



Ex-Iranian intelligence chief reveals talks with Saudis over Syria

POLITICS TEHRAN — The former Iranian intelligence minister has revealed that Iran once took the initiative to hold talks with Saudi Arabia over Syria before the situation began to deteriorate in the country but the monarchy did not seize it and vowed to fight Iran's "Islamic revolution".

"Sessions were held at the (Supreme) National Security Council and it was decided to dispatch a group to Saudi Arabia for negotiation," Heidar Moselehi said on Thursday.

Tehran and Saudi Arabia are backing opposing sides in Syria and disagree on a list of other regional issues, including what is going on in Yemen, Bahrain, and Iraq.

The two, also, have no diplomatic ties since the attack on the Saudi Arabia embassy in Tehran in January which followed protests against executions in the caliphate, among them the pro-democracy Shia cleric Nimr Baqir al-Nimr.

The Iranian negotiation team had even visited Saudi Arabia during which Moselehi sat down with then crown prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz, but reached no tangible outcome but hatred and animosity. →2

IDRO, Renault ink joint venture deal

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Industrial Development and Renovation Organization of Iran (IDRO) and French multinational automobile manufacturer Renault signed a deal

on making joint venture in Iran, IRNA reported on Friday.

The deal was on the establishment of an engineering and sales office in Iran to support Iranian

auto part manufacturers and also setting up a manufacturing plant in the country with the initial capacity of 150,000 cars per annum. The plant is scheduled to start production in 2018. →4

Goldman says OPEC deal to add as much as \$10 to H1 2017 oil prices

Goldman Sachs said the deal reached by OPEC crude producers on Wednesday to curb output should add \$7 to \$10 to oil prices in the first half of next year.

Members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreed on Wednesday to modest oil output cuts in the first such deal since 2008, with group leader Saudi Arabia softening its stance on arch-rival Iran amid mounting pressure from low oil prices.

"Strict implementation of today's deal in 2017 would represent 480,000 to 980,000 barrels per day less output," Goldman analysts said in a note dated Wednesday.

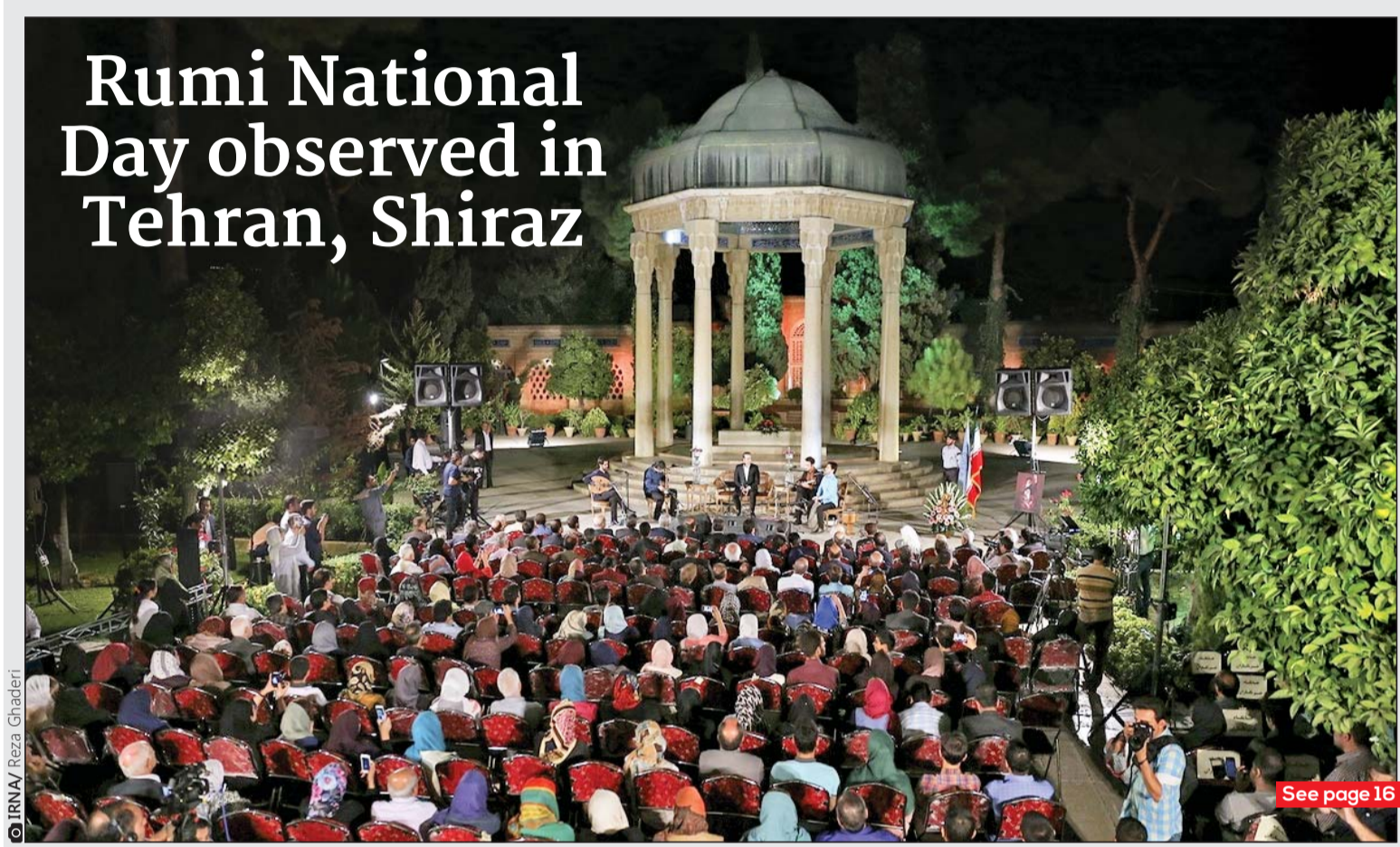
"Longer term, we remain skeptical on the implementation of the proposed quotas, if ratified," the analysts said.

Still, the bank reiterated its year-end and 2017 oil price forecasts, given the uncertainty of the OPEC proposal.

Goldman kept its end-2016 forecast for U.S. West Texas Intermediate crude (WTI) at \$43 per barrel and its 2017 forecast at \$53 per barrel.

WTI was trading around \$47 a barrel, after gaining more than 5 percent on Wednesday on OPEC's planned output cut. →5

Rumi National Day observed in Tehran, Shiraz



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PERSPECTIVE By Mehdi Sepahvand, Ali Kushki Aleppo-educated Rumi, Messiah missing to an extremist world

September 30 was the birth anniversary of Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, Persian poet and Sufi master born in 1207, and the Rumi Day named in his honor as a globally acclaimed poet.

Born in Balkh, then part of eastern Iran but now in Afghanistan, Rumi went to Aleppo and Damascus, today's Syria, to study. From there, he went to Konya, in Turkey, where he spent the last 50 years of his life.

After over eight centuries, Rumi continues to appeal to many. A host of traditional Iranian musicians and singers have ventured extensively into his words, coming out with great works of music that maximize the passion in his letters.

A young generation of musicians and vocalists have also been putting lines from the Masnavi into pop tunes, making again pieces that capture the sensations of Rumi in a modern-world setting.

In Turkey, where he was buried, Rumi draws many lovers almost as a sanctity. Rumi's tomb lures reverent followers and heads of state each year for a whirling dervish ceremony on 17 December, the anniversary of his death.

Even in the New World, the Persian mystic's magnum opus the Masnavi has sold millions of copies in recent years, making him the most popular poet in the U.S.

In early 2016, Oscar-winning screenwriter David Franzoni and producer Stephen Joel Brown said they were going to make a biopic of Rumi, even conveying inclination to Leonardo DiCaprio to act as Rumi.

The cineaste were not the only ones well-disposed to Rumi. In May 2014, it went viral that actor Brad Pitt had tattooed his arm with a variation of part of a Rumi poem, reading "There exists a field, beyond all notions of right and wrong. I will meet you there."

Shortly after, renowned master of Persian literature and Iranist Mir Jaleddin Kazzazi found the line to be a translation of Ruba'i 158 of Rumi. "Right and wrong," Kazzazi said, match religion and atheism in the original Persian text. →13

Tehran to take serious decisions to uphold rights: Shamkhani

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Supreme National Security Council secretary said on Thursday that Iran will take more serious decisions to uphold its rights if the U.S. violates its commitments under the JCPOA, the official for the nuclear pact.

"If we are supposed to witness stonewalling by the U.S. for small jobs like buying airliner, we will take more serious decisions to uphold our rights," Ali Shamkhani said in a ceremony hosted by the Energy Ministry in Tehran.

He condemned the U.S. for its delay in

implementing its obligations on the basis of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"It has been proven to us by various experiences in the nuclear talks and regional developments that trust on the U.S., be it in Syrian truce or removal of economic sanctions, is example of moving

towards mirage," the top security official remarked.

Iran and the 5+1 group - the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia plus Germany - finalized the text of the JCPOA in Vienna in July 2015. The deal took effect in January 2016.

Academic calls UN a highly politicized entity

INTERVIEW By Javad Heirannia TEHRAN — Professor Nader Entessar from South Alabama University tells the Tehran Times that "the United Nations is a highly politicized entity" and that it "depends too much on the largess of a handful of political and financially powerful countries".

Entessar blames the structural deficiencies which has made the UN incapable of settling bloody conflicts in the world.

"The problems is with the organization's structural deficiencies and not necessarily with the concept of the United Nations," Entessar says.

Following is the text of the interview:



How do you assess the role of the United Nations in settling international conflicts?

A: The United Nations has not been very successful in managing or resolving major global crises. Of course, the United Nations

cannot act as an effective supranational entity by itself as it depends on both the financial and political will of its member states. The problems is with the organization's structural deficiencies and not necessarily with the concept of the United Nations.

In the current time that Ban Ki-moon is leading the UN has the international body been able to play an effective role?

A: Ban Ki-moon has not been the most dynamic Secretary General in the history of the United Nations. He has deferred too much to the wishes of powerful states, especially those in the West, and has not been innovative in approaching major global crises. →13

Iran rejects allegations it transfers arms to Yemen

By staff and agency TEHRAN's ambassador to the UN has rejected allegations by Saudi Arabia that Iran has been transferring weapons to Yemen.

"The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran firmly rejects the pure fabrications and unsubstantiated allegations, contained in the afore-mentioned letter concerning the alleged transfer of weapons to

Yemeni Ansarullah fighters and the violation of the UN Security Council Resolutions," Gholamali Khoshroo said in his letter to the UN Security Council on Tuesday.

Following is the full text of the letter published by IRNA:

Upon instructions from my Government, and with reference to the letter dated 16 September 2016 from the Permanent Repre-

sentative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2016/786), I wish to bring the following to your attention:

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran firmly rejects the pure fabrications and unsubstantiated allegations, contained in the afore-mentioned letter concerning the alleged transfer of weapons to

Yemeni Ansarullah fighters and the violation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

This letter and the claims contained therein are at the same time quite astounding as the claimant is the representative of a government that has invaded Yemen and used, for about a year and half, a full variety of lethal weapons against Yemen's civilians and civilian infrastructure. →13

South Korea, Iran to collaborate on film industry

ART TEHRAN — South Korean producers plan to make joint films and TV series in collaboration with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB), South Korean Ambassador Kim Seung-ho said on Thursday.

He made the remarks while visiting the joint photo exhibition by South Korea's largest news agency, Yonhap, and IRNA, the Islamic Republic News Agency, now underway at the Iranian Artists Forum.

"14 Korean producers have held talks with IRIB and 30 Iranian filmmaking companies in Tehran to make joint productions," he added.

A collection of 100 photos covering different political, social, historical and tourism aspects of the two countries are on display in the exhibit, which opened on Tuesday and will be running until October 3 at the forum located on Musavi St., Taleqani Ave.



KISH FOOD EX 2016 hosting 110 companies

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Persian Gulf island of Kish is hosting 50 Iranian and 60 foreign companies in the first edition of International Food, Beverage and Related In-

dustries Exhibition (KISH FOOD EX 2016), IRNA reported.

Companies from Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Turkey, Malaysia, the Netherlands, India, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Poland,

Japan, France, Oman, Austria, Belgium and Singapore are showcasing their latest products and achievements in the exhibit which opened on September 28 and will wrap up on October 1.

The exhibition is aimed at inviting foreign companies to make investment in the Iranian growing food market, transfer of technical knowledge to Iran and elevation of exports from the country.

ARTICLE By Chung Kwan-Joo Vice Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism of South Korea

Prospect of cultural cooperation between Korea, Iran highly bright

As the vice minister for culture, sports and tourism of the Republic of Korea, I am going to arrive at Tehran in a few days for the first time in my life with a large cultural delegation. I am eager to see with my own eyes the cradle of human culture and meet the Iranian people who deserve to be praised for their contribution to the humanity achievements, be it literature, philosophy, art, architecture, and many others. And I am also delighted to introduce many aspects of Korean culture to Iranian friends during my stay in Tehran.

A large scale Korean non-verbal performance on the legendary love story of Persian prince and Korean princess will be performed at the Milad Tower on the 1st and 2nd October along with the Korean modern painting exhibition and try-out activities of various Korean culture to be held from 27th September. Particularly, the non-verbal performance shows how old our two countries relations can trace back, despite geographical remoteness and cultural difference. In addition to these performances during my stay, throughout October, a series of cultural events will continue such as Korean music night with Tehran Orchestra, Iranian calligraphy contest on Korea-Iran friendship, Korea seen by Iranian photographer exhibition, Korean Ambassador's Cup Taekwondo competition, and so on.

My visit to Iran and all ensuing cultural activities are good evidence of how much importance Korean government puts in the relation with Iran. That importance does neither come from any sense of competition, nor expectation of support for commercial activities. Why Korean government is so keen about cultural cooperation with Iran is because the bilateral relations of the two countries could be much more strengthened through enhanced cultural ties. 16 →



**MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**



**Zarif writes to Mogherini on JCPOA: spokesperson**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran's foreign minister has written a letter to EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini about implementation of the JCPOA, the official name for the nuclear deal.

"The HRVP did receive a letter from (Mohammad Javad) Zarif prior to the ministerial meeting held in NY," an EU spokesperson told Tasnim on Thursday.

"The issues mentioned in the letter related with the JCPOA implementation, are part of our regular discussions and were addressed in the Joint Commission and ministerial meeting last week."



**'Iran's Navy keeping watchful eye on foreigners'**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Iranian Navy commander has said the country's naval forces are closely watching all moves by foreign military units anywhere in regional waters.

"Foreigners' moves are under close watch and we know where each of their fleets is and what it is doing. We will not allow (them) to come near our borders and, if this happens, we will confront them as (we did) in the past," Habibollah Sayyari told IRIB on Wednesday.



**Belgian parliamentary team due in Iran**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — A high-ranking delegation from the Belgian Federal Parliament plans to start an official visit to Iran on Saturday.

The Belgian MPs will hold talks with senior Iranian officials, including Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani, on ways to deepen parliamentary ties, IRNA reported.

The delegation, headed by the chairman of the Belgian Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, will visit Tehran upon an official invitation by of Alaeddin Boroujerdi, chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee.



**German vice chancellor to visit Iran Oct. 2**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Germany's vice chancellor and minister for economic affairs and energy will visit Iran on October 2, Fars news agency reported on Friday.

Sigmar Gabriel's visit to Iran had been scheduled for June, but was postponed due to health issues, ISNA reported on Friday.

During Gabriel's visit to Tehran, he would discuss banking and investment issues with Iran's private sector representatives.

Iranian banks have not been able to establish transactions with major German banks 9 months after the implementation of the JCPOA.



**Minister accuses Saudis of backing bandits in eastern Iran**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — In implicit remarks during his visit to Iran's interior minister has said the Saudi regime has been funneling money and intelligence to the outlaws operating in Iran's eastern border areas.

"We are in no doubt that all arrogant countries are seeking to bring about unwelcome developments in Iran and expend much to make that happen," Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said on Thursday, Press TV reported.

The minister added, "In the West, they openly meet with [members of] Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO)."



**Indonesia, Iran opt for broadening of ties**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian ambassador to Jakarta Valiollah Mohammadi Nasrabadi and Indonesian Head of Indonesian Foreign Ministry's Policy Analysis and Development Agency Siswo Pramono on Thursday called for broadening of mutual cooperation between the two countries.

During the meeting, the sides discussed different issues such as prospect of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), current issues in the sphere of energy in the global market, regional affairs, and Indonesia's chairmanship over the Indian Ocean Rim Association.

# Iran set to unveil production of stable isotopes at industrial scale

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran is only one month away from producing stable isotopes at industrial scale at the Fordow facility, what the country's nuclear chief has hailed as a "great work."

"Within the next month, we will be holding an unveiling ceremony in connection with stable isotopes at the Fordow facility," said Ali Akbar Salehi in a live TV interview aired on Thursday.

Stable isotopes are used for medical and industrial purposes.

In August, Iran launched a facility to produce raw material for stable isotopes.

Later developments of the facility in the coming year will allow exports, according to Asqar Zare'an, a senior advisor to Salehi.

Iran's new advances in the nuclear industry have accelerated particularly after it signed a pact in July 2015 with world powers over its nuclear program, formally known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.



**Iran's nuclear chief says, "Within the next month, we will be holding an unveiling ceremony in connection with stable isotopes at the Fordow facility."**

The stable isotope production activities comply with the JCPOA which allows two centrifuge cascades at the Fordow facility to spin without uranium for stable isotope production after some infrastructural modification.

To obtain the know-how, Iran has been cooperating closely with its partner Russia.

Back in April, Russia's permanent representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Vladimir Voronkov announced a scientific center would be launched at Iran's Fordow facility for the production of stable isotopes.

Also, in an August interview with Azerbaijani state news agency AZERTAC, Russian President Vladimir Putin said, "We will further assist our Iranian partners in implementing the Plan of Action on Iran's nuclear program, including the processing of enriched uranium and the conversion of facilities to produce stable isotopes."

## Ex-Iranian intelligence chief reveals talks with Saudis over Syria

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — "I held talks with crown prince Nayef during my visit to Riyadh. He (Nayef) told me that the House of Saud had given more than \$40 billion to Saddam during the war on Iran and would continue to confront the Islamic revolution by all means," the former intelligence minister further noted.

This is the first time an Iranian discloses talks with Saudi Arabia, a country which Iran believes is disseminating

Wahhabism and extremism across the region.

As a matter of fact, that confrontation has grown more direct with Saudi Arabia backing terrorist groups to breed insecurity in the Iranian borders, particularly through Kurdish Peshmerga forces in western Iran, according to Iranian officials.

In a recent interview with the BBC, Mustafa Hijri, general secretary of the so-



called Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan, said his forces, known as Peshmerga, have embarked on a "new stage" of war on Iran in Kurdistan.

While denying any financial support from Riyadh, Hijri revealed contacts with foreign countries to receive assistance both financially and logistically.

According to a recent report, four members of a Kurdish terrorist cell were arrested a week ago in western Iran.

## Tehran calls on India, Pakistan to practice more self-restraint

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry called on India and Pakistan on Friday to practice more self-restraint as tensions continue to rise between the two neighbors.

"Continuation of the crisis between the two countries will undermine security in the region," ministry spokesman Bahram Qassem said in a statement.

He urged India and Pakistan to adopt peaceful ways and resolve the problems through dialogue.

"Intensification and continuation of the crisis between the two countries will lay the grounds for the extremist and terrorist groups and their supporters to spread insecurity and instability in the region," Qassem noted.

Expressing hope that the two countries would find "peaceful solutions" and "logical strategies", the Foreign Ministry official added

countries like India and Pakistan can bridge differences through diplomacy and negotiation.



**The Iranian Foreign Ministry hopes India and Pakistan find "peaceful solutions" and "logical strategies" to the problems.**

es through diplomacy and negotiation.

According to CNN, Pakistan's military said on Thursday that two Pakistani soldiers were killed after clashes with Indian troops on the de-facto border between the two countries.

The Indian army said it had conducted "surgical attacks" in the disputed region to foil a "terrorist attack," CNN quoted India's Director General of Military Operations.

But Pakistan insisted that no incursion had taken place into the territory it controls, saying there had only been an exchange of fire. It promised a "forceful response" if there was a repeat of the operation.

"The notion of surgical strike linked to alleged terrorists' bases is an illusion being deliberately generated by India to create false effects," the Pakistani military said in a statement.

Pakistan said its soldiers died in "unprovoked" firing along the Line of Control (LoC) dividing the Kashmir region.

