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Envoy hails as 'historic' Finnish president's visit to Tehran

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW By Ali Kushki

TEHRAN — Finnish President Sauli Niinistö, at the head of a high-ranking delegation, will visit Tehran in an effort to broaden and deepen ties between Tehran and Helsinki.

The delegation consists of a number world-known Finnish companies in different areas such as environment and water resources management, Finnish Ambassador to Tehran Harri Kämäräinen told the Tehran Times on Sunday.

Over the past weeks, the ambassador has been very hectic, paving the way for the presidential visit, which he hailed as "historic".

"We are preparing for the historic visit as this is the first visit by a Finnish head of state to the Islamic Republic of Iran. As a matter of fact, this is also the first official bilateral visit by a Finnish head of state ever. The visit marks a new beginning in relations between Finland and Iran on the highest political level and we are therefore very much forward-looking to the discussions in Tehran," Ambassador Kämäräinen stated.

"My president will bring along our Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Kai Mykkänen as well as a prominent Finnish business delegation, comprising of the most prominent leading Finnish global companies, companies that are well-known all around the world and this of course dominate the agenda during the discussions."

Visits between the officials have been arranged.



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Iran hopes S. Arabia, Russia to align with oil cuts

TEHRAN — Iran says it hoped that Saudi Arabia and Russia, the two top oil producers within and outside the Organization of Petroleum

Exporting Countries, will come to terms and cut production in order to boost global prices.

"We hope that Russia and Saudi Arabia will

reach an understanding on production cap and other non-OPEC members also support the organization," Shana quoted Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh as saying on Sunday. →2

'Iranian publishers willing to join Universal Copyright Convention of Berne'

TEHRAN — Mohamad-Ali Jafarieh, the director of Sales, a major publishing company in Tehran, has said that Iranian publishers are willing to join the Universal Copyright Convention of Berne.

He made the remarks in a session held at Iran's stand at the Frankfurt Book Fair on Friday, the third day.

"Joining the copyright convention in actuality with its economic implications is the request of publishers active in publishing books in Iran," he said.

"These publishers wrote a letter to the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance 12 years ago and asked to stop the distribution of governmental papers. We believe that a clean atmosphere for publishing will only be achieved by joining the universal copyright in the country.

"We also know that joining the convention may not be to our benefit, but we want to experience it and become universal.

"The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance needs to ratify a new regulation to help support both the publishers and the writers," he added. →16



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tasnim/Foad Ashrafi

Rouhani: Iran backs efforts aimed at stabilizing oil market

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani has underlined Iran's support for any effort in line with restoring stability to the global oil market.

"Iran backs any measure aimed at bringing stability to the oil market, fair prices and producers' fair share of the oil market," Rouhani said during a meeting with visiting Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in Tehran late on Saturday.



He also emphasized the necessity of coordination and cooperation among OPEC and non-OPEC countries in this regard.

Rouhani further stressed that cooperation between the two countries has been developing in recent years.

"Iran has always put great emphasis on expansion of ties with Latin American countries, especially Venezuela," the Iranian president said.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Rouhani warned of the scourge of terrorism in the region and across the world and called on all of the world's countries to unite against this vicious phenomenon.

He went on to criticize certain world powers for using terrorist groups to their benefits, saying, "These countries will ultimately suffer greatly as a result of their actions."

Maduro, for his part, said his country was determined to expand cooperation with Iran in all areas.

The Venezuelan president also pointed to his negotiations with other oil-producing countries in order to restore stability to the oil market and called on all OPEC and non-OPEC countries to establish new mechanisms to achieve this end.

He also said his government supports further cooperation between Tehran and Caracas to accelerate the implementation of agreements reached by the two countries.

Oil-exporting countries have been ramping up efforts in order to limit production levels to keep global oil prices at fair levels.

Since the implementation of the nuclear agreement between Iran and six world powers that also removed oil-related sanctions, the Islamic Republic has been trying to raise its oil output to levels prior to the imposition of the U.S.-led sanctions.

Saudi Arabia has responded by boosting its crude exports, ruining plans aimed at stabilizing oil market.

Leader says erroneous to think U.S. is invincible

TEHRAN — The Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has said the U.S. record in the region over the past years proves that it is erroneous to think that the country cannot be surmounted.

Ayatollah Khamenei was making the remarks in a meeting late on Saturday with visiting Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro in Tehran.

"Some people think that America is invincible while this notion is a big error and frequent mistakes made by Americans during the past 15 years have caused them to seriously run aground in the region and be hopeless now," he said.



The U.S. was caught in the quagmires of Afghanistan and Iraq wars after it invaded the two countries following the 9/11 attacks.

One way to overcome the U.S. pressure is to act fore-

sightedly, the Leader highlighted.

"Steadfastness and rational resistance combined with foresight in the face of pressures will certainly lead to victory," Ayatollah Khamenei

said, according to the leader. The Leader said Washington and some its regional allies are using oil as weapons to put pressure on "independent" countries.

"In the past, when some Islamic countries countered the Zionist regime [of Israel] by cutting off their oil [exports], Western countries clamored under the excuse of [condemning] the political use of oil, but unfortunately, the same countries along with some member states of OPEC and some countries in our region, which themselves are harmed by these policies, are currently using oil as a weapon in total coordination with America's policies." →2

"The Ginger Man" comes to Iranian bookstores

TEHRAN — A Persian version of Irish-American novelist J. P. Donleavy's first novel "The Ginger Man" has recently been published by Hirmand Publications in Tehran.

The 1955 book translated into Persian by Reza Eskandari tells the story of Sebastian Dangerfield, a law student at Trinity College who lives in his

English wife and infant daughter in the post-war year of 1947. He has an endless appetite for women, liquor and general roguishness.

Upon its publication, the book was banned both in Ireland and the United States of America because of obscenity.

Dangerfield is commonly believed to be a fictional version of the author, Donleavy, and his contemporaries at Trinity.



Larijani urges dialogue to end regional conflicts

TEHRAN — Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Sunday that the Islamic Republic regards dialogue as the only option to overcome regional conflicts, Fars news agency reported.

During a meeting with Austrian Parliament Vice Speaker Karlheinz Kopf in Tehran, Larijani stressed the necessity of political resolutions, as opposed to military interventions, in order to end the wars in the Middle East.

Touching upon the history of bilateral relations between the two countries, he said, "Relations between Iran and



Austria have always been fruitful, and following the JCPOA, the two sides have further expanded economic relations."

"Expansion of parliamentary ties between the two sides plays an important role in our friendly partnership," said Larijani, expressing his

support for such an end.

He also described the relations between Tehran and Vienna as beneficial for the two nations, saying Iran and Austria possess great capabilities and can cooperate in economic and scientific fields.

Kopf, for his part, underlined his country's willingness to further expand cooperation with Iran in different fields.

He also lauded the Islamic Republic for its effective role in promoting security and reducing conflict in the Middle East, saying Iran is a "very important country in the region and also across the world."

World auto giants to gather in Iran's IAIC

TEHRAN — Senior officials from international automakers such as Mercedes-Benz, Volkswagen and BMW will attend the 4th Iran Automotive Industry International Conference (IAIC) which is due to be held on November 14-15 in Tehran, ISNA reported on Sunday.

According to the latest news, representatives from Renault, Peugeot, Citroen, Hyundai, Scania will also attend the conference and many other companies like Indian carmakers Tata Motors and Mahindra also expressed willingness to join the event.

Recently, there is some news that the South Korean automaker Hyundai and Volkswagen of Germany are negotiating with Iran to start producing their products in Iran.

Sources close to the matter say that probably the agreements with the mentioned automakers will be concluded on the sidelines of the fourth Iran Automotive Industry International Conference.

Iran's Ahmadnejad wins bronze at Youth World Weightlifting C'ships

Ahmad Ahmadnejad of Iran claimed a bronze medal in the men's 77kg clean and jerk event at the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF) Youth World Weightlifting Championships in Penang, Malaysia on Sunday.

Ahmadnejad managed a lift of 134kg in snatch and 169kg in clean and jerk while in overall he couldn't stand on the podium and finished in fourth place.

Colombia's Yeison Lopez won three gold medals and broke three world records. The South American was in devastating form as he lifted 160 kilograms to win the snatch title, a new global best in the men's 77kg division.

He then managed 191kg for a new world record in the clean and jerk, meaning he easily won the overall title with a combined 351kg, another world record. →15

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Bonyad Mostazafan allocates \$160m to underdeveloped areas

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic's Bonyad Mostazafan (foundation for the oppressed) has allocated a budget of 5 trillion rials (nearly \$160 million) to go into development projects at underdeveloped areas.

Announcing the news, Mohammad Saeedikia, director of the foundation, said on Saturday the body is in close cooperation with the Social Security Organization, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, and many other ministries and organizations to make its help reach the population that need it, Khorassan newspaper reported.



Prosecutor: All banks have roles in economic corruption

POLITICS TEHRAN — Tehran's prosecutor general has said all banks have a hand in economic corruption.

The nepotistic employment of criminal, uneducated, or interested individuals by banks has created much corruption, Abbas Jafari Dolatabadi said on Saturday, Javan newspaper reported.

Economic corruption arouses people's distrust and therefore is among the things that should be fought.

Elsewhere in his comments, Dolatabadi said the Judiciary is taking steps to clarify the status of dual nationals who direct bank branches in Iran.



Iranian MPs in France to promote parliamentary relations

POLITICS TEHRAN — The spokesman for the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee said two senior members of the committee have traveled to France on an official visit to hold talks on ways to boost parliamentary ties between Tehran and Paris.

Seyyed Hossein Naqavi Hosseini on Sunday said Committee Chairman Alaeddin Boroujerdi and Hojjatoleslam Mojtaba Zonnoor are in France at the official invitation of the parliament of the Western European country, Tasnim reported.



Visa waiver with Russia on agenda: Iranian ambassador

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's ambassador to Moscow has said that visa waiver with Russia is highly favored by Iran.

Writing on Telegram on Sunday, Mehdi Sanaie said Iran may start related talks with Moscow next year.

Sanaie said the consideration comes after Moscow recently proposed visa waiver for tourist groups, which will be discussed and decided in a joint committee meeting in November.

He pointed out that Iran and Russia have already eased visa requirements for tradesmen.



Hoodfar's freedom unrelated to Khavari: Judiciary

POLITICS TEHRAN — The spokesman of the Judiciary has said that the recent release of Homa Hoodfar was not related to the case of Mahmoud Reza Khavari.

Speaking in a weekly press conference in answer to a question whether Hoodfar's release was followed by talks on Khavari, Qolamhossein Mohseni Ejei said, "The police, Foreign Ministry, and the Judiciary have been following the case of [Khavari] since early days."

"Therefore," he concluded, "the two cases are not in any way related."



Ahmadinejad writes to António Guterres

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's former president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Sunday wrote a letter to the new UN Secretary General António Guterres.

In the letter, Ahmadinejad called for the revocation of the "unfair and unpopular" veto power at the UN.

He also suggested that the headquarters of the United Nations be transferred out of the U.S. as its current location has "paved the ground for U.S. influence" over the international body.

He also suggested that the UN broadcast its activities in detail via a dedicated TV channel.

Rouhani nominates three new ministers

POLITICS TEHRAN — In a letter released to the media on Sunday President Hassan Rouhani nominated three persons for the post of culture, education and sports ministers.

Rouhani nominated Reza Salehi Amiri as minister of culture and Islamic guidance, Fakhroddin Ahmadi Danesh Ashtiani as education minister, and Masoud Soltanifar as sports and youth minister.

Salehi Amiri, the current chairman of the National Library and Archives of Iran (NLAI) and cultural advisor to the president, has taken over as caretaker education minister since Ali Asghar Fani left the ministry.

Soltanifar, who currently presides over the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicraft Organization, was Rouhani's first choice for the post of sports minister when he was elected president in 2013, however he failed to garner enough parliamentary votes.

The makeup of the parliament has



Salehi Amiri



Ahmadi Danesh Ashtiani



Soltanifar

changed since 2013 as more moderate persons have won seats in the Majlis.

Danesh Ashtiani, a graduate of Imperial College London, is a professor at the University of Khaje Nsaier. He was also proposed as science minister in 2013 but was rejected by the parliament.

He had served in different respon-

sibilities including deputy director for planning and development in the Science Ministry.

The cabinet reshuffle has been welcomed by lawmakers including Mohammad Reza Aref, a moderate reformist who leads the Hope faction in parliament.

According to unconfirmed reports

Rouhani dismissed Education Minister Fani and Sports and Youth Minister Mahmoud Goudarzi for their weak performance, but was forced to accept the resignation of culture minister

Jannai had come under pressure by some fierce opponents of the government's cultural policies.

In his resignation letter to Rouhani, Jannati said pressure against the government will increase as the presidential election is approaching.

Before the dismissal or resignation of education minister a motion was circulating among MPs to impeach Fani.

On Saturday, Rouhani launched a strong defense of his cabinet reshuffle and called on media outlets to put aside what he called "childish quarrels."

"The country's goal is development and transcendence, and the government's goal is to be at the service of the society and people. To achieve the goal, sometimes a manager has to be kept and sometimes changed," he pointed out.

Leader says erroneous to think U.S. is invincible

I → The Leader added, "These plots and hostilities can be overcome through an adoption of rational policies and increasing cooperation [among independent countries]."

Emphasizing the need to take advantage of the opportunity offered by Venezuela's chairmanship of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Leader added, "Western countries are not willing for the Non-Aligned Movement to become more active, but independent countries must move in the opposite direction to their [Western countries'] will, and in this case, the future would be certainly better than the past."

He also said Iran is serious to boost cooperation with Venezuela.

During the meeting, which was attended by First Vice President Es'haq Jahangiri, Maduro expressed satisfaction with his new visit to Iran and meeting with the Leader.

He added, "The late president of Venezuela, Hugo Chavez, knew Iran and its position well and always mentioned Iran as a powerful country."

Lauding the Iranian nation's powerful resistance against the United States' hostilities, Maduro also said, "The Iranian nation is living in complete peace and security at a time that, unfortunately, many regional countries and Iran's neighbors are suffering from wars, divisions and weaknesses."

The Venezuelan president then pointed to the sharp decline in oil prices during the past two years

and said, "The American imperialism resorted to all kinds of interventions and hostilities against Venezuela, but our nation resisted in the face of this economic war and at present, we are gradually getting out of the economic crisis."

Maduro then pointed to the presidential election campaigns in the United States, saying, "Regardless of which one of the two main election candidates in the United States become president, the next American government will be in decline, which will be very dangerous for the future of the world."

The Venezuelan president also described his negotiations with officials of the Islamic Republic as successful. "We must do our best to make [bilateral] agreements bear fruit."

Envoy hails as 'historic' Finnish president's visit to Tehran

I → "President Sauli Niinistö will meet with the political leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran and in these discussions we will discuss, of course, issues of mutual interest, namely bilateral relations between the two countries, including enhancing trade and economic cooperation. Also, issues of regional importance will be discussed. We are still working on a final agenda for the meetings. But, possibly meetings with the parliament speaker are on the agenda.

"Also, as I mentioned we will have a sizable business delegation partic-

The number of delegations exchanged between the two sides after the nuclear deal shows both sides take this historic agreement seriously. So many contacts have been established and MOUs signed. All these show we are already in the implementation phase. Still we are in the beginning of the implementation phase but we are paving the way for deepening contacts.

ipating in this program which means we are planning to organize a number of important meetings in different sectorial ministries in Tehran, possibly the ministry of information and technology (ICT) and possibly Dr. Vaezi is one of them."

Referring to academic cooperation between the two countries, the Finnish ambassador emphasized the field has been one of those areas that has connected Finland and Iran.

"Finland is ranking very high in the international competition when it comes to the level of education and therefore, it provides a good basis to enhance and broaden cooperation between our universities. I have already seen concrete results in the field. For example, one of the leading Finnish universities, Aalto, which has been ranked among the top universities in the world, has already been active in Iran since two years ago, offering training in the field of executive business management. It has resulted in excellent outcomes and 60 senior Iranian manag-

ers have already received diplomas from the Finnish university. Also, some other Finnish universities have also good cooperation with Iranian universities. So, I'm very optimistic about this field and we very much welcome this kind of cooperation."

One fascinating area for cooperation between the two countries is the environment. The two have already signed a document to expand environmental cooperation.

"The fact that cooperation between Iran and Finland has started in this field is symbolic. It shows both countries take these issues seriously. During the visit of Minister for Environment and Agriculture, Kimmo Tiilikainen, in February, he signed a memorandum of understanding with Iran's Department and Environment, led by Her Excellency Masoumeh Ebtekar."

