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Rouhani: Iran is kinder than what has been said

POLITICS TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has said Iran wants peaceful coexistence with the countries in the region and the larger world, noting Iran is “kinder” than what has been said.

Addressing a ceremony on the National Exports Day on Thursday, Rouhani said Iran's relations with the world should be based on constructive interactions.

He noted that expanding relations with the world would not be successful through disputes.

“Iran is shouting with a loud voice that it is kinder than has been introduced to the world,” Rouhani said.

He also said that the country should be more hospitable to tourists, so that businesspeople and entrepreneurs could travel to and from Iran without difficulty.

Rouhani added that the government has been attempting to remove obstacles on the way of exporters, entrepreneurs, and businessperson on their banking relations.

He further said that his government puts great emphasis on combating Iranophobia.

The president further underlined the country's openness to foreign investors and businessmen.

“We should prepare the conditions for economic, scientific, and technological relations with the world,” Rouhani said. →2

Three Iranian technicians martyred in Kirkuk

POLITICS TEHRAN — Three Iranian technicians working at a power station in Kirkuk were martyred in an assault by ISIS on Friday morning.

Five more Iranian technicians were also wounded in the terrorist attack.

Some officials and news agencies put the number of Iranians martyred at four.

The attack on the oil-producing area comes as Iraqi forces are fighting hard to re-capture ISIS's last stronghold in Mosul. →2



Iran to stand by Iraqi nation in anti-terror battle: Velayati

A senior Iranian official has reiterated the Islamic Republic's support for neighboring Iraq in its anti-terror battle as the Arab country starts a large-scale operation to drive Daesh terrorists out of the northern city of Mosul.



Ali Akbar Velayati, a senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, made the comments in a Thursday joint presser with Chairman of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq Ammar Hakim in Baghdad.

Velayati is in Iraq to attend the 9th session of the Supreme Council of the World Assembly of Islamic Awakening, which is slated to be held in Baghdad on Saturday and Sunday.

The Iranian official, who is also the secretary general of the World Assembly of Islamic Awakening, further hailed the establishment of full democracy in Iraq following its liberation from the US occupation, referring to the 2003 US-led invasion of the Arab country.

Iraq has managed to deal with its domestic problems on its own, said Velayati, adding that Iran stands by the violence-stricken nation in its counter-terrorism efforts.

Touching on the upcoming forum in Baghdad, Velayati said the event, which focuses on efforts to uproot the Takfiri ideology, is a show of unity between Shia and Sunni Muslims.

Hakim, for his part, described Daesh as a threat not only to Iraq, but to the entire world.

The Iraqi official said the Baghdad gathering comes at a critical juncture when Iraq is seeking to cleanse Mosul of Daesh terrorists. (Source: Press TV)

Zarif 'wanted Egypt at Syria talks' as Middle Eastern alliances shift

The Iranian foreign minister personally requested that Egypt attend last weekend's key Syria talks – a move that has sparked concerns that Cairo is being wooed away from its traditional pro-western stance in the region.

Talks convened by the U.S. secretary of state, John Kerry, in the Swiss city of Lausanne last Saturday evening failed to agree on a common strategy with Russia to end the conflict in Syria, now in its sixth year.

The Guardian has seen emails indicating that the Iranian foreign minister, Mohammad Javad Zarif, asked Kerry for Cairo's team to attend the Lausanne talks. When the U.S. secretary of state proposed six-nation talks to “see if a new reasonableness can manifest itself” in Syria, Zarif replied: “Why not Egypt too?”

Iran agreed to attend the talks only once it had secured places for the foreign ministers of Egypt and Iraq at the discussions. Both coun-

tries back the pro-Assad stance of Iran but Egypt is seen as significant because it is the most populous Sunni Arab nation in the Middle East.

Iran was also keen not to be outnumbered by an anti-Assad coalition – comprising Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United States – at the Lausanne talks.

The lobbying for Egyptian officials to attend the talks began a few days before Egypt shocked its financial backer Saudi Arabia by voting with the Russians to block a draft French UN security council resolution on Syria, which had demanded an end to airstrikes on Aleppo and military overflights.

At the UN, the Saudi envoy described Egypt's decision as “painful”, adding that “stances by Senegal and Malaysia were much closer to the agreed Arab decision” than that adopted by the Arab League member Egypt. The next day Riyadh suspended its oil aid to Egypt – estimated at 700,000 tonnes of



petroleum products every month.

It was the first public dispute between Egypt and Saudi Arabia since Egypt's president, Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, ousted the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi in 2013. Since then, Saudi Arabia has sent billions of dollars to Egypt, which have helped keep its faltering economy afloat.

The rivalry between Saudi Arabia

and Iran, in which both compete for the hearts and minds of the Arab street, sees them regularly seek to curb each other's influence and standing in the Middle East.

In Egypt, one of the cultural hubs of the Arab world and home to more than a quarter of its people, Tehran sees a counterweight to Saudi hostility in the high-stakes diplomacy over the future shape of Syria. →2

Director of Frankfurt Book Fair, Iranian official visit

ART TEHRAN — Frankfurt Book Fair Director Juergen Boos and Iran Cultural Fairs Institute Director Amir-Masud Shahramnia met on Thursday.

The meeting was held as part of Iran's plans for the world's largest trade fair, which is currently underway in the German city.

Ways to expand the cooperation between Iranian and German publications and

holding professional workshops on publishing by German experts in Iran were discussed during the visit, Shahramnia told the Persian service of MNA on Friday.

Boos also accepted Iran's invitation to attend the Tehran International Book Fair in 2017 and said that he will support Iran's plan to join the Universal Copyright Convention, Shahramnia added.

The Frankfurt Book Fair opened Wednesday and comes to an end Sunday.



This photo shows Iranian delegation (L) and Frankfurt Book Fair Director Juergen Boos and his colleagues during a meeting in Frankfurt on October 20, 2016.

UN-Habitat ready for closer cooperation with Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — UN-Habitat, the United Nations program working towards a better urban future, is ready to offer Iran closer cooperation via its office in Tehran.

The executive director of UN-Habitat Joan Clos said cooperation on creating opportunities and educational issues between UN-Habitat and Iran can be improved via UN-Habitat office in Tehran.

Clos made the remarks in a meeting with Iranian transport minister Abbas Akhoundi on the sidelines of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, Habitat III, which took place in Quito, Ecuador,



October 17 to 20.

Akhoundi, for his part, pointed that Habitat III and adopting new resolutions for ur-

ban management are of key importance and taking them into consideration in policy making and urban planning are pretty vital both at national and local level, IRIB reported on Wednesday.

“Habitat III” is shorthand for a major global summit, formally known as the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development.

The United Nations has called the conference, the third in a series that began in 1976, to “reinvigorate” the global political commitment to the sustainable development of towns, cities and other human settlements, both rural and urban.

Maersk Line resumes service to Iran

Maersk Line has resumed calls to Iran after a five-year hiatus and hopes that access to a new, rapidly growing market will help it through the current downturn.

The resumption of service to Iran comes nearly a year after Maersk's 2M Alliance partner Mediterranean Shipping Co. once again began sailing to the second-largest country in the Middle East.

“Global container trade has matured over the past years and is growing at a slower pace. Iran has the potential to be the market which stands out with faster growth,” said Christian Juul-Nyholm, managing director, United Arab Emirates cluster, Maersk Line.

The Iranian market represents around 700,000 forty-foot-equivalent units, said Marcus Connolly, head of sales, UAE Cluster.

Iran's largest trading partners are China, the UAE, Iraq, Turkey, and South Korea, according to Global Trade Atlas, a sister product of JOC.com within IHS. Ties between Iran and South Korea have warmed up after the sanctions were lifted, and Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Lines over the summer launched a new service between the two countries.

China and the UAE in 2015 were by far the largest trading partners with Iran, amounting to 24.7 percent and 17.2 percent, respectively, of Iran's international trade volumes, according to GTA. Iraq represented 7.6 percent, Turkey, 6.4 percent, and South Korea, 5.8 percent. →4

\$570m earmarked for facilitating exports

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The National Development Fund (NDF) of Iran has allocated 20 trillion rials (about \$570 million) to provide facilities for the country's exporters, IRIB reported on Thursday quoting Mojtaba Khosrotaj, the country's deputy industry, mining, and trade minister.

Khosrotaj who is also the head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) made the remarks on the sidelines of Iran's National Day of Export (October 20).

The official noted that the ministry is monitoring the payments being made through several banks.

The National Day of Export ceremony attended by President Hassan Rouhani was held in Tehran.

In the event the country's top three exporters received badges of honor from the president and five leading exporters were also praised by the president.

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

Iran into 2016 Kabaddi World Cup final

SPORTS Iran produced some great defending to enter the final of the 2016 Kabaddi World Cup.

The Iranian team defeated South Korea 28-22 in the first semi-final in Ahmedabad, India on Friday.

Iran will play the winner of India vs Thailand on October 22.

Meraj Sheykh was the top scorer for Iran as he finished with seven points followed by Abozar Mighani adding four crucial points for his side.

Last four minutes of game saw Iran not getting any point through raids but it was there defence, which made sure that they do not let the game slip from their hands.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Teachers Fund chairman arrested on \$2.5 billion embezzlement charges

POLITICS TEHRAN — Shahabeddin Ghandali, the CEO of the Teachers Reserve Fund of Iran, was arrested on Wednesday on charge of \$2.5 billion embezzlement.

The case included Ghandali's four assistants all of whom have also been arrested, Judiciary spokesman Qolamhossein Mohseni Ejei said on Thursday, IRIB reported.

The fund has over 800 thousand members and is run by the Ministry of Education. It is funded by the employees of the ministry and pays annual interests to members.



One can do without America: cleric

POLITICS TEHRAN — An interim Tehran Friday preacher has said life without the U.S. is possible, stating, "Those who think one cannot live without America lack revolutionary life."

"Imam Hussein (AS) considered martyrdom on the path to God equal to dignity, and rejected compromise with paganism and dishonesty as abject," Ayatollah Kazem Seddiqi said, the YJC reported.

"Today America as the mischievous oppressor and Saudi Arabia and the child-murdering Israel are the embodiments of global arrogance," the ayatollah stated.



Science minister refutes resignation reports

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's minister of science has refuted reports about his resignation, the Iranian Students News Agency reported on Thursday.

Speaking in Tehran to a conference of distinguished Iranian university professors who teach in universities across Russia, Mohammad Farhadi said he would rather attend the Majlis (parliament) and explain his policies than resign.

The Iranian minister of science in another part of his speech dismissed as untrue allegations that he had changed university deans under pressure from members of parliament.



Cabinet reshuffle in line with government-Majlis co-op: MP

POLITICS TEHRAN — A Tehran representative to the Majlis has said the cabinet reshuffle is in line with the cooperation between the government and the legislative body.

Mehdi Sheikh, speaking to IRNA on Friday, said the reshuffle "was one of the demands of the Majlis".

Praising changes in the cabinet as "positive", he said, "The Majlis not only expresses support for the move, it is ready to help as well."



Countries interested in working with Iran: ambassador

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to Malaysia has said various countries are interested in establishing relations with Iran in the post-sanctions era, ILNA reported.

Speaking in a meeting in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday, Marzieh Afkham hailed the removal of sanctions on Iran as "Iran's prideful exit from sanctions".

"The world sees Iran as a country which has lived through the sanctions relying on its internal forces. This has created much respect for Iranians with foreigners," the female diplomat remarked.



Venezuela president to visit Iran for oil talks

POLITICS TEHRAN — Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro plans to pay a visit to Iran as part of his tour of various oil-producing countries to help stabilize the international oil market.

Maduro will arrive in Tehran on Saturday and hold talks with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Press TV reported.

The Venezuelan president began his four-day visit to Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar and Azerbaijan on Thursday as a drop in global oil prices has negatively affected his country's economy.

'Takfiris in Iraq, Syria are on slope of defeat'

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's Supreme National Security Council secretary said on Friday that Takfiri terrorists in Iraq and Syria are on the "slope of defeat" even though their supporters are seeking to procrastinate the process of their defeat.

The remarks by Ali Shamkhani come as the Iraqi army and its allied Kurdish forces launched a massive assault against Daesh on Monday.

Shamkhani also said the supporters of the terrorists have failed to undermine the capabilities of the resistance front.

He said that it is essential for the regional countries to raise public awareness



about the "new strategies" being drawn up by certain countries to hamper the fight against terrorists.

Shamkhani also said there are divisions inside Daesh and also between Daesh and other Takfiri groups.

Elsewhere, the top security official said Iran will definitely continue supporting the "oppressed regional people and has no fear of publicizing any direct support for the oppressed governments and people."

Shamkhani also said that Iran will continue empowering Palestinians in their struggle against the Zionist regime of Israel.

Pourdastan: Enemies establishing positions in Afghanistan

POLITICS TEHRAN — The commander of ground forces of the Iranian Army has said that the enemies of the Islamic revolution have been establishing their positions in Afghanistan, Mehr news agency reported on Friday.

"As the enemies are establishing their positions in Afghanistan, our forces have ramped up the security of Iranian borders with its eastern neighbor," Brigadier General Ahmadreza Pourdastan told a ceremony held to mark the first anniversary of Amin Karimi's death, an Iranian soldier who was martyred in Syria.

Pourdastan also pointed to the Day of Ashura, an occasion on which the third Imam of the Shias, Imam Hussein (AS), and his family were martyred.

One of the biggest lessons that can be learned from



Ashura and Imam Hussein (AS) is to "not comply with the enemy," Pourdastan said.

"Even though the companions of Imam Hussein were only a few and were offered worldly promises, they did not abandon him. That's why they made history, and today, years after that uprising, his name and legacy is still alive," he added.

The top commander also hailed the soldiers fighting the terrorist groups in Syria, and described them as "the defenders of the holy shrines".

He went on to say, "If it weren't for the sacrifice offered by the defenders of the holy shrines, today we were forced to combat the enemies at our borders."

"We will not comply with the enemy, as Imam Hussein (AS) never did," he stressed.

Rouhani: Iran is kinder than what has been said

I→ He went on to say that the atmosphere created after the nuclear deal is a good opportunity for the country to collaborate with foreign companies and investors.

Rouhani has been trying to attract foreign investors into the country as

last year's nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), went into effect in January 2016.

"We should prepare the conditions for economic, scientific, and technological relations with the world," Rouhani said.

Commander says Iran facing 'a range of threats'

POLITICS TEHRAN — The head of Iran's Passive Defense Organization has said his country is facing a variety of threats which need to be addressed.

"We are facing a range of threats... it is necessary to protect all cyber, biological, chemical, and remote sensing areas," ISNA quoted Brigadier General Gholamreza Jalali as saying in a meeting on Friday with Grand Ayatollah Fazl Lankarani.

"Threats have grown diverse and variable, and today are most felt in the technology sector," Jalali explained.

Among these threats, the commander cited genetically modified products,

saying measures have been taken in this regard.

Over the past years, Iran has been increasingly afflicted with the threat of cyber-attacks by foreign countries.

Learning from the cyber-attack by the U.S. and Israel on its nuclear facilities

in 2009, what came to be known as Stuxnet virus, the country has been upgrading its cyber security capabilities in recent years, developing homegrown firewalls for its sensitive facilities, including nuclear, military, and economy sites.

In June, Iran's Passive Defense Organization announced plans for developing a nationwide sys-

"We are facing a range of threats... it is necessary to protect all cyber, biological, chemical, and remote sensing areas."

Zarif 'wanted Egypt at Syria talks' as Middle Eastern alliances shift

Emails show Iran's foreign minister lobbied for Egypt – region's most populous Sunni Arab country – to attend talks in Lausanne

I→ It is clear that in the short term both sides are engaging in no-holds-barred diplomacy over the Syrian imbroglio.

In an effort to bring the big players in the region together, Kerry emailed Zarif on 4 October, after the last nationwide ceasefire between the U.S. and Russia had broken down, resulting in the bombardment of the Syrian city of Aleppo.

Kerry said he had discussed with the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, having "a very small meeting of key stakeholders on Syria. He is very much for it. So am I. This is not a negotiation but a consultation.

"The purpose is to explore the political solution and to see if a new reasonableness can manifest itself and to discuss how we can change this dynamic – if possible."

The U.S. secretary of state added that "the participants would be Russia, Iran, Turkey, Qatar, KSA [Saudi Arabia] and the U.S. Could you be in Lausanne on Saturday 15th afternoon to take part?"

In response Zarif said he would try to attend, noting

that he had to be back in Tehran the following day to receive African foreign ministers. He added: "Why not Egypt too?"

After days of wrangling, Iran's deputy foreign minister for Middle Eastern affairs told journalists that "big news will be released soon". Hours later it was announced that what was billed as a small Syria contact group meeting in Lausanne would now include Egypt and Iraq to bolster Iran.

Sadegh Ghorbani, a journalist at Fars – the "semi-official" news agency of the government of Iran, tweeted that it was "interesting how Sisi's Egypt [is] gradually shifting from US-Saudi axis towards Russia-Iran. Tehran-Cairo relations revival maybe [question] of when not if"

The two countries have had not had full diplomatic relations since 1980, when Egypt offered Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi refuge following the revolution in Iran. However, Egypt and Iran have drawn closer over support for the Assad regime in Syria and in welcoming Russian military cooperation.

Some argue that Egypt's moves are purely tactical.

HA Hellyer, a fellow at the Atlantic Council and London's Royal United Services Institute, said: "Egypt has its own perspective on Syria which happens to converge with the Iranian one. Cairo wants a viable Syrian state and is worried about Islamist groups. With regard to extremists, that is a valid concern. On the other hand, Egypt has often flirted with the Russians, seemingly to show the west that Egypt has options.

"The Saudis made a strategic decision long ago. Egypt is too big to fail. Riyadh does not want chaos unfolding in the region and will do whatever it takes to keep Egypt's economy afloat. Egypt has 90 million people [and relations] are not to be toyed with."

When contacted a U.S. State Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said there would be no comment "on private diplomatic communications", adding that "the U.S. relationship with Egypt is based on a number of priorities, including our common interest in defeating terrorism and resolving the conflict in Syria".

(Source: Guardian)

Three Iranian technicians martyred in Kirkuk

I→ The news was confirmed by Iran's consul in Iraq Sa'dollah Mas'oudian.

"Sadly, three Iranian technicians were martyred and five more wounded," he said.

Allegedly, the Iranian technicians had been shot dead directly before a suicide blast went on at the site.

"The three Iranians have been shot dead directly as the terrorists opened fire at them followed by a suicide blast," the

consul explained.

At least 16 others were killed and a number of buildings demolished, Iraqi sources said.

The assault has drawn strong condemnation from Tehran.

"Terrorists in Iraq are drawing last breath and are taking revenge for their catastrophic defeats through carrying out blind terrorist operation and killing innocent civilians," Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram

The three Iranians have been shot dead directly as the terrorists opened fire at them followed by a suicide blast.

Qassemi said in a statement carried on the official website of the ministry.

Also, Qassemi expressed regret over the "brutal action," offering condolences to the families of the victims.

The Iraqi army and its allied Kurdish forces launched a massive assault against Daesh on Monday to liberate Mosul.

Iraq to continue anti-ISIL fight until final victory: Abadi

Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi says Iraq is poised to press ahead with its anti-terror war until its liberation from the ISIL (Daesh) terror group.

Abadi made the remarks during a meeting with visiting Ali Akbar Velayati, senior advisor to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, in Baghdad.