## Iran blames U.S. military interventions for rise of Daesh

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — A foreign policy advisor to the Iranian parliament speaker said on Friday that the U.S. military interventions are the main causes behind security problems in the Middle East and also the emergence of Daesh.

Hossein Amir-Abdollahian's comments came in response to U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry's remarks about Iran's role in the region.

"There are things that Iran is doing in the region that we obviously object to. We don't like the support for the Houthis, we don't like the support for Hezbollah, the support for Assad, some of their engagement in other countries — meddling," Kerry said at the Atlantic and Aspen Institute on Thursday.

Amir-Abdollahian said, "Tehran has always followed the most constructive policies in the region and been fighting against terrorism and supported regional security and stability."

He also said that Saudi Arabia's attacks on Yemen is supported by the U.S. and the Zionist regime of Israel.



"The Saudis could not carry out military attack on Yemen without intelligence and logistical support of Washington," remarked Amir-Abdollahian, an expert on Middle East affairs.

Amir-Abdollahian also said that the U.S. policies prevent efforts to achieve political solutions to the conflicts in Syria and Yemen. He added Iran is duty bound to help the Iraqi and Syrian governments in campaign against terrorism and will continue providing the countries with humanitarian and advisory help.

Elsewhere, he said that Iran will continue backing Lebanon's Hezbollah which has "acted powerfully" in fighting terrorists and the Zionist regime.

## Executions against drug traffickers will remain in place: Iran

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iran's Judiciary Chief Sadeg Amoli Larijani said on Thursday that it is not the Judiciary's policy to cancel executions for drug traffickers, Mehr reported.

"The claim that executions have not been useful is irrelevant," said Larijani during a judicial conference in Mashhad. The senior judge said drug traffickers have inflicted a great deal of harm on the country, noting that an immediate action is needed in response to such crimes.

The judiciary chief further urged all prosecutors across the country not to "delay the implementation of verdicts, and carry them out immediately after they are issued."

He went on to say that the prosecutors are not allowed to delay the verdicts for three years.

"We cannot do away with executions in general because it undermines the judiciary's deterrent effect," Larijani remarked.

He also urged the prosecutors to



"impose other forms of punishments, if possible, instead of death penalty."

Iran has been under pressure by the UN Human Rights Council for its use of death penalty against drug traffickers.

However, Iranian officials denounce such pressures as interference in the country's domestic affairs and call on the UN officials to "refrain from politicizing the issue of human rights" in the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian High Council for Human Rights has responded to criticisms against the country's Judiciary, saying that the structure of Iran's judicial system guarantees the process of a fair trial.

## South Africa looking forward to host Rouhani

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — South African Deputy Foreign Minister Nomaindiya Mfeketo has said that her country is looking forward to have President Hassan Rouhani in Johannesburg, ISNA reported.

The news came as Mfeketo warmly welcomed her Iranian counterpart Hossein Jaber Ansari during a meeting in Johannesburg on Wednesday.

The Iranian and South African diplomats met for bilateral consultations in accordance with the mandate of the South Africa-Iran Deputy Ministerial Working Group (DMWG), which provides oversight in monitoring and guiding bilateral political and economic relations between the two countries.

The DMWG remains an important diplomatic

instrument as part of the South Africa - Iran Joint Commission to consolidate and elevate bilateral political, economic and people to people relations between South Africa and Iran into a substantive strategic partnership that will benefit both countries and its peoples.

The two sides also exchanged views on regional and international issues.

Ansari, for his part, pointed out to the importance of ties with South Africa, saying that South Africa has been the first African country he has traveled since he assumed the position of deputy foreign minister for Arab and African affairs.

The Iranian diplomat is visiting South Africa to attend the seventh session of the joint political commission be-

tween the two countries.

He is accompanied by the Iranian Acting Deputy Minister of Oil Dr Hashemian, as well as senior officials from other departments and representatives from the Iranian private sector.

Earlier in April, President Rouhani welcomed his South African counterpart Jacob Zuma in Tehran.

Heading a 180-member politico-economic delegation, Zuma visited Tehran at the invitation of Rouhani to discuss ways to expand relations between the two countries.

The two sides called for strengthening cooperation in the areas of trade and industry, joint venture, agriculture, management of water resources, customs, fight against money-laundering, oil and culture.



# Syrian forces in fierce battles with militants in Aleppo

## Turkey might continue Syria incursion for years

Syrian government troops have engaged in fierce clashes with foreign-backed militants in Aleppo, as they continue their push to recapture the terrorist-held districts of the key town.

Army soldiers managed to fully clear the Handarat refugee camp of militants and recaptured nearby Kindi Hospital north of Aleppo on Friday morning, according to Lebanon-based al-Manar television.

The report said the troops, backed by government airstrikes, continued advancing in Aleppo's eastern parts. The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights also confirmed that the government forces were edging closer to the city.

By retaking Handarat, Syrian troops pushed terrorists further away from the Castello Road, a main artery leading to the occupied parts of the city.

According to an unnamed Syrian military official, the airstrikes against militants in Aleppo would continue, adding that the operations "include a ground offensive" into terrorist-held areas.

The official quoted by the Syrian TV, said many militants were killed in the battle, adding that experts were removing explosives from the liberated areas.

Meanwhile, at least four civilians were killed and ten others wounded in a rocket attack from the militant-held Sulaiman and al-Halabi neighborhoods of Aleppo.

The fierce fighting continues as diplomats in New York have failed to salvage a ceasefire mediated by the United States and Russia.

The ceasefire, which lasted for only one week, came to an end on September 19.

Damascus, however, refused to extend it after the United States-led air raids killed 83 of its army forces and wounded some 100 others at a military base in the eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr in violation of the truce.

Syrian forces, backed by Russian air raids, has been engaged in large-scale military operations across the country in recent months.

On Friday, the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said over 5,000 Takfiri militants have been killed in the Russian aerial campaign, which began last September. The group also claimed some 3,800 civilians have also died in the raids.

Meanwhile, Russian media says Moscow has deployed group of Su-24 and Su-34 bombers to the Hmeimim airbase in Syria's Latakia Province.

The Russian Defense Ministry has not made any comments the report so far.

Elsewhere, on Thursday, government troops targeted militant positions and



convoys in the vicinity of the strategic Sha'er gas field in Syria's central province of Homs, killing scores of the extremists in the process.

They advanced to Jabal Sawwanat and the first checkpoint of the gas field, after successfully wresting control over al-Barak Hills that lie on the western outskirts of the al-Sha'er Mountains.

A military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Syrian army forces also engaged members of the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham (Front for the Conquest of the Levant) terrorist group, which serves as Syria's al-Qaeda branch and was formerly known as al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra), in Izz al-Din village and killed a large number of them.

Elsewhere in the west-central province of Hama, government forces successfully thwarted militant offensives against the villages of Taybat al-Isim and Qarah.

Dozens of Jaish al-Fatah (Army of Conquest) and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists were also killed and injured during Syrian air force strikes against their bases throughout the province.

Syrian fighter jets pounded terrorists' positions in the towns of Taybat al-Imam, located 18 kilometers northwest of Hama, Tel al-Zaatar and Murak, and the villages of Atshan, al-Shatha and al-Telasia.

### Turkey might continue Syria incursion for years

Meantime, a senior Turkish official says Ankara's military incursion into Syria could last for years if necessary.

Turkish troops entered the Syrian territory in a sudden incursion which resulted in the occupation of Jarablus after ISIL

left the city without resistance earlier this month.

Turkey has indicated that its eyes were now set on the Syrian city of Raqqah which is controlled by ISIL.

The senior Turkish official said on Friday a planned U.S. offensive to retake Raqqah using Kurdish militia fighters would trigger an ethnic conflict there.

He said driving out ISIL from the Syrian city of al-Bab is also among the targets of Turkey's incursion into northern Syria.

On Sunday, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Turkey was planning to send troops deeper into Syrian territory to establish what it calls a safe zone.

Damascus has condemned the incursion, denouncing it as a "flagrant breach" of its sovereignty.

Syria's envoy to the United Nations Bashar Ja'afari said last week Turkey, along with the U.S. and Israel, have moved from a proxy war to a "personal" one on the Arab state.

### Syria slams U.S.-led coalition for destroying two bridges

The development follows as Syria has slammed the U.S.-led coalition purportedly fighting ISIL for destroying two bridges over Euphrates River in the eastern province of Dayr al-Zawr, where the same alliance recently killed 83 Syrian soldiers.

The attacks "confirm the so-called international coalition's intent to bomb and destroy Syrian infrastructure and economic and social establishments through repeated aggressive acts," the Syrian Foreign Ministry said in two letters to the UN chief and the Security Council

on Thursday.

The ministry said terrorist groups are the only beneficiaries of the U.S.-led coalition's attacks, which come under the pretext of a war against ISIL.

The letters reiterated that the U.S.-led alliance's raids run contrary to international rules and the UN Charter, calling on the world body to condemn this "deliberate" act of aggression.

The official SANA news agency reported that the bridges of al-Asharah and al-Mayadin in the eastern countryside of the provincial capital city of Dayr al-Zawr were hit by the coalition's warplanes on Wednesday.

Syria's ambassador to the UN Bashar Ja'afari said the bridges had been used by hundreds of thousands of civilians in the area.

On September 17, a Syrian army airbase in Dayr al-Zawr came under attack by U.S.-led warplanes in violation of a nationwide ceasefire deal, which had been mediated by Russia and the U.S.

More than 80 Syrian soldiers lost their lives and some 100 others were wounded in the US-led airstrikes, which helped ISIL terrorists make some gains in the area.

### Syria 'not killing its own people'

Speaking to reporters after a Thursday UN Security Council meeting on Syria, Ja'afari further dismissed accusations that the Damascus army targets civilians, saying it is the terrorists who have been killing Syrians and hampering relief operations.

"The Syrian government is not bombing civilians. These people are our own people. We don't bomb civilians, we don't kill civilians."

The senior diplomat added, "We don't bomb humanitarian convoys. We don't do that. Those who did it are the terrorists."

The comments came after UN Secretary General blamed the government in Damascus for most civilian deaths in Syria since the outbreak of the foreign-sponsored crisis there in early 2011.

More than 400,000 people have died and half the 22 million population have been uprooted in the crisis, according to the latest estimates by UN Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura.

Over the past weeks, there has been a rise in fighting between Syrian forces and Takfiri militant groups across the state, particularly in the city of Aleppo, after the collapse of a week-long ceasefire there.

The truce, which had been mediated by the U.S. and Russia, expired on September 19, with Damascus refusing to extend it after its base in Dayr al-Zawr was hit by U.S.-led air raids in breach of the deal.

(Source: Press TV)

## French warplanes scrambled to Mosul on 'anti-ISIL' mission

French fighter jets have taken off from the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier in the Mediterranean on a so-called mission against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

On Friday, eight such warplanes were flown towards Mosul to purportedly support the Iraqi army in its push to liberate the embattled city, the last major stronghold of ISIL in the country, AFP reported.



The Charles de Gaulle returned to the sea earlier this week, and is currently on its third mission since February 2015, when it joined the United States-led coalition purportedly fighting ISIL. Paris later expanded its airstrikes to Syria.

The Associated Press also quoted an unnamed French Defense Ministry official as saying that the dispatch of the warplanes "in no way" marked the beginning of the long-awaited battle for Mosul.

Washington and dozens of its allies have been conducting military operations in Syria and Iraq since September 2014. The campaign has fallen severely short of its avowed aim of dislodging ISIL. France's claim to be fighting the terrorists come as the country itself stands accused of supporting militants in Iraq and Syria.

The Iraqi army and allied volunteer forces have been preparing for the Mosul liberation operation in recent months. Reports say the ultimate push is expected to take place in October. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi said on Thursday that all troops participating in the Mosul offensive are from Iraq, and no foreigners would be among them, adding that the U.S.-led coalition would only support the operation.

Recently, Abadi addressed the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, saying his country had been mostly liberated from ISIL.

He also reiterated the pledge for the liberation of Mosul by yearend.

### UN: 700,000 will need aid once Mosul operation begins

Meantime, the United Nations says an estimated 700,000 people would need assistance once a looming military operation to liberate Mosul, which is Iraq's second-largest city and the main stronghold of the ISIL terrorist group in the crisis-hit country, gets underway.

Bruno Geddo, the representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Iraq, told reporters in the Swiss city of Geneva on Thursday that the expected offensive on Mosul, located some 400 kilometers north of the capital Baghdad, "has the potential" to displace over a million people.

The Iraqi government has pledged to retake the city this year but has not yet announced a date for the launch of the campaign. "We are planning for at least 700,000 who will be in need of assistance, shelter food, [and] water" following the operation, the UNHCR pointed out.

The UN agency is hoping to have 11 camps finished by the end of the year with the capacity to hold 120,000 people, while Iraqi authorities expect to be able to house 150,000 more, he explained.

Geddo stated that ISIL has resorted to tactics like using civilians as human shields, calling for sustained international support to help the Baghdad government overcome the Takfiri militant group and stabilize the war-ravaged country.

Gruesome violence has plagued the northern and western parts of Iraq ever since ISIL terrorists mounted an offensive there more than two years ago, and took control of portions of Iraqi territory.

(Source: Press TV)

## El Cajon shooting: Police arrest 2 men as protests turn violent in San Diego suburb

Two people were arrested during protests in El Cajon in California, United States on Thursday following the fatal shooting of a black man by a police officer. Authorities used pepper balls at the demonstrators who stopped vehicles, broke car windows and knocked a man off his motorcycle, the El Cajon Police Department said on Thursday.

The protests spilled on to a third night after one officer opened fire and the other one used a stun gun on Alfred Olango on Tuesday. Police had responded to calls complaining about an unstable man walking in traffic.

On Thursday, police arrested two men — aged 19 and 28 — who are residents of El Cajon. Their identities were not released.

Meanwhile, Olango's family and friends — who said he was mentally ill — have urged authorities to release the full video of the shooting. The 38-year-old had come to the U.S. decades ago from Uganda as a refugee.

Olango had prior run-ins with the law. Authorities at the Immigration and Customs Enforcement office said that federal authorities tried twice to deport him. However, Uganda refused to take him in.

Olango's family is expected to hold a rally on Saturday against his fatal shooting.

Authorities have launched an investigation into the shooting. (Source: International Business Times)

## Saudi Arabia condemns passage of 9/11 law

The House of Saud regime has condemned a recently passed United States law allowing the families of the victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks to sue the Saudi government.

The U.S. Congress voted overwhelmingly on Wednesday to override President Barack Obama's veto of the Justice Against Sponsors of Terrorism Act (JASTA) on relations between states.

JASTA allows attack survivors and relatives of victims to pursue cases against foreign governments in U.S. federal court and to demand compensation if such governments are proved to bear some responsibility for attacks on American soil.

In a statement on Thursday, the Saudi government said the enactment of the law was a matter "of great concern" and called on the U.S. Congress "to avoid the serious unintended consequences that may ensue", without elaborating on what the consequences might be.



"The erosion of sovereign immunity will have a negative impact on all nations, including the United States," the Saudi foreign ministry said in the statement, which

was carried on state news agency SPA on Thursday.

Fifteen of the 19 men who carried out the 2001 attacks were Saudi nationals, but Saudi Arabia, a major U.S. ally, has long denied any involvement in the attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people.

In opposing the law, Obama said it would harm U.S. interests by undermining the principle of sovereign immunity, opening up the U.S. to private lawsuits over its military missions abroad.

The erosion of sovereign immunity is also a concern among the six-nation Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, of which Saudi Arabia is the most powerful member.

Saudi Arabia's Persian Gulf allies have lined up beside Riyadh to criticize the law.

Analysts said a successful lawsuit against the Saudi government would be unlikely at best, but speculated that the uncertainty surrounding the legal implications could negatively affect bilateral trade and investment with an ally. (Source: agencies)

## Turkey suspends 1500 prison personnel and guards in post-coup probe

Police in Turkey have raided the country's biggest prison and courthouses to arrest prison guards and employees deemed linked to the failed July coup in the country.

According to Turkish media reports, police on Friday raided three Istanbul courthouses, including the Caglayan courthouse, where some of Turkey's most important trials are held.

Turkey's largest prison Silivri, which is located west of Istanbul, was also raided.

This comes after arrest warrants were issued for more than 160 personnel and

prison guards as part of nationwide investigations over the failed coup. Prosecutors have issued arrest warrants for 87 courthouse personnel.

Separately, arrest warrants had also been issued for 75 more personnel and guards in three separate prisons across Istanbul.

According to Turkish Justice Minister Bekir Bozdogan, authorities have suspended 1,500 prison personnel over links with the United States-based opposition leader Fethullah Gulen, whom Turkish officials accuse of being behind the failed July 15 coup attempt.

Speaking at an event in the Turkish capital Ankara, Bozdogan said on Friday the prison personnel were temporarily suspended but could be sacked if concrete links were found.

More than 270 people were killed and above 2,100 others sustained injuries when an army faction launched the putsch, using helicopters and tanks and clashing with government troops and people on the streets of the capital, Ankara, and the city of Istanbul.

Shortly after the coup bid was largely suppressed on July 16, President Recep

Tayyip Erdogan accused Gulen of being behind it.

Gulen has denied any involvement and warned that the blame game could be a ploy by the ruling Justice and Development Party to cement its grip on power.

Official figures show some 32,000 people have been arrested for their alleged role in the attempted coup. Nearly 100,000 people in the military, civil service, police and judiciary have been sacked or suspended. (Source: agencies)



## TSE attracts \$2.45b of investments in 6 months

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Tehran Stocks Exchange (TSE) desk could attract 85.992 trillion rials (above \$2.45 billion) of investments during the first half of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-September 20).

According to IRNA, after the implementation of nuclear deal signed between the Islamic Republic and the six world powers in January, attraction of foreign investments by TSE has witnessed a 140-percent rise.

## Chabahar port project to take off soon: Indian min.

Indian Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadakri has said the work on the Chabahar Port will begin soon once the tender process is over and hoped the project will open a new gateway for development of India, Iran and Afghanistan by boosting regional connectivity and trade.

All the three nations are keen on expediting tripartite transit agreement on the Chabahar port, Gadakri told PTI after holding a meeting with delegations from Iran and Afghanistan.

"We are keen on expanding scope of cooperation to cover development of the entire Chabahar Port...This port is going to open a new gateway not only for the development of India but at the same time the development of Afghanistan and Iran. This is a win-win situation," Gadakri said.

Gadakri along with Iran's Minister of Roads and Urban Development Abbas Akhoundi and Afghan's Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation Mohamadullah Batash held discussions on expediting trilateral agreement on establishment of International Transport and Transit Corridor i.e. the Chabahar Agreement signed on May this year in Tehran in presence of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Presidents of Iran and Afghanistan.

Gadakri said India is committed to developing the Chabahar Port in Iran and the work would commence soon after the completion of the tender process.

Wednesday's meeting was held barely a fortnight after the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the visiting Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, during their talks in New Delhi, had stressed that expediting the trilateral pact would augment connectivity among the three nations.

Gadakri said, "We will try to complete the project within the time schedule. We are also finding out what are the new things for which we will have opportunity for development and investment. The Iranian Minister has given lots of innovative suggestions regarding the development of business."

"We are in the process and our prime minister is very keen on the project. The distance between Kandla to Chabahar is less than the distance between Delhi and Mumbai. So there are lots of opportunities. Gas and petroleum products in Iran are available. We will get the market of Afghanistan also and the material from Afghanistan to Chabahar will be accessible to India," he added.

He said the problems in the project have been sorted out and the nations are looking on building up on this friendship and creating more business opportunities.

A milestone pact on the strategic Chabahar port in southern Iran, which will give India access to Afghanistan and Europe bypassing Pakistan, was inked by India and Iran in May this year after detailed discussions between Modi and the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani.

Besides the bilateral pact to develop the Chabahar port, for which India will invest \$500 million, a trilateral agreement on transport and transit corridor was also signed by India, Afghanistan and Iran, which the Prime Minister Modi has said could "alter the course of the history of the region".

Gadakri and the visiting ministers reviewed the latest situation on contract between Iran and India on the project, as well as procurement of equipment and financing.

They also stressed on the need for expanding scope of cooperation to cover development of entire Chabahar Port, projects for funding by EXIM Bank of India and reviewing participation of India in the Chabahar-Zahedan rail construction project.

During the meeting it was decided to organize a connectivity event involving all stakeholders at Chabahar within two months to increase awareness about the new opportunities offered by the Chabahar Port, according to an official statement issued on Thursday.

The ministers expressed satisfaction that the three countries are taking prompt measures for completing internal processes for the ratification of the agreement.