"The fact that the MOU was among the first MOUs during the past two or three years shows that we have actually started the cooperation from a very important sector of the society. This MOU gives a very good basis and framework for the private companies and also for the authorities to enhance the cooperation in the field of environment."

"Also, in the delegation which is arriving at Tehran, we have prominent companies which are very active in solving environmental issues not only in Europe but also worldwide. If we take, for instance, the company Kemira is a world leader in water management and we have invited Kemira to visit Iran, particularly for

this reason since we know that Iran has a lack of water in certain periods of year and the company has excellent solutions for communal water waste management as well as for the industrial water waste management which we hope could be a very good solution for many Iranian companies."

Iranian officials have highlighted that time is ripe for the country to enter into an implementation phase in its relations with foreign partners after the nuclear deal. The Finnish envoy believes relations between the two countries have already entered into an implementation phase. Yet there are issues to be resolved.

"The number of delegations exchanged between the two sides after the nuclear deal shows both sides take this historic agreement seriously. So many contacts have been established and MOUs signed. All these show we are already in the implementation phase. Still we are in the beginning of the implementation phase but we are paving the way for deepening contacts."

"But, one has to acknowledge that we still do have problems in certain areas of the implementation. Not everything is as smooth as we probably thought it would be at the very beginning. There are problems, for instance, when it comes to banking and money transfers. But these problems need to be addressed jointly by both sides."

Steps have already been taken to resolve the banking challenge, including contacts between the two countries' chambers of commerce.

During the visit of His Excellency Foreign Minister Mohamad Javad Zarif to Helsinki in May this year a working group between the chambers of commerce was established, and this working group comprises of representatives of Finnish private banks, Iranian private banks as well as representatives of the Finnish central bank and Iranian central bank.

"During the visit of His Excellency Foreign Minister Mohamad Javad Zarif to Helsinki in May this year a working group between the chambers of commerce was established, and this working group comprises of representatives of Finnish private banks, Iranian private banks as well as representatives of the Finnish central bank and Iranian central bank."

"The purpose of this working group is to look jointly at problems and obstacles at a practical level and how to overcome these obstacles in order to start money transactions between Finn-

The fact that cooperation between Iran and Finland has started in this field is symbolic. It shows both countries take these issues seriously. During the visit of Minister for Environment and Agriculture, Kimmo Tiilikainen in February, he signed a memorandum of understanding with Iran's Department and Environment, led by Her Excellency Masoumeh Ebtekar.

ish and Iranian banks. But I would say that the issue of money transfer is not the only obstacle. There are still many other things and issues that need to be solved. For example, one is the issue of transparency. As you know, Finnish banks have been ranked among the most secure and trustworthy financial institutions in the world and for Finnish banks it is very important to maintain that high status. Also, important for Finnish banks are measures against money-laundering. And that working group has to discuss these issues and also try to identify measure to address these problems in order to start the banking connections as soon as possible. We have seen some progress recently and I will remain optimistic toward the future although it takes time."

The ambassador concluded the interview with expressing optimism that relations between the two countries will flourish in the future as there are other fertile grounds for cooperation, including tourism and culture.

Kremlin: Demands for Assad's departure "thoughtless"

The entire territory of Syria must be "liberated," Russian President Vladimir Putin's spokesman said, dismissing demands for Syrian President Bashar Assad's departure as "thoughtless."

The Russian statement came as intense clashes were reported in northern Syria between Turkish troops and Turkey-backed opposition fighters with Kurdish-led forces. The Syrian army command condemned the fresh offensive by Turkish troops inside Syria, describing it as "an occupation that will be dealt with by all available means."

The Turkish military intervened in the Syrian war in August this year under orders from Ankara to clear the border area of Islamic State fighters and U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish forces linked to Turkey's own outlawed Kurdish insurgency. The Turkish government considers both to be terrorist groups.

In the northern city of Aleppo, government forces shelled eastern rebel-held neighborhoods Saturday night marking an apparent end to a lull announced by Russia.

Russia's Dmitry Peskov said Assad needs to stay in power to prevent the country from falling into the hands of extremists.

"There are just two options: Assad sitting in Damascus or the Nusra sitting in Damascus," Peskov said in a reference to the Nusra Front, al-Qaeda's branch in Syria that renamed itself Fatah al-Sham Front earlier this year. "And Assad must sit in Damascus to ensure a political settlement."

Peskov's statement comes as the break in the fighting Russia has declared in the besieged city of Aleppo entered its third day before seemingly collapsing Saturday night. He said



Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the West was turning a blind eye to the al-Qaeda militants blocking humanitarian aid deliveries to Aleppo and trying to shift the blame onto Moscow

Russia's decision to extend the break, which was initially declared for just one day Thursday, wasn't a concession to Western pressure.

The UN greeted the lull intended to allow the evacuation of wounded civilians and fighters from the rebel-held eastern neighborhoods of Aleppo that

had been devastated by airstrikes. But the rebels rejected the offer to evacuate and no evacuations were seen along the corridors created by the Syrian government.

Peskov said the goal of the Russian campaign is to fight "terrorists," saying that the fall of the Syrian government

would cause new flows of refugees and more terror attacks in Europe.

"Some countries are trying to get rid of Assad, and some just say thoughtlessly that Assad must leave," Peskov said. "If Damascus falls and terrorists take hold there, there will be no political settlement then."

He said there is little hope that the Syrian conflict could end soon, adding that it will require a "long and hard work by the international community."

"The territory of Syria must be liberated," Peskov said. "It must be liberated and everything must be done to prevent the country's breakup, which could have catastrophic consequences for the entire region."

Asked if the deployment of a Russian aircraft carrier into the eastern Mediterranean was intended as a warning for the U.S. against striking Assad's forces, Peskov said Russia already has sufficient military assets in Syria.

The Admiral Kuznetsov carrier and escorting ships sailed through the English Channel Friday en route to Syria's shores. Russia has a navy repair supply facility in the Syrian port of Tartus, the only such outpost the country has outside the former Soviet Union.

Also, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the West was turning a blind eye to the al-Qaeda militants blocking humanitarian aid deliveries to Aleppo and trying to shift the blame onto Moscow.

"It's mean and cynical to ... watch the Nusra block the delivery of food and medicines to civilians while blaming Russia for the humanitarian catastrophe in Aleppo," she said.

(Source: Washington Post)

Iraqi Kurds say they captured town near Mosul

Top advisor to ISIL ringleader killed

Kurdish fighters said they had taken the town of Bashiqa near Mosul from ISIL on Sunday as coalition forces pressed their offensive against the terrorists' last stronghold in Iraq.

An American official said Masoud Barzani, President of the Iraqi Kurdish region, had told U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter that the Kurds had succeeded in liberating Bashiqa from Islamic State.

Kurdish Peshmerga fighters told reporters at the scene that they had entered Bashiqa. Journalists were not being allowed into the town, which lies 12 km (8 miles) to the northeast of Mosul. Its capture, if confirmed, would mark the removal of one more obstacle on the road to the northern Iraqi city.

Reuters television footage from Nawran, a town near Bashiqa, showed Kurdish fighters using a heavy mortar, a machine gun and small arms as smoke rose over the area around Bashiqa.

As Kurdish Peshmerga forces moved through the area, armored vehicles moved along a road and a helicopter flew overhead.

The Peshmerga are also using tanks, rocket launchers and snipers. A Reuters photographer saw the fighters destroy at least three suicide car bombs dispatched against their forces.

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

Coalition forces have advanced to within 5 km (3 miles) of Mosul at the closest point, the interior minister of the Kurdish regional government has said.

An Iraqi force of about 30,000 is ready to push into

Mosul after recapturing Falluja and Ramadi, west of Baghdad, and seizing the Sunni stronghold of Tikrit in central Iraq.

ISIL have staged attacks apparently aimed at distracting the advancing forces. They hit the city of Kirkuk on Friday and on Sunday they attacked Rutba, a town 360 km (225 miles) west of Baghdad, where they killed at least seven policemen, according to a police source.

The mayor, Imad al-Dulaimi, said the insurgents attacked during the night and gained entry to the town by coordinating with sleeper cells there. About 30 insurgents skirmished with tribal fighters and security forces before vanishing.

Explosives

In an attempt to repel the offensive against Mosul, ISIL also set fire to a sulphur plant near the city. Up to 1,000 people were treated in hospital after inhaling toxic fumes.

Coalition officials have said the offensive is going well, but that it will take a long time to recapture Mosul, which has a civilian population of 1.5 million.

Between 4,000 and 8,000 ISIL fighters have rigged the city with explosives, built oil-filled moats, dug tunnels, and trenches and are feared to be ready to use civilians as human shields.

Carter sounded optimistic about the campaign to take Mosul during a trip to Erbil as he praised the Kurdish region's Peshmerga fighters.

"I'm here to commend you and your forces. I'm encouraged by what I see," Carter told Barzani during talks.

Peshmerga spokesman Brigadier General Halgord Hekmet told reporters that 25 Kurdish forces had been

killed so far.

Carter lamented Kurdish casualties but extolled the region's forces as "exceptionally capable and essential".

During the meeting, Barzani said the Mosul operation had started successfully and cited good progress over the past three days. He thanked the United States and the coalition for their support.

"I know you're going back to the front now. Please be safe. We appreciate your friendship," Carter told Barzani as he departed.

In Rome, Pope Francis said he was close to the Iraqi people and in particular to the citizens of Mosul.

"Our souls are shaken by the brutal acts of violence that for too long have been carried out against innocent citizens, be they Muslim, Christian or from other ethnic and religious groups."

He had been saddened by reports that numerous people, including many children, had been "killed in cold blood".

Abu Usama killed

The Iraqi air force has killed a top advisor to ISIL (Daesh)'s ringleader and second-in-command to the terror group's shadow governor for Mosul, as part of large-scale military operations to liberate the strategic northern city.

Iraqi state television reported on Sunday that Mi-35M helicopters carried out a series of air raids on the town of Tal Kayf (aka Tel Keppe), located some eight miles from Mosul in Nineveh Province, leaving the key Daesh member, named as Abu Usama, dead.

The attack also killed a number of Abu Usama's henchmen, the report added. (Source: agencies)

Saudi warplanes resume bombing Yemen as truce expires

Saudi Arabia has resumed its airstrikes against Yemen after the expiry of a three-day ceasefire in the war-ravaged country.

The Saudi jets conducted more than 16 airstrikes on areas across the provinces of Sana'a, Ta'izz, Hudaydah and Hajjah at dawn on Sunday, Yemen's al-Masirah television reported.

Several neighborhoods in Sana'a, including Nihm, Naqim and Hafa as well as Deylami airbase were targeted in rocket attacks.

Similar air raids also hit districts of Mukha and Abs, situated in Ta'izz and in Hajjah, respectively.

The strikes happened hours after the 72-hour ceasefire ended without renewal. The truce was brokered by the UN to allow aid to reach families trapped in areas cut off by the war in the Arab country.

The raids further came before the arrival in Sana'a of UN Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, who is expected to discuss options for a political solution to the conflict.

On October 8, in one of the deadliest attacks in the impoverished country, Saudi warplanes bombarded a funeral hall packed with mourners in Sana'a, killing over 140 people and injuring at least 525 others.



Two weeks later, the Joint Incidents Assessment Team claimed that the Riyadh regime had "wrongly targeted" the site based on what it called bad information.

Also earlier this week, UN experts accused Saudi Arabia of violating international humanitarian law by attacking civilians and later the wounded and medical personnel.

The panel of experts also said preliminary information indicates that the incident "resulted in a disproportionately higher numbers of civilian casualties, when compared to military casualties, and that this could have

been anticipated prior to the attack."

The Sana'a bombing was not the first attack on civilians by Saudi jets as they have targeted busy markets, schools, weddings and hospitals over the past year, resulting in hundreds of deaths and thousands of injuries.

Yemeni forces respond

In another development on Sunday, an unnamed military source said that a unit of the Yemeni army and Houthi fighters conducted rocket attacks against a place of gathering of Saudi mercenaries in Lahij's Kahboub district, killing and injuring a number of them.

Another site belonging to the Saudi mercenaries also came under similar attacks in the kingdom's southwestern region of Jizan.

Yemen has seen almost daily military attacks by Saudi Arabia since late March 2015, with the UN putting the toll from the aggression at more than 10,000.

The offensive was launched to crush the Houthi Ansarullah movement and its allies and bring back the former Yemeni government to power. The US has been providing logistic and surveillance support to the kingdom in the bloody military campaign.

(Source: Press TV)

Hezbollah to vote for Aoun at next election session: Nasrallah

Hezbollah chief Sayyed Hasan Nasrallah said on Sunday his party's members of parliament would vote for General Michel Aoun, a Hezbollah ally, to become president of Lebanon at a parliamentary session at the end of October.

Lebanon has been without a president for more than two years, leading to breakdowns in many basic services and raising fears of future unrest.

Lebanon's former prime minister Saad al-Hariri said on Thursday he would back Aoun to be president.

(Source: Daily Star)

Two police officers killed, 19 people wounded in bomb in east Turkey - sources

Two police officers were killed and 19 people were wounded when a car bomb exploded near a passing police vehicle in the eastern Turkish province of Bingol on Sunday, security sources said.

The bomb, planted by militants from the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), was detonated near the district governor's office, the security sources said.

Five police officers were among the injured, they said.

Hours before the bombing, PKK militants had attempted an attack overnight on the district governor's home, using long-range rifles and rocket launchers, Dogan news agency reported.

Two militants made it to the door of the house, but fled when police returned fire, it said.

Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast has been hit by waves of violence since the collapse of a 2-1/2-year ceasefire between the state and the PKK last year.

The autonomy-seeking PKK is considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and Europe. More than 40,000 people, most of them Kurds, have died in violence since the PKK first took up arms against the state three decades ago. (Source: Reuters)

Japanese suicide pensioner blows himself up in park, injures three others

A 72 year-old retired soldier blew himself up in a park in the Japanese city of Utsunomiya, killing himself and injuring three other people in an apparent suicide, state broadcaster NHK reported.

A second explosion, separate from the blast that killed the former Self Defense Force member, caused a fire in a nearby parking lot, while the man's home 8 km (5 miles) from the park burnt to the ground, the report said.

The police in the city, which is about 100 km (62 miles) north of Tokyo, said they had discovered a suicide note written by the man and were investigating the three incidents, but did not give further details.

Images broadcast by NHK showed two burnt out cars, one of which belonged to the dead man, about 200 metres (650 feet) from the park and a charred broken bench at the edge of the park, where a folk art festival was underway.

The explosion in the park injured two men aged 64 and 58, who were being treated for shrapnel wounds. The third victim was a 14 year-old school boy, NHK said.

Witnesses told the broadcaster they heard a series of loud explosions.

Suicide rates have declined in Japan in recent years, but remain among the highest in the world, with around 30,000 people a year taking their own lives. Experts have pointed to the financial stress of surviving on small pensions for pushing some retired people to end their lives.

In 2015, a 71 year-old man set himself on fire on a bullet train in an incident that also claimed the life of a 52 year-old woman travelling in the same carriage. (Source: Reuters)

Afghanistan: 43 percent rise in estimated opium harvest

Estimated opium production in Afghanistan has risen by 43 percent to 4,800 metric tons in 2016 compared with 2015 levels, according to the latest Afghanistan Opium Survey figures released by the Afghan Ministry of Counter Narcotics and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

The survey, released on Sunday, showed that the total area under cultivation in Afghanistan at an estimated 201,000 hectares in 2016, a 10 percent increase from the 183,000 hectares in 2015.

The report also showed a 91 percent decrease in eradication this year.

No eradication has taken place in provinces with high levels of opium poppy cultivation due to the extremely poor security situation in those areas, as well as logistical and financial challenges, the report said.

Overall, potential opium production in Afghanistan has increased 43 percent, with 4,800 tons this year compared to 3,300 tons in 2015.

Yury Fedotov, UNODC executive director, said in a statement on Sunday that the new report shows a worrying reversal in efforts to combat the persistent problem of illicit drugs and their impact on development, health and security.

Fedotov urged the international community to lend their support to achieving the sustainable development goals in Afghanistan - including vital work on a peaceful and inclusive society, health, poverty, peace, and gender, among many others. (Source: Al Jazeera)

JUMP

Iran hopes S. Arabia, Russia to align with oil cuts

1 → OPEC members agreed to limit production for the first time since 2008 at an informal meeting in Algiers in September. The goal is to cut production to a range of 32.5-33 million barrels per day. They are due to formalize the deal when they meet on November 30.