The premier said Iraqi forces would continue their anti-Daesh offensive until the liberation of entire Iraq from the terror outfit.

He expressed hope that the military operations would end soon, urging regional states to offer intelligence and security assistance to Baghdad in its ultimate push to drive the group out of the country.

Velayati, for his part, communicated Tehran's support for Iraq's unity and sovereignty.

During the talks, the two discussed anti-terror fight, bilateral relations and important of regional issues.

In an interview with Press TV on Thursday, Velayati said condemned at-



tempts by foreign countries to intervene in Iraq's internal affairs.

The Iranian official also reaffirmed Iran's commitment to helping Iraq in its battle to liberate Mosul from Daesh terrorists.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is against any kind of foreign intervention in the internal affairs of Iraq. We have been informed that the government of Iraq has strongly warned Turkey and other countries in the region that they should not intervene in the internal affairs of Iraq," said Velayati.

Iran supports "this very important desire of the government and people of Iraq," the official stressed.

Velayati is in Iraq to attend the 9th session of the Supreme Council of the World Assembly of Islamic Awakening, which is slated to be held in Baghdad on Saturday and Sunday.

On Thursday, the Iranian official held separate meetings with Chairman of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq Ammar Hakim and President Fuad Masum.

(Source: Press TV)

Syria warns it will 'bring down' Turkish jets

'Terrorists blocking civilians' exit from Aleppo'

The Syrian military has warned to intercept and bring down any Turkish fighter jets entering the country's airspace, nearly a day after Turkish warplanes bombed 18 positions of the People's Protection Units (YPG) in northern Syria, and killed up to 200 Kurdish fighters.

"Any attempt to once again breach Syrian airspace by Turkish war planes will be dealt with and they will be brought down by all means available," the Syrian army general command said in a statement.

Earlier in the day, the Turkish army said its jets had conducted 26 airstrikes against YPG targets in Maarrat Umm Hawsh region north of the embattled northwestern Syrian city of Aleppo.

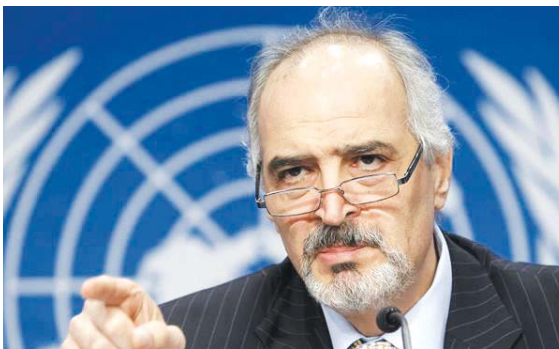
Turkey's state-run Anadolu news agency reported that between 160 and 200 YPG fighters were killed in the raids on Wednesday night.

It added that Turkish military aircraft destroyed nine buildings used as YPG headquarters, meeting points, shelters and weapons depots.

-----Terrorists preventing Aleppo evacuation

Meanwhile, Syria's UN Ambassador Bashar al-Ja'fari said foreign-sponsored Takfiri terrorist groups in Aleppo are using civilians in the militant-held eastern flank of the city as human shields.

Ja'fari told a UN General Assembly session on Thursday that the extremists are resorting to snipers and mor-



tar shells in a bid to prevent civilians and gunmen from leaving the area despite a humanitarian truce.

The Syrian diplomat further noted that the Damascus government welcomes any meeting aimed at helping the Syrian nation in a fair manner.

The Syrian UN ambassador's remarks were later echoed by Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who said the Takfiris are preventing civilians from leaving the embattled areas of eastern Aleppo.

Lavrov told his U.S. counterpart John Kerry in a phone conversation on Thursday that the militants "are violating the ceasefire and preventing the evacuation of the population."

The top Russian diplomat pointed out that the truce should give both civilians and armed men the opportunity to leave.

The humanitarian pause took effect on Thursday and will last three days as announced by the Syrian army.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu later said in a statement that the truce had been extended by a further day, and that Syrian authorities had agreed to the measure.

Earlier, Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Lieutenant General Sergei Rudskoi stated that there are six corridors in Aleppo for civilians and humanitarian aid deliveries, while two others are meant to be used by the militants in the city.

One of those corridors is in the direction of the Turkey-Syria border, while the other leads to the northwestern Syrian city of Idlib, located 59 kilometers southwest of Aleppo.

Both Russian and Syrian Air Force fighter jets stopped their bombing of militant-held neighborhoods in eastern Aleppo on Tuesday – two days ahead of the truce.

Rudskoi said Russian and Syrian military aircraft were deployed to an area at least 10 kilometers away from Aleppo during the truce, adding that the jets had not struck targets inside Aleppo since October 18.

(Source: SANA)

Trump says he will accept election result - if he wins

52 percent of Americans thought Clinton won the last debate: CNN/ORC poll

U.S. Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump said he would accept the result of the Nov. 8 election - "if I win" - fuelling Republican concerns his stance would make it harder for his party to maintain control of Congress.

His refusal to commit to accepting the election outcome was the standout remark of the third and final 2016 presidential debate between Trump and Democratic rival Hillary Clinton on Wednesday night. It ratcheted up Trump's allegations the election was being rigged against him, and became the latest flashpoint in an unusually acrimonious race three weeks before voters go to the polls.

Clinton called the comment "horrifying."

President Barack Obama blasted Trump on Thursday at a rally in Miami Gardens, Florida, for Clinton and U.S. Representative Patrick Murphy, who is trying to unseat Republican Senator Marco Rubio, a Trump supporter.

"That is dangerous. Because when you try to sow the seeds of doubt in people's minds about the legitimacy of the elections, that undermines our democracy. Then you're doing the work of our adversaries for them," Obama said.

Trump modified his comment at a rally in Ohio on Thursday, but did not back off.

"I would like to promise and pledge to all of my voters and supporters and to all of the people of the United States, that I will totally accept the results of this great and historic presidential election - if I win," he said.

He added he would accept "a clear election result," but reserved the right to contest or file a legal challenge in the case of a questionable result.

With Trump trailing in opinion polls, the focus ahead of the Nov. 8 vote is shifting to whether Republicans can keep their narrow majority in the Senate or even their larger advantage in the House



of Representatives.

Senator John McCain of Arizona, who lost the 2008 presidential election to Obama, said accepting the election result was "the American way."

"I didn't like the outcome of the 2008 election. But I had a duty to concede, and I did so without reluctance," McCain, who has opened a poll lead in his Senate re-election race, said in a statement.

"A concession isn't just an exercise in graciousness. It is an act of respect for the will of the American people, a respect that is every American leader's first responsibility."

McCain has withdrawn his support for Trump.

Asked on Wednesday night if he would commit to a peaceful transition of power, Trump, a businessman-turned-politician, replied: "What I'm saying is that I will tell you at the time. I'll keep you in suspense. OK?"

■ Transition of power

Trump's statement, the most provocative in a debate that repeatedly descended into rancor, made headlines across the country and raised questions about his commitment to a peaceful transition of power, a cornerstone of American democracy.

Clinton accused Trump of being Russian President Vladimir Putin's puppet. Trump called Clinton a "nasty woman" and a criminal who should be barred from running.

They did not exchange the customary handshake when the debate ended.

On Thursday night the two candidates appeared together at a formal charity dinner in New York and shook hands there after giving speeches intended to roast each other.

"Just before taking the dais, Hillary accidentally bumped into me, and she very civilly said, 'pardon me,'" Trump joked. "And I very politely replied, let me talk to you about that after I get into office." Trump has said Clinton should be imprisoned for her email practices as secretary of state.

Clinton spoke after Trump at the dinner, which she joked was remarkable in itself. "I didn't think he'd be ok with a peaceful transition of power," she said.

That show of humor was not the norm, however.

Democrats jumped to ask Republican candidates whether they agreed with Trump, who is making his first run for public office against Clinton, a former senator and first lady.

"Do you agree with Donald Trump to question the results of the election?" the Nevada Democratic Party asked in a release targeting Republican Joe Heck. Heck is in a tight race with Democrat Catherine Cortez Masto for retiring Democratic leader Harry Reid's Senate seat.

Trump's comments did not worry his supporters.

A CNN/ORC snap poll said 52 percent of Americans thought Clinton won the debate, to 39 percent for Trump.

Trump donor and energy investor Dan Eberhart said Trump won. He disagreed with his rhetoric, but still backs the candidate.

"I think Hillary's policies and track record are not what the country needs leading us forward for the next four years. And that backs me into supporting Trump," Eberhart said.

Trump campaign manager Kellyanne Conway sought on Thursday to defend Trump, saying in television interviews he was "putting people on notice" about voting irregularities.

Trump has not offered specific evidence to back up his vote-rigging claims, and numerous studies have shown that the U.S. election system, which is run by the states, is sound.

Trump has stepped up allegations that the election is being rigged against a backdrop of accusations that he had made improper sexual advances to women since a video emerged two weeks ago in which Trump boasted of such behavior.

A 10th woman came forward on Thursday at a news conference in Manhattan with attorney Gloria Allred, a Clinton supporter who specializes in representing women in cases of alleged assault.

Trump campaign spokeswoman Jessica Ditto called the news conference a "coordinated, publicity-seeking attack" by Allred.

First lady Michelle Obama, a powerful campaigner for Clinton, renewed her criticism of Trump without naming him during a campaign event in Arizona.

"Decent men do not demean women. And we shouldn't tolerate this behaviour from any man, let alone a man who wants to be the president," she said.

(Source: agencies)

EU fails to agree on new Russia sanctions

EU leaders reportedly clashed on Russia during a summit Thursday, with some willing to include a threat of new sanctions over Syria in a final statement and others opposing the move. In the end, only individual leaders publicly spoke on the threat.

Leaders of the 28 countries gathered in Brussels to discuss the most pressing topics facing the EU, such as a response to the ongoing migrant crisis, looming Brexit negotiations, and a possible new batch of sanctions against Moscow over what some of the members insist is a negative role in Syria.



While there were reports of a strong-worded draft statement that would include an explicit threat of sanctions to Russia in the works, the leaders reportedly fell short of reaching a consensus on the issue, dropping it off the final version, Reuters reported.

Italy's PM Matteo Renzi was one who openly opposed the possibility of a new round of restrictive measures against Moscow.

"We should do everything possible for a peace deal in Syria but it's difficult to imagine that this should be linked to further sanctions on Russia," Renzi said, as cited by Reuters.

Contrary to reports, Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern said that "no one demanded sanctions" on the first day of the summit, adding that the members "made an important step forward" in drawing up a concerted strategy in dealing with Russia, as cited by RIA Novosti.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, on the other hand, advocated for a more stringent approach if Russia continues to carry out its airstrikes in the rebel-held areas of Aleppo.

"I think even if the bombings remain as intensive as they had been previously, this will be a ground for considering further actions," she said, as reported by TASS.

Earlier, the Financial Times reported citing officials that "up to one-third" of member states, including Austria, Spain, Greece and Cyprus, did not back the prospect of new economic measures against Russia.

Nevertheless, European Union President Donald Tusk took a rather harsh stance as he told journalists that members of the meeting touched upon "all sorts of Russian hostilities", including alleged "airspace violations", "information campaigns", "cyber-attacks" as well as accusing Moscow of meddling into the "political

processes in the EU and beyond."

"Given these examples, it is clear that Russia's strategy is to weaken the EU," Tusk claimed.

However, he then said that "creating tensions with Russia is not our aim," adding that the EU is "always" up for a dialog with Russia.

The EU member-states also appeared to have made little progress on a number of economic issues. The Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with Canada (CETA) ended up in limbo after being rejected by Belgian regional Walloon government late Thursday, which cited concerns over competition from multinational corporations.

Another key deal, EU-Ukraine association agreement, is also unlikely to be sealed during the summit, as Dutch Parliament still refuses to ratify it.

"On the one hand a Dutch 'no' could potentially have an effect on the region, on the other hand I do not want the Dutch voter to feel cheated," said the country's PM Mark Rutte.

EU leaders managed to find some common ground on migration as they backed the plans to offer trade deals and financial stimuli to African countries seeking to curb uncontrollable flows of arrivals stemming from the continent.

"It is not just about money, it is about substantially improving the capabilities and the chances of people in these African countries and to give hope," Merkel said.

EU leaders have been urged to come to an agreement on a mechanism for suspending the visa-free regime "within the next few weeks." There is currently no emergency procedure in place, which means every member state must approve the cancellation of a visa-free regime agreement with other states for it to take effect. Creating such a mechanism is viewed as a necessary precaution if the visa regime with Turkey is to be liberalized, as has been long anticipated by Ankara as part of the EU's obligations in fulfilling their migration control deal.

No breakthrough has been made on the terms of Brexit, with Tusk stressing that the negotiations will be launched only after UK invokes Article 50 of Lisbon Treaty that start a formal process of leaving the block. "There will be no negotiations before Article 50 is triggered by the UK," Tusk said, adding that he "would be the happiest one" if the referendum vote would be reversible.

(Source: RT)

Maersk Line resumes service to Iran

➔ Those shares have shifted thus far in 2016 as Iran reestablishes trade ties that were cut off by the sanctions. China so far this year amounted to 22.2 percent of Iran's international trade, while the UAE shrank to 15.6 percent, Iraq rose to 8.3 percent, Turkey increase to 8 percent, and South Korea rose to 6.9 percent, according to GTA.

The opening of Iran presents opportunities on two fronts for Maersk Line parent Maersk Group, which recently split itself into two units, Transport & Logistics and Energy, to better weather the down market.

Container lines, not just Maersk, have been struggling since the 2010 financial crisis, when the GDP multiplier, which refers to the rate of growth in container shipping as it relates to global GDP growth, evaporated. The multiplier from 2000 to 2008 was 2.2x with x being global GDP growth, which had averaged around 4 percent. The multiplier since 2010 has shrunk to 1.1x while GDP growth fell to an average of 2.9 percent.

That slower rate of growth dovetailed with a surge of mega-ship newbuilds that have created an enormous capacity surplus and the conditions that led to Hanjin Shipping's abrupt collapse. That capacity glut is so large however, that Hanjin's failure did little to resolve the issue, as spot rates on the trans-Pacific and Asia-Europe trades showed in the month of September.

Spot rates on the trans-Pacific spiked in the days after Hanjin's failure, but remained flat through September, rising again only last week ahead of a general rate increase. Asia-Europe, where Hanjin's bankruptcy vaporized 150,000 twenty-foot-equivalent units of capacity overnight, also failed to make any serious gains. While Asia-Europe spot rates did rise in the aftermath, they returned to pre-Hanjin levels not long after before making an unexpected gain last week.

Given these difficult conditions, other container lines have also looked to Iran for volume growth. CMA CGM, for example, teamed up with IRISL to share vessel capacity, and jointly operate routes and marine container terminals.

(Source: joc.com)

Cautious Western insurers rebuild business ties with Iran

Western insurers are slowly reaching deals with Iran as they seek to re-enter a multi-billion dollar market although the pace of business is hampered by banking restrictions ten months on from the lifting of international sanctions.

Despite the removal of international banking restrictions in January, Tehran has secured ties with only a limited number of smaller banks as U.S. sanctions remain in force.

By contrast, Iran is in more active talks with insurers to provide cover in a market valued at \$9 billion overall last year and potentially double that in the next decade.

Western companies need insurance in order to resume business with Iran. Shipping and trade credit insurance, which remove the risk of non-payment for goods, are the first types of insurance being offered.

"There is generally a lower degree of fear and apprehension and that is because you have not had the big fines on the insurers that the banks have faced," said leading London sanctions lawyer Nigel Kushner.

"We are going to see greater and quicker movement there than on the banking side, at least in London and the UK," said Kushner, who is also a director of the British Iranian Chamber of Commerce. As Iran has aimed to ramp up oil exports, securing marine insurance has been crucial. Top tier Western ship insurers have started offering services in recent months.

Iran's deputy oil minister, Amir Hossein Zamaninia, has said European insurers now have no problems insuring Iranian oil tankers, according to the oil ministry's news agency SHANA.

Protection and Indemnity (P&I) clubs - marine insurers owned by shipping firms - have started to provide cover for Iran's shipping fleet, including its oil tankers.

Jonathan Andrews, director and head of eastern underwriting with Britain's Steamship Mutual, said it was insuring ships for Iranian tanker operator NITC and also for Iranian cargo ship operator IRISL.

"We have a long history of insuring Iranian ship owners," Andrews told Reuters. "We are happy to be insuring our former members again."

Norwegian ship insurer Skuld said it was in discussions with IRISL, while it was already insuring NITC ships.

■ Dollar restrictions

U.S. banks are forbidden to do business with Iran under domestic sanctions still in force. European banks also face problems, since transactions with Iran in dollars cannot be processed through the U.S. financial system.

Banks remain nervous after some heavy U.S. penalties, including a \$9 billion fine on France's BNP Paribas in 2014, largely for violating U.S. financial sanctions.

Despite this, European export credit agencies are guaranteeing trade finance for Western companies doing business with Iran.

Germany's state run export credit group Hermes has concluded trade finance deals covering goods worth several million euros.

"About a dozen transactions have been approved so far," a Hermes spokesman said.

"The demand is there from the exporters' side but they need a lot of information. There is a continuous and rising flow of applications (for export credit guarantees)."

Italian export credit agency SACE has also undertaken its first small transactions with Iran.

"The lingering risks should not be underestimated, however, as they might create problems ... legal, documentary, operational, for companies interested in building or restoring commercial or financial relationships with local counterparties," a SACE spokesman said. France's Coface has signed an agreement with Iran to guarantee trade finance on behalf of the French government. Nevertheless, major transactions were yet to be concluded due to the banking issues.

Aviation and energy are two sectors in focus, industry executives say, along with political risk cover, even if there have been few deals so far.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran's non-oil exports should increase 20% by Mar. 2017: industry min.

ECONOMY **Tehran** — "Iran's annual non-oil exports, including exports of services and non-oil goods, should witness a 20 percent rise by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017) compared to the previous year" the Iranian Industry Minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh said in a ceremony held to celebrate the National Exports Day (October 20), IRNA reported on Thursday.

"The country's non-oil exports will rise \$10 billion and hit \$68 billion accordingly," he said.

As he further added, "The Islamic Republic could manage to export \$28.5 billion of non-oil goods and services during the first half of the current Iranian calendar 1395 (March 21-September 21, 2016)."

Iran opens business unit in Cape Town

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — To bolster and facilitate mutual economic and trade ties between the two countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran opened a business unit in Cape Town, one of the three capital cities of South Africa, on Friday, IRNA reported.

The opening ceremony, coincident with Iran's National Exports Day (October 20), was reportedly attended by some officials from Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine, and Agriculture (ICCIMA), some members of the South African parliament, and some private sector businessmen and entrepreneurs from both countries.

According to Mohsen Movahedi-Qomi, the Iranian ambassador to the African country, Iran and South Africa are set to improve their bilateral trade up to \$2 billion by 2020 and the established business unit seeks to foster economic and commercial relations between the two countries, as well as those between Central Asian countries and South African ones.

As reported earlier this week, the value of Iran's exports to South Africa rose by \$10.4 million in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20-Septemehr 21), a 93 percent increase year on year, Shana quoted an official with the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran as saying.



Armenia, Iran have huge potential to increase bilateral trade: Armenian premier

Prime Minister of Armenia Karen Karapetyan received Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Republic of Armenia Seyed Kazem Sadjadi on October 18.