"They also exchanged views on the next steps to be taken for an early implementation of the agreement. It was decided to evolve protocols related to transport and transit, ports, customs procedures and consular affairs. It was also decided to convene an expert-level meeting of senior officials of the three countries within one month in Chabahar," it said.

Development of ports, road and rail connectivity will open up new opportunities leading to new jobs and prosperity in all three countries. Trade is recognized as driving economic growth and development, the implementation of the agreement would provide the ecosystem for the private sector to seize the business opportunities emerging due to substantial reduction of logistic costs for trade among the three countries, it said.

During the meeting, it also came up that the road transit from Chabahar to Zahedan and Milak is very limited at present and it needs to be augmented, apart from building the rail link.

Chabahar port, located in Iran's Sistan-Balouchestan province on the energy-rich Persian Gulf nation's southern coast, lies outside the Persian Gulf and is easily accessed from India's western coast, bypassing Pakistan.

"The bilateral agreement to develop the Chabahar port and related infrastructure and availability of about \$500 million from India for this purpose is an important milestone," Modi had earlier said in a joint media interaction with Rouhani.

(Source: Business Standard)

# Peugeot targets 150,000 vehicle sales in Iran in H2

PSA Peugeot Citroen said it plans to sell more than 150,000 Peugeot vehicles in Iran in the second half of this year as the French carmaker seeks to reclaim the leading position it once enjoyed in the country.

Peugeot, the biggest-selling European automaker in pre-sanctions Iran, suspended sales in 2012 when an international boycott due to Iran's nuclear program was extended to cars. Most sanctions were lifted in January.

The French carmaker's sales peaked at 458,000 vehicles before its withdrawal, nearly 30 percent of the Iranian market, but it now faces stiff competition from Chinese carmakers that have grabbed more business during the sanction years, as well as from western rivals such as Renault, who are also flocking back with newer models.

"This is the kick-off for the implementation of the deals we have signed," said Peugeot CEO Carlos Tavares, who will travel to Iran next week. Tavares wants to sell 300,000 Peugeot vehicles in Iran in 2017.

The Paris-based carmaker in July struck a framework deal with Iranian counterpart SAIPA to invest 300 million euros (\$337 million) in the development and production of three Citroen models through a new joint venture.

The deal with SAIPA, Citroen's partner since 1966, fol-



Peugeot and state-owned Iran Khodro. PSA's smaller DS premium badge has also clinched a distribution agreement in the country. (Source: Reuters)

## Athens calls for expansion of economic ties with Tehran

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — "Greece looks for development of economic, specially banking relations with Iran," said the Greek Deputy Prime Minister Yannis Dragasakis in his meeting with the Governor of the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Valiollah Seif in Athens on Thursday.

As IRNA reported, Dragasakis said that his country's banks are eager to cooper-

ate with their Iranian counterparts vowing that his administration will support Iranian companies' investment in Greece and vice-versa.

Seif, in his turn, expressed the Iranian government's readiness to boost economic and banking cooperation with the European country.

Underscoring the significant role of banking relations in consolidation of

bilateral economic ties, the CBI governor expressed content that positive steps have been taken for expansion of banking relations with Europe, including Greece.

On September 23, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani told Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras that Tehran welcomes expansion of relations with Athens in various spheres.

The two countries' capacities have laid the grounds for deepening cooperation especially in economic area, Rouhani said.

Rouhani who met Tsipras on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting in New York said a "new chapter" has been opened in Tehran-Athens ties.

He highlighted the importance of strengthening banking relations between the two countries.

## IDRO, Renault ink joint venture deal

The joint venture deal was signed by IDRO's managing director, Mansour Moazzami, and Renault's chief competitive officer, Thierry Bolloré, in the French capital city on Friday, the second day of Paris Motor Show 2016.

Iranian Industry, Mining and Trade

Minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh and Renault President Carlos Ghosn were also present in the signing ceremony.

It will expand presence of the French carmaker in Iran, which is currently active in the country through joint venture with Iranian automakers Saipa and Iran Khodro.

Renault sales to Iran tripled in the first eight months of 2016 compared to the same period last year. The French auto maker has announced that it has sold 54,548 passenger cars to Iran during the mentioned period which shows a 199 percent rise compared to 18,230 of the last year.



PICTURE OF THE DAY © IRNA/Ali Hamed Haqdoost



The 20th International Automobile Industry and Spare Parts Trade Fair of Iran (Autoexpo 2016) which kicked off on September 18 wraps up today in the north-western city of Tabriz. As reported, besides domestic car factories, representatives of foreign car companies from Turkey, Germany, Spain, Malaysia, China, South Korea, Taiwan, Belorussia, Canada and Japan have seized the chance to showcase their recent products in this exposition.

## Tehran to host 200 companies in MINEX 2016

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — The 5th Annual Iran's Mines and Mining Industries Exhibition and Conference on Investment Opportunities in Iran's Mines and Mining Industries (MINEX 2016) will start operation today in Tehran, IRIB news reported.

As reported, 160 Iranian companies as well as 40 foreign ones from Germany, Denmark, Brazil, Chile, France, Ukraine, China, Switzerland, South Africa, Nigeria, Spain, England and Poland will take part in the two-day event to present their latest achievements.

Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mine, and Trade, Iranian Mines and Industries Development and Renovation Organizations (IMIDRO), and Geological Survey & Mineral Explorations of Iran (GSI) will organize MINEX 2016.

It is one of the largest events in mines and mining industries in the Middle East. It presents the latest technologies and equipment, services and machineries in mining industry.



Deutsche CEO tries to reassure staff as shares plunge

Deutsche Bank's (DBKGn.DE) chief executive sought to reassure his staff on Friday that Germany's largest lender remained robust after its shares again fell to record lows, sending tremors through global financial markets.

Deutsche, which employs around 100,000 people, has been engulfed by crisis after a demand for up to \$14 billion earlier this month from the U.S. authorities for misselling mortgage-backed securities.

The bank is fighting the fire but would have to turn to investors for more money if it is imposed in full. The German government this week denied a newspaper report that it was working on a rescue plan for the bank.



China factories limp along, Japan inflation goes backwards

China's factory sector struggled to gain speed in September while Japanese inflation went backwards in August despite the best efforts of policymakers, underscoring the limits of stimulus in reviving world growth.

Friday's unflattering figures bookmarked a week in which the IMF warned it would likely downgrade forecasts for the U.S. economy, and the World Trade Organization slashed its outlook for global trade flows.

That was unwelcome news for markets spooked by troubles at Deutsche Bank, whose U.S. shares took a hammering on reports some hedge funds had reduced financial exposure to Germany's largest lender.



Japan's Mitsubishi Motors to resume sales after latest cheating scandal

Japanese automaker Mitsubishi Motors Corp (7211.T) will resume domestic sales of eight vehicle models on Oct. 1, the company said on Friday, after correcting overstated mileage readings in its second cheating scandal this year.

Japan's sixth largest automaker has admitted it falsified the mileage on 12 models, including the Pajero and Outlander SUV, taking a blow to its reputation.

The latest suspension came after a two-month suspension in sales of four minivan models this year, including two produced for Nissan Motor Co. (7201.T), following the initial admission of incorrect fuel economy readings.

NEWS IN BRIEF



# OPEC agrees modest oil output curbs in first deal since 2008

OPEC agreed on Wednesday modest oil output cuts in the first such deal since 2008, with the group's leader Saudi Arabia softening its stance on arch-rival Iran amid mounting pressure from low oil prices.

"OPEC made an exceptional decision today ... After two and a half years, OPEC reached consensus to manage the market," said Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh, who had repeatedly clashed with Saudi Arabia during previous meetings.

He and other ministers said the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries would reduce output to a range of 32.5-33.0 million barrels per day. OPEC estimates its current output at 33.24 million bpd.

"We have decided to decrease the production around 700,000 bpd," Zanganeh said.

The move would effectively re-establish OPEC production ceilings abandoned a year ago.

However, how much each country will produce is to be decided at the next formal OPEC meeting in November, when an invitation to join cuts could also be extended to non-OPEC countries such as Russia.

Oil prices jumped more than 5 percent to trade above \$48 per barrel as of 2015 GMT. Many traders said they were impressed OPEC had managed to reach a compromise after years of wrangling but others said they wanted to see the details.



"This is the first OPEC deal in eight years! The cartel proved that it still matters even in the age of shale! This is the end of the 'production war' and OPEC claims victory," said Phil Flynn, senior energy analyst at Price Futures Group.

Jeff Quigley, director of energy markets at Houston-based Stratass Advisors, said the market had yet to discover who would produce what. "I want to hear from the mouth of the Iranian oil minister that he's not going to go back to pre-sanction levels. For the Saudis, it just goes against the conventional wisdom of what they've been saying."

Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said on Tuesday that Iran, Nigeria and Libya would be allowed to produce "at

maximum levels that make sense" as part of any output limits.

That represents a strategy shift for Riyadh, which had said it would reduce output to ease a global glut only if every other OPEC and non-OPEC producer followed suit. Iran has argued it should be exempt from such limits as its production recovers after the lifting of EU sanctions earlier this year.

The Saudi and Iranian economies depend heavily on oil but in a post-sanctions environment, Iran is suffering less pressure from the halving in crude prices since 2014 and its economy could expand by almost 4 percent this year, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Riyadh, on the other hand, faces a sec-

ond year of budget deficits after a record gap of \$98 billion last year, a stagnating economy and is being forced to cut the salaries of government employees.

## Oil price pressures

Saudi Arabia is by far the largest OPEC producer with output of more than 10.7 million bpd, on par with Russia and the United States. Together, the three largest global producers extract a third of the world's oil.

Iran's production has been stagnant at 3.6 million bpd in the past three months, close to pre-sanctions levels although Tehran says it wants to ramp up output to more than 4 million bpd when foreign investments in its fields kick in.

Saudi oil revenue has halved over the past two years, forcing Riyadh to liquidate billions of dollars of overseas assets every month to pay bills and cut domestic fuel and utility subsidies last year.

"The Iranians have lived with a very tough macro backdrop for many years..." said Raza Agha, chief Middle East economist at investment bank VTB Capital. "So a sustained drop in oil prices has a more difficult social impact on Saudi."

Riyadh has raised production in recent years to compete for market share while Iran's output was limited by sanctions. Minister Zanganeh has said Iran wanted an output cap of close to 4 million bpd. Saudi output drops in winter when it needs less fuel than during summer, when cooling requirements spike.

(Source: Reuters)

## Venezuela expects non-OPEC nations like Russia to join in output cuts



Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said on Thursday he expects non-OPEC oil-producing countries, like Russia, to support OPEC's efforts to boost oil prices by reducing crude output.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) on Wednesday agreed to slightly reduce production for the first time since 2008 amid mounting pressure from low oil prices.

"This agreement should be consolidated in the coming days," Maduro said in comments broadcast on state television.

"I am very optimistic that major non-OPEC producing countries, such as the Russian Federation, will also take part in this joint effort of OPEC countries."

Venezuela has insisted for months that major oil producers should reach a consensus to freeze production levels to counter excess supply.

Maduro said he is convinced that there will be "a stable oil market" if OPEC and non-OPEC countries pledge to cut production.

Venezuela, which gets nearly all of its foreign exchange from oil exports, is facing triple-digit inflation and chronic product shortages as a result of low oil prices and a decaying economy.

Maduro says his government is the victim of an "economic war" led by opposition businessmen with the support of Washington.

(Source: Reuters)

## Natural gas prices fall as temperatures seen easing from high levels



Natural gas prices fell on Thursday, as expectations that cooler weather is approaching outweighed a bullish inventory report.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration reported stockpiles rose by 49 billion cubic feet last week to 3.6 trillion cubic feet. Analysts surveyed by The Wall Street Journal expected the agency to report that stockpiles rose by 57 billion cubic feet.

The storage report is a widely watched measure of supply and demand. A smaller-than-expected addition to storage likely indicates smaller supply or greater demand than expected, and prices moved higher immediately after the data's release, briefly breaking above \$3 a million British thermal units.

But prices quickly fell again amid ex-

pectations that cooler weather will result in more tepid demand. Prices for November delivery fell 4.3 cents, or 1.43%, to \$2.959 a million British thermal units on the New York Mercantile Exchange.

Natural gas has been bolstered by unusually hot weather that has propped up demand for electricity for air conditioning. But that situation is expected to change in the coming weeks as temperatures ease. "We've had so much heat hang around the East in particular, that's really driven up power demand to record levels," said Kent Bayazitoglu, an analyst at Gelber & Associates. "The weather is finally moderating, and that's going to cause bigger injections" into storage, he said.

(Source: Wall Street Journal)

## Oil prices fall as investors cash in on OPEC deal rally

Oil prices fell on Friday as investors cashed in on a 6-percent rise in just one day after OPEC members agreed to reduce output for the first time in eight years to stifle a two-year price slide.

Global benchmark Brent crude futures were down 75 cents at \$48.49 a barrel by 0814 GMT, but still nearly five percent higher than levels seen before the OPEC agreement on Wednesday.

U.S. crude was down 69 cents at \$47.14 a barrel, also around 5 percent higher than before the OPEC announcement.

"We're seeing some profit-taking because it is a long time until the next OPEC meeting in November when individual quotas have to follow," said Frank Klumpp, oil analyst at Stuttgart-based Landesbank Baden-Wuerttemberg.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreed on Wednesday to cut output to 32.5-33.0 million barrels per day (bpd) from around 33.5 million bpd, estimated by Reuters to be the output level in August.

The details, including the quotas for each member and the implementation data, will be finalized at OPEC's policy meeting in November.

"The group surprised us in Algiers and we cannot rule out that they will surprise us again," said analysts at BMI Research.

"However, we maintain our view that a collective cut will have little impact on a fundamental level."

A persistent oil supply glut brought prices from mid-2014 highs above \$100 a barrel to below \$50 today,

prompting the oil producers' group to find agreement on limiting output.

The United States, now the world's biggest oil producer but not a member of OPEC, said it had little faith in the deal leading to higher prices in the long term.

Amos Hochstein, the U.S. energy envoy, said in a Reuters interview the deal will either lead to higher U.S. production and trigger another price fall or allow U.S. producers to expand market share.

Investors are bracing for further oil price swings ahead of the November meeting.

"We are likely to see some volatility going into November's meeting," said Jade Fu, investment manager at Heartwood Investment Management.

(Source: Reuters)

## Is Russia about to ruin the oil price revival?

By Julianne Geiger

Despite the low oil price environment, Russia averaged 10.71 million bpd of crude in August, and according to Bloomberg data, is on track to average 11.1 million barrels per day in September. Russia reached its record oil production in 1987 of 11.5 million barrels.

The comments came after OPEC reached a preliminary deal Wednesday on the sidelines of the International En-

ergy Forum to cut current production (33.24 bpd in August) to a level between 32.5 million bpd and 33.0 million bpd. Novak said that Russia didn't have plans to consult with OPEC members on the issue of oil production until sometime in October and November, adding that earlier talks with OPEC revolved around limited production at current levels, not at reduced levels.

"Russia will carefully consider those proposals which will be eventually drawn

up. ... But our position is keeping the volume of production at the level that has been reached. These are the main principles that were earlier being considered," said Novak, adding that Russia was not ready to discuss any specific level that a production cap might entail, if it is able to reach an agreement with OPEC members at all.

Novak did say that a cap (of an undisclosed amount) would be considered for a period of about six months, unless

the decision was made at the beginning of the year, in which case a term of a year "would be feasible."

Russia was the world's third largest producer of oil behind the United States and Saudi Arabia according to EIA data from May 2016, although daily production in Russia has surpassed Saudi Arabia's since that time, with Saudi Arabia pumping 10.67 million barrels per day in July, and 10.63 million bpd in August.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Goldman says OPEC deal to add as much as \$10 to H1 2017 oil prices

"If this proposed cut is strictly enforced and supports prices, we would expect it to prove self-defeating medium term with a large drilling response around the world," the Goldman analysts said.

Societe Generale analyst Michael Wittner termed the deal a "big surprise", and said the agreement would be added to the bullish side of the ledger.

"Ongoing uncertainty about the deal, and associated developments and news flow, will contribute to continued high volatility in the next two months," Wittner said.

"We believe that oil market participants will now be much more reluctant to establish a significant short position for crude oil."

Oil futures retreated on Thursday as the market grew more skeptical on how OPEC would implement its plan to curb the group's oil output.

(Source: Reuters)

## Oil tax to increase amid low crude prices

It should be no secret that the oil and gas industry tends to carry the heaviest tax burden amongst industries. As oil prices have slid, many oil-producing states have felt significant tax revenue losses and are being forced to come up with new ways to finance spending, including raising taxes.

In response, several states have considered proposals to modify severance taxes or initiate new fees in recent years. Brookings released a report in April recommending that states channel their oil revenues to stable trust funds that are more able to weather the boom and bust cycle.

These states include Alaska, Colorado, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, West Virginia, and Wyoming, which rely on severance taxes for 16 percent of their tax revenue, as opposed to the 0.2 percent reliance seen in the rest of the U.S.

Oklahoma is facing a potential raise in severance taxes that could dampen future development, according to a new report by State Chamber. This comes after criticism of new severance tax laws passed by the state legislature in 2014 and made effective on July 1, 2015. Under this new scheme, new production would be taxed at two percent for the first thirty-six months before rising to seven percent.

Oil and gas serves as the largest single source of tax funding for public services in the state. In 2015, the industry paid a disproportionate amount of statewide corporate taxes at 22 percent and accounted for 7.4 percent of state employment, 13 percent of household earnings, and 17 percent of state gross domestic product.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Oil's dramatic price plunge sees Scotland turn to renewable energy

Renewables are fast becoming a key component of Scotland's energy mix as the country contemplates weak oil prices and declining production at its North Sea reserves.

The government there has big ambitions, and says it is aiming for renewables to generate the "equivalent of 100 percent of Scotland's gross annual electricity consumption by 2020."

"The oil and gas industry is having a pretty rough time globally because of the fall in oil price," Paul Wheelhouse, Scottish minister for business, innovation and energy, told CNBC's Energy Future.

"It has meant that we're having to move to an environment where we live with lower oil prices, perhaps for a longer period than we'd anticipated."

Just Scotland's luck, then, that the country is blessed with an abundance of onshore and offshore wind energy, as well as other renewable sources such as hydro, solar photovoltaics and plant biomass.

"It's a good time to be investing in renewables in Scotland," Wheelhouse said. "It's a really great coincidence of an economic need because of the challenge we face but also a really exciting opportunity. There is also the ability to transfer skills - from subsea, from oil and gas workers - into offshore wind, marine energy projects."

Another source being investigated is tidal. "Tidal is a global, untapped, clean, green source of energy," John Meagher, from Nova Innovation, said. "Tidal has the potential to create a multi-billion dollar industry," Meagher added.

Nova Innovation says it has deployed the world's first fully operational, commercial and grid connected tidal array in Shetland, a set of islands off the north coast of the Scottish mainland.

The potential of tidal energy is significant. In 2013, for example, the U.K. government said that wave and tidal stream energy had the potential to meet as much as 20 percent of the U.K.'s electricity demand.

While the potential of a tidal array such as the one in Shetland is undoubtedly exciting, its environmental impact still needs to be taken into consideration.

"Shetland's got a great resource for renewable energy - particularly wind and wave and tidal," Karen Hall, from Scottish Natural Heritage, said. "However, it's also got ... a lot of protected species, a lot of designated sites," she added.

"With tidal arrays, it's still very early technology. We really don't know what the impacts are likely to be," Hall went on to explain. "But that's why monitoring of the devices when they're in the water... (is) really important at this stage."

For Scotland, the future looks bright, according to Wheelhouse. "The former first minister has said before that Scotland kind of won the natural lottery twice: We had oil and gas and now we've got renewables, and we're very fortunate to have that."

(Source: CNBC)



## Saving refugees to save Europe

By George Soros

The refugee crisis in Europe was already pushing the European Union toward disintegration when, on June 23, it helped drive the British to vote to Brexit the EU. The refugee crisis and the Brexit calamity that it spawned have reinforced xenophobic, nationalist movements that will seek to win a series of upcoming votes— including national elections in France, the Netherlands, and Germany in 2017, a referendum in Hungary on the EU refugee policy on October 2, and a rerun of the Austrian presidential election on December 4.

Rather than uniting to resist this threat, EU member states have become increasingly unwilling to cooperate with one another. They pursue self-serving, beggar-thy-neighbor migration policies— such as building border fences— that further fragment the Union, seriously damage member states, and subvert global human-rights standards.

The current piecemeal response to the refugee crisis, culminating in the agreement reached earlier this year between the EU and Turkey to stem the flow of refugees from the Eastern Mediterranean, suffers from four fundamental flaws. First, it is not truly European; the agreement with Turkey was negotiated and imposed on Europe by German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Second, it is severely underfunded. Third, it has transformed Greece into a de facto holding pen with inadequate facilities.