"Since OPEC has reached the framework of an agreement, efforts should be made so that non-OPEC countries can also agree among themselves," Zanganeh said.

Russia's Energy Minister Alexander Novak met with counterparts from Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf Arab oil producers on Sunday to discuss steps to stabilize crude markets, Bloomberg reported.

Novak is set to meet representatives of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries on Monday in Vienna for talks that could include production cuts.

Zarif: Iran ready to facilitate energy transfer from Caspian Sea

POLITICAL TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has voiced Tehran's readiness to facilitate transfer of energy from Caspian Sea littoral states to the Sea of Oman and Persian Gulf through the Iranian soil.

Zarif made the remarks in an address to the 47th session of the special working group to draft the convention on the legal status of the Caspian Sea in Tehran on Sunday.

The two-day meeting, hosted by Iran, was attended by representatives and deputy foreign ministers of the five Caspian Sea littoral states, including Russia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Turkmenistan.

The Iranian foreign minister called for mutual trust, consensus, and understanding, saying the Caspian Sea legal regime should take into account the common interests of all involved parties.

"Peace and stability, sustainable development and fair demarcation of maritime zones are the most underlying factors that should guide any attempt to formulate the legal regime of the Caspian Sea," the chief diplomat added.

He also underlined the importance of protecting the environment and water resources of the sea, expressing optimism that the leaders of the Caspian states would pursue the issue in order to find appropriate solutions in this regard.

Deutsche Bank lights up to settle its investors' nerves

At times of great stress, bankers tend to reach for the ciggies – and that's precisely what the highly embattled Deutsche Bank seems to have done.

The German group was revealed as a lead financial adviser on British American Tobacco's planned \$47 billion takeover of Reynolds American last week – its biggest deal of the year and a useful smokescreen just before the bank's results statement on Thursday.

Still, those results will be dominated by one major question – the financial health or otherwise of the bank – following the US Justice Department's request that Deutsche pony up \$14 billion to settle all the beastly things it did with mortgage-backed securities.

That demand caused quite a lot of gasping in Frankfurt, meaning boss John Cryan has been attempting to calm investors' nerves with claims he expects to settle on a smaller figure.

All of which might depend on Deutsche's ability to charm Americans, which brings us to a second worry.

The US makes up around 25 percent of Deutsche's revenues, according to Macquarie, and last week Wall Street banks announced results that were surprisingly good across the board.

Did the US banks take advantage of their German rival's woes and poach all its business? Or might Deutsche have also benefited from an industry-wide stimulant that has resulted in a general high? By Thursday we should know.

Debenhams discounts

When Sergio Bucher was unveiled as the new Debenhams chief exec in May, it's reasonable to assume he believed he'd signed up to a different job.

In that carefree time before the Brexit vote, the UK might have felt like a welcoming place for a Swiss-Spaniard to relocate to, and the referendum has made life even trickier for the boss of the already embattled department store.

Pressure on the pound in the aftermath of the vote has hurt Debenhams' share price as – like many clothing retailers – it often buys in dollars and sells in pounds.

Meanwhile, as Bucher prepares for what should be a routine City debut at the group's results this week, investors have also begun fretting about the health of the retailer's pension scheme.

Morgan Stanley analyst Geoff Ruddell warned last week: "Recent movements in bond yields lead us to believe that the scheme's liabilities may have increased by more than £300m over the past 12 months and that, as a result, the company may disclose a net pension deficit of more than £200 million."

That missive came on the day Bucher started work – and thumped the shares. Welcome to Blighty.

(Source: The Guardian)

Preferential, free trade deals to boost Iran-Malaysia economic ties

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Iranian Communications and Information Technology Minister Mahmoud Vaezi, who is also the Iranian head of Iran-Malaysia Joint Economic Committee, after a Saturday meeting with the Malaysian Minister of International Trade and Industry Mustapa Mohamed, underlined that signing preferential and free trade agreements can act as one of the effective ways to expand bilateral ties between the two countries, IRNA reported.

As Vaezi told reporters, negotiations have been conducted for exporting Iranian petrochemical products to Malaysia and Iranian products will enter the country's market in the near future.

The Malaysian minister, for his part, admitted that both sides are eager to bolster their trade ties via endorsing a joint preferential trade agreement and reviving relations.



Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) Gholam-Hossein Shafeie (L) and Malaysian Minister of International Trade and Industry Mustapa Mohamed

Tehran to host joint economic committee meeting in spring

The Iranian minister also announced that to improve common ties the eight meeting of Iran-Malaysia Joint Economic Committee will be held in Tehran in spring 2017, where a roadmap to develop mutual ties will be prepared.

As reported, during Iran-Malaysia business forum, held in the building of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mine, and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on Saturday, ICCIMA Head Gholam-Hossein Shafeie and the visiting Malaysian minister underscored the vitality of improving cooperation between the two countries and having access to available markets.

The Malaysian minister, also the Malaysian head of Iran-Malaysia economic committee, arrived in Tehran on Saturday heading a 28-member economic delegation.

Inflation rate hits 7.9% in Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The Statistical Center of Iran has announced that the inflation rate for the 12-month period ended in the last day of the seventh Iranian calendar month of Mehr (October 21) compared to the same period in the previous year hit 7.9 percent.

Meanwhile, the center put the point-to-point inflation rate at 6.6 percent in Mehr, showing 0.1 percent

fall from its previous month.

The Central Bank of Iran (CBI) has announced that the inflation rate in the past Iranian calendar year of 1394, which ended on March 19, 2016, compared to its previous year stood at 11.9 percent.

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

months.

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

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

Iran, Germany sign 6 co-op agreements on transportation

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Tehran and Berlin inked six co-operation agreements on transportation following the Sunday meeting between the visiting German Minister of Transport and Digital Infrastructure Alexander Dobrindt and the Iranian Transport Minister Abbas Akhoundi, IRNA reported.

Hoping that the two sides can expand their transport cooperation in future, Akhoundi informed that different German companies, such as Siemens are applying for taking part in Iranian transport projects.

Dobrindt also met Head of Civil Aviation

Organization of Iran Ali Abedzadeh on Sunday.

In their meeting, Abedzadeh voiced his organization's readiness for studying suggested plans by German companies, while Dobrindt expressed German administration's willingness to finance aviation projects in Iran.

The German minister has traveled to Iran accompanied by a delegation comprised of general directors of various German companies active in shipping, ports, and marine transportation as well as German airports officials.

SCCI calls on Iranian traders to invest in KP

Iran's business community has been invited to invest in different sectors of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) President Haji Mohammad Afzal extended the invitation during a meeting with the Iranian Consul General – Mohammad Baqir Begi.

He said that the Iranian business community could invest in power generation, gems, jewellery, marbles, medicines, petrochemicals and the oil sectors of the province.

Both sides on the occasion have also agreed to exchange delegations of businessmen and make joint efforts to increase the trade volume.

Baqir Begi, while expressing his views, said that Iran wanted to join the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and negotiations for the purpose were also in progress. He further said that Iran would issue multiple visas to the traders' representatives on the chamber's recommendations.

(Source: Daily Times)

PICTURE OF THE DAY IRNA/Mehdi Jafari



The first flight of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, the flag carrier airline of the Netherlands, landed in Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKA) on Saturday.

Chairman of Azerbaijan railways visits Iran

Chairman of Azerbaijan Railways Javid Gurbanov has visited Iran to attend a meeting of heads of railways of Azerbaijan, Iran, Georgia, as well as representatives of "Deutsche Bahn" company.

The meeting discussed prospects of development of the South-West international transportation corridor, and exchanged views over transportation of goods from India and Persian Gulf states to Europe and vice-versa. The parties stressed the importance of the corridor for transportation of goods in this direction.

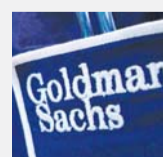
The sides also exchanged views over participation of the "Deutsche Bahn" company in the transportation through the corridor. The German representatives said that they were interested in use of the corridor.

The parties heard technical information about sending a test container train with the participation of the "Deutsche Bahn" company, and adopted a decision on realization of the issue in late November.

On the sidelines of the visit, Gurbanov met with general director of Iranian Railways Mohsen Pour Seyed Aghaie.

(Source: Azertag)

Goldman Sachs' Latam investment bank chief to leave



Martin Werner, co-head of Goldman Sachs' investment banking business in Latin America, will depart the Wall Street bank at the end of this year, according to a person familiar with the situation.

Werner, who also runs Goldman's investment banking business in Mexico, told the Mexico office last week he was retiring after 16 years at the bank.

A spokesman for Goldman Sachs in New York declined to comment. Werner did not immediately reply to an email seeking comment.

Werner's departure follows a change at the top of Goldman's Latin American business earlier this year when Stephen Scherr stood down as head of the region to take on a new role as Goldman's banking head.



Banks preparing to leave UK over Brexit

Big international banks are preparing to move some of their operations out of Britain in early 2017 due to the uncertainty over the country's future relationship with the European Union, a top banking official said.

Writing in the Observer newspaper, Anthony Browne, the chief executive of lobby group the British Bankers' Association, said the public and political debate was "taking us in the wrong direction" and businesses could not wait until the last minute.

"Most international banks now have project teams working out which operations they need to move to ensure they can continue serving customers, the date by which this must happen, and how best to do it," said Browne.



EU sets Belgium Monday deadline to back Canada trade deal

The European Union has given Belgium's federal government until late on Monday to secure backing for an EU-Canada trade deal from the region of Wallonia or a planned summit to sign the pact will be canceled, an EU source said on Sunday.

European Council President Donald Tusk, who chairs the collective body of the EU's 28 national leaders, will speak to Belgian Prime Minister Charles Michel by late on Monday, the source said, so that Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau can decide whether to fly to Brussels for the signing on Thursday.

NEWS IN BRIEF

OPEC's world oil outlook to be launched at ADIPEC on 8 November

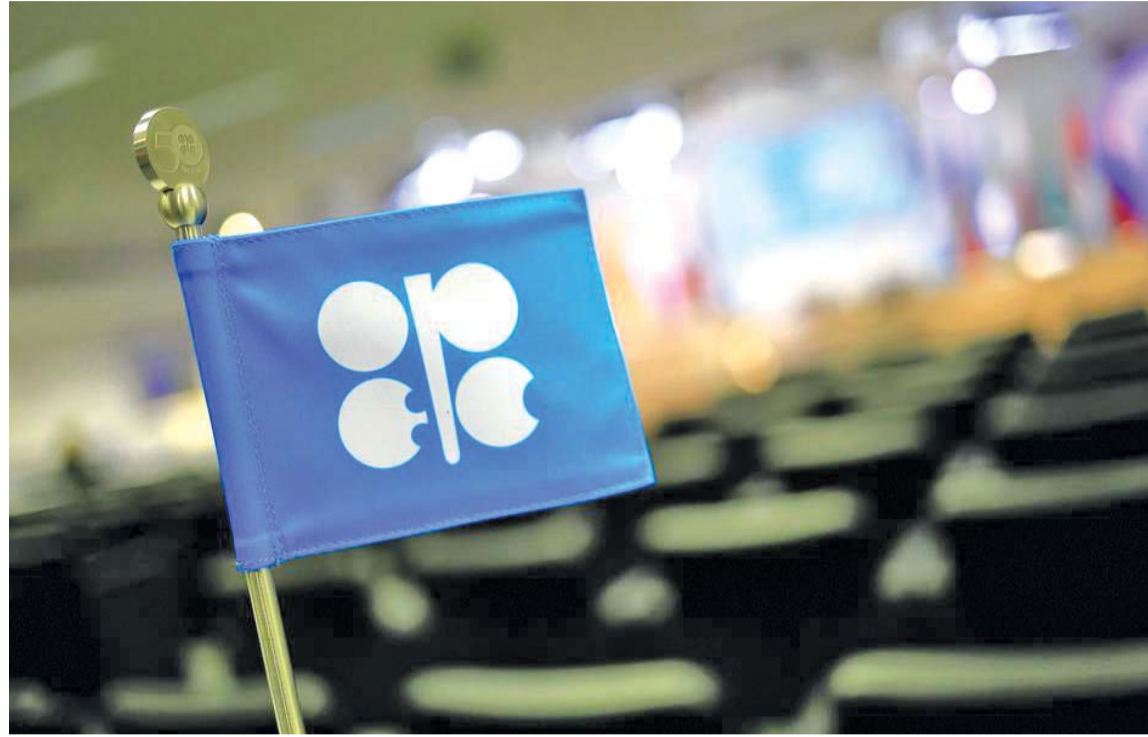
The 2016 OPEC World Oil Outlook (WOO) will be presented at a briefing to be held at the Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC) 2016 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The launch will be held at the Middle East Petroleum Club VIP theatre on Tuesday, 8 November 2016 at 11:00 am local time.

First published in 2007, the WOO provides in-depth review and analysis of the global oil industry, and offers a thorough assessment of various scenarios in the medium- and long-term development of the oil industry. The publication is an important reference, providing insights into the upstream and downstream, supply and demand, costs, investments, the potential impact of policies and the role of sustainable development. It also provides in-depth, expert analysis of many of the various challenges, as well as opportunities, facing the global oil industry.

OPEC's Secretary General, HE Mohammad Sani Barkindo, senior members of management and the report's main authors will be available after the presentation of the publication to answer questions.

This year marks the WOO's tenth edition, a significant milestone for OPEC's flagship publication. It is also the first year that the launch of the WOO takes place in an OPEC Member Country.

ADIPEC 2016, under the Patronage of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, and with the theme 'Strategies for the New Energy Landscape', will be one of the largest oil and gas events in the world. This year ADIPEC, which takes place from 7-10 November, is expected to attract 2,300 exhibiting companies and over 95,000 attendees.



Media and analysts requesting a copy of the WOO prior to the scheduled briefing may request a 48-hour embargoed copy, which will be made available

on Sunday, 6 November.

An interactive version of the WOO will also be made available on OPEC's website following the publication's launch.

(Source: OPEC)

Iraq will maintain oil output while OPEC partners discuss cuts

Iraq will maintain oil production at current levels after exceeding 4.7 million barrels a day in September, even as other OPEC members discuss limits on output.

Iraq asked the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries for an exemption from its participation in any cuts, Oil Minister Jabbar Al-Luaibi said Sunday at a news conference in Baghdad. He cited Iraq's war against Islamic State as the reason Iraq should be grouped with Iran and Nigeria in being left out of cuts agreed to at a meeting in Algeria last month.

Saudi Arabia's Minister of Energy and Industry Khalid Al-Falih is meeting Sun-

day in Riyadh with energy officials from Russia, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates for oil talks while OPEC tries to establish which members will reduce production, and by how much. Iraq, the second-biggest OPEC producer, is pumping close to record levels, adding to a glut of crude that caused prices to tumble over the last two years.

"We have passed 4.7 million barrels a day," Falah Al-Amri, the head of the state oil marketing company known as SOMO, said at the same news conference. "We are not going back. It's a question of sovereignty."

OPEC adopted a Saudi-led policy

in 2014 of allowing members to pump as much as they could to retain market share in the face of increased supply from outside the group. Prices have plunged to about half their 2014 levels, reaching a 12-year low in January as rising sales from OPEC added to new production in countries like the U.S. and Russia. Brent crude, the global benchmark, has climbed about 40 percent this year as OPEC discussed cuts. Prices closed Friday at \$51.78 a barrel.

Iraq pumped 4.228 million barrels a day at fields under the control of the federal government in Baghdad, Deputy Oil Minister Fayyad Al-Nima said at the news conference. Production

at fields operated by the semi-autonomous Kurdish government in northern Iraq stood at 546,000 barrels daily last month, Al-Nima said. Total exports were 3.871 million barrels a day in September, Al-Amri said.

The Iraqi officials are briefing reporters on the country's production after Oil Minister al-Luaibi disputed the data OPEC uses to gauge output. The group agreed in Algeria last month to make cuts but left undecided the level from which it would have to trim output.

Iraq pumped a record 4.54 million barrels of oil a day last month, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

(Source: Bloomberg)

PICTURE OF THE DAY

IRNA/Mojtaba Mohammadloo



Iran, Netherlands sign MOU on energy project

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The desk Netherlands' Minister of Infrastructure and Environment, Melanie Schultz van Haagen-Maas Geesteranus held talks with Iranian Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian in Tehran on Sunday.