As "Armenpress" was informed from the press service of the Government of Armenia, noting that Armenia and Iran have traditionally enjoyed friendly ties of close partnership, the Prime Minister said it is necessary to go beyond the existing level and take further steps to develop mutually beneficial cooperation.

In this context, Karen Karapetyan highlighted the construction of the third Iran-Armenia 400 kV power transmission line, Noravank substation, gas distribution networks in Armenia's border communities, as well as the ongoing Gas for Electricity project.

The head of the Armenian government said prospective ties of cooperation might be built up in Iran-Armenia-Georgia-Russia quadrilateral format. Coming to the North-South Highway project, the Premier said Iranian companies might get involved, if interested.

As Karen Karapetyan pointed out, Armenia and Iran have huge potential to increase trade turnover and make new investments in different sectors, including agriculture, telecommunica-

"According to Iran's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021), the country should experience a 15 percent growth in non-oil exports each year," Nematzadeh said.

The Iranian minister expressed content that domestic production is being eased and exports are being facilitated via setting and applying new regulations; however, there still remains a long way to hit the targets and some changes are necessary to be made in banking and tax regulations as well.

He underlined that improving exports should be regarded as the main focal point on the course of the country's development.

As reported, the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani also attended the National Exports Day ceremony.



tions, tourism, healthcare and other sectors.

Seyed Kazem Sadjadi expressed willingness to closely cooperate with the government of Armenia in a bid to implement mutually beneficial projects, contributing thereby to the furtherance of economic ties.

Noting the importance of increased trade turnover, the Ambassador expressed confidence that the recent exposition of Tehran as attended by over 100 Armenian companies might advance the establishment of a free economic zone in Meghri.

Karen Karapetyan and Seyed Kazem Sadjadi took the opportunity to discuss other issues on the agenda of the Armenian-Iranian relations.

(Source: Armen Press)

Iran's water, wastewater market open for UK business

British Water is building closer links with the water industry in Iran as the market opens up to foreign trade. The membership organization, which represents the UK water industry, took part in the Iran International Water & Wastewater Exhibition in Tehran in September.

The event was the first major industry event in the region since sanctions against Iran were lifted in January.

■ Opportunities ahead

Lila Thompson, International Director of British Water said: "These are early days but there are some very exciting opportunities ahead. There was a real buzz at the event.

"British Water is always keen to explore new markets and there seems to be a real willingness in the Iranian industry to make new links with the UK now diplomatic relations have been restored."

British Water highlighted the work of four UK companies at the event: pipeline infrastructure specialist Aquam; data and analytics company SEAMS; desalination and water recovery technology company Water/eau and Thermancy, manufacturer of the world's first wireless thermodynamic pump monitor.

Lila Thompson said: "It is a great time for UK companies to make links with Iran. The country has a good



range of technology companies and there is a lot of homegrown expertise. However there is a real desire to explore international best practice and products and services that might offer more efficient solutions.



EU, Canada press Belgian region to accept free trade deal

Canada's trade minister and a European Union negotiator held urgent talks with the premier of the Belgian region of Wallonia on Friday to try and break a deadlock preventing EU nations signing an EU-Canadian free trade deal.

All 28 EU governments support the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), but Belgium cannot give assent without backing from five sub-federal administrations, and French-speaking Wallonia has steadfastly opposed it.

The region rejected amendments put forward on Thursday.



Bombardier to cut 7,500 jobs through 2018

Canadian plane and train maker Bombardier Inc. will shed jobs for the second time this year, cutting about 10 percent of its global workforce over two years as it deepens turnaround efforts at its rail division.

The Montreal-based company, which has struggled in recent years with cost overruns in its aerospace unit, said on Friday it will cut about 7,500 jobs globally with about two-thirds of those in Bombardier Transportation. The rest of the cuts will be made in the aerospace division.

It said restructuring charges of \$225 million to \$275 million will be accrued as special items, beginning in the fourth quarter and through 2017.



Dollar hits seven-month high, stocks set for weekly rise

Global stocks were set for their first weekly gain in four weeks on Friday and the dollar rose to its highest since March, as the euro came under pressure after the European Central Bank shot down talk of tapering its easy money stance.

The euro hit its lowest against the dollar since March after the ECB left its ultra-loose policy unchanged on Thursday but kept the door open to more stimulus in December.

ECB President Mario Draghi also doused recent market speculation that the central bank had discussed winding down its 1.7 trillion euro asset-buying program.

European companies eager to cooperate with Iran's NPC

TEHRAN — The representatives of Germany's Thyssen Krupp Engineering AG and Denmark-based technology, catalyst and services supplier Haldor Topsøe voiced their companies' interest in Iran's petrochemical industry, Shana reported on Thursday.

On the sidelines of K-Plastics & Rubber Exhibition in Düsseldorf, Germany Iranian Deputy Oil Minister and Managing Director of Iran's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) Marziyeh Shahdaie held separate meetings with representatives of the two companies.

According to Shahdaie, Topsøe's senior managers expressed interest in collaborating on urea and ammonia projects and also methanol related projects with the NPC. And Thyssen is also interested in PVC related projects.

As the biggest event in rubber and plastic industry, K-Plastics & Rubber Exhibition kicked off on October 19 in Düsseldorf.

In this exhibition world leaders in petrochemical industry showcase their products and services, Iran's NPC as well is holding pavilion in this year's event.

Iran's Shahdaie and also Adel Nejad-Salim, the managing director of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC), Mehdi Sharifi Niknafs, the managing director of Iranian Petrochemical Commercial Company (IPCC), as well as Ali Majedi, Iran's ambassador to Germany, held speeches on the second day of the event and explained various investment opportunities, capabilities and achievements of Iran's petrochemical industry.

Senior directors of several big European Companies also dedicated their speech to Iran's petrochemical industry.



Asia's oil markets are tightening as China cuts output, fuel stocks dwindle

From sharp cuts to Chinese oil production to falling inventories of refined fuel products, signs are mounting that Asia's oil markets are slowly returning to balance.

Global inventories of refined products - made up from light and middle distillates like gasoline and diesel, as well as residual fuel such as fuel oil - have all fallen since the beginning of the month. They are now at or below levels seen this time last year, data in Thomson Reuters Datastream shows.

The drawdowns come after China, Asia's biggest oil consumer and a top-5 global producer, this week reported a 9.8 percent fall in output for September, amounting to one of the deepest cuts on record.

The falling stocks in most oil trading hubs, including Singapore, Europe's ARA

(Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Antwerp), and in the United States, as well as China's declining production, are signs of a market coming closer into balance following two years of consistent crude and refined product oversupply.

"The oil products market is in the midst of rebalancing - it started in the U.S. and Europe a few months back, and in Asia the rebalancing is starting to show," said Neveyn Nah of energy consulting firm Energy Aspects.

Despite a slight increase over the past week, Singapore's refined product stocks have fallen from over 58 million barrels last May to below 50 million barrels, according to government data.

"After two years of oversupply and sharply rising inventories, inventories may have peaked as supply and demand

comes back into balance," Neil Beveridge of Bernstein Energy said on Friday in a note to clients.

Analysts said the tighter markets were a result of both strengthening demand and tightening supplies.

A tightening fuel market is also visible in Singapore's refinery margins, which have improved despite rising feedstock crude prices.

Gasoline profits have soared from just \$1.70 per barrel in July to almost \$10, while overall Singapore refinery margins started picking up in August and have since jumped from \$2.50 a barrel to around \$6.20.

"The net result of these developments implies that prices could have further to run as markets tighten," said Bernstein's Beveridge, who expected crude prices to

average \$60 per barrel in 2017 and \$70 a barrel in 2018.

Given strong demand, especially in Asia, and tightening supplies, "there could be a substantial supply shortfall in 2017 which could go a long way to draining inventories," he added.

Yet for the moment, traders say Asia's markets are still some way off a squeeze.

China's gasoline and diesel exports, which contributed heavily to Asia's refined product glut, jumped again in September, customs data showed on Friday, as its refiners continue to produce more fuel than China consumes.

And with the refinery maintenance season coming to an end soon, refined product supplies will soon start to pick up.

(Source: Reuters)

Russia eyes record-high oil output, but sticks to 'freeze' option

Russia will produce 548 million tons (11 million barrels per day) of oil next year, a post-Soviet record, however Moscow still wants global producers to curb production amid weak prices, Energy Minister Alexander Novak said on Friday.

Russia, the leading oil producer, expects the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries to find common ground on capping oil production. OPEC is to hold its regular meeting in Vienna on Nov.30.

Before that, Novak will make several trips, including to Saudi Arabia this weekend and to Vienna next week.

He said he would take "some" proposals to a meeting with his Saudi counterpart and he believed an oil output freeze was still necessary.

He declined to provide any further details on the proposals.

Asked about the need for an oil output freeze, he

said: "Yes, this is our main position, it has not changed."

Novak said that he will discuss coordination on oil markets with OPEC Secretary General Mohammed Barkindo next week.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that Russia will join leading global oil producers in curbing production.

Russia's output jumped by almost four percent in September from the previous month to 11.11 million barrels per day, setting a new post-Soviet record-high, as companies ramped up drilling amid improved oil prices.

Russian officials have said that Moscow would rather freeze oil output than cut, but the level is yet to be agreed. Top Russian oil companies such as Rosneft, Gazprom Neft and Lukoil are launching new fields in 2016.

According to Rosneft Chief Executive Igor Sechin,



Russia has the potential to further increase oil output by up to 200 million tons a year, or four million barrels per day.

(Source: Reuters)

Oil rises on Russia's output freeze commitment

Oil edged higher on Friday as Russia reiterated its commitment to joining a producers' output freeze to stem a two-year slide in prices but a strong dollar capped gains.

Global benchmark Brent crude futures were 12 cents higher at \$51.50 a barrel at 0847 GMT.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude was trading at \$50.65 a barrel up 2 cents from its last settlement.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said on Friday an oil output freeze agreement was necessary to prop up prices and that he would make proposals to his Saudi Arabian counterpart this weekend.

The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries will hold a meeting on Nov. 30 to find common ground on capping oil production. This is expected to work out how each member country will contribute to a freeze.

"The near term fundamentals in the oil market have turned positive. Demand is stabilizing, OPEC production has peaked (and will fall if cuts are implemented), and global inventory declines imply that the market is more



balanced than many believe," Neil Beveridge of Bernstein Energy said in a note to clients.

But Olivier Jakob, oil analyst at Petro-matrix said: "We have been cautious in the current (oil) flat price rally, based on our forecast of an OPEC supply surge in the fourth quarter and a widening of the Brent contango."

A rise in the dollar .DXY on Friday to touch a seven-month high against a basket of currencies, in its third straight week of gains, prevented oil prices from pushing higher.

A stronger dollar means dollar-denominated commodities become more expensive to hold, making it less attractive for investors to buy them.

(Source: Reuters)

Big U.S. businesses are embracing solar power, according to new report

A new report has placed a leading retailer at the top of U.S. businesses embracing solar power.

The Solar Energy Industries Association's (SEIA) Solar Means Business 2016 report found that retailer Target now has 147.5 megawatts of installed capacity, pushing it to the top of rankings - and above businesses such as Walmart and Apple - for the first time.

"We feel honored to be named the top corporate solar installer in the U.S. by the Solar Energy Industries Association," John Leisen, vice president of property management at Target, said in a statement on Wednesday.

"We're incredibly proud of the progress we've made in improving building efficiencies and reducing environmental impact," Leisen went on to add. "Our commitment to installing solar panels on 500 stores and distribution centers by 2020 is evidence of that progress."

Now in its fifth year, the Solar Means Business report assesses the largest adopters of corporate solar in the U.S. It is not, the SEIA states, "a comprehen-



sive look at corporate solar in the U.S."

Walmart, which has placed first in the previous four reports, now has 145 megawatts of installed solar capacity, according to the SEIA. It added that every week, 7.3 million people visit a WalMart powered by solar.

"These blue-chip companies are proof that sustainability and profitability is not an either-or proposition," Tom Kimbis, the SEIA's interim president, said in a statement. "Investing in solar is a common-sense decision that pays dividends for both the environment and companies' bottom lines and these leaders deserve a big round of applause," Kimbis added.

(Source: CNBC)

Total to finalize \$2b investment deal in Iran's petchem industry

TEHRAN — France's giant oil and gas company Total will finalize a \$2 billion investment deal with Iran by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017), IRNA quoted a petrochemical official as saying on Friday.

Adel Nejad-Salim, the managing director of Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (PGPIC), said the French company is going to invest in a downstream olefin project.

"In recent months, Total has assessed petrochemical projects in Iran and reviewed the status of feedstock. Now, their final plan is ready and the contract will be finalized in near future," the official said.

After the implementation of Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iran and France's Total signed an MOU based on which, Total will invest in Iran's petrochemical industry.

Iran had about 63 million tons of installed petrochemical capacity in 2015 and the country plans to increase the figure to 130 million tons by 2020 and 180 million tons in 2025.



Oil titans differ on whether prices will spike or remain low

By Nick Cunningham

Saudi Arabia's energy minister Khalid al-Falih spoke at the Oil & Money Conference in London this week, where he offered a robust defense of OPEC's 2014 decision to not intervene in the market to try to support oil prices. He also warned that future supply shortages could lead to a price spike.

"Now consider if OPEC had cut production to maintain supply-demand balances. The effect would have been to encourage continued investments in expensive resources like shale, oil sands, deep sea and the Arctic, etc. This process would have continued," al-Falih said, "with OPEC having to successively cut production year after year."

But, the crash in oil prices has created a new problem for oil markets. "Without investment," al-Falih cautioned, decline rates will deepen, "to the point that many analysts are now sounding warning bells of future supply shortfalls."

Indeed, with new oil discoveries at a 70-year low, there will likely be very little new sources of supply coming online towards the end of this decade. The heads of the IEA and EIA have both warned that supply could fail to keep up with demand at some point in the next few years, due to the massive cutbacks in upstream investment between 2014 and 2016. "Many analysts are warning of supply shortfalls. I am in that camp," Al-Falih said. "There will be a period of shortage of supply."

ExxonMobil's CEO Rex Tillerson is not in that camp. He took the stage after the Saudi minister and said that the record levels of oil inventories will take years to work through and that even if oil prices do rise, U.S. shale will respond with new supply. "I don't quite share the same view that others have that we are somehow on the edge of a precipice. I think because we have confirmed viability of very large resource base in North America...that serves as enormous spare capacity in the system," Tillerson said at the conference. "It doesn't take mega-project dollars and it can be brought on line much more quickly than a 3-4 year project." As a result, Tillerson says, prices probably will not spike, despite the predictions from many corners of the oil world. "It is difficult for me to see a big supply press out there, it is difficult for me to see a big price blow out, there are too many elements in the system that will temper that."

While many of the conference participants and industry titans are rightly focused on supply, the demand side of the equation is equally uncertain. Saudi energy minister Khalid al-Falih expects global oil demand to rise by four million barrels per day between 2015 and 2017. A large portion of that growth will need to come from China and India, the greatest source of incremental demand growth.

But oil demand faces an enormous downside risk should the Chinese economy slowdown more than expected. And it would face a very bumpy ride if China suffered a "hard landing," which The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) thinks is distinctly possible in the next two years. According to the EIU's "central global forecast," China's economy will hit the rocks in 2018. "The effects of a sharp slowdown in China in 2018 will be felt around the world," the EIU wrote in its October Global Forecast. "The rest of the world will feel a chill through declines in equity prices and in consumer and business confidence." On top of that, the EIU sees the U.S. dipping into recession in 2019.

If those events come to pass, oil prices won't rebound much higher than where they are currently until the 2020s. The EIU projects oil prices to trade between \$55 and \$65 per barrel "for most of 2017-21." Of course, prices will move up and down and characteristically suffer from volatility, but the EIU says that demand from emerging markets combined with "producer restraint" will put a floor beneath prices. And high inventories and a resilient U.S. shale industry will put a ceiling on any price rally. The result will be a "new equilibrium" roughly around \$60 per barrel.

There is no shortage of opinions out there on where oil prices will go, and there will never be a consensus. Some, like the EIA, IEA and OPEC, see higher prices ahead. Others like the EIU, Exxon's Rex Tillerson and a range of investment banks see low prices for years to come. In between those very different market outlooks, there is a plethora of projections, ensuring anyone can find a specific answer that they are looking for.

(Source: oilprice.com)

A progressive political alliance for Europe

Kemal Derviş

In less than three weeks, we will know who will be the next president of the United States. What kind of partner that president finds in Europe will depend substantially on the outcome of two elections in 2017: France's presidential election in early May and Germany's federal election by the end of October.

Of course, the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union will have an impact on the future shape of Europe. The "hard Brexit" option that has gotten a lot of attention lately – particularly since British Prime Minister Theresa May announced her intention to focus on limiting immigration, even if it means losing access to the single market – would by itself change the way Europe functions.

As French Prime Minister Manuel Valls recently wrote, the key question facing Europe's leaders is whether to "give up and leave the European project to a slow but certain death" or to "transform the EU." Such a transformation would be no easy feat. It would require not only a new institutional vision for Europe, but also a major political restructuring, not least in France and Germany.

Two Europes in one

A viable institutional vision, which I described well before the Brexit vote, is to establish "two Europes in one." The euro-zone countries would form a more deeply integrated "Europe A," while another group of countries would comprise a more diverse and loosely connected "Europe B." The two Europes would be strongly linked, with some arrangements differing among the various members of Europe B. Together, the two Europes would be part of the post-Brexit "continental partnership," which might eventually even replace the EU altogether.

It is a somewhat radical vision, one that can be fulfilled only if political forces are willing to embrace it, not least in France and Germany. Each country's political leadership would need to be guided – indeed, energized – by the objective of saving "Europe." Specifically, that means pursuing an economic policy that balances competitive markets and social solidarity, with substantial space for local diversity.

In both France and Germany, such a political dynamic would depend on an alliance of center-right and center-left pro-European forces – one that could overcome and ultimately dissipate each camp's more extremist elements, thereby ensuring that anti-European political tendencies cannot block progress. To give a concrete – and provocative – example of what such a realignment might look like in France: a center-right President Alain Juppé could cooperate with a Prime Minister Emmanuel Macron trying to develop a "beyond the past" young center-left movement.

As for Germany, the center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) is, on the whole, insufficiently pro-European. Internally, it is limited by a conservative wing defined by views that are not compatible with long-term progress in Europe. Externally, it is limited by the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which has lately grown in popularity.



A new Europe

In this context, even if Chancellor Angela Merkel's CDU does emerge with the most votes next year, it will need help to build a new Europe, with more joint responsibilities for countries in Europe A and flexible arrangements with countries in Europe B. Specifically, the pro-European elements of the CDU must work with allies on the left – namely, most of the Social Democrats and the Greens.

Such an informal coalition has often allowed pro-Merkel projects to win support in Parliament, despite opposition from right-wing elements of the CDU. But, to save Europe, it must become deeper and more reliable, with common goals dominating a shared agenda.

The need for a realignment of political forces is not unique to France and Germany. There is a broad need for reformist and realistic globalizers to join forces to take on populist movements seeking to twist nostalgia into extreme nationalism, built almost exclusively on identity politics.

The world has changed substantially in recent decades, and Europe is no exception. It makes little sense to expect the old alignments to be able to respond adequately to today's policy needs or political dynamics. Consider how difficult it has been for Spain to find a new majority – a two-year-long process that has yet to end.