Most important, the response is not voluntary. The EU is trying to impose quotas that many member states strenuously oppose, forcing refugees to take up residence in countries where they are not welcome and do not want to go, and returning to Turkey others who reached Europe by irregular means.

This is unfortunate, because the EU cannot survive without a comprehensive asylum and migration policy. The current crisis is not a one-off event; it augurs a period of higher migration pressures for the foreseeable future, due to a variety of causes. These include demographic shortfalls in Europe and a population explosion in Africa; seemingly eternal political and military conflicts in the broader region; and climate change.

### Asylum-seekers

The agreement with Turkey was problematic from its inception. The very premise of the deal— that asylum-seekers can legally be returned to Turkey— is fundamentally flawed. Turkey is not a “safe third country” for most Syrian asylum-seekers, especially since the failed coup in July.

What would a comprehensive approach look like? Whatever its final form, it would be built on seven pillars.

First, the EU must take in a substantial number of refugees directly from front-line countries in a secure and orderly manner. This would be far more acceptable to the public than the current disorder. If the EU made a commitment to admit even a mere 300,000 refugees annually, most genuine asylum-seekers would view their odds of reaching their destination as good enough to deter them from seeking to reach Europe illegally— an effort that would disqualify them from legal admission.

Second, the EU must regain control of its borders. There is little that alienates and scares publics more than scenes of chaos.

Third, the EU needs to find sufficient funds to finance a comprehensive migration policy. It is estimated that at least €30 billion per year will be needed for a number of years, and the benefits of “surge funding” (spending a large amount of money up front, rather than the same amount over several years) are enormous.

Fourth, the EU must build common mechanisms for protecting borders, determining asylum claims, and relocating refugees. A single European asylum process would remove the incentives for asylum shopping and rebuild trust among member states.

Fifth, a voluntary matching mechanism for relocating refugees is needed. The EU cannot coerce member states to accept refugees they do not want, or refugees to go where they are not wanted. A scheme like the one used by Canada could elicit and match the preferences of both refugees and receiving communities.

Sixth, the EU must offer far greater support to countries that host refugees, and it must be more generous in its approach to Africa. Instead of using development funds to serve its own needs, the EU should offer a genuine grand bargain focused on the needs of recipient countries. This means creating jobs in refugees’ home countries, which would reduce the pressure to migrate to Europe.

The final pillar is the eventual creation of a welcoming environment for economic migrants. Given Europe’s aging population, the benefits migration brings far outweigh the costs of integrating immigrants. All the evidence supports the conclusion that migrants can contribute significantly to innovation and development if they are given a chance to do so.

Pursuing these seven principles, described in greater detail elsewhere, is essential in order to calm public fears, reduce chaotic flows of asylum-seekers, ensure that newcomers are fully integrated, establish mutually beneficial relations with countries in the Middle East and Africa, and meet Europe’s international humanitarian obligations.

The refugee crisis is not the only crisis Europe has to face, but it is the most pressing. And if significant progress could be made on the refugee issue, it would make the other issues— from the continuing Greek debt crisis to the fallout from Brexit to the challenge posed by Russia— easier to tackle. All the pieces need to fit together, and the chances of success remain slim. But as long as there is a strategy that might succeed, everyone who wants the EU to survive should rally behind it.

(Source: project-syndicat.org)

# David Cameron has to find a role

By Jane Roberts

Things surely could only get better when, in 2015 and against the expectations of many, he finally won the majority in Parliament that Conservative MPs had been clamoring for.

He was riding the crest of a wave. How the mighty have fallen.

Just 13 months later, on June 24, 2016, a crestfallen David Cameron abruptly announced his resignation in Downing Street following the result of the European referendum hours before. Politically this was understandable.

Cameron had gambled on winning the referendum and he lost.

We legitimately expect our politicians to take responsibility when things go awry but what are the consequences on a human level in such circumstances?

Prime minister with an agenda for the future one day, humbled and humiliated, an ordinary backbencher going nowhere the next. Suddenly no one is interested in Cameron or what he says. That hurts.

Just imagine his situation: you have been out campaigning, you are exhausted and utterly devastated by the result just in.

### Personal failure

Disbelieving, numb and shocked at the catastrophe that you yourself set in

## Cameron will now forever be seen as the prime minister who inadvertently led the UK out of Europe.

train, you feel a crushing personal failure. The dismay you see mirrored in the faces of your political allies and the jeering from some quarters compounds your misery.

From hobnobbing with U.S. President Barack Obama and Germany’s Chancellor Angela Merkel, you are an instant political has-been.

For Cameron the man, this is about loss: the loss of a valued position, of self-esteem and identity as a successful politician.

Bear in mind that he has had little previous experience of failure: from Eton and Oxford, moving seamlessly into Conservative central office and corporate communications before landing a safe Conservative seat in Parliament.

The party leadership followed only four years later. Failure was not on the agenda. Now, it may haunt him. Cameron will now forever be seen as the prime minister who inadvertently led the UK out of Europe.

Cameron had planned to go but not now and not like this.

It is a profound loss of what might have been. Now he has announced he is standing down as an MP as well, because it’s intolerable to stay on the backbenches as a new prime minister asserts her agenda while dismantling all your achievements.

It will be a dislocating time for the former leader. To rub salt in the wound, he is now being slammed for the failure of his intervention in Libya.

No longer seen as the successful leader of his country, Cameron is now tasked with constructing a new narrative about who he is. Memoirs help but what will he do with his life at the relatively young age of 49?

### Conservative Party

For decades Cameron has been consumed by politics, government and gaining political office. He was at, or close to, the center of the Conservative Party for 25 years.

What now to fill the void? From the frantic busyness of Number 10, Cameron’s days are suddenly relatively empty.

In this discombobulating time he is

fortunate to be buffered by financial security and the support of his wife, children and a wider network of family and friends.

But let’s not under-estimate how life will have changed just as suddenly for Samantha Cameron, with both welcome and unwelcome changes that could put added strain on their relationship.

Few prime ministers leave office happily. Margaret Thatcher never came to terms with her sudden demise, unable to let go of her bitterness and move on to pastures new.

Tony Blair had the luxury of planning his departure but he has nevertheless appeared a restless soul since, criss-crossing the globe in an attempt to find a role.

John Major wrote of the inevitable “limited time in the sun” of political office. He was determined not “to leave the front line of politics as a husk, bereft of everything but a backward glance to memories of my political noontide”. Wise words but not easy after crushing defeat.

Dr. Roberts’s book, *Losing Political Office*, based on more than 40 in-depth interviews with politicians and their partners, is out this autumn, published by Palgrave Macmillan.

(Source: express.co.uk)

## How the Clinton-Trump race got close



### ARTICAL

By Paul Krugman

Monday’s presidential debate was a blowout, surely the most one-sided confrontation in American political history. Hillary Clinton was knowledgeable, unflappable and — dare we say it? — likable. Donald Trump was ignorant, thin-skinned and boorish.

Yet on the eve of the debate, polls showed a close race. How was that possible?

After all, the candidates we saw Monday night were the same people they’ve been all along.

Mrs. Clinton’s grace and even humor under pressure were fully apparent during last year’s Benghazi hearing.

Mr. Trump’s whiny braggadocio has been obvious every time he opens his mouth without reading from a teleprompter.

So how could someone like Mr. Trump have been in striking position for the White House? (He may still be there, since we have yet to see what effect the debate had on the polls.)

Part of the answer is that a lot more Americans than we’d like to imagine are white nationalists at heart.

### Racial hostility

Indeed, implicit appeals to racial hostility have long been at the core of Republican strategy; Mr. Trump became the GOP nominee by saying outright what his opponents tried to convey with dog whistles.

If he loses, Republicans will claim that he was some kind of outlier, showing nothing about the nature of their party. He isn’t.

But while racially motivated voters are a bigger minority than we’d like to think, they are a minority. And as recently as August Mrs. Clinton held a commanding lead. Then her polls went into a swoon.

What happened? Did she make some huge campaign blunders?

I don’t think so. As I’ve written before, she got Gored. That is, like Al Gore in 2000, she ran into a buzz saw of adversarial reporting from the mainstream media, which treated relatively minor missteps as major scandals, and invented additional scandals out of thin air.



## Clinton opponent’s genuine scandals and various grotesqueries were downplayed or whitewashed; but as Jonathan Chait of New York magazine says, the normalization of Donald Trump was probably less important than the abnormalization of Hillary Clinton.

### Genuine scandals

Meanwhile, her opponent’s genuine scandals and various grotesqueries were downplayed or whitewashed; but as Jonathan Chait of New York magazine says, the normalization of Donald Trump was probably less important than the abnormalization of Hillary Clinton.

This media onslaught started with an Associated Press report on the Clinton Foundation, which roughly coincided with the beginning of Mrs. Clinton’s poll slide.

The A.P. took on a valid question: Did foundation donors get inappropriate access and exert undue influence?

As it happened, it failed to find any evidence of wrongdoing — but nonetheless wrote the report as if it had. And this was the beginning of an extraordinary series of hostile news stories about how various aspects of Mrs. Clinton’s life “raise questions” or “cast shadows,” conveying an impression of terrible things without saying

anything that could be refuted.

The culmination of this process came with the infamous Matt Lauer-moderated forum, which might be briefly summarized as “Emails, emails, emails; yes, Mr. Trump, whatever you say, Mr. Trump.”

I still don’t fully understand this hostility, which wasn’t ideological. Instead, it had the feel of the cool kids in high school jeering at the class nerd. Sexism was surely involved but may not have been central, since the same thing happened to Mr. Gore.

In any case, those of us who remember the 2000 campaign expected the worst would follow the first debate: Surely much of the media would declare Mr. Trump the winner even if he lied repeatedly.

### News analyses

Some “news analyses” were already laying the foundation, setting a low bar for the GOP nominee while warning that Mrs. Clinton’s “body language” might display “condescension.”

Then came the debate itself, which was almost unspinnable.

Some people tried, declaring Mr. Trump the winner in the discussion of trade even though everything he said was factually or conceptually false. Or — my favorite — we had declarations that while Mr. Trump was underprepared, Mrs. Clinton may have been “overprepared.” What?

But meanwhile, tens of millions of Americans saw the candidates in action, directly, without a media filter.

For many, the revelation wasn’t Mr. Trump’s performance, but Mrs. Clinton’s: The woman they saw bore little resemblance to the cold, joyless drone they’d been told to expect.

How much will it matter? My guess — but I could very well be completely wrong — is that it will matter a lot. Hard-core Trump supporters won’t be swayed. But voters who had been planning to stay home or, what amounts to the same thing, vote for a minor-party candidate rather than choose between the racist and the she-devil may now realize that they were misinformed.

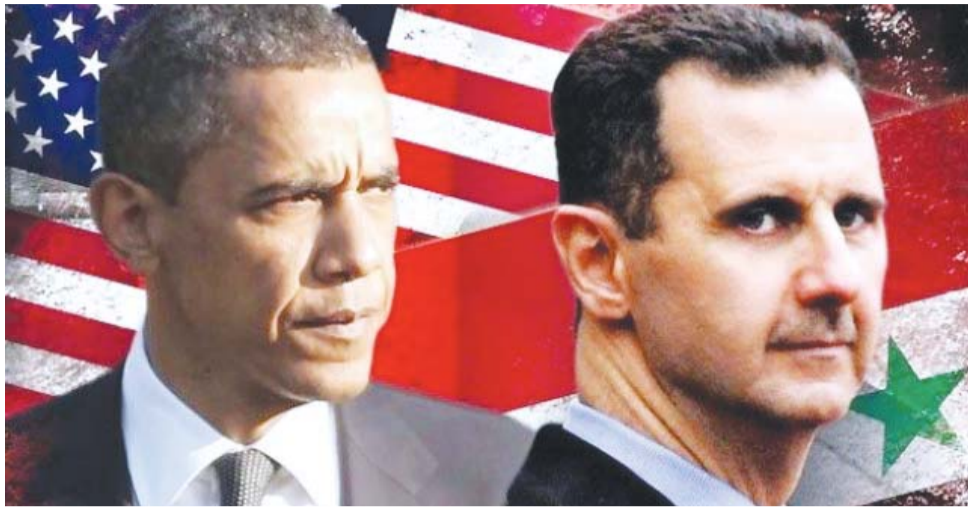
If so, it will be Mrs. Clinton’s bravura performance, under incredible pressure, that turned the tide.

But things should never have gotten to this point, where so much depended on defying media expectations over the course of an hour and a half. And those who helped bring us here should engage in some serious soul-searching.

(Source: The NYT)



# A chronicle of confusion: U.S. Policy toward Syria



**Over the last decade, the U.S. policy toward Syria followed ambiguous, confused and even contradictory objectives.**

By Dr. Zeinab Ghasemi

Last week when the US-led coalition hit Syrian forces, killing 62 soldiers and wounding 100 more, many observers inside Iran were not surprised. The attack took place two days before the Russian-American arrangements were assumed to come into full force; immediately after the attack ISIS launched a major offensive. Following the attack, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Maria Zakharova stated, "If previously we had suspicions that Al-Nusra Front is protected this way, now, after today's airstrikes on the Syrian army we come to a really terrifying conclusion for the entire world: The White House is defending IS [Islamic State, formerly ISIS/ISIL]." The strike triggered a war of words between Washington and Moscow, which further escalated after an alleged airstrike on an aid convoy on Monday.

While some commentators had welcomed the prospects of the U.S. joining the fight against Daesh, others maintained that the U.S. wants the status quo to be perpetuated: after having done much to undermine President Assad's government, which led to the killing hundreds of thousands, injuring and displacing millions and obliterating the infrastructure and institutions of the country, the U.S. is seeking to perpetuate the civil war in Syria by arming the opposition forces just enough to keep them fighting Assad, but not

enough to overthrow the government.

Over the last decade, the U.S. policy toward Syria followed ambiguous, confused and even contradictory objectives. Washington once considered and pursued the removal of Bashar al-Assad from power, thus backed and armed the terrorist groups; then it had to reconsider the previous stance and contemplate on dealing with Assad in power in order to harness the same terrorist groups it once supported (though it still arms the so called moderate opposition groups). Others argue that the U.S. is after perpetuating stalemate in Syria.

### 2006: Pursuing regime change in Syria

Back in December 13, 2006, five years before the so-called "Arab Spring" William Roebuck, who at the time was chargé d'affaires at the U.S. embassy in Damascus, sent a cable, which reveals that the U.S. was following regime change policy in Syria. The cable affirmed the stability of the Syrian government stating that, "The SARG ends 2006 in a much stronger position domestically and internationally than it did 2005". It continued by offering a number of vulnerabilities and potential actions that could increase the likelihood of destabilizing the Syrian government. Accordingly, the cable predicted opportunities in using "Islamic extremists", "exploiting" Syria's relationship with Iran to "play on Sunni fears of Iranian influence" to escalate Sunni-Shia sectarianism.

### For the sake of the Syrian people Assad Must Go

In August 18, 2011, a few months after the start of the conflict, in a written statement Obama asked Assad to step down, "For the sake of the Syrian people, the time has come for President Assad to step aside." The leaders of France, Germany and Britain joined him in calling on Assad "to face the reality of the complete rejection of his regime by the Syrian people and to step aside." For many observers Obama's statement constituted a green light to terrorist groups including al-Qaeda in Iraq, which were sponsored by the U.S. and their regional allies.

Moreover, a secret U.S. intelligence report in 2012 (declassified on June 2015) makes it clear that the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) had "predicted" and even "welcomed", "the prospect of a 'Salafist principality' in eastern Syria and an al-Qaida-controlled Islamic state in Syria and Iraq to destabilize Syria". According to the report the Syrian "regime" was considered as "the strategic depth of the Shia expansion (Iraq and Iran)".

In April 2013, Obama signed a secret order authorizing a CIA plan to begin arming the Syrian rebels. While there was a debate on the failure of the past attempts by the CIA to arm foreign forces covertly, the proposed plan by the CIA director, David H. Petraeus, was backed by Hillary Clinton, then the Secretary of State, who had reportedly said it was time for the United States to get "skin in the game."

### We don't want the Syrian government to Collapse

In December 2015, when for four years a bloody war had raged in Syria, John Kerry claimed that the U.S. and his partners are not seeking regime change in Syria. After meeting with Russian officials in Moscow Kerry said,

We focused on a process — on the political process — whereby Syrians will be making decisions for the future of Syria. But we do believe that nobody should be forced to choose between a dictator and being plagued by terrorists. Our challenge remains creating the conditions on which an alternative can emerge.

He had emphasized that, "The United States and our partners are not seeking so-called regime change."

### Blaming friends and foes

When ISIS had turned into a real problem in 2014, Joe Biden, U.S. vice president's Biden, lectured students at the Institute of Politics at Harvard University blaming U.S. regional allies for destabilizing



**In April 2013, Obama signed a secret order authorizing a CIA plan to begin arming the Syrian rebels.**

Syria. Not mentioning the U.S. role in Syria's catastrophic condition Biden pronounces:

Our allies in the region were our largest problem in Syria. The Turks, the Saudis, the Emiratis, etc. They were so determined to take down Assad and essentially have a proxy Sunni-Shia war, what did they do? They poured hundreds of millions of dollars and tens, thousands of tons of weapons into anyone who would fight against Assad. The people who were being supplied were Al-Nusra and Al Qaeda and the extremist elements of jihadis coming from other parts of the world.

Significantly more recently and in January 2016, in an attempt to explain why the United States is urged to enter into negotiations for a nationwide ceasefire and establishing a "path to a political transition" in Syria, John Kerry, U.S. Secretary of State blamed Assad and his supporter for Syria's unfolding humanitarian catastrophe,

"We must not forget what the Syrian people will always remember: Assad and his allies have, from the very beginning, been by far the primary source of killing, torture, and deprivation in this war; and the primary magnet drawing foreign fighters to Syria, giving cause to Daesh."

In similar statements, U.N., and Syrian opposition groups have accused Assad of seeking to divide country along sectarian lines.

### Is the U.S. welcoming the Syrian qaqumire?

With the failure of the new cease-fire in Syria, and the war of words as involved parties blame the other, many argue whether the U.S. is after perpetuating the Syrian war by arming the opposition forces just enough to keep them fighting Assad, but not enough to overthrow the government. While the CIA Director John Brennan said the U.S. should "make sure the moderate opposition continues to stay strong, puts the pressure on the regime" Brennan stated that, "We don't want the Syrian government to collapse [...]. That's the last thing we want to do."

The same stances was expressed by the White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough in 2013, when he had privately informed a number of Congressional officials that the U.S. should favor keeping the status quo in Syria as it could keep Iran pinned down for years.

Last week's attacks on the Syrian forces and the aid convoy seems to reveal the United States' intention to perpetuating the war, as according to Jim Jatras, a former U.S. diplomat, eastern Aleppo is of critical importance to the Obama administration whose priority is to prevent it from being retaken by government forces, "if the jihad terrorists lose eastern Aleppo strategically this war is over."

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## 10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

Here are high rated IT titles in the world that reviewed by savvy tech users:

- 1** Qualcomm unveiled Snapdragon 410E and 600E chips for IoT tools makers.  
410E model is made for smart washing machines, TV dongles, medical imaging, robots, and other types of internet of things.  
600E is bigger than 410E and for similar IoT purposes.
- 2** Yahoo mail added additional fingerprint security layers for android users.  
The new update promises to provide an easier method to edit contact information, so users can quickly add, delete and modify information directly from Yahoo Mail application.
- 3** Latest news shows only 60% of US Owners of Galaxy note 7 exchanged their fablets and only 57% of costumers replaced their phones in Europe.  
Interestingly, 90% Europe costumers have decided to wait for replacement phone, while 3% chose other Samsung smartphone instead.
- 4** Lucky T-Mobile travelers to Europe and South America will get Unlimited high speed internet access.

The deal starting October 1st for customers traveling anywhere in South America or to any of 19 specific countries in Europe -- Armenia, Austria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Ukraine, or the United Kingdom.

- 5** Spotify company buys SoundCloud. Financial Times is reporting that Spotify is in "advanced talks" to purchase SoundCloud in the near future.  
SoundCloud has yet to make any comment on this matter.
- 6** More than 5 Million users downloaded 'Google Allo' app less than a week on Play store.
- 7** IEEE has approved the 802.3bz standard: 2.5Gbps over Cat 5e, 5Gbps over Cat 6.