On the sidelines of the event, Renewable Energy Organization of Iran (known as SUNA) signed a cooperation agreement with a Dutch company on construction of a solar power plant in the country.

In this event Iranian minister noted that environmental issues, water management and generation of electricity for industrial and agricultural uses could be potential areas of cooperation between the two countries.

Van Haagen for her part said, "With the signing of such memoranda of understandings, two countries' cooperation in the fields of water and electricity will be strengthened."

India to ramp up solar investment in 2017

India is making the push to become greener through the use of solar panels. The nation is lagging behind other countries in terms of renewables and has finally begun taking the steps to change. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's latest mission is to increase manufacturing of solar panels and expand capacity across the country.

The Prayas initiative, the plan to accomplish such tasks, is still in development but will set a goal to create five gigawatts of solar capacity by 2019. The more long-term goal is to have raised capacity to 100 gigawatts by 2022 from the current capacity level of 45 gigawatts. Modi's vision is for India to be completely self-sufficient in mass production, hence the slogan Make in India. Less importing of solar panel parts from China could save India a significant amount and stimulate the economy. This

initiative has sparked international interests in the country bringing investors to India's doorstep. The government is also trying to get households involved, which would expand the industry domestically. Dozens of manufacturers are gearing themselves to provide solar panels to consumers who are looking to save and go green.

Most cells and modules used in manufacturing solar panels are imported from China. In the first half of 2016, India imported 18 percent of China's production, equivalent to \$1.1 billion. India's businesses lack the economies of scale necessary to effectively produce their own panels and the country altogether spends too much money investing in China. Modi's plan also allows for the allocation of roughly nine million rupees per megawatt manufactured, monetarily motivating

companies. The state aid will be awarded to those who get selected via tender. With funding from the state and outside investments from other companies pouring in, India hopes manufacturers will finally be able to raise the capital resources needed to compete on this larger scale. Government officials hope that if India is able to ramp up solar energy production, they too could be exporters like their neighboring competitor.

The exchange rate between the two countries is currently 9.91 rupees for every Chinese Yuan. By capitalizing on solar manufacturing, India has the opportunity to steal China's market share and increase economic growth. Indian officials claim the Prayas initiative has the potential to create thousands of jobs. This combined with an international interest in the industry is also

beneficial and directly challenges China's stake. Investors should buy rupees against the Chinese Yuan now before the Prayas initiative is officially released. The plan is to be discussed at the next finance ministry meeting next month.

Japanese SoftBank Group Corp. may be one of the companies manufacturing solar panels in India through a joint venture. The company already holds a \$10 billion joint venture to manufacture panels in India with Foxconn Technology Group and Bharti Enterprises Pvt. but is considering dropping them for this project. Foxconn is public in Taiwan and Bharti has a subsidiary which is public in India named Bharti Airtel Limited. Both companies could suffer losses if SoftBank advances without them.

(Source: oilprice.com)

Iran signs tanker tech deal with Singapore firm

The National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC) and Singaporean Tru Marine recently signed an agreement of cooperation in technology and information sharing and repair of turbochargers for main engines and diesel ship generators, a report said.

The deal was signed on the sidelines of the 18th Marine Industries Exhibition, NITC Technical and Navigation Operations director Akbar Jebalameli was quoted as saying in the Iran Daily report, which cited Shana.

Azarpad Engineering & Procurement Company, as the representative of NITC, signed the contract with the Singaporean Tru Marine Company, Jebalameli said.

The companies will also cooperate on technical and educational areas, he added.

(Source: Trade Arabia)

Non-OPEC states should cooperate to help raise oil prices: Azeri president

Non-OPEC states should cooperate to ensure the growth of oil prices, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said Saturday.

The oil prices dove down in 2014 following a few very profitable years and have been struggling to recover ever since, with a recent IMF prognosis predicting little significant growth in the next five years. "I believe that non-OPEC countries should work together, openly and honestly. The right decisions have to be made. A powerful control mechanism over the carrying out of these decisions should be established. If all this happens, the oil prices will begin rising to a necessary level," Aliyev said, as quoted by his press office, after a meeting with President of Venezuela Nicolas Maduro.

Maduro, following that meeting, said that the non-OPEC members were very close to joining the agreement on oil output freeze, which OPEC countries reached in September and are set to finalize at the OPEC summit in Vienna on November 30.

(Source: Sputnik)

Saudi Arabia asks Russia to join Persian Gulf oil talks in sign of cooperation

Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih said on Sunday he had invited his Russian counterpart Alexander Novak to join a meeting of Persian Gulf Arab oil ministers in Riyadh as part of efforts to cooperate with non-OPEC members to stabilize the oil market.

"Russia is one of the world's biggest oil producers...and is one of the influential parties in the stability of the oil market," Falih said at the opening session of the ministers of the six-member Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC).

Falih said Novak had welcomed the invitation, "as a clear indication of sincere desire to continue cooperation and coordination with the oil producing and exporting countries for more stability in the market."

Novak had said on Friday he would take "some" proposals to the meeting in Riyadh.

(Source: Reuters)

Kuwait acting oil minister expects oil between \$50-\$60/bbl: agency

Kuwait's finance minister and acting oil minister Anas al-Saleh sees crude oil prices at \$50 to \$60 a barrel within the next 15 months, state news agency Kuna reported on Sunday.

Saleh made his comments in an interview that aired on Kuwait's al-Rai television late on Saturday, Kuna said.

"We expect to see the level of \$60, meaning \$50 to \$60, and we will be within this range in the next 15 months," Saleh said.

Saleh also said there were serious efforts being made to balance prices at a level that serves both the producer and the consumer, and pointed to Sunday's Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) oil ministers' meeting due to take place in Riyadh with the presence of the Russian energy minister.

(Source: Reuters)

Angola unveils \$44b 2017 budget based on \$46 oil price

Angola, which has been hard hit by depressed oil prices, on Friday unveiled a 2017 budget of 7.3 trillion kwanza (\$44.22 billion) with a budget deficit of 5.9 percent of gross domestic product.

Aia-Eza Silva, the budget state secretary, told reporters the budget forecasts sub-Saharan Africa's third-largest economy to grow 2.1 percent next year compared with estimates of 1.3 percent this year, and is based on an average crude oil price in 2017 of \$46 a barrel.

Angola, which is heavily dependent on crude exports, has had to slash spending and growth forecasts before. In July Luanda halved its 2016 economic growth forecast and slashed government spending as lower oil prices hammered state revenues.

(Source: Reuters)

The Kuwaiti opposition's return to the parliament

By Badr Al-Rashed

The Kuwaiti opposition has not agreed on anything since the dismissal of Prime Minister Shaikh Nasser Mohammed Al-Sabah in 2011. It agreed to boycott the 2013 parliamentary elections; three years later, though, this consensus has broken down. Now, it seems that those insisting on boycotting the elections are a minority, albeit an important minority led by former parliamentary speaker and one of the leaders of the Popular Action Bloc, Ahmed Al-Saadoun.



The dissolution of the parliament last week, at the request of the resigning Council of Ministers, came as a surprise, especially as this parliament was not troublesome like its predecessors. However, the sudden dissolution could also signal a lack of desire for the return of the opposition to parliament, which has been quiet for three years but with no reflection on the development conditions in Kuwait, which the parliament, including the opposition, is accused of disabling.

The suddenness of the dissolution was meant to confuse the opposition, so it would make a quick decision to end the boycott or continue it. Although most opposition blocs and groups announced the end of their boycott before this happened — particularly the Islamists of the Muslim Brotherhood — preparation for early elections was not on their agenda; they were waiting for next summer.

■ Represent the nation

It doesn't look like the opposition has benefitted from boycotting the 2013 parliamentary election, which was called in protest at the one-vote law. According to opposition leaders, this helps to manipulate elections, and allows those who don't deserve to "represent the nation" to buy their way into office. It seems that the excessive opposition lobbying for a boycott, and its regarding of the move as a matter of principle, is making it awkward to back down, although not difficult.

Several factors have made the boycott useless, the most important of which is the inability of the opposition in Kuwait to agree on a clear political agenda, after the consensus on rejecting a former prime minister and calling for his resignation in 2008. Furthermore, the regional situation has affected and confused political and social conditions in Kuwait. The years 2014 and 2015 were the most difficult for Kuwaitis; pro-Daesh groups targeted mosques in the Persian Gulf State to ignite sectarian strife.

Along with this security dilemma, the likes of which Kuwait has not witnessed since the Iraqi occupation, came the fall in the oil price and the government's austerity policies. Together they made difficult economic conditions connected with the political confusion. However, it looks as if the country has overcome the security crisis this year.

Kuwait's destiny was to be a small state in a troubled region, and to be full of sectarian and tribal diversity. This geo-strategic and social situation, along with the presence of a relatively democratic constitution since 1962, gave Kuwait a different status in the region. The turmoil in Iraq and the threat of terrorism, though, are all critical factors in Kuwaiti politics, and they overshadow domestic issues, including the relationship between the government and the opposition, the structure of the government itself and internal problems within the opposition.

Perhaps the decision of the opposition to go back to parliament is a difficult one, but it seems that there is no alternative, especially with the slowdown of political activity over the past three years, in contrast to the activities of the "Orange Campaign" or "We want five", which demanded a change into five constituencies in Kuwait in 2006.

The opposition, or most of it, will return to the parliament, and some of its leading lights will be elected as part of a parliamentary system that has been founded on the basis of not giving a majority to any bloc. Controversy will be back between the government and the opposition within the Council, according to the Kuwaiti constitution, which has given Kuwaitis this right for over half-a-century. Nevertheless, the experience of the past three years will have its impact on the relationship between the government and the opposition: the former cannot ignore the opposition for long, and the opposition cannot continue to resist it; in the end, the ultimate decision is made through elections and the constitutional foundations of the country.

(Source: middleeastmonitor)

Perhaps the decision of the opposition to go back to parliament is a difficult one, but it seems that there is no alternative.

The dangers of Hillary Clinton

By Ross Douthat

A vote for Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump, the Clinton campaign has suggested in broad ways and subtle ones, isn't just a vote for a Democrat over a Republican: It's a vote for safety over risk, steady competence over boastful recklessness, psychological stability in the White House over ungovernable passions.

This theme has been a winning one for Hillary, in her debates and in the wider campaign, and for good reason. The perils of a Trump presidency are as distinctive as the candidate himself, and a vote for Trump makes a long list of worst cases — the Western alliance system's unraveling, a cycle of domestic radicalization, an accidental economic meltdown, a civilian-military crisis — more likely than with any normal administration.

Indeed, Trump and his supporters almost admit as much. "We've tried sane, now let's try crazy," is basically his campaign's working motto. The promise to be a bull in a china shop is part of his demagogue's appeal. Some of his more eloquent supporters have analogized a vote for Trump to storming the cockpit of a hijacked plane, with the likelihood of a plane crash entirely factored in.

But passing on the plane-crash candidate doesn't mean ignoring the dangers of his rival.

The dangers of a Hillary Clinton presidency are more familiar than Trump's authoritarian unknowns, because we live with them in our politics already. They're the dangers of elite groupthink, of Beltway power worship, of a cult of presidential action in the service of dubious ideals. They're the dangers of a recklessness and radicalism that doesn't recognize itself as either, because it's convinced that if an idea is mainstream and commonplace among the great and good then it cannot possibly be folly.

■ The last 15 years

Almost every crisis that has come upon the West in the last 15 years has its roots in this establishmentarian type of folly. The Iraq War, which liberals prefer to remember as a conflict conjured by a neoconservative cabal, was actually the work of a bipartisan interventionist consensus, pushed hard by George W. Bush but embraced as well by a large slice of center-left opinion that included Tony Blair and more than half of Senate Democrats.

Likewise the financial crisis: Whether you blame financial-services deregulation or happy-go-lucky housing policy (or both), the policies that helped inflate



The dangers of a Hillary Clinton presidency are more familiar than Trump's authoritarian unknowns, because we live with them in our politics already.

and pop the bubble were embraced by both wings of the political establishment. Likewise with the euro, the European common currency, a terrible idea that only cranks and Little Englanders dared oppose until the Great Recession exposed it as a potentially economy-sinking folly. Likewise with Angela Merkel's grand and reckless open-borders gesture just last year: She was the heroine of a thousand profiles even as she delivered her continent to polarization and violence.

This record of elite folly — which doesn't even include lesser case studies like our splendid little war in Libya — is a big part of why the United States has a "let's try crazy" candidate in this election, and why there are so many Trumpian parties thriving on European soil.

One can look at Trump himself and see too much danger of still-deeper disaster, too much temperamental risk and moral

turpitude, to be an acceptable alternative to this blunder-ridden status quo ... while also looking at Hillary Clinton and seeing a woman whose record embodies the tendencies that gave rise to Trumpism in the first place.

Indeed what is distinctive about Clinton, more even than Bush or Obama, is how few examples there are of her ever breaking with the elite consensus on matters of statecraft.

She was for the Iraq War when everyone was for it, against the surge when everyone had given up on Iraq, and then an unchaste liberal hawk again in Libya just a few short years later.

She was a Russia dove when the media mocked Mitt Romney for being a Russia hawk; now she's a Russia hawk along with everyone else in Washington in a moment that might require de-escalation.

She cites Merkel as a model leader, she's surrounded by a bipartisan foreign

policy cadre that's eager for a details to be determined escalation in Syria, and she seems — like her Goldman Sachs audiences — intent on sailing serenely above the storm of nationalism rather than reconsidering any of the assumptions of her class.

The good news is that she is not a utopian; she is — or has become, across a long and grinding career — temperamentally pragmatic, self-consciously hardheaded. So she is unlikely to do anything that the cosmopolitan capitals of Europe and America would consider obviously radical or dangerous or dumb.

But in those cases where the cosmopolitan position isn't necessarily reasonable or safe, in those instances where the Western elite can go half-mad without realizing it, Hillary Clinton shows every sign of being just as ready to march into folly as her peers.

(Source: The NYT)

Britain must present a united face to the world after Brexit

A leading member of the British Asian community calls for a common purpose to promote the UK as a diverse and tolerant nation

By Kalpesh Solanki

So much of what we see around us here and abroad is about highlighting the differences between us and building barriers around our borders to keep people of different faiths and cultures out of our country. We hear politicians promoting divisions and igniting fires of hatred to advance their own cause. We witnessed strong rhetoric around the campaign to leave Europe that has directly translated into violence against minorities and immigrants.

Then we hear the home secretary wanting organizations to list the number of foreign workers they employ. And the health secretary wants more British-trained doctors in the NHS. What message does this government want to give immigrants who have made Britain their home? Is this the modern-day Britain we want the world to see? It's not the Britain we have become accustomed to living in. And it is not going to help build bridges with new economic partners from India and China.

It has taken decades of hard work to foster good race relations and achieve so much in an effort to make our society fairer, to provide equality for all and to ensure discrimination is dealt with appropriately.

Change is the only constant in life. But change has to make our society better. We must learn from mistakes made throughout history and ensure we don't go backwards and cut ourselves off from the world.

When we look at society, we are surrounded by heroes. People who have excelled in their chosen line of work. People who do amazing things such as saving lives and defending our freedoms. We don't see surgeons refusing to operate on patients because they are brown, black or white.

These are the real-life heroes. Heroes who make our world better. And this is why the GG2 Leadership awards are so important so we can recognize their great work and take a moment to say thank you for all that you have done.

We are proud of people like the mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, who won the largest personal mandate in British political history. The son of a bus driver who



There are tough times ahead as Britain negotiates its exit from Europe. Politicians are looking for new friends and seeking trade deals to ensure our prosperity as a nation is unhindered.

grew up on a council estate has shown everyone what we as minorities can achieve. What a great message his victory sent around the world. That the people of one of the greatest cities in the world have elected a Muslim mayor.

As we celebrate his victory we know there are tough times ahead as Britain negotiates its exit from Europe. Politicians are looking for new friends and seeking trade deals to ensure our prosperity as a nation is unhindered.

There is absolutely no doubt that commerce and trade will be a very important part of the equation and private sector organizations will be required to generate employment and wealth to prevent the UK from going into recession.

Organizations with a diverse leadership team can capitalize on these opportunities with speed. It should come as no surprise that more diverse companies and institutions are achieving better performance. Diversity

matters because we live in a world that has become deeply interconnected.

When we go to work we pick up a newspaper from an Asian-owned newsagent. We come home late and pick up a meal from an Indian or Chinese takeaway. We have a cold and pick up medicine from an Asian-owned pharmacy. The NHS survives on the invaluable contribution from doctors, surgeons, dentists and nurses from the Asian, black and European communities.