Against this background, a political reshuffling is almost inevitable; the party shifts and conflicts that have characterized the ongoing U.S. presidential election exemplify this. But that reshuffling could lead to a number of outcomes. To secure a positive, open, and prosperous future for Europe, it is critical that the forces that come out on top are those that recognize the huge benefits of politically and economically open societies, as well as the need for national and global public policies to promote more inclusion.

But even if progressive center-right and center-left forces manage to overcome their backward-looking counterparts, it will not be enough. The traditional political structure always risks being taken hostage or outflanked by identity-focused populists. That is why forward-thinking political groups must overcome their differences in a more structural manner to advance a new institutional vision of Europe.

Such a deep political restructuring aimed at building new progressive majorities will be difficult, and it will not happen overnight. But it is Europe's only option. Without it, "Europe" will die, and the assault on economic openness and democratic values will continue to gain traction around the world – with potentially devastating consequences.

How Clinton could lose even as she wins



By Bill Schneider

It's not enough to win the election. You also have to win the interpretation.

That's where your mandate comes from. What kind of mandate will Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton get if she wins? Much depends on her margin of victory. And her coattails.

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump has indicated that he does not intend to concede, even if Republican leaders try to concede for him. Trump is already claiming the election is rigged. If he loses narrowly he will likely insist the election was stolen.

Asked in the final debate Wednesday night whether he would accept the election result if he loses, Trump's response was shocking: "I will tell you at the time. I will keep you in suspense."

Don't expect Trump to fade away quietly. He's making plans to start Trump TV in order to give himself a platform from which he can harass President Clinton. He could become the creepy clown of American politics.

A close election will be interpreted to mean that Clinton won only because she is not Trump. Trump's supporters will rally behind him and protest Clinton's victory up to – and beyond – her inauguration in January.

An illegitimate president

They will denounce her as an illegitimate president. They will pressure Republicans in Congress to block everything she tries to do. If her victory does not produce big Democratic gains in Congress, Republicans will feel emboldened to defy her. A narrow victory means endless gridlock.

A landslide Clinton victory may be tough. As a Democrat who was part of the Obama administration, she is the candidate of the status quo. The fact that Clinton would be the first woman elected President does not appear to be

A lot of Americans resent being governed by educated experts and professionals like Clinton and Obama.

generating much excitement, especially among younger women.

But there's a lot of discontent in the country and it's not confined to Trump enthusiasts. All this year, around 70 percent of Americans told the Gallup poll they are not satisfied with the way things are going in the United States. If Republicans had nominated a more broadly acceptable candidate – like Ohio Governor John Kasich or Senator Marco Rubio of Florida – there is a good chance Clinton would be losing.

Trump tried to claim the change issue for himself when he said at the end of the debate, "We cannot take four more years of Barack Obama, and that's what you get when you get her."

But he discredited himself when he was asked about his abusive behavior toward women. He claimed, "Those stories have been largely debunked." No, they haven't. In fact, more of them are coming out, and they are being corroborated.

The Clinton campaign understands that there is a market for change in the country. That's why her husband told the Democratic convention in August, "She is the best darn change-maker I have ever known," adding, "She always wants to move the ball forward."

That's what "change" means for Clinton: "moving the ball forward," as opposed to radical disruption. No round-up of illegal immigrants. No wall on the Mexican border. No high tariff barriers. No abandonment of military allies. No repeal of Obamacare. No jailing of political enemies. No harassment of the press.

Clinton stands for incremental change. Measures to reduce inequality. To fight climate change. To resolve conflicts between minorities and the police. To create more

jobs. To push back Islamic State without committing large numbers of U.S. troops.

A sweeping Clinton victory would mean that the New America, a coalition of working women, African-Americans, Latinos, Asian-Americans, single mothers, Jewish and Muslim voters that swept President Barack Obama into office, has finally arrived and is here to stay. It would mean that Trump's resistance movement has been crushed. It would be an endorsement of diversity and inclusion for previously marginalized groups like immigrants and minorities and working women and gays.

It would be a message to the Republican Party. As Ohio Governor John Kasich put it, "If the Republican Party does not evolve, the Republican Party is going to die."

The huge education gap

One striking feature of this presidential campaign is the huge education gap. White non-college-educated voters are going two-to-one for Trump, 62 percent to 31 percent, according to the ABC News-Washington Post poll. College graduates favor Clinton by more than 20 points, 55 to 34 percent. For the first time in more than 50 years, whites with a college degree are voting Democratic, 51 to 38 percent.

To educated voters, Trump represents know-nothing politics. His supporters reject climate change as a hoax. They are suspicious of foreigners and immigrants. They are fearful of a globalized economy. They harbor racial resentment. They believe the rest of the world takes advantage of the United States. They nurture conspiracy theories and believe this election is being hijacked by sinister forces.

"This election will determine," Trump

told a rally in Florida, "whether we are a free nation or whether we have only the illusion of democracy, but are in fact controlled by a small handful of global special interests rigging the system."

A lot of Americans resent being governed by educated experts and professionals like Clinton and Obama. Resentment of the educated elite has always been a deep strain in American populism.

It emerged in 2008, when Obama spoke disdainfully about economically distressed small-town Americans who "cling to guns and religion." It broke out this year when Hillary Clinton denounced "half of Trump supporters" as a "basket of deplorable . . . racist, xenophobic, Islamophobic – you name it." To many less well-educated Americans, comments like those are blatant snobbery.

Resentment of the educated elite also drives hatred of the press. Journalists, especially national journalists, are usually well educated and have a sophisticated world view. A conservative editor explained to the New York Times that mainstream journalists are "interested in every kind of diversity except the kind that would challenge their own prejudices," including "bigotry against conservative religion, bigotry against rural folks and bigotry against working-class and poor white people."

Educated Americans will interpret a big Clinton victory as an endorsement of their "enlightened" values. For less well-educated whites, it will confirm their sense of isolation and resentment.

Each of the last four presidents – George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Obama – promised to bring the country together. They all failed.

There is little prospect that either Clinton or Trump – two of the most divisive figures in U.S. politics – can heal the divide. Two Americas, two interpretations. And no widely accepted mandate.

(Source: Reuters)

Ending modern wars driven by ancient wrongs

Scratch below the surface of today's territorial conflicts – such as Russia's land grab in Ukraine, China's island claims in East Asia, or Turkey's troops in Iraq and Syria – and you find leaders who evoke memories of their countries as past victims of aggression by others. Often these countries were once empires. They still lament over lost lands and faded imperial glory.

A leader might stoke the embers of ancient victimhood to divert attention, to stay in power, or to justify violence. The head of Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, seeks to restore a medieval-period Islamic caliphate by savage means in order to end what he claims is a history of "humiliation, disgrace, degradation, subordination, loss, emptiness ..." for Muslims.

It is a rare leader who outright rejects this temptation to cite ancient wrongs to justify aggressive moves. Yet in a recent speech, South Korean President Park Geun-hye did just that. She called on South Koreans to end her country's tendency to see its future as still determined by big powers.

"We must do away with this victim mentality and pessimistic thinking," she said.

As South Korea has become a mature political and economic power – one that is now courted rather than threatened by its larger neighbors – it has achieved a certain domestic tranquility. It can use its history as a victim in past centuries to serve as lessons for healing and reconciliation. But it need not exaggerate the past to the point of recrimination.

Other countries that cling to old grievances, often to their detriment in initiating a war or in trying to instill national unity, need to follow Park's advice. It is not always easy.

In a 2014 book, Elliott Behar, a former prosecutor for



It is a rare leader who outright rejects this temptation to cite ancient wrongs to justify aggressive moves.

war crimes in the former Yugoslavia, explains why nations that were subject to outsider violence in the past too often repeat the acts of their aggressors:

"This feeling of entitlement to justice – this impulse – is a powerful prerequisite to collective violence. It provokes anger and invokes an enabling sense of self-pity to go along with it. It stokes fear of an enemy and can activate a corresponding and collectively shared sense of pride and duty. These are dangerous combinations, ones that can readily breed the notion that violence is acceptable and necessary. The stories we tell ourselves – our collective narratives – can be all too easily contorted under the

right circumstances to serve these goals. They transform how we see ourselves, how we see others and what we choose not to see at all," he writes in "Tell It to the World: International Justice and the Secret Campaign to Hide Mass Murder in Kosovo."

A victim mentality still drives too many conflicts or causes countries to make unwise choices. The past should not be forgotten. Its lingering wrongs must often be righted. But it also should not be abused to satisfy current ambitions or concerns. A nation at peace with its past can be a peacemaker for the future.

(The CSM)

Yemen mirror of global decay of morality

By Hamidreza Gholamzadeh

Nearly 18 months of Saudi invasion of Yemen has so far led to death of about 7,000 civilians and injury and displacement of thousands of more people. With unsanctioned attacks on Yemen and more civilian casualties especially in cases such as recent attack on a funeral ceremony, more objections to the Saudi regime and its coalition is heard.

In this regard, we have talked to London-based human rights activist Jamila Hanan who has shared her ideas about invasion on Yemen as follows.

■ **Attack on Medicines Without Borders, air raids on a market in March killing 119 people, being on the list of child-killers, bribing to be removed from the list and now attacking a funeral... are these highlights not enough for international condemnation of Saudi invasion on Yemen?**

These things should be enough to bring about international condemnation, but unfortunately many of our world leaders are compromised by connections and deals with the Saudi regime or arms sales. What we see is a global decay of morality where few of our leaders speak the truth and nearly all show a disgraceful display of double standards.



Western countries are sticking to arms deals with Riyadh quite simply because profit is more important to their leaders, than are the poor Yemeni people's lives.

■ **Why did Saudi Arabia attack the funeral at the first place? Is it acceptable that it was a mistake while Saudi Arabia and its coalition are using advanced weapons purchased from U.S. and UK? Or they were targeting a particular figure as the procession was for demised father of defense minister of revolutionaries in Yemen?**

Saudi Arabia clearly knew that there would be several political leaders and military officers at the funeral and has little concern about killing innocent civilians so did not hesitate to bomb the funeral hall when they saw the opportunity, knowing that they can carry out their war crimes with complete impunity, as they have done previously without any consequences.

■ **White House has threatened to review it support for Saudi-led invasion of Yemen; how serious this threat is and would that change anything on the scene?**

I don't take this threat by the White House to review support for Saudi's invasion seriously at all. There have been numerous calls for reviews after previous massacres and it is clear that there is still overwhelming political support for America to keep selling arms to Saudi Arabia, as demonstrated in a recent vote on the matter. If America wanted to stop the war they could stop refuelling the jets, and until they do then the rest of their talk is just



If America wanted to stop the war they could stop refuelling the jets, and until they do then the rest of their talk is just the usual double standard rhetoric.

the usual double standard rhetoric.

■ **UN says nearly 7000 people have so far died during Saudi war on Yemen; how many more people must die to have the world do something serious to cease hostility in Yemen?**

People will continue to die in Yemen, at a far greater rate than even we are seeing now due to the famine that is taking hold and the collapsing health system. Even after the airstrike on the funeral hall the airstrikes have continued on civilian homes with another family killed even now as I answer your questions. The massacres will continue and I won't be surprised if they will grow even larger as the Saudi regime is clearly out of control. The UN has proven itself to be worse than useless when it comes to stopping such acts of genocide.

The UN would be best now not issuing any more resolutions in regards to Yemen as their previous ones have done more harm than good. This war will stop when the USA and the UK says so, not before. It is very sad to think of how many thousands more people will die before then, whilst my own government reaps the benefits.

■ **Why despite all these violations of human rights, western countries are still sticking to their arms deals with Riyadh?**

Western countries are sticking to their arms deals with Riyadh quite simply because profit is more important to the people cur-

rently in power in the west, than are the poor Yemeni people's lives.

■ **What can be reaction of Yemen to this attack?**

Yemeni people are naturally now grieving and extremely angry. They have nothing more to lose, they will keep fighting. Many people who were peaceful are now feeling obliged to fight. Whereas the Houthis were of little threat to Saudi Arabia before the airstrikes began, they certainly are now.

■ **After about a year and half, has Saudi Arabia achieved its objectives in war on Yemen?**

Saudi Arabia's initial objective of restoring the so-called 'legitimate' president Hadi to power in Yemen is long gone and everyone knows that will never be achieved. Almost everyone in Yemen hates him now, he wouldn't last 5 minutes there. Their new objectives appear to be the destruction of Yemen, so that it is of little threat to Saudi Arabia and is weakened to the point of submission to Saudi's demands and their choice of leader. Regarding the destruction, yes they have and continue to destroy Yemen's infrastructure and starve its people and cripple its health system very successfully. But regarding weakening the people into submission, I can never see that happen - it does seem that the more you bomb the people of Yemen the more determined they become to resist all forms of foreign 'intervention'.

After profiting from weapons sales and then bombing Yemen, U.S. calls for a cease-fire

By Nika Knight

The United States, Britain, and the U.N. peace envoy to Yemen called Sunday for an unconditional ceasefire in Yemen to take place "within hours."

The two nations are trying "to seize on outrage caused by the killing of 140 people in a Saudi airstrike," the Guardian reports.

The newspaper describes the details of the proposed ceasefire:

The U.S. secretary of state, John Kerry, said if Yemen's opposing sides accepted and moved forward on a ceasefire then the UN special envoy, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, would work through the details and announce when and how it would take effect.

"This is the time to implement a ceasefire unconditionally and then move to the negotiating table," Kerry said after a brief meeting with the British foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, and other officials in London. "We cannot emphasize enough today the urgency of ending the violence in Yemen."

Kerry said he, Johnson and Cheikh Ahmed were calling for the implementation of a ceasefire "as rapidly as possible, meaning Monday, Tuesday." Kerry and Johnson also met the Saudi foreign minister, Adel al-Jubeir.

The brutal Saudi-led bombing campaign against Yemen's Houthi rebels has lasted for over 18 months, and the U.S. continues to sell billions of dollars' worth of weapons to Saudi Arabia despite repeated reports that the kingdom has been targeting civilian sites.

The U.S. also joined the war and bombed Yemen itself earlier this week, claiming self-defense.

Johnson's and Kerry's ceasefire call "came after meetings in London with Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir and senior UAE officials," Reuters reports. "Kerry met Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif on Saturday in Switzerland on the sidelines of Syria talks."

Reuters quotes Kerry's statements on the ceasefire at length:

It is a crisis now of enormous proportions with an increasing economic, increasing humanitarian and health crisis, and obviously the military components are troubling to everybody," Kerry said.

He added that the release of two American prisoners by Yemen's Houthi and the evacuation of Yemeni civilians wounded in a Saudi airstrike were "an important humanitarian gesture by the Saudis to address the humanitarian concern."

Kerry did not appear to mention the United States' most recent \$1.15 billion weapons sale to Saudi Arabia, nor address the U.S. airstrikes that struck Yemen Wednesday.

The conflict in Yemen "has killed almost 6,900 people, wounded more than 35,000 and displaced at least three million since March last year, according to the United Nations," AFP notes, adding that civilians "have paid the heaviest price in an increasingly dire humanitarian crisis."

(Source: Truthdig)

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Microwaving food in plastic: Dangerous or not?

Let's cover the original misinformation first: The earliest missives warned that microwaved plastic releases cancer-causing chemicals called dioxins into food. The problem with that warning is that plastics don't contain dioxins. They are created when garbage, plastics, metals, wood, and other materials are burned. As long as you don't burn your food in a microwave, you aren't exposing yourself to dioxins.

■ Migrating chemicals

There's no single substance called "plastic." That term covers many materials made from an array of organic and inorganic compounds. Substances are often added to plastic to help shape or stabilize it. Two of these plasticizers are:

- bisphenol-A (BPA), added to make clear, hard plastic
- phthalates, added to make plastic soft and flexible

BPA and phthalates are believed to be "endocrine disrupters." These are substances that mimic human hormones, and not for the good.

When food is wrapped in plastic or placed in a plastic container and microwaved, BPA and phthalates may leak into the food. Any migration is likely to be greater with fatty foods such as meats and cheeses than with other foods.

The FDA long ago recognized the potential for small amounts of plasticizers to migrate into food. So it closely regulates plastic containers and materials that come into contact with food. The FDA



requires manufacturers to test these containers using tests that meet FDA standards and specifications. It then reviews test data before approving a container for microwave use.

Some of these tests measure the migration of chemicals at temperatures that the container or wrap is likely to encounter during ordinary use. For microwave approval, the agency estimates the ratio of plastic surface area to food, how long the container is likely to be in the microwave, how often a person is likely to eat from the container, and how hot the food can be expected to get during microwaving. The scientists also measure the chemicals that leach into food and the extent to

which they migrate in different kinds of foods. The maximum allowable amount is 100–1,000 times less per pound of body weight than the amount shown to harm laboratory animals over a lifetime of use. Only containers that pass this test can display a microwave-safe icon, the words "microwave safe," or words to the effect that they're approved for use in microwave ovens.

When Good Housekeeping microwaved food in 31 plastic containers, lids, and wraps, it found that almost none of the food contained plastic additives.

What about containers without a microwave-safe label? They aren't necessarily unsafe; the FDA simply hasn't determined whether it is or not.

■ Is Styrofoam microwave safe?

Contrary to popular belief, some Styrofoam and other polystyrene containers can safely be used in the microwave. Just follow the same rule you follow for other plastic containers: Check the label.

■ The bottom line

Here are some things to keep in mind when using the microwave:

- If you're concerned about plastic wraps or containers in the microwave, transfer food to glass or ceramic containers labeled for use in microwave ovens.
- Don't let plastic wrap touch food during microwaving because it may melt. Wax paper, kitchen parchment paper, white paper towels, or a domed container that fits over a plate or bowl are better alternatives.
- Most takeout containers, water bottles, and plastic tubs or jars made to hold margarine, yogurt, whipped topping, and foods such as cream cheese, mayonnaise, and mustard are not microwave-safe.
- Microwavable takeout dinner trays are formulated for one-time use only and will say so on the package.
- Old, scratched, or cracked containers, or those that have been microwaved many times, may leach out more plasticizers.
- Don't microwave plastic storage bags or plastic bags from the grocery store.
- Before microwaving food, be sure to vent the container: leave the lid ajar, or lift the edge of the cover.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

Wrong drug induced convulsions in newborn



■ MEDICINE TEHRAN — A three-month-old baby went into convulsions for given incorrect medication, an official with Golestan University of Medical Sciences announced on Thursday.

Convulsion is a sudden, violent, irregular movement of the body caused by involuntary contraction of muscles and associated especially with brain disorders such as epilepsy, the presence of certain toxins or other agents in the blood, or fever in children.

The family of the infant goes into a pharmacy in Gorgan, northern Iran, to fill their baby's prescription when the pharmacy technician makes the fatal mistake and dispenses wrong medicine, resulting in baby's convulsions, IRNA quoted Mohammadreza Babaeian as saying.

The baby then gets transferred to a nearby hospital immediately and receives treatment; though in the first few days, he was semiconscious, Babaeian expressed.

He said thankfully the baby is in a stable condition in the hospital and will be discharged soon after making a full recovery.

The father of the baby has filed complaint against the pharmacy technician, and the case is under investigation.

To minimize dispensing errors pharmacytimes.com suggests pharmacy staff implement and go by the following strategies:

1. Ensure correct entry of the prescription.
2. Confirm that the prescription is correct and complete.
3. Beware of look-alike, sound-alike drugs.
4. Be careful about zeroes and abbreviations.
5. Organize the workplace.
6. Reduce distraction when possible.
7. Focus on reducing stress and balancing heavy workloads.
8. Take the time to store drugs properly.
9. Thoroughly check all prescriptions.
10. Always provide thorough patient counseling.

