend of the poet, called Garmarudi a strong tree rooted in Iranian-Islamic culture,

history, literature, religion and spirituality. "Today he is a tree in a garden, in which hundreds of trees have since grown, but there was a time when he was a single tree in a vast desert," he added.

In his brief remarks, managing Director of Etelaat Persian Newspaper Mahmud Doai also praised Garmarudi for his new books.

Khorramshahi, who has helped Garmarudi in editing his new translation of Nahj-ul-Balagha, said, "When Garmarudi gave his translation to me for editing, I found it to be the most eloquent translation of the text."

Nahj-ul-Balagha was first compiled by

Sharif Radi known in Persian as Seyyed Razi, who divided the work into three sections containing the speeches, letters and short sayings of Imam Ali (AS).

Garmarudi also expressed his thanks to all the participants at the ceremony and said, "When I completed the translation, I asked Imam Ali (AS) to have mercy on me, and I must say I am happy for what I am and where I am right now."

"But I am sure there are many more who deserve to be honored for their cultural activities," he concluded.

Published by Qadyani Publications, the translation took Garmarudi over six years of work and research.



Seyyed Ali Musavi Garmarudi poses during a ceremony organized by the Owj Arts and Media Organization in Tehran on September 25, 2016 to honor the poet for his lifetime achievements. (Mehr/Mohammad Moheimani)

### PICTURE OF THE DAY Tasnim/Hamed Malekpur



Merila Zarei, the star of Asghar Farhadi's Oscar-winning drama "A Separation", attends the 14th Resistance International Film Festival at Tehran's Mellat Cineplex on September 25, 2016 to hold a workshop.

## Iranian-Dutch production "Reconsider Your Image of Me" goes on stage in Tehran

**T A R T TEHRAN** — "Reconsider Your Image of Me", a co-production between the English Theatre STET from The Hague, Netherlands and the Virgule Performance Arts Company from Iran, is currently on stage in Tehran's City Theater Complex.

Iranian director Arvand Dashtaray, Dutch dramaturge Cecile Brommer and Iranian playwright Naghmeh Samini have worked in conjunction with the Dutch partner Marene van Holk on the production, which is a project by Eleonora Herder, a freelance director and dramaturge in Germany and Spain.

In a session attended by a number of

actors and the director of the play at the complex, the troupe discussed the project, the Persian service of ISNA reported on Monday.

"We began this project in 2013. 'Reconsider Your Image of Me' is a five-year research project that questions the images that we have of the 'other', and challenges the current state and impact of theater and art in our global society," Dashtaray said at the session.

"Both Iran and the West have a strong 'image' of the other. This image has been created by the media, the geo-political situation and the lack of knowledge. To

unravel this misinformation we proposed to offer the stage to 'regular' stories from people who might not have the problems with each other prevalent in the political sphere."

For her part Marene van Holk said that living with a person from another culture means entering a new world, and this play somehow tries to depict these types of couples.

Cecil Brommer said that the project aims to depict the image one has of a new country and a new culture.

Dutch actor Michael Bloos called it a great experience to have been working on



this project with his wife.

Diba Khatami, Arusha Beigi and Azadeh Mirzai are among other Iranian actors of the play.

The play, which opened on Sunday, will be onstage for fifteen nights.

## U.S. country singer Jean Shepard dead at 82

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — Jean Shepard, who played a pioneering role for women in country music and was a member of the Grand Ole Opry and Country Music Hall of Fame, died on Sunday at age 82, the Nashville Tennessean reported.

"Today is one of the hardest days of my life. Mom has been called home this morning and is now at peace," the singer's son Hawkshaw Hawkins Jr. said in a statement quoted by Billboard Magazine. The magazine said Shepard entered hospice care last week after a long illness.

Representatives for Shepard did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Neither the Tennessean nor Billboard listed a cause of death or said where she died.

Shepard, who had a No. 1 in 1953 with the song "Dear John Letter", performed into her final years and published a memoir, "Down through the Years", the newspaper said. She was invited to join the Grand Ole Opry, Nashville's famous country music weekly program, in 1955, at 22, the Tennessean said. At her death, she was its longest-serving member.