More than half of construction workers building London's new homes are from Europe. This is the Britain we know and this is the Britain we want to excel in the 21st century, leading the way with talent from all communities to engineer space travel, build driverless cars and save lives. So let's embrace change and unite to help each other achieve greater success together.

Division weakens us — but in unity there is strength. (Source: The Guardian)

EU likely to disintegrate, more shocks imminent

INTERVIEW

By Hamidreza Gholamzadeh

Following a record drop in value of British Pound, we have talked to London-based Professor of binary economics Rodney Shakespeare to discuss why Theresa May's recent remarks introducing a timeframe for implementation of Brexit led to a devaluation of UK currency and what more is to be expected. Here it's the full text of interview.

Why has there been a drop in the UK pound?

At present most market participants basically assume that things are broadly in balance and that, as long as there are no big shocks like Brexit, things will continue to be broadly in balance. Moreover, a large percentage of the traders are young people with little or no understanding of

An effective devaluation for the UK economy was needed - and that is what has happened in practice.

the lessons of history -- this is particularly so because economic history is generally not taught on the university economics courses.

So there has been a knee-jerk reaction against the UK pound.

That, in itself, is not necessarily a bad thing. An effective devaluation for the UK economy was needed -- and that is what has happened in practice.

As a result UK exports will substantially improve and people will be encouraged to take their holidays in the UK which is a country with many lovely and varied places to visit.

Has the world realised that the

UK really is separating from the EU?

Yes, the world is realising that the UK will separate from the EU. But, at the moment, the world is also failing to realise that much bigger shocks are in the offing for other countries and the UK will at least be a little better prepared for those shocks than the other countries.

For example, the EU is probably going to disintegrate and, as that happens, bigger shocks are in store. Germany's Deutsche Bank is in trouble with a huge derivative book in the form of an upside pyramid; the Italian banks are in big trouble and we may soon find that Italy is voting for the Five Star Movement and ITEXT just as the French vote for Marine Le Pen and FRETIT.

And please remember that all the European banks are interconnected so the EU is probably in bigger underlying trouble than is the UK.

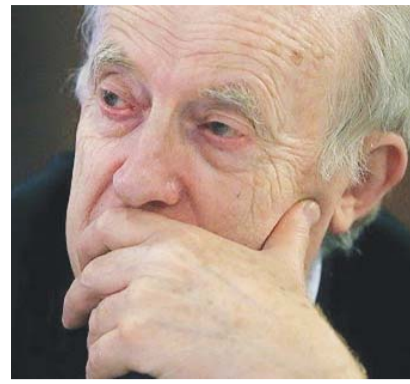
Is the drop natural and justifiable?

Given the complacent assumptions of most market traders, the drop is probably inevitable. But overall debt levels (throughout Europe and the world) are much higher than in 2007/2008 and for the last five years the major economies have been engaged in competitive devaluation against each other which has not solved the basic problems.

The basic problems are that there is too much debt; a growing rich-poor division; and that, because of the technological shift, most new jobs are insecure, low-paid, temporary etc.

Shall we expect more and serious turmoil after March 2017 when Brexit is happened?

So we must expect much greater turmoil coming not because of Brexit but because the global economy is cracking and some sort of major implosion is coming during



Before Brexit actually happens, the EU will be in political and economic disorder.

which the apparent troubles of Brexit will be minimal or even forgotten.

Conventional mainstream economics has little, indeed no, understanding of the huge danger in which the global economy now is. Mainstream economists have no understanding that their basic assumptions of equilibrium and 'free market' efficiency are profoundly false.

And more and more people are sensing that conventional economics has failed and they are voting against the elite and its complacent economics. NB Both Trump and Sanders in the USA are signs of a big revolt against the political and economic elite, just as Brexit is in the UK and there is similar anger in Italy, France and other European countries.

Does this pound value collapse have any impact on the EU and its economy?

The Americans keep accusing China of having an unfair advantage because of the low value of the Chinese money to the American dollar. Soon, various countries will be accusing the UK of having an unfair advantage.

How do you think it would affect Ireland and Scotland's consideration of remaining in the EU?

This is a big question but it is my view that, before Brexit actually happens, the EU will be in political and economic disorder. In short, that there will be a completely different situation with every country being in a new, unforeseen situation.

'Assad certain winner of war in Syria'

By Parnaz Talebi

Talking to Tehran Times, American analyst believes the United States is playing hard with Russia announcing the suspension of talks on Syria and there would be no military action in Syria as U.S. knows well it would fail.

Former university professor, war historian and writer Nikos Retsos has shared his views on latest developments in Syria and the role U.S. plays in the conflict. Retsos believes that Syrian President Bashar Assad would be the certain winner of the crisis in Syria.

Here is the text of interview:

U.S. announced on Monday, 3 October, the suspension of bilateral talks with Russia on Syria, blaming Russia for failure of the September 9 truce. How do you evaluate this? Is halting the dialogue setting the ground for a military option by US?

No the halting of dialogue is a U.S. gimmick to play hard with Russia. There won't be a U.S. military action in Syria - period, because the U.S. will be the loser.

The ceasefire agreement reached by U.S. and Russia on September 9 came to a halt just after a week mainly due to breaches of the pact by terrorists and lack of cooperation by American party as it failed to fulfill its obligation to separate groups it supports under pretext of being moderate from al-Nusra & terrorist groups. What is your analysis of this?

The U.S. -through Saudi Arabia- supports all groups in Syria now - including Al Nusra, because the ultimate U.S. and Saudi Arabia involvement in Syria is about ousting Assad. Any terrorist group in Syria, except ISIS, is considered moderate by the U.S. because all those groups are on Saudi and U.S. payroll to oust Assad. Nothing else matter to either the U.S. or Saudi Arabia.

What should be expected in Syria after all these developments? Is there any prospect for U.S. and Russia rejoining on the crisis as two major players in Syria?

No. I don't see the U.S. and Russia rejoining for any matter in Syria because their objectives are on opposing sides, and their differences are irreconcilable.



For example, the EU is probably going to disintegrate and, as that happens, bigger shocks are in store.

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Chemotherapy in Iran more common than in U.S. and Europe: academic

TEHRAN — Lack of clinical practice guidelines has made Iranian oncologists prescribe chemotherapy in Iran by far more than American and European countries, head of cancer research center at Shahid Beheshti University of medical sciences has announced.

Clinical practice guidelines serve as a guide for doctors and outline appropriate methods of treatment and care.

While in many cases in Iran, cancer patients can skip chemo treatment, chemotherapy is still administered, a costly treatment that poses physical harm to patients as well, said Mohammad Esmaeil Akbari.

Chemotherapy is proven almost ineffective in cancer types such as metastatic stomach cancer and in many sarcomas, malignant tumors of connective or other non-epithelial tissues, IRNA quoted Akbari as saying on Saturday.

Over 95 percent of all patients with breast cancer receive chemotherapy in Iran, while the figure should be around 70 percent, the doctor warned.

Referring to the World Health Organization (WHO) statistics, Akbari explained surgical treatment, the very first and best treatment option for cancer, has helped close to 50 percent of cancer cases regain health, while chemotherapy has been shown effective in only 11 percent of patients.

High cost of chemo drugs in Iran
Another critic of indiscriminate use of chemotherapy in the country, secretary



of Iranian Society of Radiation Oncology also called the cost of chemo drugs for the country mind-boggling.

"Chemo drugs cost the state [Iran] over \$428 million annually," Ahmad Ameri said.

Ameri blamed lack of coordination and communication among physicians involved in patient care for the wide usage of chemotherapy in the country.

Chemotherapy is considered a non-surgical treatment in patients with cancer, Ameri pointed, however, its over usage and high cost has diverted attention away from the progress of radiation therapy in the country.

Radiation therapy or radiotherapy, often abbreviated RT, RTx, or XRT, is therapy using ionizing radiation, generally as part

of cancer treatment to control or kill malignant cells and normally delivered by a linear accelerator.

Chemotherapy (often abbreviated to chemo and sometimes CTx or CTx) is a category of cancer treatment that uses one or more anti-cancer drugs (chemotherapeutic agents) as part of a standardized chemotherapy regimen.

Truth behind chemotherapy business

According to reset.me, chemotherapy fails in 97 percent of all cancer cases but still gets prescribed. The site goes on to explain the murky business of the multi-billion dollar industry.

While doctors don't get direct kickbacks for prescribing most medications, chemo drugs are unique in that the doctors purchase them from the pharmaceutical company and then sell them to patients at a profit, the site says.

Another site, naturalnews.com, reveals another astonishing truth about chemotherapy.

Research using polls, taken by accomplished scientists at the McGill Cancer Center from 118 doctors who are all experts on cancer, showed that 3 of every 4 doctors and scientists would refuse chemotherapy for themselves due to its devastating effects on the entire body and the immune system.

On top of that, the site reads, only 2 to 4% of all cancers even respond to chemotherapy or prove to be life extending, yet it is prescribed across the board for just about every kind of cancer.

While in many cases in Iran, cancer patients can skip chemo treatment, chemotherapy is still administered, a costly treatment that poses physical harm to patients as well, said Mohammad Esmaeil Akbari.

Stevia, best sugar substitute

Native to Paraguay, stevia has traditionally been used to sweeten beverages and make tea. The term "stevia" refers to the entire plant and its components, only some of which are sweet. Used in moderation, stevia poses no health risk. The plant is cultivated as a commercial crop in Japan, China, Kenya, Vietnam, India, Argentina, Colombia, Thailand, Paraguay, and Brazil. Currently, China is the leading exporter of stevia products. Stevia is much sweeter than sugar - the extract can taste 250-300 times sweeter than table sugar.

Read below for a list of the plant health benefits:

- Diabetic control
- Helps prevent cancer
- Boosts bone health and reduces risk of osteoporosis
- Beneficial in weight loss
- Alleviates blood pressure
- Prevents cavities and gingivitis
- Promotes proper digestion
- Prevents premature aging and cognitive malfunction
- Protects against heart attack and stroke



Want healthy feet? Keep a healthy weight

Being overweight can lead to a host of health problems, from high blood pressure and heart disease to arthritis, gallstones, and sleep apnea. It can also contribute to foot problems in two ways.

First, excess weight contributes to the misery of common structural problems such as heel pain and arthritis. Any foot ailment is more painful the more weight you put on it. Second, excess pounds increase your chances of developing atherosclerosis, poor circulation, and diabetes — all of which can damage your feet.



If you deal with foot pain, your doctor may recommend medication or physical therapy. But if foot pain is slowing you down and you are also overweight, losing weight can help get more spring in your step.

No single diet plan is guaranteed to produce a slimmer you. But this three-pronged strategy for losing weight can help:

1. Be physically active. Aim for at least 30 minutes of strenuous physical activity (such as fast swimming) or an hour of moderate activity (such as walking briskly) on most days—more if you want to lose weight faster. But protect your feet with well-cushioned, supportive shoes. Exercise not only burns calories, it also builds muscle — or at least prevents muscle loss.

2. Find an eating plan that works for you. Nutrition experts at the Harvard School of Public Health emphasize limiting your intake of refined carbohydrates (such as white bread) and added sugars (soft drinks, candy, cookies). Instead, choose whole grains and plenty of fruits and vegetables. Eat relatively little meat, especially processed meats. Use olive oil and other vegetable oils instead of butter, margarine, hydrogenated oils, and other sources of saturated and trans fats.

3. Be a defensive eater. Learn to stop eating before you feel stuffed. In restaurants, avoid oversized portions, share an entree, or choose an appetizer and salad instead of an entree. Share or skip dessert, too. Look for hidden calories: for example, an 8-ounce glass of cola has 100 calories. So does the same amount of grapefruit juice (although it's healthier because it has more nutrients). It's better to drink mainly water or seltzer, which have no calories.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

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1_ Villa in Jordan 900 sqm in 2 units, Each unit is 450 sqm, full facilities Total 8 bedrooms, nice garden 14000 \$, Mr. Abtin: 0921 334 2120	5_ Open house in Niavaran 320 sqm, 4 bedrooms, full facilities, Viewing time, week days from 15:00 to 18:00, Fridays from 10:00 to 15:00 Mr. Saba: 0912 915 9297
2_ Office from 50 to 2000 sqm, In Jordan, Vanak, Mirdamad, Arjhanthin, Vozara, Zafaraniyeh, Mr. Abtin: 0921 334 2120	6_ Building For residential or office use, 4 story, Each floor 330 sqm, Furnished or unfinished Mr. Saba: 0912 915 9297
3_ Luxury 420 sqm in Velenjak 4 bedrooms, full facilities, Especially for picky people, Best eternal view, brand materials, 18000 \$ Mr. Khajevand: 0935 100 4140	7_ Sa'aadat Abaad 500 sqm, 5 bedrooms, 8 th floor, fully furnished Mr. Arzaani: 0933 60 77 415
4_ 500sqm in Mahmoodieh 4 bedrooms, 200 sqm garden Full facilities, best floor, eternal view, 15000 \$ Mr. Khajevand: 0935 100 4140	8_ Shahrak-e-gharb 300 sqm, 3 bedrooms Mr. Arzaani: 0933 60 77 415

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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** Donald Trump promised to block the \$85.4 billion deal between AT&T and Time Warner.
After buying Time Warner by AT&T, the republican presidential candidate said: "It's too much concentration of power in the hands of too few."
Trump said that if he wins the election on November 8th, he will block the transaction, because of antitrust law!
- 2** The former CEO of Microsoft revealed he wanted to buy Facebook for \$24 billion in 2010.
Steve Ballmer that was being interviewed on CNBC added Microsoft was serious, but he respected Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg's decision to turn it down.
- 3** With new version of Facebook's Messenger app for Windows 10 you able to make call. Facebook has quietly upgraded its Messenger app for Windows 10 with the ability to make voice and video calls, VentureBeat has discovered. New Rules by Doctors letting babies watch screens.
- 4** You can show a tablet to your toddler, but only if you're there to supervise.
In 2007, Google bought online advertising network Doubleclick with the assurance that they would prioritize user privacy as they developed new ad products.
- 5** But today, Google's redefined privacy policy lets ads follow you everywhere.
Facebook is apparently in development of a live video feature for Instagram.
- 6** If you want to share a live video yourself, you hit the big red Go Insta! button.
LG G6 won't be a modular phone at all.
- 7** A new report from the company's home of South Korea claims LG's next flagship smartphone, the G6, will have no module and will be the next version of V20.
- 8** HTC Bolt launches globally as HTC 10 evo.
HTC Bolt will be available in the US through Sprint sometime in October.
The phone will be powered by last year's Snapdragon 810 and sport a 5.5-inch 1080p or QHD display.
- 9** Vulkan API will reduce power usage in games. The result shows a 15% power saving compare to OpenGL.
Apple faces stiff opposition in County Galway in Ireland over new \$925 million data center. Apparently, local residents and businesses don't want it "in their back garden."
- 10**

IT IRAN

French giant telecommunications providers keen to start mutual ties with Tehran

By Shataw Naseri

Paris Ambassador to Tehran François Sénémaud met Iran's ICT Minister Mahmoud Vaezi on last Thursday, Public Relations Center at ICT Ministry reported.
Vaezi said that following Hassan Rouhani's visit to France and signing several international partnership documents, "we have witnessed favorable negotiations between the Iranian and French companies."
Referring to a French banking delegation's visit to Tehran, he maintained, "we could reach positive agreements as the both nations' private companies are keen to expand mutual ties."
"Should the both sides' ICT officials meet each other prior to the establishment of a mutual joint economic commission, additional achievements might be reached," Vaezi added.
François Sénémaud, for his part, noted, "we believe that to carry out the economic and technological agreements would be beneficial for Tehran and Paris, as well."
He underlined the negotiations of Eutelsat and the French telecommunications operator, Orange, with the Iranian firms, adding, "Eutelsat is keen to cooperate with Iran's space companies and is, currently, preparing a draft of its proposals to take part in the tender for building a satellite."
The French Minister stressed that Tehran-Paris joint economic commission be established prior to the end of the year.
He, also, submitted an invitation letter from French ICT Minister for Vaezi to visit Paris to explore the necessary grounds for mutual joint ventures.