A new Ethernet standard that allows for up to 2.5Gbps over normal Cat 5e cables has been approved by the IEEE. The standard—formally known as IEEE 802.3bz-2016, 2.5G/5GBASE-T, or just 2.5 and 5 Gigabit Ethernet—also allows for up to 5Gbps over Cat 6 cabling.

- 8** The Volkswagen I.D. It's an electric car with a decent (250-300 mile) range that you'll be able to buy in 2020.

The I.D. features a 125kW motor, batteries good for 250 to 375 miles' range (400 to 600km) according to VW, and it's the first car to use VW Group's Modular Electric Drive (MEB) platform.

- 9** Blackberry gave his QWERTY license to other phone manufactures.  
BlackBerry is known for its outstanding physical keyboard with the fretted QWERTY on the BlackBerry Bold 9000 probably considered the best physical keyboard to ever grace a smartphone.
- 10** New flexible lithium-ion batteries made by Panasonic coming to market by the end of October 2016.

Of course this kind of battery is as high as 60mAh, which means they're not meant to be included in smartphones.

## Melinda Gates turns her focus to promoting women in tech

Melinda Gates is taking time from her philanthropic work to build out a personal team dedicated to helping increase the number of women in technology-related jobs. Gates, who co-chairs the world's largest philanthropic foundation with her husband and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, says the issue is close to her heart. She graduated from Duke University in 1987 with a degree in computer science (as well as an MBA and a bachelor's degree in economics) and joined Microsoft shortly thereafter, where she worked for more than a decade.

"I care about computer science," Gates tells Backchannel in an interview published today. "When I was in school in the 1980s, women got about 37 percent of computer science degrees and law degrees then. Law went up to 47 percent now. In medicine, we were at 28 percent in 1984. That's gone up to 48 percent. Computer science went from 37 percent to 18 percent."

Gates finds this data troubling, and she's dedicated to putting resources toward figuring out how to both increase and maintain female representation in STEM fields. It's unclear what form this initiative will take, and what the interplay between this new project and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will look like. But Gates says right now she is focused on learning more about the problem before making investments. Areas of interest she's pinpointed include problems in the education pipeline that push girls away from STEM subjects, adequate role models for young girls interested in tech, and perception problems with male-dominated fields like the game industry.

"We all know there's this leaky pipeline. It starts in elementary school, then middle school, then high school, and so on. I want to figure out the solutions," Gates says. "We don't know for sure, but it looks like the correlation is that when the gaming industry became very male, all of a sudden you had women in computer science [drop off]."

Beyond education, Gates is looking at broader structural problems making it more difficult for women to pursue careers in technology. Gates calls out corporate blind spots, like Apple having once left out a menstruation feature in their health-tracking app, and the pitfalls with artificial intelligence and the rise of female-voiced assistants. She's also trying to tackle issues with parental leave policies. These are all topics Gates feels would be aided by having female voices in the industry — and not just one or two, but a collective.

"I started to learn about it and say, 'My gosh.' To me, the tech industry is one of the best places to work right now. If I was working again, I would work in biological science or tech or a combination," she says. "Every company needs technology, and yet we're graduating fewer women technologists. That is not good for society. We have to change it."

(source: theverge)

# Where ransomware goes next: Your phone, your TV, your servers

Europol's latest annual Internet Organized Crime Threat Assessment report paints a rather grim portrait of digital criminality loose on the internet.

It warns that the Crime-as-a-Service model continues to provide crooks, from the entry level to top-tier players, with the tools and services needed to conduct crime online.

The report also said that the boundaries between cybercriminals and state-sponsored hackers continue to blur, warning: "While the extent to which extremist groups currently use cyber techniques to conduct attacks appears to be limited, the availability of cybercrime tools and services, and illicit commodities such as firearms on the Darknet, provide ample opportunities for this situation to change."

But Europol said that in terms of day-to-day online criminality, "ransomware continues to be the dominant concern for EU law enforcement", as the number of variants of the malware have multiplied. Most use the same business model: encrypt a user's files, demand a ransom in Bitcoin, and offer a free test file decryption to prove their capability.

But while traditional malware mostly



targets desktop Windows users, Europol said there are many more potential targets for ransomware, from individual users' devices, to networks within industry, healthcare, or even government.

"Cryptoware will also continue to expand its attack surface," it said, adding: "The profile of ransomware as a threat on mobile devices will grow as developers hone their skills in attacking those operating systems and platforms."

And while the same data-stealing malware largely appears year-on-year, ransomware is in greater flux will take several more years before it reaches the same level of equilibrium, said the report.

Europol warned that ransomware will evolve to "routinely spread to other smart devices", and that there were already some indications that ransomware is capable of infecting devices such as smart TVs.

"Following the pattern of data-stealing malware, cryptoware campaigns will likely become less scattergun and more targeted on victims of greater potential worth," the report said, noting that a new strain of server-side ransomware called Samsam was targeting the healthcare industry. Samsam does not require user to click on a link or open an attachment, but exploits the vulnerabilities of web servers and encrypts folders typically associated with website files, images and scripts.

As well as ransomware, the report warned that the overall quality and authenticity of phishing campaigns has increased, with targeted phishing -- also known as spear-phishing -- aimed at high-value targets, including CEOs for the purposes of fraud. It also said that DDoS attacks continue to grow in intensity and complexity, as do the ways in which criminals use the data they steal.

"Data remains a key commodity for cybercriminals, however data is no longer just procured for immediate financial gain. Increasingly it is acquired for the furtherance of more complex fraud, encrypted for ransom, or used directly for extortion," said the report.

(source: zdnet)

## Brazil tablet sales drop 32 percent in Q2

The Brazilian tablet market has hit a new low in the second quarter of 2016, according to analyst firm IDC.

Some 860,000 such devices were sold during Q2, 32 percent less than the same period in 2015. But the number of units sold was 3 percent higher than the first three months of the year.

The average ticket has also gone up: in the second quarter of last year, tablets would cost about R\$428 (\$132) while devices cost an average of R\$443 (\$136) in the same period in 2016. According to IDC the tablet price increase for the year in Brazil is estimated to reach 17 percent.

The analyst firm adds that the decrease in sales is partly due to the rise in phablet sales and also to the fact



that many smaller manufacturers gave up on the Brazilian market as the local economic conditions worsened with dollar exchange rates in relation to the Brazilian real becoming too unstable.

According to IDC, the expectation is that sales will see a further uplift in the third and fourth quarters due to Children's Day and Christmas -- the analyst points out that the focus of tablet manufacturers will be younger users who do not own mobile phones yet.

But overall, the trend is that the market will continue to decline. IDC predicts that some 4 million tablets will be sold in Brazil during 2016, so a 30 percent drop in relation to 2015.

(source: IDC)

## Details of \$1 billion in Flipkart by Walmart

Wal-Mart Stores Inc is in talks to buy a minority stake in India's largest e-commerce firm Flipkart, two people familiar with the matter said, as the world's biggest retailer aims to break into a fast growing but highly competitive online retail market.

One of the sources said the U.S. retailer was looking to invest between \$750 million and \$1 billion in Flipkart, but the final value and size of the stake would depend on the outcome of talks about the Indian company's overall valuation.



A deal would pit Wal-Mart against U.S. rival Amazon.com Inc, which has been expanding rapidly in a market that Bank of America Merrill Lynch has forecast will surge to \$220 billion in value of goods sold by 2025 from about \$11 billion last year.

Wal-Mart operates 21 wholesale stores in the South Asian country, but is discouraged from setting up its own bricks-and-mortar shops by rules that limit foreign ownership for multi-brand retailers to 51 percent and the cost of setting up shops in a country as large as India.

For Flipkart, a cash infusion from Wal-Mart would come in handy at a time when funding from traditional investors into the online space such as venture capital is proving harder to obtain amid worries about valuations in India.

Kashyap Chanchani, managing partner of the Rainmaker Group, a Mumbai-based tech and digital media investment banking firm, said it was natural for Wal-Mart to want to partner with Flipkart.

(source: reuters)

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# Earth CO2 levels: Are we at the point of no return?

Earth may have passed a significant symbolic threshold as the global climate continues to grow warmer.

Usually, September marks a low in the amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere. This concentration sets the bar over which levels of the greenhouse gas will fluctuate throughout the next year. But this September, CO2 levels are staying high, at around 400 parts per million, and many scientists think that we will not see levels of the greenhouse gas drop below that threshold within our lifetimes.

Earth has been steadily building up CO2 in the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution, but the 400 ppm landmark is creating a new normal that hasn't been seen on this planet for millions of years.

The "last time our planet saw 400 ppm carbon dioxide in our atmosphere was about 3.5 million years ago, and global climate was distinctly different than today," David Black, associate professor in the School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences at Stony Brook University in New York, tells The Christian Science Monitor in an email.

"In particular, the Arctic (north of 60°) was substantially warmer than present, and global sea level was anywhere between 15 and 90 feet higher than today," Professor Black says.

## Atmospheric CO2

"It took millions of years for the at-



mosphere to reach 400 ppm CO2 back then, and it took millions of years for the atmospheric CO2 to drop to 280 ppm right before the industrial revolution. One

of the things that really concerns climate scientists is we as humans have taken only a few centuries to do what nature took millions of years, and most of that

**Earth has been steadily building up CO2 in the atmosphere since the Industrial Revolution, but the 400 ppm landmark is creating a new normal that hasn't been seen on this planet for millions of years.**

change was just in the last 50-60 years."

While global concentrations have spiked above the 400 ppm level for several years, the summer growing season has always absorbed enough atmospheric CO2 through photosynthesis to keep concentrations below that mark for the bulk of the year.

As human activities — mainly the burning of fossil fuels — have flooded more CO2 into the atmosphere, however, the annual low point has inched closer and closer to that 400 ppm mark.

"Is it possible that October 2016 will yield a lower monthly value than September and dip below 400 ppm? Almost impossible," wrote Ralph Keeling, director of the program at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, in a blog post last week.

While CO2 levels have dipped below the previous September's benchmark in the past, such an occurrence is rare. Even if the world stopped producing carbon dioxide completely tomorrow, the gas would likely linger above the 400 ppm mark for years, scientists say.

"At best (in that scenario), one might expect a balance in the near term and so CO2 levels probably wouldn't change much — but would start to fall off in a decade or so," Gavin Schmidt, NASA's chief climate scientist, told Climate Central.

(Source: The CSM)

## Curiosity finds evidence of Mars crust contributing to atmosphere

NASA's Curiosity rover has found evidence that chemistry in the surface material on Mars contributed dynamically to the makeup of its atmosphere over time. It's another clue that the history of the Red Planet's atmosphere is more complex and interesting than a simple legacy of loss.

The findings come from the rover's Sample Analysis at Mars, or SAM, instrument suite, which studied the gases xenon and krypton in Mars' atmosphere. The two gases can be used as tracers to help scientists investigate the evolution and erosion of the Martian atmosphere. A lot of information about xenon and krypton in Mars' atmosphere came from analyses of Martian meteorites and measurements made by the Viking mission.

"What we found is that earlier studies of xenon and krypton only told part of the story," said Pamela Conrad, lead author of the report and SAM's deputy principal investigator at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt, Maryland. "SAM is now giving us the first complete in situ benchmark against which to compare meteorite measurements."

Of particular interest to scientists are the ratios of certain isotopes — or chemical variants — of xenon and krypton. The SAM team ran a series of first-of-a-kind experiments to measure all the isotopes of xenon and krypton in the Martian atmosphere. The experiments are described in a paper published in Earth and Planetary Science Letters.

### Detecting gases

The team's method is called static mass spectrometry, and it's good for detecting gases or isotopes that are present only in trace amounts. Although static mass spectrometry isn't a new technique, its use on the surface of another planet is something only SAM has done.

Overall, the analysis agreed with earlier studies, but some isotope ratios were a bit different than expected. When working on an explanation for those subtle but important differences, the researchers realized that neutrons might have gotten transferred from one chemical element to another within the surface material on Mars. The process is called neutron capture, and it would explain why a few selected isotopes were more abundant than previously thought possible.

In particular, it looks as if some of the barium surrendered neutrons that got picked up by xenon to produce higher-than-expected levels of the isotopes xenon-124 and 126. Likewise, bromine might have surrendered some of its neutrons to produce unusual levels of krypton-80 and krypton-82.

These isotopes could have been released into the atmosphere by impacts on the surface and by gas escaping from the regolith, which is the soil and broken rocks of the surface.

### Planet's surface

"SAM's measurements provide evidence of a really in-



teresting process in which the rock and unconsolidated material at the planet's surface have contributed to the xenon and krypton isotopic composition of the atmosphere in a dynamic way," said Conrad.

The atmospheres of Earth and Mars exhibit very different patterns of xenon and krypton isotopes, particularly for xenon-129. Mars has much more of it in the atmosphere than does Earth.

The "unique capability to measure in situ the six and nine different isotopes of krypton and xenon allows scientists to delve into the complex interactions between the Martian atmosphere and crust," said Michael Meyer, lead scientist for the Mars Exploration Program at NASA Headquarters in Washington.

(Source: phys.org)

## Ancient reptile fossils claw for more attention

Newly recovered fossils confirm that Drepanosaurus, a prehistoric cross between a chameleon and an anteater, was a small reptile with a fearsome finger. The second digit of its forelimb sported a massive claw.

Scientists analyzed 212-million-year-old Drepanosaurus arm fossils that were discovered at the Hayden Quarry in Ghost Ranch, New Mexico.

Drepanosaurus is neither a dinosaur nor a lizard. It is a one- to two-foot long reptile from an extinct group of animals called drepanosaurs, and shares a common ancestry with lizards, crocodiles, and dinosaurs.

The only other known Drepanosaurus fossil was a badly crushed skeleton found in northern Italy more than 30 years ago.

### Animal stretches

"This animal stretches the bounds of what we think can evolve in the limbs of four-footed animals," said Adam Pritchard, a postdoctoral researcher at Yale and first author of the study.

"Ecologically, Drepanosaurus seems to be a sort of chameleon-anteater hybrid, which is really bizarre for the time. It possesses a totally unique forelimb."

Four-limbed animals with a backbone are called tetrapods.

In nearly all tetrapods, the forearm is made up of two, elongate and parallel bones — the radius and the ulna. These bones connect to a series of much shorter, wrist bones at the base of the hand.



Drepanosaurus, however, has radius and ulna bones that are not parallel. Instead, the ulna is a flat, crescent-shaped bone. Also, the two wrist bones that meet the end of the ulna are long rather than short. They are longer than the radius, in fact.

### Enlarged claws

The "bone contacts suggest that the

enlarged claw of Drepanosaurus could have been hooked into insect nests," Pritchard said.

The "entire arm could then have been powerfully retracted to tear open the nest. This motion is very similar to the hook-and-pull digging of living anteaters, which also eat insects."

Drepanosaurus also had grasping feet and a claw-like structure at the tip of its tail. The finding suggests that tetrapods developed specialized, modern ecological roles more than 200 million years ago.

Pritchard is a postdoctoral fellow in the lab of Bhart-Anjan Bhullar in the Department of Geology and Geophysics at Yale.

(Source: phys.org)

## Overpopulation in Dhaka 'will see groundwater contaminated with arsenic within next decade'

Deep groundwater near megacities may become contaminated within 10 years, scientists have warned. Using the example of Dhaka, in Bangladesh, they show that over-pumping water in cities affects regional ground resources in the region.

Around 15 million people live in Dhaka, making it one of the most populated cities in the world.

Population density is also one of the highest in the world, with roughly 115,000 people per square mile. Accommodating the needs of such a vast number of inhabitants means there are often enormous strains on the environment.

Water resources are a prime example of this. Like many of the world's megacities, Dhaka is reliant on groundwater from aquifers — permeable rocks which contain water — to provide the precious liquid to its inhabitants.

Indeed, surface waters contain many pollutants such as toxic metals, organics, nitrate or naturally occurring arsenic, so it has been necessary to pump the groundwater in aquifers to reduce people's exposure to these substances.

This has led many of these aquifers to be over-exploited and threatened by contamination from shallow



waters above. In the long-run, the city's ability to make clean and safe water accessible to all may be hampered.

### Simplified aquifer

The problem is that studies that discuss this pessimistic scenario are often backed up by simplified aquifer models to examine how groundwater flows. Scientists know that the rock composition of aquifers can affect how water flows and distributes contaminants, but so far, robust evidence about how this relates to over-pumping of groundwater had been missing.

In the latest study, published in the journal Nature Communications, scientists from the University of Del-

aware have used regional data from Dhaka to assess how differences between aquifers and over-exploitation of groundwater in the city affected regional ground resources.

They have developed a complex aquifer model which is based on geological and statistical simulations of aquifer heterogeneity — taking into account the different types of rock layers constituting aquifers. They show that the over-pumping of water has lowered groundwater levels in the region around Dhaka and this is resulting in a downward flow of contaminated shallow waters into the deeper part of aquifers.

These shallow waters contain arsenic which will likely contaminate deep aquifers, more than 150 meters underground, within the coming decade, according to the model. This would not only have an environmental impact, but health consequences too.

Previously, it was thought the contamination of deep water sources by arsenic and other chemicals would only occur by the end of the century. The study thus emphasizes that there is an urgent need to act and rethink megacities' strategies to provide water to their inhabitants.

(Source: ibtimes.com)

## Bees have feelings too and become happy and optimistic after drinking nectar

Bees become optimistic and happy after drinking nectar, leading scientists to speculate they may have a consciousness.

Biologists at Queen Mary University of London (QMUL) have discovered that after bumblebees drink a small droplet of sweet sugar water, they behave like they are in a positive emotional state.

In a number of experiments, bees were taught to find sugary water in a blue cylinder and not a green cylinder. When they were later presented with an ambiguously-colored cylinder, the bees which had drunk the 'nectar' flew more quickly to the potential food source.

The scientists say it mirrors the way happy people make more optimistic judgments about the outcome of situations. The sugar-water bees were more optimistic that there would be food in the mystery container.

Senior author Professor Lars Chittka said: The "finding that bees exhibit not just surprising levels of intelligence, but also emotion-like states, indicates that we should respect their needs when testing them in experiments, and do more for their conservation."

In a second experiment that tested bees' reactions to a simulated attack by a spider, bees that had consumed the sugar solution before the 'attack' took less time to resume foraging, suggesting they were less troubled.

Luigi Baciadonna, co-author and PhD candidate at QMUL added: "Sweet food can improve negative moods in human adults and reduce crying of new-borns in response to negative events."

Prof Michael Mendl of Bristol University said: "Whether 'emotion-like' states in insects are accompanied by emotional feelings remains unanswered, but the possibility of insect consciousness is now the topic of exciting new theories and vigorous debate."

Further experiments indicate that the same neurochemicals involved in emotional processing in humans may also play a role in the emotion-like behaviors seen in bees.

(Source: The Telegraph)

## Early bloomer: Demonstration shows flower that can shape-shift on demand

Scientists coming up with shape-shifting materials is cool, but you know what's even cooler? Materials that shape-shift on demand.

That's what a team of researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Akron describe in a new paper, published in the journal Nature Communications. The paper details the invention of materials that can be programmed to change shape at a specific time, without the need for an external stimuli like heat or light.

"There are already a lot of materials which will respond to specific conditions, such as ice which converts to water at a certain temperature," Professor Sergei Sheiko, one of the paper's co-authors, told Digital Trends. The "problem is that there are many systems, such as the human body, which remain very stable in terms of temperature, light, and other prompts that could act a stimulus to trigger change."

That's a problem if — as Sheiko and his collaborators are — you're considering possible applications such as drug delivery inside the body. By shifting the trigger to a time-based one, it is therefore possible to create materials that will change shape on their own — controllable down to hours, minutes or even seconds.

The groundbreaking material is made using two different types of chemical bonds — dynamic and permanent — which control both the shape-shifting process and the final state of the material, once the change has taken place.

(Source: Digital Trends)

## Why birds never crash into each other in midair

Birds always seem to avoid one another, even if they're flying on what looks like a collision course.

In a study in PLOS ONE, researchers from the University of Queensland decided to look into how this happens.

Their rationale was that birds must've evolved over millions of years to have these skills, and it's possible that we could learn a thing or two about how to avoid possible aircraft collisions. Humans are much newer to flight, after all.

The researchers looked at 10 birds, specifically parakeets or "buddies." They set the birds up on opposite ends of a tunnel and went through 102 rounds of flights.

They then found out that of the 102 flights, none resulted in crashes.

What's more, the birds tended to avoid any head-on collisions by always turning right, or in some cases changing altitude so that they weren't on the same level.

Here's an example of a collision being avoided: "As air traffic becomes increasingly busy, there is a pressing need for robust automatic systems for manned and unmanned aircraft, so there are real lessons to be learned from nature," study author Mandyam Srinivasan said in a news release.