'Back pain second leading disorder in Iran'



■ MEDICINE TEHRAN — Backache is the second only to headache as the most prevalent disease in Iran, secretary of the 4th national conference of musculoskeletal disorders announced on Thursday.

Statistics indicate, Hamidreza Taqavi said, "Half of Iran's population of all ages suffers from backache."

Taking a sick day for sore back is the second cause of employees' missing work and staying home after common cold, IRNA quoted Taqavi as saying.

At the 4th national conference of musculoskeletal disorder, scheduled in Sari, northern Iran, from October 19-20, speakers covered a wide range of topics on backache, osteoporosis, latest treatment in knee arthritis and such.

On living with low back pain WebMD offers 11 ways to prevent backache from returning:

1. Get more exercise.

2. Watch your weight.
3. If you smoke, stop because smoking restricts the flow of nutrient-containing blood to spinal discs, so smokers are especially vulnerable to back pain.
4. Sleeping position. Sleeping on your side with your knees pulled up slightly toward your chest is sometimes suggested.
5. Pay attention to your posture.
6. Be careful how you lift objects.
7. Avoid high heels.
8. Stash the skinny jeans as clothing so tight that it interferes with bending, sitting, or walking can aggravate back pain.
9. Lighten your wallet. Sitting on an overstuffed wallet may cause discomfort and back pain.
10. Pick the right handbag or briefcase.
11. Forget about back braces. They can be helpful after certain kinds of surgery, but there is not much evidence that they help treat chronic back pain.

NEWS

17% of Iranians affected by osteoporosis: professor

■ MEDICINE TEHRAN — According to a professor in Beheshti University of Medical Science, 17 percent of Iranian population suffers from osteoporosis.

Osteoporosis is a medical condition in which the bones become brittle and fragile from loss of tissue, typically as a result of hormonal changes, deficiency of calcium or vitamin D or simply aging.



Ahmad Raeis Al-Sadat, one of the speakers at the 4th national conference on musculoskeletal disorders in Sari, said studies indicate "the figure [those with osteoporosis] will rise in the coming years with the aging population."

By 2021, Iran's elderly population is expected to reach 10 million, an alarming number that calls for serious prevention of osteoporosis in the country, IRNA quoted Raeis Al-Sadat as saying.

'Osteoporosis threatens young adults'

To top it all, the professor said about 30 percent of Iran's population aged 35 to 40 is also at risk of osteoporosis.

'Northern provinces in Iran hit hardest by osteoporosis'

Iran's northern provinces, particularly Mazandaran and Golestan have the largest number of people with osteoporosis, followed by Tehran, Azarbaijan provinces, Raeis Al-Sadat commented.

■ Symptoms of osteoporosis

A person is often not aware that he or she has osteoporosis until a fracture occurs. But there are occasionally symptoms of the disorder. They could include: backache, a gradual loss of height and an accompanying stooped posture, and fractures of the spine, wrist, or hip.

■ Risk factors for osteoporosis

The biggest risk factor for osteoporosis is age. As people grow older, the body goes through the process of breaking down old bone and growing new bone in its place. Around the age of 30, however, the body starts losing bone faster than it's able to replace it.

Other risk factors include: being female, being an older adult, being Caucasian or Asian, family history/genetics, poor nutrition, physical inactivity, smoking, taking certain medication, low body weight, and small-boned frame.

Osteoporosis is diagnosed with a painless bone density scan called a dual energy X-ray absorptiometry (DXA), and the most common drugs used to treat osteoporosis are called bisphosphonates while people can also seek hormone therapy.

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- Increase athletic performance
- Reduce cough and throat irritation
- Blood sugar regulation
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- Strengthen the immune system
- Improve skin
- Treat allergies
- Fight infections

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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 Apple says 90 percent of genuine Apple accessories on Amazon are fake. Apple is accusing Mobile Star LLC of selling bogus Apple-branded power adapters and cables on Amazon.

2 FBI and state police hold images of 117 million US adults on their databases.

The facial recognition in US is a mature technology and is used legitimately to combat serious and violent crimes.

3 'App shortcuts' menu and 'smart storage' are part of new preview of Android 7.1.

The final version will come December while google plans to release one more preview of Android 7.1 in November.

4 Samsung introduced the first 8GB DRAM for mobile.

New product based on 16Gigabit (Gb) LPDDR4 made in the 10-nanometer process, it will level smartphone specs to equal that of a premium ultraslim notebook.

5 All Tesla vehicles will come with new full self-driving hardware that will give the car the ability to drive better than a human.

Tesla said each car it produces will have: "Eight surround cameras provide 360-degree visibility around the car at up to 250 meters of range.

6 Verizon's Q3 revenue from IoT was \$217 million.

The telecom giant has a bevy of moving parts. On the IoT front, Verizon closed the purchase of Sensity Systems, which adds to the company's smart city efforts. Ecuador cut Assange's internet.

7 American intelligence officials told the publication that the US urged Ecuadorian politicians to stop allowing Assange to do Russia's bidding from within their territory.

8 eBay launches shopping bot for Facebook Messenger.

The eBay Shopbot is now live and ready to handle your shopping queries. Just tell mr. Bot what do you want to buy and it will come up with suggestions.

9 Samsung will be shipping the Gear S3 smartwatch in mid-November for both the US and major European nations.

Samsung's Gear S3 Classic and Frontier are both expected to sell for \$360 USD.

10 Amazon.com is considering offering internet service directly to consumers in Europe.

That would allow Amazon to bundle internet access with its Prime streaming video offering.

Selfies are replacing passwords to buy and sell items by smartphones

As phone manufacturers continue to improve the front-facing camera on their devices in order to allow users to shoot better looking selfies, the self-portrait itself is becoming more useful. Some companies are beginning to use these photographs as a replacement for a password. One such company is MasterCard, which launched an app called Identity Check Mobile. With the app, consumers using their credit card online can verify their identity by looking into the smartphone camera on their phone. The consumer is asked to blink to prevent someone from substituting a still photo.



The image is stored by Master Card on their server until it is encrypted. At that point, the photo is deleted. Next year, MasterCard says that consumer selfies will be kept inside the Identity Check Mobile app as a safety precaution. MasterCard has started this program in Europe, and 92% of the customers participating say that they want to login to mobile banking apps by using biometrics instead of using a password.

Ride-sharing service Uber is now asking its drivers to take a selfie every now and then before accepting a new fare. This is done through an app that is available to Uber drivers only. The picture is run through Microsoft's cloud-based Cognitive Services software tool which uses an algorithm to match the selfie with pictures on file. Even though some of the pictures it has on file are not very good ones, Uber was still able to verify 99% of the selfies sent in by its drivers.

Selfies snapped for identification use are converted to a series of numbers based on certain facial measurements. The width of someone's nose, or the curve of their jaw are measured and then converted to an ID code that is compared to a reference photo left on file. It isn't a system that has been perfected yet, but many companies are happy to use it. For example, U.K. bank HSBC allows banking customers to open an online account using a selfie that is compared to an uploaded driver's license photo.

(Source: WSJ)

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos thinks space can be the new internet

Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos saw Neil Armstrong step on the Moon nearly 50 years ago and the moment changed his life. Now, as the head of one of the robust online retailers in the world, Bezos says that space is the next frontier, a new internet if you will, that is desperately lacking in infrastructure to support new entrepreneurs. Speaking at the Vanity Fair New Establishment Summit in San Francisco today, Bezos said the sole purpose of his rocket venture Blue Origin is to build out the same kind of infrastructure for space that Amazon enjoyed in 1995 with the early internet.

"Two kids in their dorm room can reinvent an industry," Bezos said, referring to the strengths of the modern internet. "Two kids in their dorm room cannot do anything interesting in space." Bezos says rocket reusability needs to be improved, and both Blue Origin and Elon Musk's SpaceX are working toward the goal of vastly reducing the cost of sending payloads to space. Bezos said there's also a number of restraints right now that prevent the kind of entrepreneurial spirit that helped create Amazon do the same for a next-generation space venture. "We need to be able to put big things in space at low cost."

Bezos talked of his earliest days at Amazon more than 20 years ago, where he was driving packages him-



self to the post office with a 10-person team. "We were sitting on a bunch of a heavy lifting infrastructure," he said. "For example, there was already a gigantic network called United States Postal Service. The internet itself was sitting on top of the long distance phone network." This is the kind of infrastructure Bezos hopes to build out with Blue Origin.

Amazon has similar business ventures dedicated to the future of computing. Bezos says Amazon Web Services, which rents server power in the cloud to startups and even huge tech companies like Spotify and Netflix, is a similar heavy-lifting exercise that's paid off for his company. (AWS is Amazon's most profitable and fastest-growing division.) With the Echo speaker and Alexa assistant, Amazon is betting big on artificial intelligence and hoping its platform will be the one to dominant the living room. Like AWS and the early internet before it, the strength of Alexa depends in part on what companies are able to build on top of it.

"Every time you figure out some way of providing tools and services that allow other people to deploy their creativity, you're really onto something," Bezos said. But building that infrastructure space is still his grandest dream. "I think space is about to enter a golden age."

(Source: theverge)

Everything We Know About Nintendo Switch

Nintendo's next console is almost here. Nintendo Switch, previously codenamed NX and announced this morning, is on track to release in March 2017. When it's out, your home and portable play will be combined into one unit: Switch is a tablet with detachable controllers that can dock with your TV, playing its games anywhere.

The hanafuda maker is still playing its hand close to its chest, however, only unveiling a short, three-minute concept video of the Switch, plus a little bit of information in follow-up press releases. Nintendo promises to unveil more information later, including lists of games, system specs, and the all-important price.

You can play on your big-screen TV at home, but why stop there? Pull the Switch out of the docking station next to your TV, and you can take that game on the go. This means more than just convenience: It means that Nintendo's home and portable game libraries will now be combined into one single platform. No more having to support both the home Wii U and the portable 3DS with separate Mario Kart games—Nintendo can just create one game that's played by everyone. And you don't have to buy two pieces of Nintendo hardware to enjoy all the company's games, anymore.

You'll notice joysticks and buttons on the sides of the Switch. These will let you play when used in tandem. But you can also break those controllers off, like so many pieces of a Kit Kat bar, hand one to a friend, and play a round of competitive, portable Mario Kart anywhere you like. This will of course mean that each player's control option is limited to one joystick and a handful of buttons.



But many Nintendo games already control just fine with such a setup. You can also play local multiplayer games using two or more Switch consoles.

You also have the option of controlling a game with

one controller in each hand, like playing an old-school Wii game with the remote and nunchuk attachment. These controllers are known as Joy-Cons, and you can put them into an accessory called the Joy-Con Grip to create a single controller that's sort of shaped like a standard gamepad. And if you truly want a standard gamepad experience for hardcore gamin', you can just buy the Nintendo Switch Pro Controller.

Nintendo usually doesn't like talking up what's inside its hardware (which got it into some trouble with Wii U when many people weren't even aware that it had announced a new piece of hardware). That changes with Nintendo Switch, as it's publicly touting the fact that inside the unit is an Nvidia Tegra, the high-performance mobile gaming chip.

"The high-efficiency scalable processor includes an Nvidia GPU based on the same architecture as the world's top-performing GeForce gaming graphics cards," Nvidia wrote on its blog. But the company isn't just providing the chips, it says, noting that it was involved in the creation of the "algorithms, computer architecture, system design, system software, APIs, game engines and peripherals."

While you will surely be able to buy games digitally on Switch, physical game retailers aren't being left out of the equation. You'll be able to buy your games on tiny cards about the size of a 3DS game cart, if you're into that sort of thing. No promise that every game will get such a physical release, of course. And no details on how big those cards are.

(Source: Wired)

5 free iPhone 7 to the first five who officially change their name to "Seven iPhone"



Ukraine's largest phone retailer, Allo.ua, is carrying out an iPhone 7 giveaway with some crazy rules: the first five people that officially changes their name to "Sim iPhone" (literally, meaning "Seven iPhone", where Sim is the personal name, while iPhone is the surname) are getting the hot new phone for the equivalent of a US nickel (or 1 Ukrainian hryvnia). The website does not clarify which storage version it's giving away, but does mention that it will give away black iPhones.

Yes, this needs to be official: the store will require participants to first send in a selfie with their newly issued passport with the new name clearly printed in there, and then show up with the passport in store.

To better understand why such a crazy offer might be of consideration to people in Ukraine, it's

worth noting that both Russia and Ukraine have suffered huge devaluations of their currencies after Russian troops invaded the Crimean peninsula and the Eastern regions of Ukraine. With an official average salary of just around 5,200 Ukrainian hryvnias, the equivalent of \$203, the iPhone 7 with its prices starting at 23,500 hryvnias (\$917) is way out of reach for the majority of Ukrainian citizens. This means that it takes some four and a half average salaries to buy an iPhone 7 in Ukraine.

Of course, the whole meaning of that giveaway is some crazy publicity and while the rules are definitely insane, we've seen people in the past sell their kidneys for an iPad, so we're glad we're hearing less of those truly horrifying stories these days.

(Source: Allo.ua)

Apple's Eddy Cue: Nope, we don't want to be Netflix



Apple may have courage, but that doesn't mean it will tackle original programming on a Netflix-like scale.

Eddy Cue, Apple's senior vice president of Internet software and services, said the original shows Apple is developing today are going to stay limited. "You're not seeing a huge number of them," he said. "The real opportunity for us is to make it easier to get access to all this content." Cue was speaking Thursday at the annual Vanity Fair New Establishment Summit in San Francisco, which brings together big names in the business, technology and entertainment worlds. He appeared on stage with Richard Plepler, HBO's chairman? and CEO.

Apple and HBO are cozy, highlighted by the launch of HBO Now on Apple devices last year. The premium channel's first standalone subscription app was one of the most highly anticipated of its kind, and HBO grant-

ed Apple an exclusive on sign-ups: If you wanted to be among the first to try it, and catch the season premiere of "Game of Thrones," you had to sign up through an Apple product.

But Apple has long been grappling to put together its own TV service, and it's starting to create its own original programming, like a reality-TV-style series about app developers and a scripted show with Dr. Dre. On stage, Cue noted that Apple's original-video efforts will revolve around topics in which it already has expertise, like music-related programming related to iTunes and Apple Music.

Separately, Plepler dismissed the notion that HBO would start selling subscriptions to its individual shows, dashing the idea that a "Game of Thrones" or "Westworld" fanatic could pay for that single slice of its network. "We want to get you inside, and once we do that...you're going to find other things that you like," he said.

(SOURCE: CNET)

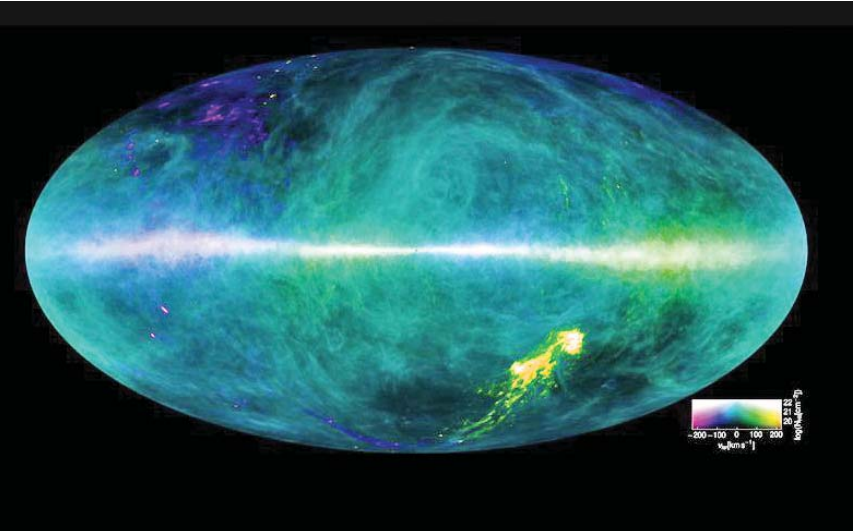
This breathtaking map traces hydrogen throughout the Milky Way

When it comes to the atoms and elements of the universe, hydrogen rules. It makes up nearly everything — from stars to galaxies. And by tracking it around the night sky, scientists have learned a lot, even details about the origins of the cosmos.

Now, an international team of scientists have pieced together data gathered from two of the world's most powerful telescopes to create the most detailed map of hydrogen atoms in the Milky Way to date.

Radio telescopes are critical tools for mapping the night sky, but even the most powerful ones can only glimpse a tiny piece of the observable universe. So in order to make this map, it took teams of researchers working on opposite sides of the world joining forces, George Dvorsky reports for Gizmodo.

"We've kind of just put the data together from both hemispheres, a bit like putting maps of our own world together from the Northern Hemisphere and the Southern Hemisphere and picturing the globe for the first time," Lister Staveley-Smith, a researcher from the International Center for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR) who ran the project, tells Emily Piesse for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.



Radio telescope

Half of the team on this project were based out of Australia's CSIRO radio telescope, while the others pored through data gathered by the Max-Planck radio telescope in Germany. But even with two teams covering each hemisphere, it took

millions of observations and ten years of work to stitch this map together, Dvorsky reports.

Neutral hydrogen atoms may be common and easy to detect, but making a map of this scale took some serious effort. Not only did it take time to scan

every inch of the observable skies from both the northern and southern hemispheres, but the researchers also needed to filter out any distortions in the data that may have been caused by human technology or simple glitches, Ben Sullivan reports for Motherboard.

"Radio 'noise' caused by mobile phones and broadcast stations pollute the faint emissions coming from stars and galaxies in the universe," Jürgen Kerp, an astronomer with the University of Bonn, says in a statement. "So sophisticated computer algorithms have to be developed to clean each individual data point of this unwanted human interference."

For the scientists, however, the years of effort have paid off. The end result maps trails of neutral hydrogen atoms across the Milky Way and illuminates the massive, gaseous structures that link the galaxy's stars. Now that these trails have been traced in great detail, astronomers can better understand the chemical makeup of our own galaxy as well as more distant ones, Sullivan reports.

"Essentially, hydrogen is the element of the universe," Kerp tells Sullivan. "Formed within the first three minutes after the Big Bang [it's] the material that eventually forms stars."

(Source: smithsonian.com)

Radio telescopes are critical tools for mapping the night sky, but even the most powerful ones can only glimpse a tiny piece of the observable universe.

Researchers plan to create superhard materials using insane amounts of pressure

Researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham have created artificial diamonds they hope will be capable of generating previously unimaginable amounts of pressure. Keep your fingers away!

Or maybe you can — because, as a professor and scholar of physics at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Vohra has led a team of researchers in creating artificial diamonds by generating previously unseen amounts of pressure.

"When you fill your car tire at the gas station, you use approximately two atmospheres of pressure," he told Digital Trends. "With our work, the goal is eventually to get to 10 million atmospheres, which is the equivalent of the pressure at the center of Saturn. By comparison, the pressure at the center of the Earth is

around 3.6 million atmospheres."

The key to the work is a tiny nanocrystalline-diamond anvil, which has been created in a clean room manufacturing facility at the university. "Our main innovation is the ability to grow a nanocrystalline diamond on top of a single crystal," Vohra continued. The "reason this is exciting is because it's possible to achieve much higher pressures using these nanocrystalline diamonds."