Iran's local emails and domestic search engines fail to attract many users

Iran's local emails much like its domestic search engines and the mobile messaging apps boast of some users, however, they have failed to play an effective role in attracting users, ISNA News Agency reported.
Iranian native emails (rayaname) seem to have been used by not many users. Some reasons could be their tendency to be independent of other services, thus, in regard to their high cost of maintenance, they ought to be connected to search engines. ICT Deputy Minister Nasrollah Jahangard believes that to provide the native email service ought to be accompanied by other services since to support email service is costly.
Insisting on supporting native emails, Alireza Yari, the head of ICT Ministry Research Center, noted, "rayanames could be connected to text search engines so that their users might escalate." Stressing that Iran's local search engines as well as its native emails feature an Achilles heel and it is their failure to identify market, he added, "we support native emails belonging to Chapar, Elenoon and Bayan companies."
These native emails do not feature a good market and Chapar with 200,000 to 300,000 users features the highest number of clients, nonetheless, the main goal is to create some conditions to preserve the nation's data in Iran so that it might be less employed by international institutions.

The massive cyberattack that hit the US hints at a new kind of cyberwarfare

By Rob Garver

Nobody seems to know just yet where the massive cyberattack that made major websites like Twitter and Spotify unavailable Friday morning originated.
But whether the huge distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack originated in Russia, China, Eastern Europe or right here in the U.S., it's a reminder of how vulnerable the infrastructure that our increasingly interconnected society relies on is, and makes the increasing willingness of government actors to engage in cyberattacks extremely worrying.
Friday's attack was aimed at Dyn, a domain name service provider that channels internet traffic to its clients. The company's systems were overwhelmed briefly Friday by huge numbers of requests made simultaneously with the aim of crowding out legitimate web traffic.
Early Friday morning, the company reported, "we began monitoring and mitigating a DDoS attack against our Dyn Managed DNS infrastructure. Some customers may experience increased DNS query latency and delayed zone propagation during this time."
"This attack is mainly impacting US East and is impacting Managed DNS customers in this region," Dyn reported. An outage map, produced by the telecommunications company Level 3, confirmed massive problems across almost the entire eastern half of the United States.
By mid-morning, engineers had brought the problem largely under control, the company said, and service had been restored.
But while people across the country may be able to tweet and stream music



again, the uncomfortable reality is that attacks like this one -- and perhaps even far more destructive ones that involve destruction of data, crippling of critical infrastructure and worse -- are an increasingly real threat.
Of course, the attack on Dyn may not have been motivated by any political actors at all. Cybersecurity blogger Brian Krebs, whose own blog was the target of a massive DDoS attack just a few weeks ago, noted, "The attack on DYN comes just hours after DYN researcher Doug Madory presented a talk on DDoS attacks in Dallas, Texas at a meeting of the North American Network Operators Group (NANOG)." That at least raises the

possibility that the attack might simply have been hackers trying to embarrass a high-profile security expert.
But regardless of the genesis of this particular attack, the willingness of the Russian government to actively interfere in the U.S. presidential election, to cite the most obvious example, has signaled a dramatic change in the role government cyberwarriors are likely to play in the future. The persistent leaking of hacked emails and other data, stolen from people with ties to the Democratic Party, may be unprecedented, but isn't likely to remain unique.
The issue even found its way into the final presidential debate, in which Hillary

Clinton, the Democratic presidential nominee, pointed out the unanimous assessment of U.S. intelligence agencies which, she said, "all concluded that these espionage attacks, these cyberattacks, come from the highest levels of the Kremlin. And they are designed to influence our election."
And the U.S. is expected to take some sort of retaliatory action, as Vice President Joe Biden said on Meet the Press last Sunday.
"We're sending a message -- we have the capacity to do it," Biden said.
"He'll know it," Biden continued, referring to Russian President Vladimir Putin. "It will be at the time of our choosing. And under the circumstances that have the greatest impact."
While the U.S. can hardly avoid mounting some sort of response, the worry is that it could lead to an escalating series of retaliatory actions and frequent disruptions that could play havoc with an economy that has become dependent on unfettered, reliable connectivity.
During the Cold War, for better or worse, there was an effective brake on escalation in the form of nuclear weapons. Russia and the U.S. tried to avoid direct conflict, in large part out of fear that military engagement might spiral out of control, leading to the very real possibility of mutual destruction.
In cyberwarfare, so far at least, there is no obvious equivalent to an intercontinental nuclear missile. And while that's probably a good thing, on balance, it also means that there is no obvious line that everyone involved has an interest not only in not crossing, but not even approaching.
(Source: thefiscaltimes)

More than 10 million devices helped take down the internet

A massive cyberattack on Friday on a key piece of internet infrastructure included "10s of millions" of individual devices that were coordinated using a piece of computer code recently released online.
Dyn, the company subject to the attack, released more details about the incident on Saturday, including the fact that more than 10 million distinct IP addresses were part of the botnet that caused widespread problems for users trying to access many major websites.
The attack used a piece of code that combs the internet for connected devices with weak security, then hijacks them to be used in distributed denial of services

(DDoS) attacks. A DDoS attack uses a heavy flow of traffic to target and disrupt particular systems, rendering them unusable.
Flashpoint, a cybersecurity firm that is working with Dyn, told Mashable that among the devices hijacked for the attack were digital video recorders.
(Source: Mashable)

Australian politicians are in trouble for using WhatsApp



Cyber security experts have raised concerns about Prime Minister Malcom Turnbull and senior government ministers sending private and confidential information via the messaging service.
WhatsApp and similar messaging apps are great for normal day-to-day communication between friends, but using it to discuss matters of national security is certainly a choice that will raise eyebrows.
As with any technology, particularly those that allow for speedy communication, the benefits have to be weighed carefully against the associated security risks.
One of the main points of criticism over the decision to use WhatsApp is that it doesn't feature on the Evaluated Products List -- the list of accepted tools for ministerial communications compiled by the Australian Signals Directorate.
Besides text-based messages, WhatsApp also allows files to be shared and transferred between users. This has implications for government, especially if used by ministers or staff with access to classified information. If such information were disseminated via WhatsApp, this would constitute a serious security breach.
Besides malware posing as genuine WhatsApp links, it is also reportedly possible to crash the app by sending large (over 7 megabytes) messages, or messages containing special characters -- a particular fear given that these messages can be typed and sent very quickly by someone who gains access to a device for a short period.
WhatsApp or Instant Messaging via mobile devices represents a new wave of communication adopted by the community at large. But the question of whether high-ranking members of the government should be using secured messaging apps is one that requires further investigation.
(Source: theconversation)

Microsoft's plan to create a bot search engine

Microsoft wants to expand its bot directory, general manager of FUSE Labs at Microsoft Research Lili Cheng told VentureBeat in an interview, and it wants to do it with the help of developers and other chat app platforms.
"My hope is that we can do something more like search does with web pages, rather than a very closed directory that just Microsoft owns, and we kind of lean that way anyway because we support all these channels," Cheng said.
No prospective launch date has been set for an expanded Microsoft bot directory, but Cheng said Microsoft wants to work with the bot developer community and other platforms to create a directory that includes names like Skype, Facebook Messenger, Kik, Slack -- some of the biggest chat app platforms in the world.
Cheng and her team are one of the most influential groups in the short history of bots on chat platforms. Her team at Microsoft Research led efforts to create Xiaoice, a bot with 40 million users in China, and Tay, the famous Twitter bot that turned into a racist, anti-Semitic less than 24 hours after launch.
Microsoft Research also created the Microsoft Bot Framework, a tool kit for making bots that connects with half a dozen other platforms currently being used by more than 45,000 developers.
Cheng said she doesn't want a bot directory for Microsoft bots alone, and that she doesn't even want to create a directory of bots made with the bot framework alone.
A lack of discovery can create a problem for developers and businesses who want their work seen and adopted. It's too early for the walled gardens of chat app platforms to become silos, Cheng said.
Microsoft has thus far proven to be pretty agnostic about platforms you can create bots for using its framework. Since its launch in April, the Microsoft Bot Framework has grown to include integrations with Facebook Messenger, Kik, and as of two weeks ago Slack.
"Should you be writing a bot for Kik or Telegram or Slack or Facebook or Skype or Skype for Business or web chat or your mobile app, like there's so many channels?" Cheng asked.
Today in the Microsoft Bot Directory you can find roughly 50 bots of varying skills, mostly a mashup of artificial intelligence available through Microsoft Cognitive Services, but the company wants it to grow and be inclusive of platforms in the world, not just Skype.
In informal surveys of bot developers, Microsoft has found that discovery is a big problem.
(Source: venturebeat)

FIFA 17 Mobile major update brings enhanced gameplay, attack mode polishing



FIFA fans rejoice, as EA has just released a major update for their mobile game that made it to Android, iOS and Windows 10 Mobile about two weeks ago.
The new update might have been introduced on the Android and iOS platforms first, but Windows Phone players will be able to enjoy the new features and improvements beginning this week.
The first and most important new change included in the update is the enhanced gameplay featuring better crossing speed and accuracy, as well as lobbed pass targeting and chip shot control. These tweaks have been in the works since the game made it to market, so hopefully they'll provide that sense of reality that fans of sports simulation games are looking for.
The Attack Mode received some polishing as well, including balancing tactics and increased deep and wide free kicks. EA also announced that it has improved difficulty levels in Attack Mode, Seasons, and skill games.
On the graphics side, the developers confirmed they have added some visual enhancements in skill game zones and maps, Plans slots, and in Attack Mode and Live Events. Also, some camera adjustments for a wider pitch view have been implemented too.
The official changelog also mentions the update revises stats in Player Items and brings an improved tutorial flow. Last but not least, language support has been extended to Japanese, Korean, Traditional Chinese, and Simplified Chinese.
If you haven't yet tried EA's FIFA 17 Mobile, now would be a good time to give it a chance. It won't cost you a dime, unless you plan on spending on in-game items.
(Source: phonearena)

Why the few remaining snow leopards are still dying at the hands of humans

Approximately 4,000 snow leopards live across central Asia, but humans have killed as many as 450 since 2008. These killings are largely carried out by either poachers, who hope to sell the animal's valuable pelts, claws, and teeth, or by herders, whose livestock has been preyed on by snow leopards.

These numbers come via a newly published report by Traffic a wildlife trade monitoring network that is a collaboration between the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the World Wildlife Foundation. The report estimates that between 221 and 450 snow leopards have been killed since 2008, but notes that the number could be higher since killings in remote areas go undetected and it is difficult to monitor the trade of big cats.

Conservation models

Some see survival prospects as bleak for the big cats. However, in Kyrgyzstan — where the remaining snow leopards are found in relatively large numbers — new conservation models have shown some signs of progress.

Between poachers and herders, it may be that herders pose the greater threat to snow leopards.

The "snow leopard doesn't turn up that often in markets, what the report authors have concluded is that it's a bit opportunistic, if a snow leopard is killed and the parts or the pelt is saleable it's



almost like getting your own back for the livestock you've lost," James Compton of Traffic told BBC News.

The Traffic report estimates that while only 21 percent of snow leopards are purposely hunted for sale, 60

percent of snow leopards killed end up on the market. Herders may kill for retaliation, but end up selling for profit.

"We think that what most observations, seizure records and expert

opinion show is that the majority is still happening because of retaliatory killing," Compton told BBC News. "One of the major interventions to stop that is better protection for livestock, in some of these very remote areas where you have nomad communities and herds of livestock, because that's where the friction takes place."

Snow leopards

Vicious killers, snow leopards are capable of taking down animals three times their own weight and one snow leopard can kill up to 20 goats or sheep at a time if they are trapped in a pen, Tech Times reports. For the often impoverished and marginalized mountain communities that rely on herding, loss of livestock to a snow leopard can have a big impact on quality of life.

But Kyrgyzstan has become a model for snow leopard conservation as the Snow Leopard Trust and Snow Leopard Foundation, in combination with the Kyrgyz government, have been co-managing a former hunting ground as a wildlife sanctuary called Shamshy.

Herders can still graze livestock in Shamshy, but with healthy populations of ibex and mountain goat, the snow leopard's natural prey, conservationists hope that snow leopards will be attracted to the sanctuary but refrain from attacking livestock.

(Source: The CSM)

Vicious killers, snow leopards are capable of taking down animals three times their own weight and one snow leopard can kill up to 20 goats or sheep at a time if they are trapped in a pen.

With docking of Shenzhou-11, China is one step closer to building a space station

China recently announced the successful docking of its Shenzhou-11 spacecraft with the Tiangong-2 space lab, a move that brings the country and its aerospace ambitions closer to reaching their goal of building their own space station.

Coupled with the European Space Agency's (ESA) recent collaboration with Roscomos, the Russian space agency, in sending a spacecraft to Mars, international relations pundits and space enthusiasts the world over may now be asking, are we headed towards another space race?

Earlier last week, the Shenzhou-11 mission sent two astronauts into space from a military launching pad in Mongolia, successfully joining up with China's space lab. The event has pushed ahead the country's for a space station and represents just one piece of its larger vision for space exploration. China also plans to reach Mars

by the year 2020 and to set up a permanent colony on the moon. In speaking to the BBC earlier this year on his nation's plans, Wu Weiren, chief designer of China's moon and Mars missions said, "Our long-term goal is to explore, land, and settle (on the moon). We want a manned lunar landing to stay for longer periods and establish a research base."

Small players

As far as other nations are concerned, along with the ongoing joint ESA-Roscomos ExoMars mission, smaller players seem to be quickly getting caught up to speed. Both Japan and India, for example, are planning missions to the moon and nearby objects. And despite recent setbacks, the private sector is determinedly nurturing its taste for space travel and has received backing by real money from ambitious entrepreneurs and high tech innovators.

For one, SpaceX founder and CEO Elon Musk has assured the world that building a human colony on Mars ("to make life interplanetary," Musk says) is both doable and desirable, pledging to lower the per person costs from \$10 billion to an affordable \$200,000 USD and boasting that he'll reach the goal by 2025, well ahead of NASA's plans for a human-led mission to Mars sometime in the 2030s.

All of which leads us to wonder about the supposed U.S. supremacy in the great beyond. To wit, the NASA-led International Space Station, launched in 1998, is set to retire in 2024, potentially leaving China the lone proprietor of a permanent orbiter. China is "on the rise and the U.S. is in very real danger of falling behind in the future," warned Leroy Chiao, a former NASA astronaut and commander of the International Space Station.

(Source: cantechletter.com)

Climate change is driving lobsters out of New England

There was once a time in America when lobsters were so abundant people caught them at the shore by hand and used them as field fertilizer. But now vast stretches of New England are as devoid of the crustaceans as the moon's surface, a lobster drought partly due to the ever-warming oceans.

This past month was the hottest September globally in 136 years of records. Just as the growing warmth affects hu-

mans, it affects lobsters, which are sensitive to temperature. (That's one reason David Foster Wallace famously argued we shouldn't boil them.)

But the lobsters have not disappeared. They've simply relocated northward to avoid the steamy waters. Their new choice of digs has caused havoc among Connecticut and New York fishing communities — some of which now have

switched to harvesting clams and seaweed — while simultaneously creating a lobster boom in Maine.

Lobster catches

We can watch their movement over the decades thanks to this nifty visualization from NASA, which uses data from Rutgers University's OceanAdapt. It depicts lobster catches from the late '60s to 2014 off the New England coast, where

the sea surface has warmed 99 percent faster than the rest of the planet's oceans.

Note that the lobsters probably are not physically trekking north in some great, 10-legged migration. It's just that juvenile lobsters in the southern seas are less likely to survive — they're vulnerable to heat stress and parasites — while northern waters provide a refuge.

(Source: NewsWeek)

RIC Chief Calls for Participation of Insurance Firms to Set up Public Insurance Fund

Insurance companies were urged to participate in setting up Public Insurance Fund for natural disasters. In general, high capacities and potentials of insurance firms should be used optimally.

Speaking in his weekly press briefing, Managing Director of Razi Insurance Company (RIC) Younes Mazloumi announced the above statement and said: "The bylaw for setting up Public Insurance Fund for natural disaster was approved second Iranian month of Ordibehesht (May 2016) in the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Iranian Parliament also called Majlis), the issue of which was turned down at the Guardians' Council.

Given the above issue, Majlis deputies corrected some articles of the bylaw in late Oct. in order to convince the Council for final approval, he maintained.

He lashed out at lackluster and poor performance of insurance companies in the field of offering insurance policies for housing such as fire insurance and said: "Effective steps should be taken in this regard."

Razi Insurance Co. Ranked in "Capital International" Institute



Elsewhere in this remarks, chief executive pointed to the international ranking of this insurance company by "Capital International" Institute, tasked with rating EU Economic Institutions" and said: "Razi Insurance Company is the first Iranian company that has presently been ranked in international level."