It's a pretty simple takeaway, but the researchers think the "to the right" rule, along with guidelines related to changing altitude could be useful for unmanned aircrafts and autopilot systems.

(Source: Business Insider)



# Closing the broadband divide to connect people in Asia and the Pacific



## ARTICLE

By Dr. Shamshad Akhtar

Under-Secretary-General of the UN



Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) underscored the need to address this challenge in a recent report entitled the State of ICT in Asia and the Pacific 2016: Uncovering the Widening Broadband Divide. The report highlighted the alarming disparity in broadband connectivity within Asia-Pacific, with high-income countries experiencing a higher growth rate of broadband penetration relative to other countries. Twenty countries in the region have only 2% of fixed broadband subscription per 100 inhabitants, while ICT champions such as the Republic of Korea, enjoy over 40% broadband penetration. Further emphasizing regional disparities, 75 % of fixed broadband subscriptions were registered in North and North-East Asia, mainly in the People's Republic of China, the Republic of Korea and Japan.

Broadband connectivity, especially reliable, affordable and resilient fixed broadband infrastructure, is a critical foundation which supports various applications and initiatives that are essential for the achievement of the SDGs, ranging from traffic and transport management, smart power management, trade facilitation, disaster management and financial inclusion, to name only a few. ICT is not only a growth sector which creates value-added services, products and employment opportunities, but it also acts as a development enabler which can ac-

celerate efforts towards the implementation of the SDGs.

While success stories in e-commerce abound, such as China's Alibaba, less is known about the use of ICT for socioeconomic benefits, such as mobile money in Pakistan and the Philippines where salaries and remittances are sent over mobile phones. Farmers and rural residents increasingly use the Internet, allowing them to gain unparalleled access to information and knowledge and helping to further develop multiple sectors, such as agriculture, education and health. ICT also plays a crucial role in disaster management. When a disaster strikes, it is the telecommunications infrastructure which provides the platform to communicate with those in need of help and collect and analyze data on losses and damage to facilitate disaster response and reconstruction. Moreover, ICT can facilitate social integration of marginalized groups, such as people with disabilities, by providing them with more effective means to communicate and engage in a wider variety of socioeconomic activities. At the same time, however, the region needs a development pathway to the digital economy and future prosperity for inclusive and sustainable development.

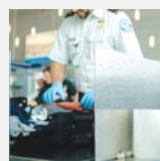
While significant efforts have gone towards expanding broadband connectivity at national and sub-national levels, the Internet is inherently regional as well as global, therefore affordable and reli-

able connectivity to regional and global telecommunications networks are indispensable for narrowing the digital divide through better connectivity. The Asia-Pacific region is particularly impacted by the widening digital divide due to its vulnerability to frequent catastrophic disasters, which cause massive destruction to life and property. Earthquakes, for instance, have disrupted submarine cables and subsequently access to the Internet among densely populated coastal areas and cities. Learning from the lessons and moving forward, the region urgently needs to improve, enhance and expand its broadband connectivity to provide alternative routes and networks to build greater regional resilience to disasters.

In this context, ESCAP supports the Asia-Pacific Information Superhighway (AP-IS), a regional broadband connectivity initiative mandated by member countries that aims to enhance connectivity from Turkey to Kiribati in a holistic manner, with four pillars of enhancing physical connectivity, effective Internet traffic management, e-resilience and inclusive broadband access. Given the regional and global nature of the initiative, ESCAP provides an inter-governmental platform for member countries to discuss the regional cooperation framework and implementation of the AP-IS Master Plan to further deepen regional connectivity and maximize the socio-economic benefits for all.

ESCAP's Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation, scheduled from 5 to 7 October 2016 in Bangkok, is one such regional platform to engage member countries and other stakeholders in discussions contributing to a regional vision of what ICT can and should do for the region's future. It is imperative that we enhance connectivity, since without effective and viable "people connections," the region's full potential will not be realized.

(The author is an Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCAP. She has been the UN's Sherpa for the G20 and previously served as Governor of the Central Bank of Pakistan and Vice President of the MENA Region of the World Bank.)



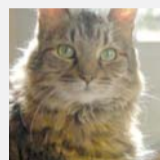
## Austrian customs officials find human intestines in luggage

VIENNA (AP) — Austrian customs officials are used to finding unusual items in travelers' luggage. But human intestines were not on their list — until now.

The Austrian Press Agency reports that the organ parts were found packed tightly in plastic containers and formaldehyde in a Moroccan woman's baggage during a recent check at the airport of the southern city of Graz.

It said Monday that the woman told police that she had brought the intestines of her dead husband to Austria to have them examined because she thought he had been poisoned.

The tissue is being subjected to a pathological analysis. Pathologist Gerald Hoefler told state broadcaster authorities in Morocco where the man died gave the cause of death as intestinal obstruction, a diagnosis he says is plausible.



## Alaska council to vote on cat leash law

Cats will need leashes just like dogs if a proposal before the Kenai council wins approval.

Kenai Mayor Pat Porter and council member Tim Navarre have proposed a cat leash law after complaints from residents about roaming felines.

The Peninsula Clarion reports that current city code does not include cats on its list of animals that need to be restrained.

The proposed ordinance also cites complaints about the impact of a growing cat population on the Kenai Animal Shelter's resources.

Kenai City Manager Rick Koch says shelter resources are sufficient. He said he will research data and see whether other Alaska communities have similar laws.

Some residents are concerned about compliance and whether the law will tax animal control resources. A hearing and vote is set for Oct. 5.

(Source: Yahoo News)

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Participating in Winter Sports

Hanna: It's finally snowing outside! Soon we'll be able to get out the 'sled'.

Ahmed: Sledding is for kids. I'm going 'downhill skiing' as soon as there's enough 'powder'. I can't wait to feel the wind in my hair as I 'careen' down the side of a mountain. Hanna: You're more likely to be on the 'bunny slopes'! You've only been on a 'snowmobile' once and gone 'cross-country skiing' a few times. What makes you think you'll be able to ski the slopes like an expert?

Ahmed: I can 'ice skate' better than you can, so no matter what, I know I'll be better at it than you'll be. When I 'get the hang of' skiing, I'll probably try 'snowboarding'.

Hanna: Now I know you're 'blowing smoke'. You don't 'have the nerve'.

Ahmed: Oh, yeah? I challenge you a game of one-on-one 'ice hockey'.

Hanna: You're twice my size! Make it a 'snowball fight'.

Ahmed: 'You're on'!

(Source: eslpod.com)

#### Words & phrases

**sled:** a small vehicle used for sliding over snow, often used by children or in some sports

**downhill skiing:** skiing down slopes, rather than along level ground

**powder:** dry light snow

**careen:** to move forwards quickly without control, making sudden sideways movements

**bunny slope:** the area of a mountain where people learn to ski; nursery slope

**snowmobile:** a small vehicle with a motor that moves over snow or ice easily

**cross-country skiing:** a form of skiing where skiers rely on their own locomotion to move across snow-covered terrain, rather than using ski lifts or other forms of assistance

**ice skate:** to slide on ice wearing ice skates

**get the hang of something:** to learn how to do something or use something

**snowboard:** a long wide board made of plastic, which people stand on to go down snow-covered hills as a sport

**blow smoke:** to say things that are not true in order to make yourself or something you are involved with seem better than it is

**have the nerve:** to have the courage and confidence in a dangerous, difficult, or frightening situation

**ice hockey:** a sport played on ice, in which players try to hit a hard flat round object into the other team's goal with special sticks

**snowball fight:** a physical game in which balls of snow are thrown with the intention of hitting somebody else

**you're on:** used as a way of expressing agreement to something happening

#### IN FOCUS Tasnim/ Ali Dalkabadi



Farmers are collecting walnut crop in Sabzevar, Khorasan Razavi province.



## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

#### Iran's 1st science theme park opens

The first scientific and recreational park in Iran, dubbed "Professor Bazima", opened in the city of Mashhad on Thursday, IRNA news agency reported.

Stretching over a land area of 2,500 square meters, Professor Bazima Park is Iran's first theme park and the third park in the world with a trip inside the human body, the park's director, Mohammad Lajvardi, said.

The park is home to a collection of 3,000 animal species of Iran's wildlife, Lajvardi said, explaining, visitors start one hour journey with time machine from the big bang to present age passing by the caves, volcano, birds, dinosaurs, and they get on a submarine to get to know the marine life.

#### نخستین پارک علمی ایران در مشهد گشایش یافت

به گزارش خبرگزاری ایرنا نخستین پارک علمی تفریحی ایران با نام پروفیسور بازیمما روز پنجشنبه در مشهد گشایش یافت.

سیدمحمد لاجوردی، رئیس هیات مدیره پارک گفت: این مجموعه کع دو هزار و ۵۰۰ مترمربع مساحت دارد نخستین پارک علمی تفریحی در ایران و سومین پارک سفر به درون بدن انسان در دنیاست

لاچوردی به وجود سه هزار نمونه از حیات وحش ایران در این پارک اشاره و بیان کرد: بازدیدکنندگان سوار بر ماشین زمان شده و به سفری یک ساعته از ابتدای خلقت جهان تا به امروز می رود، از کنار غارها، آتشفشان ها و دایناسورها عبور کرده و به درون زیردریایی اکتشافی می روند تا با دنیای زیر دریا آشنا شوند.

#### ENGLISH PROVERB

### New brooms sweep clean

■ **Explanation:** someone who is new in a particular job will do a very good job at first, to prove how competent he or she is

■ **For example:** The new teacher immediately flunked three of the laziest students. A new broom sweeps clean, one of the students shrugged.

#### PHRASAL VERB

### Beat somebody/ something out

■ **Meaning:** to defeat someone in a competition

■ **For example:** Lockheed beat out a rival company to win the contract.

#### ENGLISH IDIOM

### Cost an arm and a leg

■ **Explanation:** if something costs an arm and a leg, it is very expensive

■ **For example:** The house cost us an arm and a leg, but we have no regrets.



Yemeni forces have killed a Saudi soldier in a cross border attack, which came in retaliation for Riyadh's deadly air raids against its southern neighbor.

Ansarullah (Houthi) movement forces and their allies in Yemen's army fired shells into the al-Tuwal area in the Jizan border region, southwestern Saudi Arabia, said the kingdom's Interior Ministry spokesman Mansour al-Turki on Friday.

The border guard was killed on the way to hospital. Three other people were also wounded.

The retaliatory attacks came after Saudi airstrikes on Thursday pounded Yemeni houses and places of gatherings in Razih and Shida districts of Sa'ada Province, where at least 8 civilians were killed and several others injured.

According to reports, the warplanes also bombed several other areas across the country, but there were no reports available on the potential casualties.

#### UN fails to launch independent probe into rights abuses in Yemen

Meantime, the United Nations Human Rights Council has once again failed to launch an independent investigation into Saudi rights violations in Yemen amid "aggressive" lobbying by the kingdom.

High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad al-Husseini, along with a number of European Union states, had demanded an international inquiry into Saudi rights violations in Yemen.

## Yemeni forces kill Saudi soldier in cross border attack



However, the 47-member UN rights council approved by consensus a watered-down version of the text, drafted by Sudan following days of behind-the-scenes negotiations in Geneva.

The resolution calls on the UN to in-

struct its investigators "to complement the investigatory work of the national commission" while documenting human rights abuses by all sides in Yemen.

Rights activists were disappointed as was the UN rights chief.

Last year, the Saudi regime used its position on the Human Rights Council to hinder the establishment of an independent international investigation.

Save the Children said the resolution will fail "to establish all the facts around reported violations of international human rights and humanitarian law, which are destroying the lives of Yemeni children and their families."

In June, the UN raised controversy by dropping the House of Saud regime from its annual blacklist of child killers, only a week after blacklisting the monarchy for overwhelmingly violating children's rights in Yemen.

The decision came after Saudi Arabia and its allies threatened to cut off funding to UN programs if the body kept the kingdom on the blacklist.

Yemen has been under almost daily airstrikes by the House of Saud regime since March 2015. International sources put the death toll from the aggression at almost 10,000.

The kingdom has launched an air campaign to restore power to former President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi and undermine the Ansarullah movement and its allies.

According to the United Nations, Saudi airstrikes are to blame for 60 percent of civilian deaths in the country.

(Source: Press TV)

## Academic calls UN a highly politicized entity

'Granting of the veto power to a handful of countries is not conducive to the needs of the 21st century'



#### What are the main hurdles which have made the UN rather incapable in resolving bloody disputes?

A: The United Nations is a highly politicized entity and its structure resembles the balance of forces at the end of the Second World War. For example, the Security Council and its granting of the veto power to a handful of countries is not conducive to the needs of the 21st century. The organization depends too much on the largess of a handful of political and financially powerful countries.

One of the things which has prevented the UN from doing its duties effectively is that it is financially dependent on contributions made by countries and this seems to last forever. In regard to this fact can a mechanism be devised that financial dependence do not affect the performance of the UN?

A: Unfortunately, any international organization whose membership is composed of nations-states is dependent on the financial contributions from its member states. The wealthier and more powerful members contribute more financially to the working of the United Nations and its affiliated agencies. As a result, they exert more control over the functions of the United Nations. International organizations cannot have their own central banks and independent source of financing.

**"He [Ban Ki-moon] has deferred too much to the wishes of powerful states, especially those in the West."**

## Bulgaria parliament bans full-face veils in public

Bulgaria's parliament has approved a nationwide law banning the wearing of face-covering veils from most public places.

The legislation, pushed by the nationalist Patriotic Front coalition and passed on Friday, echoes similar moves in a small number of European Union countries such as France, Netherlands and Belgium.

Hostility towards Muslims has grown in Bulgaria, a major gateway for refugees trying to reach Europe from Turkey, with human rights groups criticizing the country for its harsh treatment of refugees.

The ban comes after Pazardzhik, in central Bulgaria, became in April the first town in the country to prohibit the wearing of full-face veils in public, in a move local officials claimed would prevent tension among communities and boost security.

Under the new law, full-face veils will be banned in public institutions, schools, areas of administrative and public services. Homes and places of worship are not included in the prohibition.

People who do not follow the ban face fines of up to 1,500 leva (\$858) as well as suspension of social benefits.

Bulgaria's mostly centuries-old Muslim community, dating back to Ottoman times, makes up around 13 percent of the population, mostly in the Turkish minority.

The legislation was approved despite opposition from the MDL Turkish minority party, which accused the other political forces of "sowing religious intolerance".

The ruling center-right party said the ban has nothing to do with religious outfits but only aimed at boosting national security and allowing better video surveillance.

"The law is not directed against religious communities and is not repressive," Krasimir Velchev, a ruling GERB party MP, said. "We made a very good law for the safety of our children."

France and Belgium have both banned the full-face veil and Switzerland's lower house this week narrowly approved a draft bill on a nationwide ban. In August Germany's interior minister came out in favor of a partial ban.



France was also this summer embroiled in a row over bans on the full-body burkini swimsuit in resorts around the Riviera.

A poll published earlier this month showed Britons to be strongly in favor of a full-face veil ban.

(Source: agencies)

## Aleppo-educated Rumi, Messiah missing to an extremist world



It comes as a sad story that the ideas of the genius Sufi are not being practiced as much as his name is heard.

Many have been bogged down in an identity fallacy.

Literary circles in Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkey, for example, are in polemic over which country Rumi belongs to. Iranians say that the birthplace of Rumi and his work's language testify to his Iranian roots.

Turkey, on the other hand, says it is entitled to have Rumi as a national honor because of being home to Rumi's tomb. Afghanistan has also its own argument.

However, what has brought Rumi all this reputation is exactly his deconstructive thinking, based on which all notions of nationality, blood, race, color, and faith lose meaning to a universal soul.



Ceremony celebrating Rumi: dancers exhibit ecstatic followers of a unified rhythm created by his poems

As someone who has delved deep into Rumi, traditional Iranian music virtuoso Mohammad Reza Shajarian once censored a face value approach to Rumi.

In particular, he attacked sincere but ignorant lovers who idolize Rumi by

prostrating themselves at his tomb much like a religious show of devotion.

Yet, the worshippers, Shajarian lamented, seem to be unmindful of Rumi's message. "We are beyond blasphemy and religion, and superior to peace and

grudge," Shajarian quoted a line from the poet, expressing sadness that Rumi's cause cannot be met by such ignorant rituals.

As a reality check, even Rumi's geographical whereabouts have been bearing the brunt of superficial approaches to what he believed in centuries ago.

The world in general, and Syria and Aleppo in particular, have been seeing the worst makings of extremism and intolerance.

Rumi seems still to be a pioneer nine centuries since he lived and expressed his ideas.

Exhausted by all the havoc that extremism and intolerance have wrought, many today wish for a land "beyond all notions of right and wrong."

Rumi shows to have grasped something that people today need to adopt as a pivot on which to relate to each other.

## Hamas slams Abbas for taking part in Peres funeral

The Palestinian resistance movement of Hamas has censured President of the Palestinian Authority (PA) Mahmoud Abbas for joining the funeral of former Israeli President Shimon Peres.

Abbas led a Palestinian delegation, including the PA's Chief Negotiator Sa'eb Erekat, to the funeral on Friday after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu approved his request to do so.

The ceremony featured a handshake between Netanyahu and Abbas, who also forwarded condolences to Peres' family.

Hamas had earlier called on Abbas not to attend the funeral, saying such a step would encourage other Arab parties to normalize relations with Israel and result in disastrous impacts on the Palestinian endeavor to bring about national unity.

"We condemn Abbas' condolences for Shimon Peres, and consider it disregards the blood of the martyrs and the suffering of the Palestinian people," the movement had also said.

The Palestinian leader has also come under attack for referring to Peres as a "brave" partner for peace by some high-profile figures in Ramallah, who regard the defunct as no more than a "war criminal."

The Sheba Medical Center in Tel Aviv had pronounced the 93-year-old dead on Wednesday.

Over five decades of politicking, Peres held nearly every major office in the regime's ranks.

Under Peres's tenure as president, two full-scale wars were launched against the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip, which killed more than 3,700 Palestinians in total.

He, however, slammed as "outrageous" and "one-sided"

a United Nations inquiry that blamed Israel for six serious attacks on UN buildings during the first Gaza offensive and said Tel Aviv would not apologize for defending its people.

Residents of Gaza took to the streets on Friday for a "Day of Rage" to coincide with the funeral attended by United States President Barack Obama and other leaders of Israel's key supporters.

Separately, Israeli authorities canceled this week's visit of Palestinians from Hamas-ruled Gaza to the al-Aqsa Mosque in the Tel Aviv-occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem), saying it would interfere with Peres' funeral in al-Quds.

Israelis, along with several world leaders, gathered in al-Quds on Friday for the funeral of former President Shimon Peres.

(Source: agencies)

## Duterte cites Hitler, wants to kill millions of addicts

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has appeared to compare himself with Adolf Hitler, saying he would be "happy to slaughter" millions of drug addicts just like Nazi Germany killed three million Jews.

"Hitler massacred three million Jews ... there's three million drug addicts. There are. I'd be happy to slaughter them," Duterte said early on Friday on his arrival in Davao City after a visit to Vietnam.

"If Germany had Hitler, the Philippines would have ..." he said, pausing and pointing to himself, according to AFP news agency.

While Hitler's victims were innocent people, Duterte said his targets were "all criminals" and that getting rid of them would "finish the [drug] problem of my country and save the next generation from perdition".

Historians say that six million Jews were killed by the Nazis under Hitler before and during World War II.

Duterte was elected in a May vote on the back of a promise to wage war on drugs and other crimes in the country of 100 million people.

He took office on June 30 and more than 3,500 people have been killed since

then in police operations and attacks by unidentified assailants.

Duterte's war on drugs has been heavily criticized by the United Nations, the European Union, the United States, the Catholic Church and human rights groups.

But he has hit back, often with abusive language, to the criticism.

When the European Parliament last week called on the Philippine government to put an end to the killings of drug suspects, Duterte replied by unleashing a series of expletives against the bloc.

"I have read the condemnation of the

European Union. I'm telling them, 'F\*\*k you,'" Duterte said in a mix of Filipino and English, before describing the EU as hypocrites trying to "atone" for guilt over its members occupying other countries in the past.

Earlier this month, Duterte also directed profanities at UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and U.S. President Barack Obama, after they made similar comments about the mounting death toll in the Philippines.

Duterte later apologized for calling Obama "a son of a whore".

(Source: agencies)

## Turkish security forces kill six Kurdish PKK militants

At least six Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK/Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê) militants have been killed during fierce clashes with Turkish security forces in the country's northern province of Ordu.