Nanocrystalline pillar

At just 30 micrometers wide and 15 micrometers tall, the team's nanocrystalline pillar of diamond is tiny, but astonishingly effective. In a test at Argonne National Laboratory in Lemont, Illinois, it showed no sign of deformation when exposed to 264 gigapascals of pressure.

This number is roughly 75 percent of the pressure found at the center of the Earth.

"In the last two years, we've had a breakthrough in terms of generating pressure due to these nanocrystalline diamonds," he continued.

So what is the goal of the miniature diamond anvils? Ultimately, there are several — but one will be the possibility of creating as-yet-unknown new materials. Since massive amounts of force in the natural world are capable of turning carbon into diamonds, or volcanic ash into slate, the idea is that increased pressure can result in materials we've not even dreamed of.

"There's a lot interest in this field from a material science perspective," Vohra concluded. The "ability to generate ex-

treme conditions and the possibility of synthesizing new materials under pressure is very exciting. One of the areas we're looking at is the creation of novel superhard materials. Diamonds are an incredibly hard material, but they still have limitations when you reach extreme temperatures. Under extreme conditions, a whole new kind of material science becomes possible."

Next up for the project is the goal of creating smaller grain sizes in the nanocrystalline diamond, which Vohra hopes will make the material even stronger. It's also hoped that ion beams can be used to machine the top of the micro-anvil to a hemispherical shape, thereby creating an even narrower contact point for greater pressure.

(Source: Digital Trends)

Robomussels' used to monitor climate change from the ocean bed

'Robomussels', tiny aquatic robots that resemble mussels, are being used to monitor climate change and its impact on biodiversity.

The devices, developed by Northeastern University scientist Brian Helmuth, have the same shape, size and colour of actual mussels and are fitted with miniature sensors that track temperatures inside the mussel beds.

For the past 18 years, every 10 to 15 minutes, Helmuth and a global research team of 48 scientists have used robomussels to track internal body temperature, which is determined by the warmth of the surrounding air or water and the amount of solar radiation the devices absorb.

They place the robots inside mussel beds in oceans around the globe and record temperatures. The researchers have built a database of nearly two decades worth of data, enabling scientists to pinpoint areas of unusual warming, intervene to help curb damage to vital marine ecosystems and develop strategies that could prevent extinction of certain species.

Effects of climate change

By tracking the effects of climate change, the findings can reveal emerging hotspots so policymakers and scientists can step in and relieve stressors such as erosion and water acidification before it's too late.

The latest State Of The Climate report, which was released in August, found that dozens of climate records



were broken in 2015 and that it was the hottest year on record, with a broad range of temperature peaks documented.

"They look exactly like mussels, but they have little green blinking lights in them," said Helmuth. "You basically pluck out a mussel and then glue the device to the rock right inside the mussel bed. They enable us to link our field observations with the physiological impact of global climate change on these ecologically and economically important animals."

Mussels have often been used as a climate change barometer because they rely on external sources of heat such as air temperature and sun exposure for their body heat and thrive, or not, depending on those conditions.

Computational models

Using fieldwork along with mathematical and computational models, Helmuth forecasts the patterns of growth, reproduction and survival of mussels in intertidal zones.

"These data sets tell us when and where to look for the effects of climate change," Helmuth said. "Without them we could miss early warning signs of trouble."

The robomussels' near-continuous measurements serve as an early warning system. "If we start to see sites where the animals are regularly getting to temperatures that are right below what kills them, we know that any slight increase is likely to send them over the edge, and we can act," he said.

"Losing mussel beds is essentially like clearing a forest," says Helmuth. "If they go, everything that's living in them will go. They are a major food supply for many species, including lobsters and crabs. They also function as filters along near-shore waters, clearing huge amounts of particulates."

(Source: E & T Magazine)



State University and lead author of the study, told AFP.

All 301 species identified are found exclusively in developing countries, with the highest concentration in southeast Asia (113), followed by Africa (91), the rest of Asia (61) and Latin America (38).

The countries with the most native

More than 300 wild mammal species in Asia, Africa and Latin America are being driven to extinction by humanity's voracious appetite for bushmeat, according to a world-first assessment released Wednesday.

The species at risk range from rats to rhinoceros, and include docile, ant-eating pangolins as well as flesh-ripping big cats.

The findings, published in the journal Royal Society Open Science, are evidence of a "global crisis" for warm-blooded land animals, 15 top conservation scientists concluded.

"Terrestrial mammals are experiencing a massive collapse in their population sizes and geographical ranges around the world," the study warned.

This decline, it said, was part of a larger trend known as a "mass extinction event," only the sixth time in half a billion years that Earth's species are dying out at more than 1,000 times the usual rate.

Besides eating them, humans are rob-

bing mammals of their natural habitats through agriculture and urbanization, and decimating them through pollution, disease and climate change.

According to the Union for the Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of endangered species, a quarter of 4,556 land mammals assessed are on the road to annihilation.

For 301 of these threatened species, "hunting by humans" -- mainly for food, but also as purported health and virility boosters, and trophies such as horns or pelts -- is the main threat, according to the comprehensive review of scientific literature.

More than 100 primates, including gorillas and snub-nosed monkeys, and dozens of hooved animals from oxen to antelope, are at dire risk from hunting.

Species decline

"These species will continue to decline unless there is major global action to save them," Bill Ripple, a professor at Oregon

species under siege from hunting were Madagascar (46), Indonesia (37), the Philippines (14) and Brazil (10).

The scale of the problem is daunting: some 89,000 tons of wild meat -- with a market value of about \$200 million (180 million euros) -- is butchered every year from the Brazilian Amazon alone, the study found.

On current trends, the prospects for these and other mammals is not bright, the authors said.

"Forty of these species were already classed as critically endangered by 1996, indicating that there has been little or no conservation progress in reversing their fate," they note.

This, despite dozens of major conservation conferences and summits, and the expansion of protected areas.

The impact of extinction may be felt well beyond the loss of individual species, the scientists cautioned.

(Source: AFP)

Researchers: Limits on drilling not enough to protect bird

Oil and gas development in the Western U.S. could continue to cause sage grouse numbers to decline despite limits on drilling meant to protect the struggling bird species, according to scientists.

Researchers from the U.S. Geological Survey and Colorado State University reached the conclusion after examining the effects of drilling on greater sage grouse over a 25-year period ending in 2008.

They found that populations of the chicken-sized bird dropped 14 percent annually in areas with at least 10 oil or gas wells per square mile.

Federal land management rules recently crafted to protect grouse across their 11-state range would allow that many wells or more in areas crucial to the birds' long-term survival.

Populations were stable when no wells were present, the researchers concluded in their findings published in The Journal of Wildlife Management.

Kathleen Sgamma with the Western Energy Alliance industry group said the researchers ignored changes to federal and state land use policies meant to concentrate drilling in some areas and avoid impacting the most sensitive sage grouse habitat.

Study co-author Cameron Aldridge said more concentrated drilling may reduce impacts. But that doesn't mean it won't affect grouse.

"It's not a well or well pad that causes a decline. It's all of the associated activity that contributes collectively," said Aldridge, an associate professor at Colorado State University's Department of Ecosystem Science and Sustainability.

(Source: AP)

Adults usually can't catch kids in a lie

A new study found that adults correctly classified children's truths and lies 54 percent of the time, or only slightly better than chance. The findings are based on an analysis of 45 previously published experiments involving nearly 8,000 adults and about 1,800 children in all, the researchers said.

"(The result) is significantly above chance when you talk about it in statistical terms, but in practical terms, when you say 54 percent and chance is at 50 percent, it's maybe not as significant as we want it to be," said study lead researcher Jennifer Gongola, a doctoral student of psychology and social behavior at the University of California, Irvine.

Children as young as 3 years old can tell a lie, but there is little research on how good adults are at discerning those lies. To learn more, Gongola and her colleagues looked at earlier work, combining studies to produce a big sample for analysis.

The experiments that the researchers looked at were set up in different ways, but a classic setup involved a researcher asking whether a child had looked at a toy after he or she was asked not to do so. A video recording done when the adult was out of the room revealed whether the child was lying.

Overall, adults were better at identifying truths, correctly spotting true statements at an average rate of 64 percent of the time, the researchers found. In contrast, adults caught lies at an average rate of only about 48 percent, the researchers said.

"We're finding what's referred to as a truth bias," Gongola said. "People tend to assume that they're being told the truth even when you tell them that 50 percent of the children they view are telling a lie."

(Source: Live Science)

A new dinosaur species has been discovered in Australia

Paleontologists have discovered a new species of dinosaur in Australia. The wide-hipped, long-necked, four-legged plant-eater was about half the length of a basketball court, and its shoulders stood as high as the hoop. Dinosaur fossils in Australia are exceedingly rare, and this discovery could help scientists understand how these massive creatures spread across the planet millions of years ago.



David Elliott, now the chairman of the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum, stumbled across the fossils by chance in 2005. He was herding sheep in the northern Australian town of Winton when he discovered what he thought were fossilized limb bones. When his wife Judy Elliott fit two of the fossils together, they realized that the bones were in fact the toe of a massive, plant-eating dinosaur. The rest of the skeleton revealed that it was an entirely new species from the group of vegetarian dinosaurs called sauropods.

Today, after more than 10 years of work, a team of scientists led by Australian paleontologist Stephen Poropat officially published their discovery in the journal Scientific Reports. They named the species Savannasaurus elliotorum after the Elliott family and the grassy region where they discovered it. This is an important discovery, says Matthew Lamanna, a curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pennsylvania who was not involved in this study.

(Source: The Verge)

Polluting sand mines in Tehran shut down for good

T T SOCIETY TEHRAN — Sand mines located in south-western Tehran, which had been one of the main sources of pollution in the city, were closed permanently, Mehr news agency reported.



Owing to the district 18 municipality's serious bid for closing down the sand mines which are claimed to be the main hotspots for air pollution in Tehran particularly during cold seasons the mines are forced to stop operating permanently. The mines illegal activities have contributed to the water contamination, air and noise pollution and in general they were a threat for the residents' health, district 18 mayor Behrouz Mohammadzadeh said.

Thanks to Tehran City Council, judiciary, and police force we finally succeeded in closing down these illegal units, Mohammadzadeh added.

By the beginning of the cold season worries over persisting air pollution usually caused by temperature inversion start to grow. It is believed that along with cars and sand storms from neighboring countries, sand mines are also playing a huge role in intensifying the suffocating air pollution.

LEARN ENGLISH

Having a Backup Plan

Jerome: This is a very dangerous **undertaking**. Do you have a **backup plan** if anything goes wrong?

Sandy: It'll work. I've come up with **contingencies** for every possible **setback**.

Jerome: It's just that I'd like to know we have some **recourse** if anything goes wrong.

Sandy: My plan is **foolproof**. **Failure is not an option**.

Jerome: But don't you think we should consider some **alternatives**? If, **God forbid**, anything goes wrong, it would be good to have an **escape hatch**, don't you think?

Sandy: That won't be necessary. If anything goes wrong, **it's every man for himself**.

Jerome: What?! I thought we were in this together? What happened to, **"Stick with me and you can't go wrong"**?

Sandy: That was before I realized what a **liability** you are.

Jerome: A liability?!

Sandy: In a dangerous plan like this, there are **bound to be** some **casualties** — a sacrificial lamb or two.

Jerome: Yes, but I didn't know you'd **double-cross** me before we even got started!

(Source: eslpod.com)

Words & phrases

undertaking: an important job, piece of work, or activity that you are responsible for

backup plan: an alternative plan in case something bad happens

contingency: an event or situation that might happen in the future, especially one that could cause problems

setback: a problem that delays or prevents progress, or makes things worse than they were

resource: all the money, property, skills etc. that you have available to use when you need them

foolproof: a foolproof method, plan, system etc. is certain to be successful; infallible

failure is not an option: meaning you cannot choose to fail and should try as hard as you can to win

alternative: an alternative idea, plan etc. is different from the one you have and can be used instead

God forbid: used to emphasize that you hope that something will not happen

escape hatch: a means of avoiding a troublesome situation; a ready or handy way out

it's every man for himself: used to say that people will not help each other

stick with someone: to stay close to someone

you can't go wrong: you are sure to succeed

liability: someone or something that is likely to cause problems for someone

be bound to be: used to say that something should have been expected

casualty: someone or something that suffers as a result of a particular event or situation

double-cross: to cheat someone, especially after you have agreed to do something dishonest with them

Tehran hosts 2nd Rectors' Forum for Top Iranian, Russian Universities

T T SOCIETY TEHRAN — The 2nd Rectors' Forum for Top Iranian and Russian Universities convened chancellors of 33 top universities from the two countries in Tehran on Thursday to examine ways of fostering academic cooperation.

University chancellors from top 13 Iranian universities along with top 20 Russian universities, Iranian Science Minister Mohammad Farhadi, Russian ambassador to Iran Levan Dzhagaryan, and rector of Lomonosov Moscow State University Viktor Antonovich Sadovnichiy attended the one-day event, IRNA news agency reported.

"With both countries intellectuals and academics we can strengthen the two countries cooperation as science and technology know no bounds and they are global matters by nature," Iranian science minister suggested.

Mentioning Razi science center in Moscow and Lomonosov center in Shahid Beheshti University in Iran Farhadi explained that so far are the two countries have signed some 30 memorandums of understanding



(MOUs) saying, "I hope we come up with plans of action to implement these MOUs over the next forum."

He further noted that student and faculty exchange programs can help develop

cooperation between the two sides.

"So far several research projects in fields of medical sciences and laser application, immunology and medications for incurable diseases have been co-con-

ducted by Iran and Russia," he added.

Russian ambassador Dzhagaryan, for his part, explained that without researchers and academics cooperation none of the current achievements would be brought to fruition.

The rector of Lomonosov Moscow State University also pointed out that Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation Olga Vasilyeva is also pleased to see that the two countries are seeking academic cooperation.

Sadovnichiy also highlighted that some 35 percent of Iranian and Russian scientists are co-conducting research programs.

Shahid Beheshti University chancellor, Mohammad-Mahdi Tehrani, also said that some 120 joint projects are submitted to the forum of which 12 would be approved and executed by 2017.

The first Rectors' Forum for Top Iranian and Russian Universities in Moscow was hosted by Lomonosov Moscow State University and presided by the Rector Sadovnichiy on October 28, 2015, which resulted in signing some 15 MOUs.

Some 47,700 girls at risk of early, forced marriage, every day: UNFPA

Executive Director of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin in his statement on the occasion of the launch of The State of World Population 2016 said every day, 47,700 girls, many of them as young as age 10, are at risk of early and forced marriage.

In some countries and communities, when a girl reaches age 10 and approaches puberty, she may suddenly be seen not as a girl capable of anything she sets her mind to, but as a commodity that may be sold, traded or trafficked for marriage, for childbearing, for free labor, for sexual exploitation.

For millions of girls, the arrival of puberty marks the beginning of a lifetime of poverty, powerlessness and missed opportunities.

The State of World Population shows that girls who reach adulthood with an education and their health and rights intact stand to triple their lifetime income. Higher incomes and greater productivity can help fuel progress for entire countries.

Over the next 15 years alone, developing countries together stand to gain or forfeit at least \$21 billion, depending on whether they invest in the well-being, education and independence of their 10-year-old girls today.

The State of World Population 2016 shows that our collective future depends on how we support today's 60 million 10-year-old girls today as they start their journey from adolescence to adulthood.

Today's 10-year-old girl will be 24 when progress towards the United Nations' new development agenda is tallied in 2030.

With support from family, community and nation, and the full realization of her rights, a 10-year-old girl can thrive and help bring about the future we all want.

(Source: UNIC)

IN FOCUS Tehran Times/Amir-Ali Razaqi



Namad-mali (literally meaning felt beating) is a traditional craft being practiced in Iran to make namad, a traditional rug, out of woolen fabrics by rolling and pressing them.

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → E

Organs of brain dead soldier save 3 lives

Family of a brain dead soldier, who was declared brain dead following a June 22 road accident, donated his organs and saved three lives.

Vahid Hallaj, a soldier who was among the passengers boarding a bus coming back from the garrison in Kerman, was announced brain dead on August 23 after spending two months in a critical condition at the hospital.

Vahid's kidneys and liver were the organs viable for transplant. His liver went to a 39-year-old male patients and his kidneys went to two patients; a 47-year old male and a 48-year old female, Mehr news agency quoted Health Ministry spokesman Iraj Harirchi as saying on Thursday.

اعضای بدن سرباز مرگ مغزی به سه تن دیگر زندگی دوباره بخشید

خانواده ی سرباز مرگ مغزی که چندی پیش بر اثر حادثه ی اتوبوس حامل سربازان در سوم تیرماه در بیمارستان بستری شده بود با اهدای اعضای بدن وی موافقت کردند و به سه تن دیگر زندگی دوباره بخشیدند.

وحید حلاج، سرباز وظیفه ای که در میان مسافران اتوبوس پادگان ۰۵ کرمان بود و مدت دو ماه در شرایط وخیمی به سر می برد، دوم شهریورماه دچار مرگ مغزی شد.

به گزارش خبرگزاری مهر ایرج حریرچی سخنگوی وزارت بهداشت روز سه شنبه گفت: دو کلیه و کبد وحید برای پیوند مناسب تشخیص داده شد. کبد وی به یک بیمار مرد ۳۹ساله و کلیه های او هم به دو بیمار خانم و آقای ۴۸ و ۴۷ ساله اهدا شده است.

ENGLISH PROVERB

One man's trash is another man's treasure

■ **Explanation**: something that one person considers worthless may be considered valuable by someone else.

■ **For example**: John: Why would anyone want to hang a picture like that on the wall? Alex: One man's trash is another man's treasure.

PHRASAL VERB

Bog somebody/ something down

■ **Meaning**: if a process or plan becomes bogged down, it is delayed so that no progress is made

■ **For example**: Talks to settle the pay dispute have become bogged down.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Away with the fairies

■ **Explanation**: someone who is in such a dreamy state that they are not totally in touch with reality and give the impression of being slightly mad

■ **For example**: It's no use trying to explain the problem to her, she's away with the fairies!



Every action has a reaction. We have one planet; one chance.

Iraqi forces make more gains in Mosul battle

Iraqi army soldiers, backed by Popular Mobilization Units and Kurdish Peshmerga forces, have established control over more areas near Mosul as they are trying to drive Daesh militants out of their last stronghold in the country and deal a death blow to them.

Meanwhile, ISIL terrorist group launched a major counter-attack on the city of Kirkuk on Friday as Iraqi and Kurdish forces pursued operations to seize territory around Mosul in preparation for an offensive on the terrorists' last major stronghold in Iraq.

ISIL's assault on Kirkuk, which lies in an oil-producing region, killed 18 members of the security forces and workers at a power station outside the city, including two Iranians, a hospital source said.

Crude oil production facilities were not targeted and the power supply continued uninterrupted in the city. Kirkuk is located east of Hawija, a pocket still under control of Islamic State that lies between Baghdad and Mosul.

With air and ground support from the U.S.-led coalition, Iraqi government forces captured eight villages south and southeast of Mosul. Kurdish forces attacking from the north and east also captured several villages, according to statements from their respective military commands overnight.

The offensive that started on Monday to capture Mosul is expected to become the biggest battle fought in Iraq since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003.

The United Nations says Mosul could require the biggest humanitarian relief operation in the world, with worst-case scenario forecasts of up to a million people being uprooted.