Given the above issue, suitable way has been paved

for the company in order to transfer a part of risk management to the international reinsurances, he stressed.

Since a part of stocks of world's giant rating companies such as "Fitch" and "Moody's" are at the U.S. control, "We entered into direct negotiation with European Company."

RIC managed to receive "B+" in domestic level and "A+" in international level after a year, the chief of company reiterated.

He put the current number of people covered by the insurance services of the company at 12 million in a way that total volume of its reliable insurance policies hit 2,500,000, he said, adding: "Moreover, 300,000 people have been put under the healthcare and medical insurance services of the company."

In the end, Managing Director of Razi Insurance Company (RIC) Younes Mazloumi said: "The company has so far issued insurance policies, valued at 4,900 billion rials, since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year in 1395 (started March 20, 2016), showing a significant 70 percent growth as compared to a year earlier."

Nouri Petrochemical Co. Appointed Exemplary Exporter in 2016

The commemoration ceremony of National Exports Day (2016) was held in OIC Summit in Tehran on Thursday Oct. 20.

In this prestigious ceremony, Nouri Petrochemical Company was introduced as a model and exemplary exporter in current year.

Based on best performance of company in the last Iranian calendar year 1394 (ended March 20, 2016), Managing Director of Nouri Petrochemical Company Eng. Taheri was awarded with a Plaque of Honor and statue of ceremony by the Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Eng. Ne'matzadeh.

The award-granting ceremony was at-

tended by senior officials of the country including President Rouhani and Minister of Industry Eng. Ne'matzadeh and a number of public and private sector activities.

As held at the initiative taken by the Trade Promotion Organization of Iran (TPOI), the following criteria were taken into consideration for the selection of exemplary economic enterprises as follows: exports value, growing trend of exports over the last three years, diversification of target market and sustainability of exports, history of export activity, technical knowhow and skill in the field of exports, taking membership in specialized export unions and also active and constructive

presence in regional and international exhibitions, etc.

It is worth mentioning that Nouri Petrochemical Company is one of the largest and most important aromatic producers in world which plays an important role in petrochemical products' market of the country and Middle East region.

Presently, Persian Gulf Petrochemical Industries Company (Holding) is main shareholder of the company.

Of main products of the company, it should be referred to benzene, Orthoxylene, paraxylene, raffinate and treated naphtha, etc. which are exported to the countries based in east and southeast

Asia, North Africa, Persian Gulf littoral states, Indian Peninsula, etc.

The senior official of the company put the volume of petrochemicals exported to other countries in the last Iranian calendar year in 1394 (ended March 19, 2016) at more than 2,621,162 tons, valued at \$1.2 billion.

In the end, Managing Director of Nouri Petrochemical Company Eng. Taheri put the petrochemicals exported to other countries in the first half of current year (March 20 — Sept. 21) at 1,682,477 tons, valued at \$868,874,964, turning into a leader in the field of export of petrochemicals in the region.

Life on Mars found 40 yrs ago? Study says 1970s Viking rovers may have had key evidence

This year the Curiosity rover supposedly discovered traces of life on Mars, but a study claims NASA may have had evidence of life in the Martian soil as early as 1976.

The Viking rovers 1 and 2 were Earth's first spacecrafts to land on Mars, they took the first high-resolution images of the red planet and were the first to collect geological data.

Now, in a study recently published in the journal of Astrobiology, scientists Gilbert Levin and Patricia Ann Straat, from Arizona State University and the U.S. National Institutes of Health, say the soil collected by the robots 40 years ago is in need of another testing.

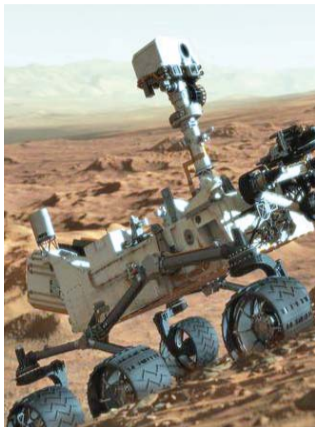
Viking 1 and 2 conducted three probes into Mars' biology by collecting soil, one of which was done with the Labeled Release (LR) experiment. Scientists tested the soil picked up by the rovers for any signs of life by mixing it with nutrient-rich water.

Supposedly, if the soil contained signs of life, it would metabolize the nutrients in the water dropped by the robot — and, surprisingly, it did. The LR test was reportedly compared to Earth soil from Death Valley to Antarctica just to be sure, which seemed to support a positive result for life on Mars.

However, the two other soil experiments proved to be less exciting as they contained no evidence of organic material, and therefore no presence of life, so NASA concluded that a non-biological process must be responsible for the supposed false positive of LR's result.

However, in light of recent findings, the study by Dr. Levin and Dr. Straat into LR's results suggests it's possible that biological processes were responsible for the positive result and the doctors are calling for the soil to be reexamined.

(Source: RT)



Fossilized jaw in Tanzania is the oldest evidence of a right-handed homo habilis

Researchers have discovered a fossilized jaw, known as OH-65, from a homo habilis in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania. Dating 1.8 million years ago, this is the oldest evidence on the evolution of right-handedness in human beings. Pictured above is a sculptor's rendering of the famous hominid Australopithecus afarensis "Lucy."

The study, published in the Journal of Human Evolution, says that researchers have discovered a fossilized jaw, known as OH-65, from a homo habilis in the Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania. Dating 1.8 million years ago, this is the oldest evidence on the evolution of right-handedness in human beings.

The researchers determined that the jaw belonged to a right-handed homo habilis by analyzing grooves or labial striations on the lip side of the anterior teeth, which slanted downward from left to right.

"We think that tells us something further about lateralization of the brain. We already know that homo habilis had brain lateralization and was more like us than like apes. This extends it to handedness, which is key," said David Frayer, a professor emeritus from Kansas University and lead author of the study, via Science Daily.

This means that the homo habilis used a stone tool with his right hand which was gripped in between his anterior teeth. The marks were from the said tool, which would occasionally strike the labial face.

This stunning discovery could lead to more studies on the marks present with other early Homo fossils to understand more about the origins of our genus and how language and cortical reorganization developed among humans.

(Source: Nature World News)

How a false vacuum could destroy the universe with terrifying efficiency

Tired of worrying about the upcoming election, global war and/or the slow destruction of the Earth through climate change? Never fear! Here's a new, totally hypothetical yet frighteningly well-founded nightmare apocalypse scenario!

The theory is explained in-depth in a new video from Kurzgesagt, but here's the elevator pitch: quantum fields (which are basically a set of rules that the tiniest bits of matter need to obey) want to move from a high energy state to a lower energy state. When they are in the lowest energy state possible, they're stable.

The fear is that one of these quantum fields, the Higgs field, is not actually stable, but rather exists in a "false vacuum." This means it still contains potential energy. If this energy was somehow triggered, it would create a rolling tide of destruction, called a stable Higgs field, moving at the speed of light, vaporizing everything in its path, and leaving in its wake a void where physics as we know it would cease to exist and life would be impossible. Pretty cool, huh?

For all we know, this has already happened somewhere out there. But that doesn't mean we're screwed.

The speed of light is pretty slow on the scale of the universe, and since the universe is expanding, it's possible that one of these stable Higgs fields would never have the time to reach us. Or, scientists could just be wrong about the whole thing. Chances are we'll find another apocalypse to get wrapped up in before we ever really find out.

(Source: Popular Mechanics)

Department of Environment bans tilapia breeding

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Iran's Department of Environment (DOE) has banned tilapia breeding in the country as it poses a significant threat to native fish species, an expert with aquatic animals division of the DOE has said.

The only body in charge of granting a license for tilapia breeding is the DOE which is strongly disagree with breeding the fish, Mehr news agency quoted Omid Seddiqi as saying.



The law clearly mandates that breeding any kind of aquatic animals must be approved by the DOE, Seddiqi stated.

Some justify tilapia breeding as a means of creating more job opportunities and making profit but the species are pretty harmful and detrimental to the environment and native species and will also lead to some negative and serious social and economic consequences, he warned.

"Breeding aquatic animals which are native to Iran are pretty much profitable but unfortunately the farmers overlooked such great treasures," he regretted.

It is believed that breeding tilapia in Iran is a big threat to other aquatic animals as tilapia is pretty invasive to the ecosystem and their introduction causes or is likely to cause harm to the ecosystem.

U.S. carbon emissions from energy sector lowest in 25 years

Energy-related carbon emissions have reached their lowest levels since 1991, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) said in a report.

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the U.S. energy sector totaled 2,530 million metric tons during the first six months of 2016, which is the lowest in 25 years. The report also projected that energy-related CO₂ emissions will decrease to 5,179 million metric tons in 2016. According to the EIA's Short-Term Energy Outlook, mild weather and changes in the country's energy consumption contributed to the decline.



The U.S. had the fewest heating degree days--an indicator of heating demand--during the first six months of the year. Warmer weather during winter months has reduced the demand for heating fuels like electricity, natural gas, and distillate heating oil. As a result, primary energy consumption was 2 percent lower compared with that from the same period in 2015. The decline was more evident in the residential and power sectors, where primary consumption decreased 9 percent and 3 percent, respectively.

In addition, coal and natural gas consumption decreased compared to the same period in 2015. The decrease, however, was greater for coal, which accounts for greater carbon emissions when burned compared with natural gas. Coal consumption declined 18 percent and natural gas consumption fell 1 percent.

Consumption of energy from renewable sources, which do not produce CO₂, also increased 9 percent in the first six months of 2016 compared with the same period in 2015. Wind energy accounted for nearly half of the increase, while hydroelectric power, which has increased with the lessening of drought conditions on the West Coast represented 35 percent of the surge in consumption. Solar energy accounted 13 percent of the increase and is expected to see the largest capacity additions of any fuel in 2016, the report said.

(Source: Nature World News)



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

Majlis passes 'clean air' bill

ENVIRONMENT TEHRAN — Iran's **d e s k** parliament (Majlis) on Wednesday approved clean air bill which could greatly help deal with sources of pollution in the country once it comes into force.

The bill will be discussed in detail later this week, IRIB reported.

The chief of Department of Environment, Masoumeh Ebtekar, explained that the bill has been modified with the help of cabinet members and executive bodies.

"As some of the laws and regulations date back to 20 years ago and some of the newly stricken environmental issues such as sand storms were not included in the law some modifications were required," Ebtekar said.

It's been some years Tehran and some other metropolises of Iran are struggling with air pollution all year round more specifically in autumn and winter when the temperature inversion occur.

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.

■ Clean air bill to the benefit of industries

Ebtekar went on to say that the



newly adopted bill is to the benefit of all industries in case they agree to undergo eco-friendly changes.

"The bill won't pose any problems for the industries at all and the industries can even turn it to their good advantage for more production and creating more job opportunities which eventually result in the public health," she said.

■ Environmental loss at \$30b annually

Further the DOE chief regretted the fact that environmental predicaments Iranians are facing incur loss of \$30 billion annually.

"According to the studies Iranians sustained loss of \$9 billion in 2010 and the amount increased to \$30 billion this year," she pointed.

■ Clean air bill mandates provision of public transportation

Elsewhere in an interview with ISNA news agency Mohammad Mojabi, deputy for parliament affairs of the DOE, explained that the clean air bill mandates provision of public transportation in the megacities.

"The budget for public transportation facilities must increase by 5 percent in the metropolises annually," Mojabi said.

■ Vehicle inspection intervals reduced to two years

The five-year interval for vehicle inspection in Iran will reduce to two years by implementation of the clean air bill, Mojabi said.

Moreover, the interval will decrease to one year for public and governmental vehicles, he added.

■ The public should be determined to eliminate air pollution

The public must reach a firm decision to phase out air pollution, Mojabi said, adding, such regulations such as increasing public transportation, addressing sand storms, setting high standards for fuel quality, imposing green tax and sending them on mitigating air pollution, and being explicit about the rules can help curbing the problem of air pollution.

Caracal, wildlife great hunter

By Farnaz Heidari

Caracal (Caracal caracal) is a native species in Iran and some other countries of southwest Asia into India. This species also have broadly distribution in Central Asia and Africa. The historical range of the Caracal mirrors that of the cheetah, and both coincide with the distribution of several small desert gazelles.

Caracals provisionally are present across most regions of eastern and central Iran, including Fars and northern Khuzestan but there are also some concerns over the status of populations not just in Iran but also in the Central Asian Republics and also in Pakistan.

Dry steppes and semi deserts of Kavir National Park, Tooran National Park, Bahram-e Goor Protected Area, Saghband Yazd, Abbasabad Naeen, Naybandan Wildlife Refuge, Sistan-Baluchestan, Khorasan, Masjedsoleyman and Kermanshah are all listed as Caracal habitats in Iran.

Taxonomic and molecular evidences confirmed that Caracal is closely allied with the African Golden Cat (Caracal aurata) and Serval (Leptailurus serval). Caracals as nocturnal hunters live in harmony with rodents, birds, reptiles, snakes, rabbits, small mammals.

■ A magnificent capability that threatens Caracals

Caracals have a great capability for hunting and that's why they are traditionally trained and abused for hunting small game including birds. On the other hand, trapping and relocating individuals is often thought of as a humane-solution to current or potential conflict with predatory species. Trapping causes animals great stress because they can injure themselves if adequate methods does not apply.

Caracals all have stories to tell. This is the story of Michael, a male Caracal who lives at Tehran Zoo now. His story help us feel the status of being abused just because of being exclusive and a fast hunter. This is a true story from Iran wildlife.

■ Michael, the story of suffering and being abused

In October 2010, a male three years old Caracal that was illegally captured, found at small village near Shiraz, Fars Province, in Iran.

Dr. Iman Memarian is trusted wildlife veterinarian of Department of the Environment of Islamic Repub-

lic of Iran (DoE), and also an expert in capturing and recapturing wildlife species. Memarian pinpointed the process of anesthesia to the Tehran Times saying "We used combination of Zoletil and Medetomidine administered in same 5ml Teleinject blowpipe dart by intramuscular injection provided effective anesthesia and sedation that reversed with atipamezole at least 20 minutes after medetomidine injection; under the anesthesia the animal was weighed (10kg), blood and skin sample for DNA analyses were taken and a radio collar was placed on the animal."

But what was the reason of using radio collar and how it came by? "Within a couple of days he was ready to be released to where he was initially found," he said.

"Iranian conservationist team at that time considered particular facts such as collecting data on him because this individual could reflect his natural behavior which is still a big gap for conservation of these opportunistic predator," Memarian explained, adding, "After adequate conservation study, Bahram-e-Goor Protected Area was considered as a suitable place for rehabilitation of the animal and finally on October 6, 2010 the animal was released in this protected area."

This male Caracal was monitored for two months until Iranian conservationists were shocked when absolutely no signal was detected for one month. In the light of using radio collars, the male Caracal was found in a sheep pen at a village, sustaining some injuries.

"We human beings tend to assume we rule the Wildlife," Memarian regretted, "Poor male Caracal (Michael) has been captured by rural people in a village near Shahrehabab, Kerman Province, in December 2010."

"Michael was anaesthetized again by using combination of Ketamine and Medetomidine administered in same 5ml Teleinject blowpipe dart by intramuscular injection that reversed with atipamezole at least 50 minutes after medetomidine injection; clinical examination revealed 4kg weight loss compared to the previous examination, 8%-10% dehydration (depressed, eyes: deeply sunken, mucous membranes: dry, Skin turgor > 3 sec) and depression," he explained.

The animal had alopecia, erythema, erosion, crusting and scaling around his head, neck (under the collar) and front limbs and under anesthesia, skin samples

were obtained by scraping and hair plucking in several regions of affected areas, he said.

Via direct microscopy no mite or fungi were seen in superficial and deep skin scraping and a trichogram showed broken hair shafts in anagen phase, he added.

Skin scrapings and hair follicles specimens were collected aseptically and submitted for culture to the Mycology Laboratory, University of Shiraz, he said, adding, suspected dermatophyte colonies were identified by their macroscopic and microscopic morphological characteristics and all tests were performed in triplicate. Finally, the fungus was identified as *T. mentagrophytes*.

Memarian went on to say that Michael was placed in a disinfected cage and treatment was done by Griseofulvin administered with the feed and improvement was noted after 3 weeks of therapy.

He further pointed that treatment lasted for 5 weeks and a second sampling showed no infection with dermatophytes and then blood sample was taken again and no side effects were detected and to the best of our knowledge, this was the first report on isolation of *Trichophyton mentagrophytes* in Caracal caracal.