Provincial Governor Irfan Balkanlıoğlu said the terrorists were spotted and shot dead during a Friday counter-terrorism operation in the Mesudiye district of the province, situated approximately 435 kilometers east of the capital Ankara.

Balkanlioglu added that an M16 and five AK-47 assault rifles besides several hand grenades and documents were seized from the slain Kurdish militants.

Also on Friday, a paramilitary policeman was killed and two others sustained injuries when PKK militants detonated by a remote-controlled bomb they had planted earlier on the side of a road linking the southeastern Turkish town of Sirkak to Cizre.

Ambulances rushed to the scene following the explosion, and transferred the wounded soldiers to Sirkak State Hospital.

The developments came a day after three paramilitary policemen were killed and two others injured in a PKK militant attack in the Yuksekova district of the southeastern province of Hakkari.

A shaky ceasefire between the PKK and the Turkish government collapsed in July 2015, and attacks on Turkish security forces have soared ever since.

Over the past few months, Turkish ground and air forces have been carrying out operations against PKK positions in the country's troubled southeastern region border as well as Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan region and northern Syria.

The campaign was launched after more than 30 civilians lost their lives in a July 2015 bomb attack in the southern Turkish town of Suruc. Turkish authorities held the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group accountable for the act of terror.

PKK militants, who accuse the Ankara government of sponsoring ISIL, mounted a series of supposed reprisal attacks against Turkish security forces after the bombing, prompting the Turkish military operations.

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)

## Iran rejects allegations it transfers arms to Yemen



Numerous reports, by the United Nations and other authoritative institutions, have so far documented the crimes committed by the Saudi-led coalition against Yemeni civilians, specially children and women, as well as Coalition's engagement in violating international law and international humanitarian law, including Security Council Resolution 2286.

According to the latest survey conducted by human rights activists and academics, Saudi Arabia has targeted 3,158 non-military sites in Yemen between March 2015 and the end of August 2016. The findings further reveals that there were 942 air raids on residential areas, 114 on markets, 34 on mosques, 147 on schools, 26 on universities and 378 on transport sites during the same period.

The air strikes by the Saudi-led coalition, yesterday, 26 September 2016, on a Yemeni hospital, supported by Doctors without Borders, during which at least 11 people were killed and 19 injured are the latest in a series of ceaseless attacks on civilian targets in Yemen. The bombing of a school in northern Yemen, on 13 August 2016, is another example during which 10 children died and 28 were injured.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always reiterated that there could be no military solution to this war and has urged for an end to hostilities and a peaceful resolution of this conflict through negotiations and the utilization of peaceful mechanisms.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.



## Leipzig's Ralf Rangnick linked to England manager job - but is he the right man?

The FA are keen to speak to Ralf Rangnick about the vacant England manager's job, according to reports.

Following the departure of Sam Allardyce this week after he was caught up in a newspaper sting, the governing body are keen to fill the void having asked Gareth Southgate to step into the role on a temporary basis for the next four games.

According to the Telegraph, Rangnick held talks with the FA about the role after Roy Hodgson stepped down as manager over the summer.



Rangnick is said to have impressed FA Chiefs, with technical director Dan Ashworth in particular supportive of the German, though it was ultimately decided they wanted an Englishman in the role.

With Allardyce no longer in post and a lack of English talent available, Rangnick could be back in the frame – as could Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger.

### Who is he?

Currently the director of sports at Leipzig in the German Bundesliga, the 58-year-old has also held the role of sporting director at Red Bull Salzburg.

Though having spent his entire managerial career in Germany – including leading Schalke to the Champions League semi-finals in 2011 – Rangnick is apparently fluent in English having spent a year studying at the University of Sussex, near Brighton.

He resigned four months after the semi-final defeat to Manchester United, later citing exhaustion.

### He may not be tough enough

Andreas Schulz, from Eurosport Germany, writes:

Rangnick is usually referred to as the "Professor" in Germany for his academic approach. Some don't like this and his very tactical view of the game and the fact that he is working for little loved Red Bull.

But he's got this job for a reason: he's an highly regarded expert, many of his former protégées are successful coaches now.

He's been quite successful as a coach himself, his time with Hoffenheim was very impressive, bringing them from 3rd division right to the top of the Bundesliga standings. Winning the DFB Pokal cup with Schalke in 2011 was another highlight – and having the courage to leave the club, making his burn-out public, impressed many people.

Would he fit? He knows all about football, no doubt, but we'd doubt him being tough enough to take on the media and the pressure which comes with coaching England.

(Source: Eurosport)

## Pep Guardiola: Mauricio Pochettino 'one of the best managers in the world'

**MANCHESTER** — Pep Guardiola has hailed Mauricio Pochettino as one of the best managers in the world ahead of Manchester City's trip to Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday.

The City boss is still unbeaten since he took over in the summer and has won his opening six Premier League to open up a four-point gap over second-placed Spurs at the top of the Premier League.

Tottenham ran champions Leicester City close to the title last season and Guardiola believes Pochettino will have improved his side even further this season and will again be contenders.

"I don't think he's one of the best managers in England, he's one of the best football managers in the world," he told a news conference.

"I enjoy watching Tottenham. Not [just] right now -- since last year. I think what he's doing is an amazing job in London in Tottenham. The way they play I like a lot. He's aggressive without the ball and has a lot of quality with his players.

"Last season they were there until the last two or three games with the chance to be champions. So still this year they are playing in a high, high level.

"They are second. It will be a tough, tough game and I am looking forward to going to White Hart Lane for the first time in my life as well."

City will be without injured trio Kevin De Bruyne, Vincent Kompany and Fabian Delph, while winger Nolito is serving the third game of a three-match ban and Yaya Toure will still not be considered for the first team.

Spurs have their own injury issues with Harry Kane ruled out and concerns over Mousa Dembele, Eric Dier, Danny Rose and Moussa Sissoko. But they've won five of their six games this month while City have struggled defensively -- conceding five goals from their last three games.

However, Guardiola isn't too concerned about trying to keep clean sheets as long as his side are creating chances.

"Of course to have a clean sheet is perfect, for the goalkeeper, for the team, but the most important thing is how many chances they create," he added. "That is, I think, the basis.

"When they arrive three times, four times, that's good. Sometimes they arrive three times, four times and they don't score goals; sometimes they arrive four times, like the last game against Celtic -- the second half they didn't have any chances, except the first goal in the first minute of the second half -- and they score three goals.

"The problem is when they create more chances. For example, in the second half at Old Trafford, they created more chances than Celtic. They didn't score one goal and Celtic scored three goals. I try to see how many chances they create, how many chances we produce. That is the balance. But of course, we prefer not conceding goals. We're working on that." (Source: ESPN)

# Arsene Wenger's 20 years at Arsenal: An imperfect love story

On Saturday, it is 20 years since Arsene Wenger officially took charge at Arsenal. Tom Adams looks back over the two decades of his reign.

Even at a time when he was not yet a regular punchline, Arsene Wenger still had the capacity to make his audience laugh. "It wouldn't surprise me if we went unbeaten for the whole season," Wenger said in August 2002, to a largely derisive response.

The prediction held only until October 19 and a defeat away at Everton, the first of four losses in a row across all competitions. "It will go down under the heading of 'things you wish you had never said' - alongside Alan Hansen's 'you don't win anything with kids' comment on Match of the Day eight years ago," the BBC reported at the end of the season as Manchester United lifted the league title. The chuckling could be heard all the way from Carrington to London.

But the remarkably bold prophecy was fulfilled just a year later. And as Arsenal consecrated the greatest league campaign in the history of English football with a 2-1 win against Leicester on May 15, 2004, Wenger savoured the moment. With celebrations unfolding all around him, he clutched a t-shirt bearing his own face and reading: "Comical Wenger; I think we can do the whole season unbeaten."

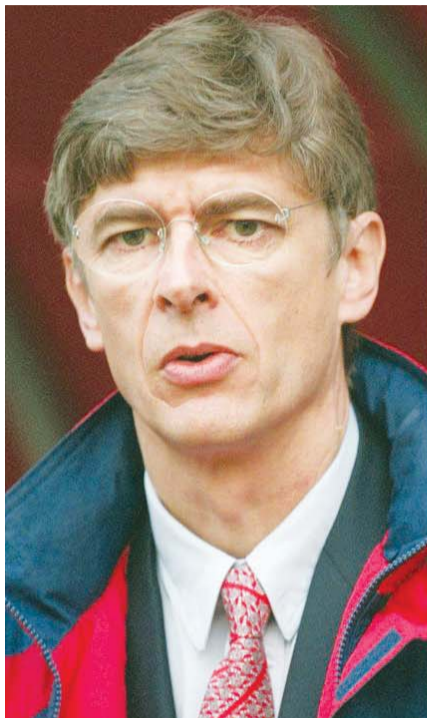
This was the height of his imperial period. It was Wenger as visionary: the man who could imagine an impossible feat and then achieve it. A totemic figure who could make his critics wilt.

The Invincible season was the culmination of the grand revolution he forged within Arsenal's marble halls and beyond, the peak of a cycle of change which transformed the club. A revolution in fitness, player recruitment, preparatory methods, diet, style and, most importantly, achievement: the story of Wenger's impact on English football has been told and told again, and never diminishes with the telling.

Change was sweeping through English football and society in the summer and autumn of 1996. The fervour of Euro 96 supercharged football in England and then David Beckham beat Neil Sullivan from the half-way line on the first day of the new season. With the Spice Girls, including his future wife, at No. 1 in the charts with Wannabe, this can be pinpointed as the precise moment when the age of celebrity was launched, consuming popular culture.

Wenger was never a convert: it was antithetical to every idea he had about sport. But he had no problem in manufacturing superstars from his Hertfordshire enclave and he always stayed relevant even as the culture transformed around him.

Patrick Vieira, Thierry Henry, Robert Pires and so many others were forged by Wenger. He tweaked positions, instructed new roles and the results of his overarching work were manifold: some of the best football English football has seen and three league titles and four FA Cups in the 10 years before Arsenal moved from



Highbury. It was the move that would change everything.

Wenger's vision for Arsenal also included new infrastructure. A new training ground was constructed after Nicolas Anelka was sold to Real Madrid for £23m in the summer of 2000 but the real game-changer was the construction of the new stadium, orchestrated by director Danny Fiszman but designed with the help of Wenger's instructions, down to the shape of the dressing room.

With season-ticket waiting lists stretching out to a decade for supporters desperate to see Wenger's cavalier team in action – honestly, go back and watch a DVD of the unbeaten season and just sit in wonderment at the levels of interplay, imagination and technique on show – the need for a move was obvious, but so too were the limitations it would impose on the club's ambition in the short term.

Denied the huge financial resources that Roman Abramovich endowed on Chelsea in 2004, and forced to sell star players every year to balance the books, Wenger embarked on a project to identify, promote and entrust his hopes in the best young talents on the planet. Cesc Fabregas and Robin van Persie were the success stories; Philippe Senderos, Denilson and a cast of others the reminder that the transition from potential to product is not an exact one.

Until this moment the main thrust of the Wenger story is unchallenged, but here it diverts into two narratives.

Wenger's supporters make the case that he kept Arsenal competitive and in the Champions League every season, protecting the club's elite status even as they sought to secure it in perpetuity with the competitive advantages a 60,000-seater stadium would endow on them. It was a feat of persistent achievement, of fourth-placed trophies.

In the eyes of his detractors, though, Arsenal's austerity years saw Wenger formulate a response to the "financial dop-



ing" of Chelsea and then Manchester City which was too ideologically pure. He would only try and win the 'right' way using the 'right' methods: which as it turned out involved playing Manuel Almunia in goal and Marouane Chamakh up front.

The revolutionary had become the reactionary, encasing himself in a fortress of his own moral superiority while refusing to accept that outside, the world was moving on without him. It was a retreat into dogma.

If one example can be pulled out of this regressive period, it would be the summer of 2008 when Arsenal saw Gilberto Silva, Mathieu Flamini and Lassana Diarra depart. Rather than signing a new defensive midfielder, Wenger chose to overpromote Denilson to a position of responsibility he was never suited to.

It was the era of 'playing with the handbrake on', of refusing to sign new stars for fear of 'killing' the youngsters who had been elevated too quickly into first-team positions and lacked the character and substance of some of their predecessors. It was Wenger sticking to his guns through almost a decade of waste.

There were near misses: the title challenge in 2008 being the most painful of all as their hopes evaporated following Eduardo's horrendous injury against Birmingham. But 10 years since the move to the Emirates, the half-way point of Wenger's reign, Arsenal have adorned the trophy room in their new stadium with just two FA Cups, won in 2014 and 2015. The first, a 3-2 win from 2-0 down against Hull, was likely responsible for keeping Wenger in place, staving off poisonous discontent which was multiplying amongst supporters.

Twin Wembley triumphs have not been enough to rescue his reputation entirely in the late period of his reign – especially when Leicester City lifted the Premier League title last season. Residual discontent has proved hard to dislodge, though



spending £100m this summer was a belatedly sensible way to head off anger from fans who pay the most expensive tickets in English football, as well as giving Wenger his best squad in some time as he enters his third decade in charge.

This 20th anniversary invites us to appraise his reign, which can be neatly cleaved into two; Wenger will hope to recapture the glories of those first 10 years as a failure to do so may make his position untenable with many supporters.

But in a reign of two halves, there is one common thread, one unifying factor. Arsenal is the club of Wenger's life and throughout his 20 years in charge he has always devoted himself to its stewardship. Wenger has shouldered imaginable abuse in the name of Arsenal, some of which has come from the club's own supporters; he has never lost his optimism and idealism, or his good humour; he has turned down England, France, Real Madrid and Paris Saint-Germain; everything he has done is in service of the club.

Single-minded to the extent of being blinkered? Perhaps, but even in the lean years Wenger's motivation was never self-serving. While the board required sales every summer at the same time as publicly telling supporters that money was there to spend, it was Wenger who uncomplainingly became the lightning rod for fan anger. He could have alleviated the pressure on his own shoulders by demanding big-name signings and playing to the gallery, but it would have sacrificed the club's best interests on the altar of self-preservation. It was not an option; never for Wenger.

"It's a love story, and with a love story you never want it to end," Wenger said in his press conference on Friday. The second part of that sentence will be disputed by those seeking regime change at Arsenal, but the first cannot be. It has been a love story: imperfect and complicated and difficult, but nevertheless complete.

(Source: Eurosport)

## Ibrahimovic turned down €100m from China - Raiola

Zlatan Ibrahimovic turned down a staggering offer worth €100 million from an unnamed Chinese club in the summer, according to his agent Mino Raiola.

The Swedish striker moved to Manchester United on a free transfer in the summer after his contract at Paris Saint-Germain expired.

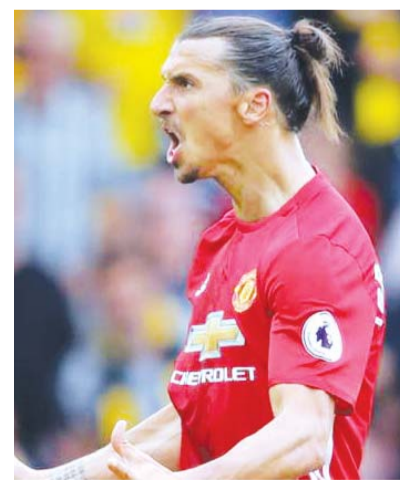
Ibrahimovic is reported to earn in excess of £200,000-per-week at Old Trafford, but Raiola claims he could have lined his pockets even further had he decided to move to the Far East.

Speaking to Il Giornale, he said: "Ibrahimovic is the best. He turned down €100m net from the Chinese! He doesn't want more money, he wants to win.

"I've been lucky, I've always had champions. Zlatan, [Pavel] Nedved, Maxwell and now [Blaise] Matuidi and [Gigio] Donnarumma.

"He [Donnarumma] will become even better than [Gigio] Buffon, because whoever comes in the future is always better than the past."

Raiola also claims that another of his clients, Mario Balotelli, must follow the example set by Ibrahimovic if he is ever to reach his full potential.



"Mario is a phenomenon, but he's Balotelli," Raiola joked.

"He was lucky enough to be adopted by two great people, but in a tough town [Bagnolo Mella], let's face it: a racist one.

"He suffered a lot when he was a child, and he's always been that way in the head. If he had the mentality of Zlatan, with his talent he'd have won five Ballon d'Ors."

(Source: Goal)

## Germany recall Guendogan after injury woes

Midfielder Ilkay Guendogan was named in the Germany squad on Friday for next month's World Cup qualifiers after almost a year out of the side due to injury problems.

The 25-year-old Manchester City player, who also missed the 2014 World Cup through injury, last played for Germany in a friendly in Paris in November.

Forward Mario Gomez and central defender Jerome Boateng were also recalled to the squad having recovered from injuries picked up at Euro 2016.

Midfielder Sebastian Rudy was also included after the 26-year-old narrowly missed the cut for the Euro 2016 squad.

Germany, who won their qualifying Group C opener against Norway 3-0 this month, take on the Czech Republic in Hamburg on Oct. 8 before hosting Northern Ireland in Hanover three days later.

"Both these home games are extremely important for us," said coach Joachim Loew. "After having started well against Norway we want to also win these two games in order to take control of the group.



"The players, belonging to our core, have rediscovered their playing rhythm in recent weeks both on club level and internationally and we will count on those players. They know what is expected at this stage."

Azerbaijan are second in the group, also on three points. The Czechs are on one along with Northern Ireland. San Marino and Norway have yet to earn a point.

(Source: Reuters)



# Iran advances to AFC U-16 Championship final

Goalkeeper Ali Gholam Zadeh was the hero as Islamic Republic of Iran booked a date with Iraq in Sunday's AFC U-16 Championship India 2016 final after claiming a 6-5 penalty shootout win over defending champions DPR Korea following a 1-1 draw in Thursday's semi-final.

Iran dominated the first half at Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium and took a one-goal lead into the break thanks to captain Mohammad Sharifi before Kye Tam levelled the scores from the spot to take the semi-final to penalties.

With the shootout at 5-5 Gholam Zadeh scored his spot kick before returning to his line to save from Kim Kyong-sok as the 2008 champions advanced to the final for only the second time.

After starting the stronger, Abbas Chamanian's team came close on 16 minutes as Allahyar Sayyad's cross-goal shot evaded an outstretched Sin Tae-song in the Korean goal only to come back off the right post.

As one-way traffic ensued Iran took a deserved lead on three minutes later after Sin was penalised for picking up a back pass on the edge of the six-yard box.

Mohammad Ghaderi rolled the ensuing free-kick to Sharifi and the skipper fired in low and hard at the near post.

Iran showed no sign of letting up as Sayyad headed Amirhossein Esmailzadeh's corner from the right just wide mid-way through the half before the frontman was again off target with a header.

The holders remained a threat, though, and substitute Kim Hwi-hwang forced Gholam Zadeh to tip round the right post after the ball broke kindly for him in the box two minutes before the interval.

DPR Korea came out with renewed purpose after the restart and captain Kim Pom-hyok drilled in a free-kick from fully 35 yards that was well dealt with by the Iran custodian before Cha Kwang was narrowly off target from the right side of



the Iranian penalty area.

With the tie firmly in the balance Iran sought to give themselves breathing space and substitute Alireza Asadabadi saw his powerfully struck effort from distance on 55 minutes tipped over the crossbar.

As the half wore on, though, Yun Jong-su's team took firm control of proceedings. Kim Hwi-hwang should have done better than head into Gholam Zadeh's arms from seven yards after being teed up by Paek Kwang-min.

The Koreans' superiority paid off with 11 minutes remaining when Yun Min's

free-kick was handled by Amir Khodamoradi in the Iranian wall and, after the referee pointed to the spot, Kye made no mistake in dispatching beyond the reach of Gholam Zadeh.

But substitute Younes Delfi should have won for Iran with three minutes remaining only to side-foot inches wide when one-on-one with Sin and Asadabadi did likewise in stoppage time.

With no extra time at the AFC U-16 competition the game went to penalties and Sharifi opened the scoring before Kye evened things up. Esmailzadeh netted but Yun Min again levelled, be-

fore both Saeid Ahani and Kim Chung-jin scored.

Sin then saved from Khodamoradi only for Gholam Zadeh to tip Cha's effort onto the upright. Asadabadi coolly slotted home and, after the Iranian 'keeper was adjudged to have come off his line to save from Kim Pom-hyok, the Korean captain scored the retake.

Taha Shariati and Paek scored before Gholam Zadeh side-footed home and returned to his line to save from Kim Kyong-sok and send his side through to Sunday's finale.