About 1.5 million residents are still believed to be inside Mosul. ISIL has taken 550 families from villages around Mosul and is holding them close to ISIL locations in the city, probably as human shields, a spokeswoman for the UN human rights office said in Geneva.

The fighting has forced 5,640 people to flee their homes so far from the vicinity of the city, the International Organization for Migration said late on Thursday.

The Turkish Red Crescent said it was sending aid trucks to northern Iraq with food and humanitarian supplies



for 10,000 people displaced by fighting around Mosul.

■ Explosive device

A U.S. service member died on Thursday from wounds sustained in an improvised explosive device blast near the city.

Roughly 5,000 U.S. forces are in Iraq. More than 100 of them are embedded with Iraqi and Kurdish Peshmerga forces, advising commanders and helping them ensure coalition air power hits the right targets, officials say.

However, the Kurdish military command complained that air support wasn't enough on Thursday.

"Regrettably a number of Peshmerga have paid the ultimate sacrifice for us to deliver today's gains against ISIL. Further, Global Coalition warplane and support were not as decisive as in the past," the Kurdish command said in a statement.

Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi, addressing anti-ISIL coalition allies meeting in Paris via video link, said the offensive was advancing more quickly than planned.

A senior Kurdish military official told Reuters the offensive by the Iraqi and Kurdish forces was moving steadily as they push into villages on the outskirts of Mosul.

But he expected the offensive to slow down once they approach the city itself, where ISIL has built trenches, dug tunnels

and might use civilians as human shields.

"I believe it will be more clear within the coming weeks once we get rid of those villages and we come closer to the city how quickly this war will end. If they (ISIL) decide to defend the actual city then the process will slow down."

Once inside Mosul, Iraqi special forces would have to go from street to street and from neighborhood to neighborhood to clear explosives and booby traps, the official said.

ISIL denied that government forces had advanced. Under the headline "The crusade on Nineveh gets a lousy start," the group's weekly online magazine Al-Nabaa said it repelled assaults on all fronts, killing dozens in ambushes and suicide attacks and destroying dozens of vehicles including tanks.

■ Holed UP

In Kirkuk, ISIL attacked several police buildings and a power station in the early hours of Friday and some of the attackers remained holed up in a mosque and an abandoned hotel.

The militants also cut the road between the city and the power station 30 km (20 miles) to the north.

Several dozen took part in the assault, according to security sources who couldn't confirm a claim by Islamic State that it had taken a Kurdish police officer hostage.

The assailants in Kirkuk came from

outside the city, said the head of Iraq's Special Forces, Lieutenant General Talib Shaghathi, speaking on a frontline east of Mosul. Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Ghasemi reacted to the killing of the Iranian citizens in Kirkuk, saying these attacks are "the last breath of terrorists in Iraq".

At least eight militants were killed, either by blowing themselves up or in clashes with the security forces, the sources said. Kurdish forces had dislodged the militants from all the police and public buildings they had seized before dawn, they said.

■ Machine gun

Kurdish NRT TV footage showed machine gun fire hitting a drab two-floor building that used to be a hotel, and cars burning in a nearby street.

ISIL claimed the attacks in online statements, and authorities declared a curfew in the city where Kurdish forces were getting reinforcements.

Kurdish Peshmerga fighters took control of Kirkuk in 2014, after the Iraqi army withdrew from the region, fleeing an Islamic State advance through northern and western Iraq.

On the frontline south of Mosul, thick black smoke lingered from oil wells that Islamic State torched to evade air surveillance, in the region of Qayyara.

The army and the U.S.-led coalition took back this region in August and are using its air base as a hub to support the offensive on Mosul.

"Long live Iraq, death to Daesh," was painted on a wall near an army checkpoint there, referring to an Arabic acronym of ISIL.

The army Humvees at the checkpoint carried Shia flags, revealing that the soldiers of this unit belonged to Iraq's majority community.

The nation's top Shia cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, on Friday renewed a call to spare civilians.

"All those who are participating in the battle have to respect the humanitarian principles and refrain from seeking vengeance," said a sermon delivered in Sistani's name in the holy Shia city of Kerbala by one of his representatives.

(Source: Reuters)

South Africa to quit International Criminal Court

South Africa is pulling out of the International Criminal Court (ICC) because its obligations are inconsistent with laws giving sitting leaders diplomatic immunity, according to government officials.

Justice Minister Michael Masutha said on Friday that the government will soon submit a bill in parliament to withdraw from the court in The Hague, a move that comes as several African countries express concerns over what they call the ICC's disproportionate targeting of the continent.

The bill will propose that South Africa repeal the Rome Statute that created the court because the statute is "in conflict and inconsistent with" the country's diplomatic immunity law, said Masutha.

"A difficult choice had to be made," Masutha told reporters in the capital Pretoria.

Last year, South Africa said it planned to leave the ICC after it faced criticism for not arresting Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir, who is accused of genocides and war crimes, when he visited the country. Bashir has denied the accusations.

"Officials here say the ICC unfairly targets African governments and leaders," Al Jazeera's Haru Mutasa, reporting from Johannesburg, said.

Mutasa said that government began the process of withdrawing from the ICC last year after civil society

groups dragged the government to court over its decision to let Bashir go.

A document seen by Reuters at the United Nations on Thursday showed that the move would take effect one year after notice is formally received by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The document was dated October 19, and signed by Maite Nkoana-Mashabane, South Africa's minister of international relations and cooperation.

"The Republic of South Africa has found that its obligations with respect to the peaceful resolution of conflicts at times are incompatible with the interpretation given by the International Criminal Court," the document said.

"The Republic of South Africa is committed to fight impunity and to bring those who commit atrocities and international crimes to justice and, as a founding member of the African Union, promotes international human rights and the peaceful resolution of conflicts on the African continent," it added.

"In complex and multi-faceted peace negotiations and sensitive post-conflict situations, peace and justice must be viewed as complementary and not mutually exclusive."

The ICC, which opened in July 2002 and has 124 member states, is the first legal body with permanent

international jurisdiction to prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Another African country, Burundi, appeared set to become the first county to withdraw from the Rome Statute, the 1998 treaty establishing the global court, after its parliament voted last week to leave.

Burundi's President Pierre Nkurunziza signed a decree on Tuesday, but the United Nations has not yet been officially notified.

Other African countries have also threatened withdrawal, accusing the court of disproportionately bringing charges against suspected human rights abusers from the continent.

Al Jazeera's Mutasa said South Africa's move "will have huge ramifications" on the African continent, citing divisions within the African Union as "some countries want to stay while some of them want to leave."

"If Africa does leave the ICC, human rights activists are concerned [whether] there will be a body that will hold leaders to account if they commit human rights abuses and violations," our correspondent said.

The opinions of ordinary Africans were also divided, Mutasa said. "They want the ICC to broaden its reach, and perhaps target leaders from the US and Europe."

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Pentagon chief in Turkey stress Iraqi sovereignty

Defense Secretary Ash Carter, arriving in Turkey Friday, said he will tell Turkish leaders that it's important to respect Iraqi sovereignty. But he stopped short of saying that he will press the Turks to remove any forces that are operating in Iraq without Baghdad's invitation.

Carter's expected meetings in Ankara with top leaders and defense officials come amid escalating tensions between Turkey and Iraq, over Turkish military operations in northern Iraq as allied forces move to retake Mosul from ISIL terrorists.

"We've long had discussions with everyone about this - about respect for Iraqi sovereignty in the course of the conduct of the counter-ISIL campaign," Carter told reporters traveling with him to Turkey. "It's very important for all the members of the counter-ISIL campaign to participate in that integrated way. Will I be talking with the Turks about that? Absolutely."

It was not clear how strong Carter intended to be in his discussions with Turkish leaders, or what impact it could have on the situation.

The key is to "keep everybody focused on the object here which is to defeat ISIL," Carter said, using another acronym for ISIL, "because that is a threat to all three of us."

The angry rhetoric between Iraq and Turkey has grown as the Mosul campaign continues to take shape.

Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan have traded insults, and earlier this week thousands of followers of a Shiite cleric rallied outside the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad, calling for an end to the Turkish "occupation."

They were referring to the presence of some 500 Turkish troops at a base north of Mosul who have been training Sunni and Kurdish fighters since last December. Baghdad says the troops are there without permission and has called on them to withdraw. Ankara has refused, and insists it will play a role in liberating the city.

The Turkish troops are training Kurdish forces loyal to Kurdish leader Masoud Barzani.

At the same time, the U.S. is also looking into reports that Turkish jets and artillery struck Syrian Kurds in northern Syria on Thursday, killing as many as 200.

Carter also said he has few details on the incident, and questions remain about the casualty total and whether or not the Kurdish forces were ones backed by the U.S.

Turkish Defense Minister Fikri Isik told Carter that Turkey expects the Syrian Kurdish militia to leave the Syrian town of Manbij and to move east of the river Euphrates, as promised.

"We cannot trust the words of terror organizations; we cannot know what the (Kurdish militants) will do tomorrow," a Turkish official quoted Isik as telling Carter. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the conversation publicly.

The Syrian Kurdish forces have been a source of tension between NATO allies Turkey and the United States. The U.S. considers the militia group - the People's Protection Units or YPG - to be the most effective force in the fight against the ISIS in Syria. Turkey says it's an extension of its own outlawed Kurdish militants who have carried out a series of deadly attacks in Turkey in the past and considers it to be a terrorist organization.

Carter said he also wants to talk to Turkish leaders about the ongoing effort to secure Turkey's border with Syria. Turkey has stepped up its military air and ground operations against ISIL in Syria, and recently was able to help retake the symbolically important town of Dabiq from ISIL.

That, said Carter, was a "very significant victory."

(Source: AP)

Al-Nusra Front & allies sabotage humanitarian aid delivery efforts to east Aleppo: Lavrov

Militants from Al-Nusra Front (now Jabhat Fateh al-Sham) and Ahrar ash-Sham terrorist groups are sabotaging UN efforts, supported by Damascus and Moscow, to deliver humanitarian aid to eastern Aleppo, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Friday.

"Both Al-Nusra Front and Ahrar ash-Sham, along other organizations cooperating with them, are ultimately sabotaging UN efforts to restore the delivery of humanitarian assistance to eastern Aleppo, [carried out] with [Russia's] support and the support of the Syrian government," Lavrov told the press on Friday. "[They] explicitly shell those routes through which such humanitarian aid can be delivered"

Lavrov said that according to Russian intelligence, all the groups which have been operating in Aleppo are "one way or another under the command" of Al-Nusra Front, "which controls eastern Aleppo."

He also noted that those terrorists have been preventing the exit of civilians from eastern Aleppo, as well as blocking the exit of militants who had expressed readiness to respond to the call by the United Nations to leave the area.

The UN humanitarian agency on Friday said it is currently unable to conduct medical evacuations from Aleppo due to lack of security. The agency said it plans to use Days 3 and 4 of the four-day pause in fighting in the Syrian city for medical evacuations and aid delivery, but it is still awaiting security guarantees, AP reported.

Syria's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, Husam Aala, told Reuters the Syrian government had given the UN the green light for medical evacuations two days ago and had buses and ambulances ready. Evacuations, however, have not begun as militants have been attacking humanitarian corridors and crossing points with mortars and gunfire.

Addressing the press, Sergey Lavrov also expressed concern that Al-Nusra Front militants have been unwilling to leave Aleppo, despite being given the chance.

"We are very much concerned that, despite the goodwill gestures that Moscow and Damascus have undertaken, we see Al-Nusra Front fighters refusing to leave the city," Lavrov said, noting that the same applies to Ahrar al-Sham, which has been expressing solidarity with Al-Nusra Front, although the West considers it 'moderate'.

(Source: RT)

Venezuela suspends recall vote against President Maduro

Electoral officials in Venezuela have suspended a recall referendum campaign against President Nicolas Maduro, a move that further challenges opposition efforts to oust the socialist leader in the wake of a deepening economic crisis.

Thursday's decision by the electoral council came after several regional courts voided the results of an earlier signature drive against Maduro due to fraud allegations.

Later on Thursday, former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles said he and seven other opposition leaders had received court orders banning them from leaving Venezuela.

Capriles, who was the opposition's candidate in both 2012 and 2013 presidential elections against then-President Hugo Chavez and Maduro respectively, shared an image of the court order barring him from leaving the country on his official Twitter account.

"Once again they are wasting their

time. Wait for announcements in the next few hours," he said on Friday.

The opposition blames Maduro for an economic implosion that has seen severe food shortages, a healthcare crisis, hyperinflation, violence and looting in a once-booming country that is home to the world's largest oil reserves.

Capriles previously blasted Thursday's decision to suspend the recall as unconstitutional.

"We alert the diplomatic corps in our country that the government today is pushing toward a very dangerous scenario," Capriles said on Twitter.

The electoral council's decision was in response to rulings by courts in four Venezuelan states that found there was fraud in the initial stage of the petition drive. During that stage the opposition had collected signatures from 1 percent of the electorate.

"In adherence with the constitution, the National Electoral Council abides by

the decisions ordered by the tribunals and has sent instructions to postpone the process of signature gathering until new judicial instructions are known," the council said in a statement.

To trigger a stay-or-go referendum, the opposition needed to collect and validate some four million signatures from 20 percent of the electorate in 24 states over three days next week.

The opposition needed a referendum this year because under Venezuela's constitutional rules, should Maduro lose a plebiscite next year, his vice president would take over rather than there being a new election, denying the opposition their opportunity to take power after 17 years of socialism.

The ruling comes on the heels of another decision by the electoral council this week to suspend by about six months state elections that were slated for December, giving the government more breath-

ing room before going to the polls

Polls say a majority of Venezuelans want Maduro gone.

The opposition staged its largest street demonstration in years on September 1, with a rally in Caracas demanding a referendum against Maduro be held in 2016. But apart from that protest, most anti-government rallies this year have been relatively small and quick to disperse.

On Thursday night, opposition leaders started calling for more massive street protests in the face of election authority's ruling.

"This is the time for national unity," wrote former presidential candidate Maria Corina Machado on her Twitter account.

"Every single person must take to the streets, with strength and without fear, to make the transition a reality."

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Premier League should learn from Pep Guardiola, not pour scorn on him

By Jacob Steinberg

What is your favourite thing about the Premier League, Pep? Is it the intensity or is it the passion? The intense passion or the passionate intensity? Maybe it's the intense intensity. Or maybe it's the passionate passion. Maybe it's both. Take your time. You don't have to answer straight away. But you do love us, don't you?

How could you not be moved and thrilled and even a little seduced by the musky no-nonsense masculinity of English football, where there are never any easy games and it's so much more competitive and exciting than the craven trash they serve up in

Spain and Germany. Validate us, Pep. Hold us, look into our eyes, tell us that we have the best league in the world.

Such was the tone of the questioning after Manchester City were held at home by Everton last Saturday, an entertaining 1-1 draw that took place while Barcelona were rinsing Deportivo La Coruña 4-0, offering definitive proof that La Liga is a league full of wastrels and flakes who are all too willing to roll over and have their tummies tickled. Imagine going to the Camp Nou and losing 4-0. What a bunch of losers.

However Guardiola, who has handed out several painful lessons to English clubs with Barcelona and Bayern Munich, refused to play along. "None of you have been in La Liga or the Bundesliga to know how intense it is," he said. "You have to have respect for the other leagues and the way they play."

The problem for Guardiola is trying to satisfy that neediness, that desire for the sophisticated, suave, garlanded foreign man to tell us how awesome the Premier League is, with its habit of serving up matches as chokingly dull as Red Monday's Liverpool v Manchester United extravaganza.

Guardiola can cut a cold presence in his public appearances, his broken English often quite difficult to understand, his obsessive academic air making him somehow less approachable. Where's his banter? Why won't this tactics square give us any bantz? If the smartest kid in school won't dance for the cameras, if he won't soothe our insecurities and lavish praise on our moneyed league, then he needs to be taken down a notch or two. We don't like experts in this country any more. We definitely don't like foreign experts.

It has been possible to detect an undercurrent of resistance to Guardiola in England for a while, typified by that ludicrous suggestion that his hallowed Barcelona side would have struggled on a wet and windy Tuesday night at Stoke City, and it seeped out in the predictable reaction to Claudio Bravo's admittedly hilarious red card on Wednesday night.

It was a dismal mistake. One Spanish newspaper gave Bravo one star and he has been a spreader of chaos since joining City from Barcelona in the summer, goofing on his debut against United and kicking poorly under pressure in the defeat at Tottenham, and there was irony in Joe Hart's sweeper-keeper replacement conceding possession to Luis Suárez so meekly, the error compounded by the Chilean's foolhardy decision to handle the ball outside the area.

"CLOWNIO" roared the Sun's back page on Thursday morning, which was fair enough. It was a pretty clownish piece of goalkeeping, incompetence on a grand scale. But how the Bravo backlash fits into the wider Guardiola debate is instructive, an early pointer about how the schadenfreude would flow if the Catalan fails in England, and not just because he offended national sensibilities by jettisoning Hart with such ruthlessness that he might as well have said the Great British Bake Off is overrated. It is also because he is introducing an alien concept here, redefining the art of goalkeeping by making his No1 play out from the back, turning him into an auxiliary midfield playmaker. Well, that might work in Spain. But try to spray a pass on to David Silva's chest while Andy Carroll's elbow is lodged down your throat. The sensible English goalkeeper saves, catches, boots it into Row Z and appears in a shampoo commercial. Inevitably Guardiola, recognising the risks of his approach, defended Bravo. This is how he sees football.

He will not betray his principles because of one mistake. Instead we are the ones who should be learning from him. We drool over Barcelona's football, marvelling at the way Marc-André ter Stegen instigates moves, and dream of our teams playing like that. But if we are not willing to embrace Guardiola, we lose the right to complain about England's inability to care for the ball every other summer.

If it is understandable that an idea is taking hold that Bravo is an accident waiting to happen, consider his record at Barcelona. Praised for his "excellent feet" by Andoni Zubizarreta, the club's sporting director and former No1, Bravo won La Liga in both of his seasons as Barcelona's first-choice league keeper. He completed 84% of his passes last season. Hart completed 53%. Hart gave possession to the opposition 352 times, Bravo 142.

On the international stage, Bravo has helped Chile win two Copa Américas. For England, Hart has gurned at Andrea Pirlo, sworn at a ballboy and provided light entertainment during the Iceland defeat at Euro 2016.

These are early days for Bravo, yet he is not the first foreign goalkeeper to get a raw deal in England, presumably from people who thought that David "Calamity" James was an ironic nickname. David de Gea, who has a fair claim to being the best goalkeeper in the world, was pilloried in his first year at United, heightening the impression that all newcomers are the new Massimo Taibi until they prove otherwise. Test him under the high ball. He doesn't fancy it. He can't catch it. Hit it long. Lob it in that fahkin' mixer.

But here comes Guardiola, looking to make us feel small and insignificant with his philosophy and ideas. He gets rid of an English knight, refuses to watch a tape of John Ruddy and brings in a man from Chile. So let's not listen. Let's not learn. Let's revel in our ignorance, close ourselves off and wonder why the rest of the world thinks that English football is ignorant. A goalkeeper who passes the ball? Well, the Premier League is very intense.

(Source: Guardian)

Nadal ends season to recover from left wrist injury

Former world number one Rafael Nadal called time on his 2016 season on Thursday saying he needed to fully recover from the left wrist injury he suffered midway through the year.