(Source: the-afc)

## Javid caught between pride and frustration

The Iran players traipsed towards the dressing room with their jaws clenched and their heads bowed, but not tongue-tied. Their disappointment was palpable following their 4-3 defeat by Russia in the semi-finals of the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016, but they were also proud of their efforts.

A glimpse of these conflicting sentiments was provided by Mahdi Javid, one of the stars of Team Melli's Colombian campaign. While ruing what might have been – "This is by far the biggest frustration of my career" – he was nevertheless able to take some comfort from the fact that he and his team-mates had fulfilled the pledge they had made to one another beforehand.

"We resolved before the match that we were going to give everything, it's as simple as that. It was a conscious choice. And that's exactly what we did, but it was decided by details and they didn't go our way," said Javid wistfully. One such example was the triple chance that agonisingly went begging at the beginning of the second half, before Russia had scored their second goal. "Everyone saw that we were on Russia's level," he added with a hint of defiance.

Iran may have been outplayed in terms of possession and chances in the first period, but the Asian champions blunted the Russian firepower better than anyone before them, proving particularly effective at



foiling Eder Lima. It all added up to a fascinating spectacle and a great advertisement for futsal in Medellin, with stunning strikes supplying the first two goals, tension aplenty and the sight of two well-oiled machines in full flow. The second of these ingredients has been something of an Iranian speciality in Colombia, where Javid and his team-mates have been involved in several rollercoaster encounters. "That's one of the hallmarks of futsal and it's partly why I love this sport," said the attacker adamantly, in spite of the unhappy ending to their most recent thriller.

Commendable spirit

"I'll sleep well because I gave my all. Only regrets can make you lose sleep and we don't have any," went on Javid, who also caught the eye when coach Seyed Nazemalsharieh planted a kiss on his forehead before the fateful final six minutes.

"It's a common gesture in our culture, but it takes on special significance on the pitch. It was his way of showing his faith in me and wishing me luck," explained the star. And who else should go on to notch Iran's last goal, with 11 seconds left on the clock? "Sadly it was too little, too late," he added, before sportingly making a point of praising Russia's qualities and then talking up his own side's togetherness and battling spirit.

Team Melli's gutsy display made a big impression among the crowd, who responded with applause to their various demonstrations of courage and unity, including when they gathered in a circle a few minutes after the final whistle. "We're a family, even in defeat. It's in adversity that you have to pull together. That's when it means the most, even though we haven't been able to achieve our ultimate dream," concluded Javid, putting on a brave face ahead of the play-off for third place, a game that Iran so dearly wanted to avoid but in which they will now look to go out on a high.

(Source: FIFA)

## Mata: I've never had problems with Mourinho



Manchester United midfielder Juan Mata is adamant that he has never had any problems with Jose Mourinho.

Mata fell out of favour at Chelsea while Mourinho was in charge before moving to Old Trafford in 2014, although the Portuguese recently claimed he had no desire to sell the playmaker.

"My relationship with Mourinho has never been bad," Mata said.

"Many lies were told about me and Mourinho when he arrived at the club this summer. It bothered me that every day I had to read and listen to rumours that were not true. With him I am fine.

"You read a lot of comments on Facebook and Twitter but they just make you laugh."

Mata has netted two goals in eight appearances in all competitions so far this term.

(Source: Goal)

## Second-tier Qashqai knocks Persepolis out of Iran's Hazfi Cup



**IT SPORTS** Second-tier Qashqai Shiraz knocked Persepolis out of Iran's Hazfi Cup in Round of 64 on Friday.

In the match held in Shiraz's Hafezieh Stadium, two teams finished in a 1-1 tie in regular time.

Qashqai and Persepolis went to penalty shootout after extra time.

The second-tier defeated the

Iranian giant 7-6 and advanced to Round of 32.

Esteghlal will also face Malavan Novin on Saturday in Round of 64.

The 2016-17 Hazfi Cup is the 30th season of the Iranian football knockout competition. Zob Ahan Isfahan is the defending champion. The final will be played on 23 May 2017.

## One final push for pride and glory

However the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016 concludes, the tournament will go down as a watershed. For the first time, the trophy will not be lifted by Brazil or Spain, with either Russia or Argentina – both of whom will be making their maiden appearance in the final – set to claim the crown in Cali this Saturday, 1 October. Iran also have the opportunity to break new ground by securing third place up against Portugal, who are looking to repeat their feat of 2000 by rounding off the podium.

### Final

**Russia-Argentina, Coliseo el Pueblo, Cali, 1 October 2016, 14:30 (local time)**

The Russians have resembled a juggernaut en route to the final. They started off by sweeping all before them in Group B, in which only Thailand managed to briefly hold their own against them before succumbing 6-4, while Egypt and Cuba were summarily dismissed 6-1 and 7-1 respectively. The eastern Europeans were even more rampant against Vietnam in the Round of 16, prevailing 7-0, before producing another powerful display in their 6-2 victory over Spain in the quarter-finals. Lastly, Iran,



who had upset Brazil, were beaten 4-3 in the semis. The secret to Russia's success? A perfect blend of gifted individuals with a wide range of attributes, united by their spirit, confidence and winning mentality.

The Argentinians, for their part, have gone from strength to strength after surviving some struggles in the early stages. They opened their Group E campaign by labouring to a 1-0 win over Kazakhstan, before defeating Solomon Islands 7-3 in a game in which they had more trouble than expected. Argentina then rounded off the group stage by being held to a 2-2 draw by Costa Rica. The South Americans put their fans through the wringer again in the last 16, being taken to extra time by Ukraine before running out 1-0 winners. However, it has been plain sailing since then, with a 5-0 thrashing of Egypt in the quarters followed by an equally impressive 5-2 triumph over Portugal in the last four. La Albiceleste boast the best defensive record in the competition and look to be peaking at the right time.

### Match for third place

**Iran-Portugal, Coliseo el Pueblo, Cali, 1 October 2016, 12:00 (local time)**

As 11-time Asian champions, Iran's credentials are beyond question and they have a habit of ending matches with smiles on their faces. That said, their long relationship with the Futsal World Cup has been somewhat tumultuous and they will be without captain Mohammad Keshavarz and Ghodrath Bahadori as they target their first-ever podium finish.

Ricardinho had an off night against Argentina in the semi-finals and Portugal paid the price. The Seleção das Quinas will now be intent on rediscovering the attacking prowess and defensive solidity they had shown in their previous five encounters, in which they shone, in order to head home on a high.

### Player to watch Robinho (RUS)

The diminutive star is the sole Russian player who is yet to score so far, although it has not been for a want of trying. The winger, who at 5'6 (1.67m) is the smallest player in the Russia squad, has been making things happen for his team from the outset of the competition, but has consistently come up short in front of goal. Has he saved the best for last?

### The stat

6 – The number of current members of the Argentina and Russia set-ups who were in the thick of the action the last time the countries met, in a 2-2 draw in the second round at Brazil 2008. Of the players still going strong, Vladislav Shayakhmetov was on the pitch for the Russians, while Cristian Borruto, Fernando Wilhelm and Maximiliano Rescia were all involved for the Argentinians. On top of that, Diego Giustozzi, now the Albiceleste coach, and his assistant Matias Lucuix were both in the starting line-up.

### The words

"Russia have had an excellent World Cup. Our priority will be to stay faithful to our style of play. I will try to give my players the tools to make sure that they are ready for the final," **Argentina coach Diego Giustozzi.**

### Match schedule

Iran-Portugal (Coliseo el Pueblo, Cali, 12:00)  
Russia-Argentina (Coliseo el Pueblo, Cali, 14:30)

(Source: FIFA)

## Iran B crowned AVC Cup champion for third time

Iran national B volleyball team claimed the title of the 2016 AVC (Asian Volleyball Confederation) Cup for men on Wednesday.

Naser Shahnaz's men earned a 3-1 (23-25, 25-23, 25-21, 25-21) hard-fought win over China at the Nakhon Pathom, Thailand.

Iran's Alireza Behboudi was named the competition's Most Valuable Player.

In the third-place playoff, Japan pulled off a dramatic 3-1 (25-18 17-25 28-26 25-12) victory over Chinese Taipei.

Iran had already landed the prestigious AVC Cup in 2008 and 2010 before losing its crown to China in 2012 in Vietnam.

At the previous edition two years ago, Iranian players had a disappointing outing to return from Almaty, Kazakhstan with their heads low in great despair after finishing a below-par fourth place.





### Poem of the day

Ours is not a caravan of despair.  
Come, even if you have broken your vow  
a thousand times  
Come, yet again, come, come.

Rumi

### Prayer Times

Noon: 11:54 Evening: 6:06 Dawn: 4:37 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:00 (tomorrow)

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## NEWS IN BRIEF



**Tehran gallery opens with photo exhibit by Jean Baudrillard**

**A R T TEHRAN** — A gallery named *d e s k* Transition opened in Tehran on Friday with a display of a collection of 38 photos by French photographer Jean Baudrillard, who is also an acclaimed philosopher.

Prominent Iranian philosopher Dariush Shayegan delivered a speech about Baudrillard and his works at the ceremony.

Baudrillard (1929-2007) was also a sociologist whose works are frequently associated with postmodernism and post-structuralism.



**"The Pillowman" to go on stage at Russian festival**

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian directors *d e s k* Mohammad Yaqubi and Aida Keikhai will stage Irish playwright Martin McDonagh's play "The Pillowman" at the 2nd International Festival of Martin McDonagh, which will open in Perm, Russia, today.

"The Pillowman" tells the story of a writer who is interrogated about her short stories and their similarities to a number of child murders occurring in his town.

In addition, Iranian scholar and playwright Ardeshtir Salehpour is on the jury panel of the festival, which will run until October 7.

## WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

### Painting

An exhibition of paintings by Mohammadreza Atashzad is underway at Atashzad Gallery.



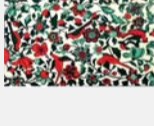
The exhibit named "Dreamy Realities" will run until October 9 at the gallery that can be found at 23 North Abbaspur (Tavanir) St., near Vanak Sq.

Vista Gallery is currently displaying paintings by Munes Mahmudi in an exhibition entitled "Staying Ok".



The exhibit runs until October 7 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

Shirin Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Hossein Edalatkhah.



The exhibit named "Beyond the Walls" will run until October 19 at the gallery located at No. 5, 13th St., Karim Khan Ave.

### Photo

A collection of photos by Puyan Shadpur is on show in an exhibition at No. 6 Gallery.



The exhibit titled "Nowhere" runs until October 7 at the gallery located at No. 2, 20th Alley, off Mirzaye Shirazi St.

### Multimedia

Paintings and sculptures by Milad Zeinali are on display in an exhibition at Seyhun Gallery.



The exhibit named "Improvisation" runs until October 19 at the gallery located at 24 Sinai Alley, off Keyhan St., Moqaddas Ardebili Ave.

### Calligraphic painting

A collection of calligraphic paintings by Mehdi Movahhedi is currently underway at Sohrab Gallery 2.



The exhibition will continue until October 9 at the gallery, which can be found at 11 Kachui St., off Evin St.

## McGregor says wife behind "American Pastoral" directorial debut

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — Scottish actor Ewan McGregor, in his directorial debut, brought an adaptation of Philip Roth's novel "American Pastoral" to the Zurich Film Festival this week and said his wife helped him get behind the camera.

McGregor also stars in the movie, set in late 1960s America, alongside Jennifer Connelly and Dakota Fanning, playing a man whose family starts to fall apart when his daughter becomes politically radicalized.

"I've always wanted to direct for a long time and I always wanted to wait to have a story that I felt I was burning to tell," McGregor told Reuters in an interview.

# Abbas Kiarostami Awards established to honor world promising filmmakers

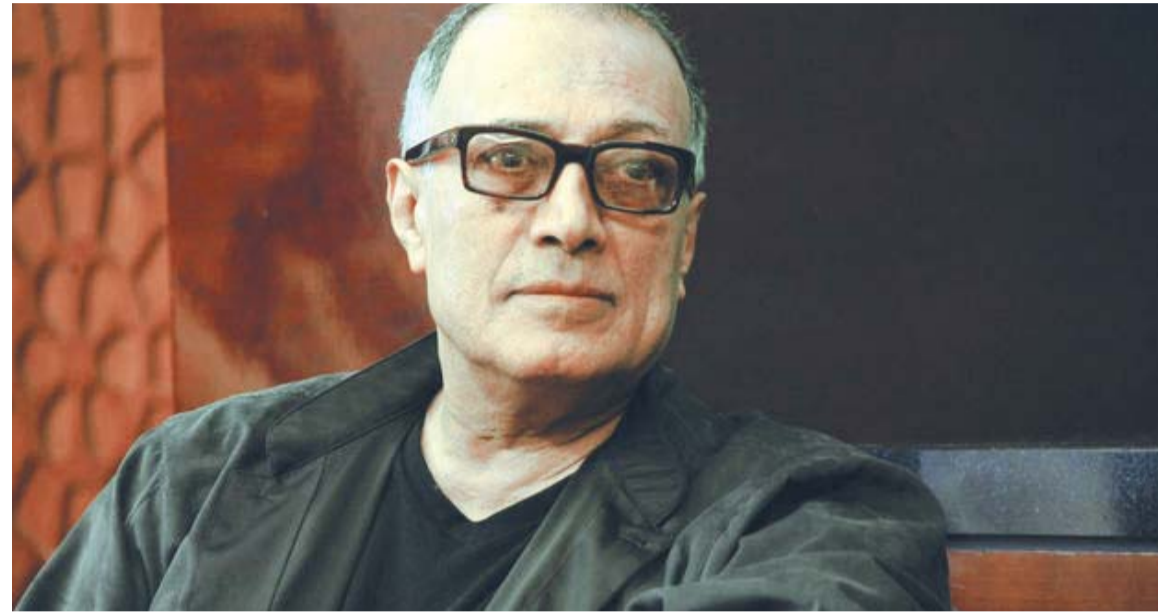
**A R T TEHRAN** — The Karnameh Art *d e s k* and Cultural Institute in Tehran in collaboration with two institutes in France and England has established the Abbas Kiarostami Awards to honor the world's promising filmmakers.

Karnameh Director Negar Eskandarfar announced the news on Wednesday during a meeting at Thirty Images – Kiarostami, an exhibition displaying works by 30 photographers and painters on the world renowned Iranian filmmaker Kiarostami at Tehran's Mellat Cineplex.

Ecole Supérieure d'AudioVisuel (Higher School of Audio Visual) in Toulouse, France, and the London Film School in England will also collaborate in the Abbas Kiarostami Awards, which will be presented to three young filmmakers at Karnameh during a three-day program from June 10 to 12, 2017.

Eskandarfar said that over 500 young filmmakers attended workshops that Kiarostami held at Karnameh over the past eleven years. The winners will be selected from among the students who attended the workshops.

Eskandarfar also said that her institute is ready to transfer the responsibility for organizing the awards to the Kiarostami foundation, which is scheduled to be established by his family.



Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami in an undated photo

## Rumi National Day observed in Tehran, Shiraz

**A R T TEHRAN** — A number of Iranian and foreign scholars and experts on Rumi gathered in Tehran and Shiraz on Thursday to mark the Rumi National Day.

Literati from the Persian-speaking nations and some other countries attended the Fourth International Conference on Rumi in Tehran to commemorate the Persian mystic and poet Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi (1207-1273).

The ceremony, which took place at the Shahid Beheshti University International Conference Center, began with short

speeches delivered by secretary of the event Hossein Baher and Rumi expert Feizollah Tohidi, followed by honoring the Iranian literati and artists who have created works on Rumi.

Scholar Heshmatollah Riyazi was honored in the section of studies on Rumi, while Feizollah Tohidi was honored in the research section.

The other honorees include Mostafa Badkubi (literature and poetry), Mohammadreza Shajarian (art of music) and Reza Badrossama (calligraphy and painting).

Composer Loris Tjeknavorian, author

Akram Jahangir and Serat Publications were among other honorees.

Turkish Rumi experts Adnan Karaismailoglu and Erdogan Erol were also among the invited guests at the conference.

In addition, the Mausoleum of Hafez in Shiraz hosted devotees of Rumi who gathered to observe Rumi National Day. They also commemorated Hafez National Day on the sidelines.

Hafez National Day will be October 11 but the celebration was hastened due to the fact that this year, the day falls during the Muharram mourning season.

Moreover, the International Congress of Shams-i Tabrizi ran from September 25 to 28 in the city of Khoy where lies the tomb of Shams, the wandering sage who later became the mentor of Rumi.

Rumi's 22nd niece Esin Çelebi who is also the deputy director of Turkey's International Mevlana Foundation, attended the congress.

Veteran director Pari Saberi, who was also among the guests, remarked that she would like to restage in Khoy "The Flying Shams", her vibrant story of Rumi's first encounter with his mentor Shams, if support by officials can be obtained.

### PICTURE OF THE DAY Honaronline/Gatha Ziatabari



A group of visually impaired thespians performs "The Season for Sour Orange Blossoms", a love story by Iranian playwright Mahmud Nazeri, at the City Theater Complex on September 29, 2016. Gholamreza Arabi is the director of the play.

## Prospect of cultural cooperation between Korea, Iran highly bright

→ With someone whom we know only superficially, we end up with superficial relations accordingly. And building trust is almost impossible in such relationship. This axiom is applied to the national relations too. In order to build mutually complementary and sustainable relations with other countries, first of all, we have to be familiar with them, be friends with them. The first step to do so is to know who they are, what they like. Namely, it is a mutual understanding and respect to the other's culture. The relation we want with Iran is an interlinked, stable and comprehensive one. I am sure that our countries will be even closer in every aspect and enjoy higher level of cooperation through cultural activities.

However, such cultural activities shall be mutual and reciprocal. Unilateral promotion of one country is neither sustainable nor effective. Occasional visits of cultural delegation should be advanced into the upper level of sustainable and mutual cultural

exchange. It is very encouraging that the two governments already started to consult in this regard. During the historic visit of Korean president to Iran last May, year 2017 was designated as the Year of Korea-Iran Cultural Exchange. In order to boost cultural activities, Iran and Korea also expressed their readiness to negotiate establishing cultural centers in their respective capitals in the near future. Preparatory works are already in process. Two countries officials are expected to meet within this year in order to prepare cultural exchange program in 2017. Discussion for Korean cultural center in Tehran is started. Recently it was agreed to open a section for Iranian books in the National Library of Korea. I hope that such mutual activities will be stepped up during my stay in Tehran.

The cultural activities need not to be confined to art and traditional things. It is a comprehensive concept incorporating education, people to people exchange, tourism, sports and other aspects of humanity. While staying in Tehran, I expect

to meet relevant Iranian officials to discuss on how to enlarge cooperative activities in these fields too. I am particularly interested in the Iranian touristic potentials which are regrettably not yet fully introduced to Koreans. Likewise abundant cultural heritage and beautiful sceneries of Korea wait for Iranian friends. Education is another effective tool to promote mutual understanding of the two countries. I thank the Tehran University for their decision to establish Korean language department in 2017. In October, Korean embassy in Iran will organize an expo of Korean universities for the Iranian students who are interested in studying in Korea. Some of winners of Iranian college math contest will be invited to Korea in November. The news that the first Olympic medal won by Iranian women player was in no other than Taekwondo signifies that there are a lot of work we can collaborate in sports too.

By the means of various exchanges which are already in the pipeline and to be executed hand-in-hand with Iran, I

am confident that the prospect of cultural cooperation between Korea and Iran is highly bright and soon bear fruits which our people commonly benefit from. I genuinely hope we go beyond our interests, yet build a solid partnership with the virtue of trust. I would like to reiterate that culture shall be the foundation of this relations. When we pursue commercial benefits, we have to face each other to haggle over the price. Partners put their shoulders each other to travel together. Korea and Iran are partners not merely in oil and gas, TVs and phones. As declared when Korean President visited Iran, Korea and Iran are partners in all areas, namely comprehensive partners. In order to make the foundation of this partnership more solid, Korean government will not spare efforts to reach out Iranian people and support Iranians to be friends with Koreans. I hope my humble visit with cultural delegation to be accepted as a sign of Korean government's determination in this regards.

## Rakhshan Bani-Etemad awarded at Turkish festival

**A R T TEHRAN** — The 6th *d e s k* International Crime and Punishment Film Festival in Istanbul, Turkey presented its Cinema Honorary Award to prominent Iranian filmmaker Rakhshan Bani-Etemad during the opening ceremony of the event on Thursday.

Bani-Etemad's 2000 drama "Under the Skin of the City" will also go on screen at the festival, which will run until October 6.

In addition, Iranian director Bahman Ghamari's "The Half" will be screened in the non-competitive section of the festival.

The festival, which generally focuses on films about justice, has put its spotlight on poverty this year.