The Spanish 14-times gram slam champion said he would play no more tournaments and would instead begin "preparing intensively" for the 2017 season.

The 30-year-old left hander was forced to pull out of this year's French Open before his third round match, ending his pursuit of an record-extending 10th Roland Garros title, and also missed Wimbledon because of the injury.

He returned to win a gold medal in doubles with Marc Lopez at the Rio Olympics but his results since have been disappointing and he lost his opening match to Viktor Troicki at the Shanghai Masters this month.

While the original wrist tendon has improved considerably a statement from Nadal's management

said he had suffered a "bone edema" due to an overload on a different area of the joint.

"It is no secret that I arrived to the Olympic Games short of preparation and not fully recovered, but the goal was to compete and win a medal for Spain," Nadal said.

"This forced recovery has caused me pain since then and now I am forced to stop and start preparing the 2017 season.

"Now it is time to rest and start preparing intensively the 2017 season."

Nadal, ranked sixth, had been due to play in Basel and Paris and was on course to qualify for the ATP World Tour Finals which features the top eight in the rankings.

The Spaniard's great career rival Roger Federer will also be missing from the season-ender in London after the Swiss also curtailed his season to recover from a knee problem.

"I am very saddened for not being able to play next week in Basel since I have a great memory of the tournament and the final played against Roger

Federer last year," Nadal said.

■ FEROCIOUS PLAYER

Nadal claimed two titles this year, on clay in Monte Carlo and Barcelona, but has looked well short of the ferocious player that once dominated men's tennis, failing to reach a grand slam quarter-final for the first time since 2004.

He suffered a shock defeat by fellow Spaniard Fernando Verdasco in the first round of the Australian Open and was beaten by Frenchman Lucas Pouille in the U.S. Open fourth round.

Nadal has suffered injuries throughout his career -- a legacy of the many grueling battles he has endured.

He missed Wimbledon in 2009 having won the title in memorable fashion against Federer the year before.

He also missed the Olympics and U.S. Open in 2012 with a recurrence of his knee problems and was absent from the 2013 Australian Open because of a stomach virus.

In 2014 a wrist injury kept him out of the U.S. Open before he was sidelined by appendix surgery.

This year is only the second in his career since 2004 that he has not managed to win one of the grand slams, following a similarly disappointing 2015.

(Source: Reuters)

Terry fit for Chelsea's clash with United



John Terry has recovered from an ankle injury and will be available for Chelsea's home clash with Manchester United on Sunday, manager Antonio Conte said on Friday.

The Chelsea skipper, who has not played since early September, was unable to train on Thursday after aggravating the injury but Conte said the 35-year-old would be ready for the clash against Jose Mourinho's United.

"John is in good shape," Conte told a news conference. "He trained with the team (on Friday). He solved his problem with his ankle. He's available for the game."

Terry has been out of action for five weeks since suffering the injury against Swansea City, although he did make the bench for last weekend's 3-0 defeat of champions Leicester City.

Mourinho's return to Stamford Bridge, almost a year after he was

sacked by the club for a second time following a dreadful start to the defence of their Premier league title, adds extra spice to the fixture this season.

The Portuguese is Chelsea's most successful manager, having won three league titles in two spells in charge, but Conte is trying to build his own legacy at Stamford Bridge and will hope to make it an unhappy homecoming for Mourinho.

"I want to see progress on Sunday compared with the Liverpool and Arsenal games and I am confident I will," Conte said. "It will be a tactical game on Sunday but he the fans have a big part to play and can be an advantage."

"I have great respect for Mourinho," he added. "He deserves a good reception. He was an important man for Chelsea and wrote part of the club's story."

(Source: Reuters)

Rowing federation against 2020 Tokyo Games venue change



The proposed rowing venue for the 2020 Tokyo Games should not be changed as part of cost-cutting measures as it is the only one that meets Olympic standards, the International Rowing Federation (FISA) said on Thursday.

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Games organizers have agreed to set up a review process to reduce ballooning costs and part of that operation will mean changing venues from those in the original bid plan.

The rowing federation, however, said plans to move the competition from the capital could not work.

"FISA remains of the view that the Sea Forest Water Sports Center is the only venue in Japan which can meet the requirements for an Olympic Games regatta," it said in a statement.

"FISA therefore looks forward to continuing to find financial savings and operational efficiencies for Sea Forest."

The IOC said on Tuesday it felt costs for the Games looked "very high" and would work with organizers to cut them.

The comments came at a meeting between Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike and IOC President Thomas Bach, who proposed forming a working group to find ways to bring costs that could be as much as \$30 billion -- four times the initial estimate -- down.

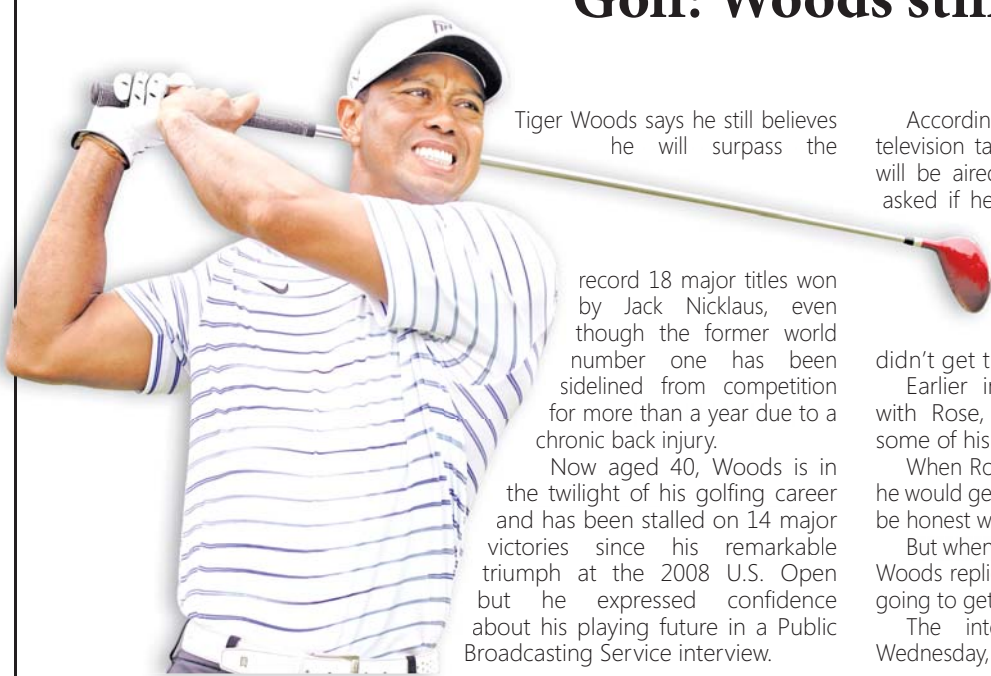
One of the proposed venue changes would mean moving rowing and canoe/kayak sprint events away from the capital, with several options on the table, including Nagatsuma Lake some 400km north of Tokyo.

According to Japanese media, the IOC would even consider hosting the events in the South Korean city of Chungju, where rowing events were held for the 2014 Asian Games.

"FISA has not been involved in any discussions that might consider other venues outside of Japan," the federation said.

(Source: Reuters)

Golf: Woods still dreams of eclipsing Nicklaus' major record



Tiger Woods says he still believes he will surpass the

record 18 major titles won by Jack Nicklaus, even though the former world number one has been sidelined from competition for more than a year due to a chronic back injury.

Now aged 40, Woods is in the twilight of his golfing career and has been stalled on 14 major victories since his remarkable triumph at the 2008 U.S. Open but he expressed confidence about his playing future in a Public Broadcasting Service interview.

According to an excerpt of an interview with television talk show host Charlie Rose, which will be aired in full later on Thursday, when asked if he believed he would end up with more than 18 major titles, Woods replied: "Correct".

When Rose followed up with: "And if you don't, you will say?", Woods responded: "I didn't get there."

Earlier in his one-on-one conversation with Rose, Woods had been playful with some of his responses.

When Rose initially asked him if he thought he would get 18 major wins, Woods replied: "To be honest with you, no."

But when Rose said: "You've accepted that?", Woods replied with a laugh: "I've accepted I'm going to get more (than 18)."

The interview, which was taped on Wednesday, marked the first comments made

by Woods since he announced his withdrawal from the PGA Tour's Safeway Open in northern California nine days earlier.

Woods had been hoping to make his tournament comeback after 14 months out following back surgeries, but in a surprise U-turn he said that his game was not sharp enough for him to compete in the Oct. 13-16 event in Napa.

Woods also told Rose that he hopes to make his competitive return at the Tiger Woods Foundation-run Hero World Challenge in Albany (Bahamas) from Dec. 1-4.

"You know, I miss being out there," said Woods. "I miss competing. I miss mixing it up with the boys and coming down the stretch."

Woods has not played on the PGA Tour since August 2015, having undergone surgeries in September and again in October of that year due to ongoing back problems.

(Source: Reuters)

Iran climbs 10 places in FIFA rankings

SPORTS Iran national football team climbed ten positions to 27 in the FIFA global football rankings published on Thursday.

A pair of wins for Team Melli against Uzbekistan and South Korea in the 2018 World Cup qualification means the team finds itself above Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, Sweden and Paraguay.

Iran has maintained its position as the best Asian team, followed by Australia (40), South Korea (44), Uzbekistan (48) and Japan (51).

These top five Asian teams are currently competing in the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018 Asian Qualifiers, and are in the top three of their respective group. Iran however, have proved to be a formidable force by being at the top of their group with three wins and a draw to their name.

Some of the top movers up the ranks are Syria with an 18-rank jump to 96th, followed by Chinese Taipei who leaped 17 ranks to 161st, and Iraq with a 15-rank increase to 113th.

Despite the conflicts at home, Syria are Asia's biggest movers this month, helped by their performance in the World Cup Asian Qualifiers, which includes beating China 1-0.

ASIA'S TOP 10:

Iran 27th
Australia 40th
Korea Republic 44th
Uzbekistan 48th
Japan 51st
Saudi Arabia 54th
United Arab Emirates 70th
China PR 84th
Qatar 91st
Syria 96th

Germany has moved up to second behind Argentina as Belgium dropped out of the top three. Spain, who beat Belgium in a friendly last month, is back in the top 10. The next edition of the FIFA World Ranking will be released on 24 November.



Esteghlal beats Saipa, Sepahan climbs to sixth

SPORTS Esteghlal football team defeated Saipa 2-0 in the ninth week of Iran Professional League in front of 30,000 fans in Tehran's Azadi stadium on Friday.

Substitute Mohsen Karimi in the 76th minute and Jaber Ansari in the 82nd minute scored two goals as the Blues earned their best win of the season so far. This was Esteghlal's first win of the season with a two-goal margin.

Elsewhere in Isfahan, Sepahan edged past Siah Jamegan thanks to goals from Ehsan Haji Safi and Jalaleddin Alimohammadi. Sepahan moved up to sixth place with 13 points.



This season's surprise Sanat Naft beat Machine Sazi 3-0 to climb to fourth place with 13 points. Padideh and Peykan played out a goalless draw while Saba held to a goalless draw against Gostaresh Foolad.

Earlier on Thursday, league leader Persepolis was held to a 1-1 draw against defending champion Esteghlal Khuzestan while Tractor Sazi was held to a 2-2 draw against Foolad. Naft Tehran also defeated Zob Ahan 2-1.

Persepolis is at the top with 19 points while Tractor Sazi and Naft Tehran are in second and third places respectively with 17 and 15 points.

Javanmardi receives Best Female Athlete of the Month for September



SPORTS Sareh Javanmardi has been voted by the public as the Allianz Best Female Athlete of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, completing a double victory for Iran as compatriot powerlifter Siamand Rahman received the Best Male honor last week.

Javanmardi made history by becoming Iran's first ever female gold medalist in Paralympic shooting, winning P2 (women's 10m air pistol SH1). The 31-year-old

followed that up with a second gold in P4 (mixed 50m pistol SH1).

It was a close race in the public polls between Javanmardi (41 per cent) and Italian wheelchair fencer Beatrice Vio (38 per cent). US Para triathlete Grace Norman was third with 19 per cent of the votes. New Zealand swimmer Sophie Pascoe, Nigerian powerlifter Josephine Orji and Chinese swimmer Li Zhang were also nominated, Paralympic.org wrote.

Iran's Payame Noor earns two wins at 3x3 FISU World University



SPORTS Payame Noor University from Iran defeated South Africa (16-9) and USA (21-15) at the 3x3 FISU World University League.

The competition is being held in Xiamen, China from 21 to 23 October.

The 16 male and 16 female teams represent the five continents to win the 2016 edition of the FISU 3x3 WUL.

The 32 teams are coming from 23

different countries, with 30 universities represented and will this year again fight for the men's and women's titles, including the individual shoot-out (women) and dunk (men) contests.

The 2016 edition offer those 128 athletes a chance to enjoy the university sport spirit and compete for a prestigious trophy representing their respective universities.

Sharp focus stood us in good stead says Irans' Razzaghpour

Abolfazl Razzaghpour and his Islamic Republic of Iran teammates may be youngsters wet behind the ears but they have shown maturity and mental skills well beyond their years that would elude even seasoned professionals during trying game time.

Razzaghpour's (pictured, No23) first-half free kick earned Iran a 1-0 win over Yemen on Thursday evening as Amir Peiravnai's side booked their place in the knockout phase of the AFC U-19 Championship Bahrain 2016.

However, after two draws against Japan and Qatar, Iran found themselves in an emotionally testing situation during the Yemen game, where they had to wait and see their group's other match's result to have any chance of progressing, which would have been perfect ingredients for stress and pressure on the pitch.

But stress and pressure were something the Iranian youths handled very well, and Razzaghpour, the scorer of virtually all of Iran's goals in the campaign so far, attributed their success to the power of concentration and focus on the game at hand.



"It was a very important match (against Yemen) for us," he told the-AFC.com. "Because we needed to win to advance to the next stage, the coach and all players promised each other to win the match tonight."

"Also God helped our team...and Japan won against Qa-

tar (3-0). We had a lot of chances at scoring goal, but lost the opportunity and consequently faced stress at the last minute of the match because a 1-0 win was not safe for us.

"Thankfully, one of the best things in our team is that we don't get overly stressed, and we just concentrate on the match we are facing. This is what my coach wants as well."

"If we thought about the other match between Japan and Qatar, we might have lost the match tonight. We just concentrated on our match against Yemen. We knew the result of Japan against Qatar only after our final whistle."

Iran now have to nail one more match, against Group D winners Uzbekistan, to qualify for the 2017 FIFA U-20 World Cup as a top-four team and Razzaghpour is already shifting his focus on the next game.

"Our physical condition is very good thanks to our trainers and physical coach. The coaches trained us very well and we are ready for the upcoming match without any problems. Thus we don't worry about our recovery, and we are looking forward to the upcoming match."

(Source: AFC)

Iran beat Yemen to advance to AFC U-19 Championship quarters

Abolfazl Razzaghpour's first-half free kick earned Islamic Republic of Iran a 1-0 win over Yemen on Thursday evening as Amir Peiravnai's side booked their place in the knockout phase of the AFC U-19 Championship Bahrain 2016.

Iran secured their first win of the competition after draws with Qatar and Japan to join the Japanese in the quarter-finals with a second place finish in Group C, setting up a meeting with the winners of Group D in the next round.



Razzaghpour's goal came in the 45th minute and was enough for a dominant Iranian team to take all three points despite a lack of clear cut chances throughout the 90 minutes for either side.

Iran spent most of the opening 35 minutes camped out in the Yemen half but, although they dominated possession, Amir Peiravani's side was able to create little due to the organisation and discipline on display by the Yemeni defence.

Steadily, though, the Iranians moved closer to the Yemeni goal. Mehdi Mehdikhani fired off a long range attempt that curled well wide in the 39th minute while two minutes later he headed just wide from only six yards out.

However, it always seemed as if it would take something special to break the deadlock and, on the stroke of halftime, a moment of class from Razzaghpour put the Iranians in front when the left back curled his free kick into the top corner of Salem Al Harsh's goal, giving the keeper little hope.

The second half followed a similar pattern, even if Yemen's Zakarya Tawaf had a sight of goal two minutes after the resumption, only for his low shot to be easily gathered by Shahab Adeli.

Reza Jafari hit the woodwork with his close range header after fine work down the right by Majtaba Najarian allowed the winger to clip the ball into the danger area while just minutes later Omid Norafkan thumped his drive from 35 yards over the bar.

Reza Shekari went close with a fine individual effort in the 73rd minute when he turned to shoot from outside the corner of the penalty area, only for the ball to fly narrowly over Al Harsh's goal.

And Razzaghpour's long range attempt 12 minutes from time also cleared the goal with distance to spare, but it mattered little as the Iranians picked up all three points to progress to the next round.

IR Iran coach Amir Peiravani

"I'd like to thank my players because they played very disciplined and were well organised. These players are all young, 18 and 17, and they had a lot of stress because they were thinking that if we didn't win they would have to go home, so they were nervous."

"One or two days ago the Yemen coach said they could win against us because he wanted to put pressure on our players, but we were unlucky in this game. We could have scored three or four goals. We've already forgotten this game, because from now the first whistle for the next game has been blown and we have to go into that game with a good mentality. I must talk to my players because the next match is very important for us."

Yemen coach Mohammad Al Nufiay

"We have to say congratulations to Iran and Japan. Today this was our last game and we tried to do our best. We were very close to getting the three points, but the players were hurrying and not concentrating. They were tired after three games because the preparation for the team wasn't enough for us. The Iranian team focused on free kicks and this is the only weapon they used against us, even the mistakes we made made their job very easy to get the three points."

(Source: the-afc)

Iran canceled football friendly with Iraq

Iran Football Federation (IFF) has cancelled the friendly match with Iraq after it didn't reach agreement with its Iraqi counterpart on the place of the match.

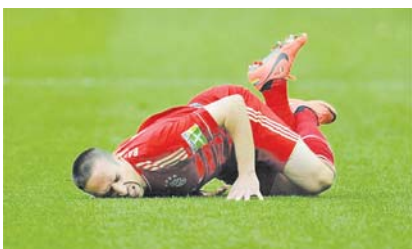
The match had been scheduled to take place in Tehran on November 6 but the Iraqi federation has requested the match to be played in Abu Dhabi, where Iraq will face the UAE nine days later in the World Cup qualifier.

The Iranian federation has not accepted the request and the match has been called off.

Iran prepares for the match against Syria in Group A of the 2018 World Cup qualifier which will be played at the Tuanku Abdul Rahman Stadium in Seremban, Malaysia on November 15.



(Source: Tasnim)



Bayern Munich winger Franck Ribery is set to start individual training next week as he looks to recover from a muscle injury sustained earlier this month, coach Carlo Ancelotti said on Friday.

Ribery had enjoyed a fine start to the season before getting injured. The winger, whose Bayern contract is set to expire at the end of the season, then suffered another

injury setback last week in training.

"Apart from Ribery, everyone else is fit," Ancelotti told reporters ahead of their Bundesliga match against Borussia Mönchengladbach on Saturday.

"He will start with individual training next week."

Ribery, who missed last week's Bundesliga draw against Eintracht Frankfurt as

well as their midweek 4-1 victory over PSV Eindhoven in the Champions League, had scored two goals in the Bundesliga and set up another five prior to his injury.

Bayern, two points clear of Cologne at the top of the table, are chasing a record-extending fifth consecutive German league title.

(Source: Reuters)