■ Michael, from the wild to Tehran Zoo

Animal right activists always condemn Zoos to bring the animals in captivity, but what was the future of Michael if there was no zoo? Could he back to the wild?

"Absolutely not" Memarian said.

There is a growing body of evidence that suggest Iranian Zoos have many problems, but the question is: "Shall we omit the reality?" Now zoos around the world, considered as an important part of conservation plans. With the rise of the animal welfare movement and increasing concern for the environment in general, and the loss of biodiversity in particular, many zoos have moved the focus of their activity towards conservation and Iranian Zoos must carry it out.

Some management methods such as the story of Michael come directly from human and veterinary medicine. Memarian concluded "the current goal of most major zoos such as Tehran Zoo is helping wildlife not just keeping animals in captivity; Michael now lives in Tehran Zoo just because there was absolutely no way for him to survive, he had serious injuries and we will do our best to be good hosts to animals like Michael".



The UK is training Saudi pilots amid accusations of war crimes in Yemen

The Saudi Air Force is being trained by the British Government amid accusations that it is carrying out atrocities in neighboring Yemen, it has emerged.

The Liberal Democrats – who uncovered the instruction being given, in both Saudi Arabia and the UK itself – described the revelation as “shameful”.

Tom Brake, the party's foreign affairs spokesman, called on the Ministry of Defense (MoD) to end the training immediately and for much stricter controls on arms exports to the oil-rich kingdom.

Defense Secretary Michael Fallon said the Royal Saudi Air Force was helped in order to “improve their targeting processes” – and, therefore, their compliance with international law.

But Brake said: “It is shameful that the UK Government is not only arming Saudi pilots, it is training them as well. The indiscriminate bombing of innocent civilians by Saudi Arabia in Yemen, in clear breach of international humanitarian law, is now well documented. The Government must end its complicity in this murderous campaign.”

The training opens up a new front in criticism of Britain's close links with Saudi Arabia – with the Saudis currently leading a coalition bombing campaign against Houthi rebels in Yemen – at growing humanitarian cost.

Earlier this month, air strikes carried out by the coalition's air forces killed at least 140 people and injured up to 600 more at a funeral. A report by the Saudi-led coalition's Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) admitted responsibility having promised an investigation into the incident, but blamed “wrong information” from allies of the internationally recognized Yemeni government, which it



is supporting in the conflict.

“A party affiliated to the Yemeni presidency of the general chief of staff wrongly passed information that there was a gathering of armed Houthi leaders in a known location in Sanaa, and insisted that the location be targeted immediately,” investigators said in a statement at the time.

Saudi Arabia insists the coalition it leads keeps to international laws, with any incidents investigated.

Despite the accusations of alleged war crimes, Theresa May has defended selling arms to Saudi Arabia by insisting close ties “keep people on the streets of Britain safe”.

The admission that training is also taking place came in a written parliamentary answer obtained by Brake from Fallon.

The Liberal Democrat demanded to know what training and advice had been given by the UK on authorizing military

operations and the “targeting of aerial operations” over the past year.

In reply, Fallon wrote: “As part of our ongoing defense engagement with Saudi Arabia, the UK has provided training to the Royal Saudi Air Force (RSAF) both in the UK and in Saudi Arabia, including international targeting courses for RSAF personnel, to improve their targeting processes and to support International Humanitarian Law (IHL) compliance.”

The Defense Secretary said the UK had also delivered two training sessions in Saudi Arabia on the process for investigating alleged IHL violations, under a joint incident team it supported.

But he added: “The UK has not been directly involved in investigations undertaken by the JIAT, has not provided any specific operational advice to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for operations in Yemen and has not provided training on political authorization of military opera-

tions.”

Saudi Arabia has insisted its campaign in Yemen is being waged “in accordance with international humanitarian law, in a legitimate war of self defense, in a legitimate war to defend the legitimate government of Yemen”.

Brake said the latest revelation emphasized the urgent need for strict rules to require the Foreign Secretary to sign off personally any arms sales to countries such as Saudi Arabia.

His plan would see all 28 countries on the Foreign Office's “countries of concern” list – which also includes China and Russia – denied arms without proof there was “no risk they'll be used in human rights abuses”.

Brake announced plans to bring forward a backbench Bill, hoping to win the support of both Labor and the Scottish National party for the crackdown.

(Source: The Independent)

‘Hezbollah to stay in Syria until final victory’

The secretary general of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement says the group's fighters will remain in neighboring Syria until they achieve the final victory over foreign-sponsored Takfiri terrorists and purge the crisis-hit Arab country of extremists.

Addressing people in a speech marking a week since the killing of the movement's military commander, Hatem Hamade, in Syria, Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah dispelled illusions about Hezbollah forces' withdrawing from Syria, stressing that the fighters will leave Syria only after they have defeated Takfiri terrorists there.

“Our choice of going to Syria was very well studied after observing the regional developments that began in Tunisia and reached Syria,” he said, adding, “Time has revealed that the battle in Syria is aimed at making existential changes on the ground as well as to the political map of the region.”

“We will continue this battle until the end, and we are proud of our martyrs in Syria, and whoever bargains on our tiredness will lose,” he said, emphasizing that the security “we are living in now is not the outcome of agreements or mere prayers,” but it is the outcome of efforts made by martyrs and their blood.

Nasrallah pointed out that Hezbollah fighters

were not ordered by any third party to play a role in Syria, but rather entered the neighboring country following a comprehensive and extensive analysis.

The Hezbollah leader stated that the ongoing foreign-backed militancy in Syria is not simply aimed at toppling the incumbent Damascus government, but rather meant to make changes to demographic map and borders of the region in order to uproot certain groups of people.

The Hezbollah secretary general further condemned Saudi Arabia as the country actively supporting and financing the Daesh Takfiri terrorists group.

He added that leaked private emails related to former US secretary of state and Democratic presidential candidate, Hillary Clinton, attest to the fact that Saudi Arabia and US were behind forming Daesh group.

Nasrallah also condemned the inaction and passivity of international human rights bodies toward crimes being perpetrated by Daesh terrorists in Iraq and Syria, noting that despite hundreds and thousands of people have been either beheaded or killed in other ways by this group, world rights bodies maintain their silence toward its crimes.

Yemen blockade threatening over 20 million people

Turning to the Saudi-led coalitions' aerial and naval blockade of Yemen, Nasrallah stated that the restrictive measures adopted by Riyadh toward its impoverished southern neighbor have affected the lives of more than 20 million people.

Nasrallah also took to task international organizations for their failure to adopt any decisive measures to end Saudi Arabia's brutal embargo on the Yemeni people.

All Iraqis fighting Daesh to liberate Mosul

Elsewhere in his speech, the Hezbollah secretary general said that people from all walks of life are currently fighting the Daesh Takfiri terrorists in Iraq, and dozens or even hundreds of people are sacrificing their lives in order to liberate the northern Iraqi city of Mosul from Daesh terrorists.

“Unfortunately, what Daesh is doing is under the name of [Prophet] Mohammad (PBUH). They want to throw this name, which has always shined in this world with glory, into darkness of Daesh,” Nasrallah said, adding that committing crimes under the name of Islam and its prophet is a deliberated and preplanned act by Daesh.

(Source: Press TV)

Trump planning lawsuit after election

Steering his campaign toward controversy yet again, Donald Trump vowed to sue every woman who has accused him of sexual assault or other inappropriate behavior. He called them “liars” whose allegations he blamed Democrats for orchestrating.

Trump's blunt threat of legal action eclipsed his planned focus on serious-minded policy during a speech in Gettysburg. Though his campaign had billed the speech as a chance for Trump to lay out a to-do list for his first 100 days as president, he seemed unable to restrain himself from re-litigating grievances with Hillary Clinton, the media and especially the women who have come forward in recent days.

“All of these liars will be sued once the election is over,” Trump said. He added later: “I look so forward to doing that.”

Speaking to reporters aboard her campaign plane between rallies in Pennsylvania, Clinton said that, after three debates, she was no longer thinking about responding to what Trump says anymore and would “let the American people decide what he offers and what we offer.”

Clinton said she would be focusing the days remaining before the election helping down-ballot Democrats. To that end, she assailed the state's Republican senator, Pat Toomey, saying in Pittsburgh that he has refused to “stand up” to Trump as she touted his Democratic challenger, Katie McGinty.

Noting Trump's comments about Mexican immigrants and his attacks on a Muslim-American military family, she said of Toomey: “If he doesn't have the courage to stand up to Donald Trump after all of this, then can you be sure that he will

stand up for you when it counts?”

Toomey spokesman Ted Kwong said Clinton's comments show that McGinty would not be an independent voice in the Senate.

“Today is just further proof that hyper-partisan, ethically challenged Katie McGinty will be a rubber stamp for everything Hillary Clinton wants to do in Washington,” he said. “Pat Toomey has been, and will continue to be, an independent leader in the Senate on issues ranging from gun safety to ending Wall Street bailouts.”

Trump's comments on women Saturday came after numerous complaints that his behavior toward them has been inappropriate.

Nearly a dozen women have publicly accused Trump of unwanted advances or sexual assault in the weeks since a 2005

recording emerged in which the former reality TV star boasted of kissing women and groping their genitals without their consent. The latest came on Saturday, when an adult film actress said the billionaire kissed her and two other women on the lips “without asking for permission” when they met him after a golf tournament in 2006.

Trump has denied all the allegations, while insisting some of the women weren't attractive enough for him to want to pursue.

“Every woman lied when they came forward to hurt my campaign,” he said. Without offering evidence, he surmised that Clinton or the Democratic National Committee had put the women up to it. Clinton called the accusation “inaccurate.”

(Source: AP)

‘Assad certain winner of war in Syria’

Qatar? Do they continue to be an ally for U.S. and accept its representation in possible negotiations with Russia or they would seek their own share?

Turkey is in a mess now, and I don't see it as a player. Some Turkish artillery into north Syria is about the Kurds as Turkey is afraid that after the Syrian war is over, the Kurds would use their battlefield experience and weapons to have their own or an autonomous state within Syria in Rojava.

A revealed audio file of John Kerry's meeting with some Syrian opposition groups shows Washington would agree with an election including As-

ad; but says it must be under strict international observation. When is a good time for such an election? And would U.S. accept if Assad wins again or like the previous round it would reject it despite international monitoring?

I don't see elections in Syria for at least 4-5 years as Assad would surely be the winner of the civil war, and he won't need the approval of elections until full Syrian reconstruction. It won't matter if the U.S. accept or reject the results of any future Syrian election because the losing party in a war cannot impose conditions at the winning party.

Russia: U.S.-led raid near Kirkuk is a war crime

Russia has condemned the recent bombing of dozens of civilian mourners in Iraq's oil-rich northern province of Kirkuk, saying the so-called U.S.-led coalition is committing war crimes in the Arab country.

“Judging by the eyewitness accounts, the mourning procession was mistaken for terrorists by the coalition aviation. Dozens of Iraqi civilians died, including women and children,” Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said in a statement.

He added that Russian reconnaissance had pinpointed two jets conducting air strikes on Daquq, located 30 kilometers south of Kirkuk, stressing that there were no ISIL (Daesh) militants there.

Konashenkov further noted that U.S.-led coalition strikes on residential areas bore the mark of “war crimes.”

“We have observed several times that these deadly strikes ... which have all the hallmarks of war crimes, have practically become a daily routine by the international coalition's warplanes,” he said.

The senior Russian official went on to say that civilians, along with non-military infrastructure, were increasingly being targeted by the member states of the US-led coalition.

“Too often weddings, funerals, hospitals, police stations and humanitarian convoys are being hit by the coalition warplanes,” Konashenkov said.

On Friday, at least 15 women lost their lives and scores of other civilians sustained injuries when US-led military aircraft targeted a Shia place of worship in the town of Daquq.

The attack came as nearly 30,000 Iraqi army soldiers, volunteer fighters and Kurdish Peshmerga forces are taking part in the military operation to retake the strategic northern city of Mosul from Daesh terrorists.

(Source: TASS)

White House says Michelle Obama may be Clinton's top advocate

First lady Michelle Obama probably helps Hillary Clinton on the campaign trail more than President Obama does, White House press secretary Josh Earnest told reporters.



“Based on the strong support and deep respect that people across the country have for her, based on the compelling personal argument that she's been making in support of secretary Clinton, and she's also quite talented in her own right at delivering a speech, and those things I do think combine to make her a very powerful advocate for secretary Clinton — and probably the most powerful advocate that secretary Clinton has,” Earnest told reporters at his daily briefing.

The spokesman had been asked whether he agreed with commentators who have proclaimed the first lady to be an even stronger surrogate for Clinton than the president has been.

Earnest's comment came after Michelle Obama won rave reviews from Democrats and some pundits for a pair of high-profile speeches on the campaign trail. The first lady not only strongly endorsed the former secretary of state, but also hit Republican nominee Donald Trump hard and in highly personal terms after a recording surfaced in which the former reality show star brags about kissing and groping women without their consent.

“I have to tell you that I can't stop thinking about this,” Michelle Obama said in a speech in New Hampshire last week. “It has shaken me to my core in a way that I couldn't have predicted. So while I'd love nothing more than to pretend like this isn't happening, and to come out here and do my normal campaign speech, it would be dishonest and disingenuous to me to just move on to the next thing like this was all just a bad dream.”

Even the Trump campaign has quietly praised the first lady for her effective work on behalf of Clinton's campaign, a high-level Trump campaign source, speaking anonymously, told Yahoo News last week that Michelle Obama has a better “connection” to voters than Clinton.

“She's a much bigger threat than Hillary Clinton because of her charisma, her connection,” the Trump source said. “I mean she kind of connects like Trump connects, right? She connects like [President] Obama connects. She has a huge connection. ... It's very tough to compete with that.”

The first lady enjoys considerably higher approval ratings than her husband — at least 10 points better in most public opinion polls.

“She is somebody who enjoys the deep respect of a large majority of Americans,” Earnest said Friday. “She also is somebody who is a very persuasive speaker. She is somebody who has been able to make a forceful personal case about why she's involved in this election.”

(Source: Yahoo News)

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How the U.S. Presidential Elections would affect the Syrian issue? There are speculations that there wouldn't be any settlement to the crisis till the elections by which the burden would pass to the next president.

Correct. Obama knows he cannot win the war in Syria, and he would pass on to the next president on January 20, 2017 to lose, so the loss won't go into Obama's war history record.

How do you see the role and influence of other regional players such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and

What they said about Pele

"The greatest goal I ever scored was a one-two with Celeste – we named him Edson Arantes do Nascimento."

■ Dondinho, Pele's father

"I told myself before the game, 'he's made of skin and bones just like everyone else'. But I was wrong."

Tarcisio Burgnich, the Italy defender who marked Pele in the Mexico 1970 Final

"On this special date when you celebrate your 75th birthday, allow me to offer you my best wishes of health and happiness. I sincerely hope you find some time to spend a wonderful day with your family and friends. I thank you for everything that you have done for football, and I would like to convey to you my sincere friendship and respect."

with your family and friends. I thank you for everything that you have done for football, and I would like to convey to you my sincere friendship and respect."

■ Issa Hayatou, Acting FIFA President

"My name is Ronald Reagan, I'm the President of the United States of America. But you don't need to introduce yourself, because everyone knows who Pele is."

■ Ronald Reagan

"The difficulty, the extraordinary, is not to score 1,000 goals like Pele – it's to score one goal like Pele."

Carlos Drummond de Andrade, Brazilian poet

"The greatest player in history was Di Stefano. I refuse to classify Pele as a player. He was above that."

■ Ferenc Puskas

"In some countries they wanted to touch him, in some they wanted to kiss him. In others they even kissed the ground he walked on. I thought it was beautiful, just beautiful."

■ Clodoaldo

"After the fifth goal, even I wanted to cheer for him." Sigge Parling of Sweden on a 5-2 defeat by Brazil in the 1958 FIFA World Cup Final

"I arrived hoping to stop a great man, but I went away convinced I had been undone by someone who was not born on the same planet as the rest of us."

Costa Pereira on Benfica's 5-2 loss to Santos in the 1962 Intercontinental Cup in Lisbon

"Pele was the greatest – he was simply flawless. And off the pitch he is always smiling and upbeat. You never see him bad-tempered. He loves being Pele."

■ Tostao

"When I saw Pele play, it made me feel I should hang up my boots."

■ Just Fontaine

"Pele was so focused on winning the Trophy. It was like he knew it was his destiny. He was like a child waiting for Santa Claus."

Mario Americo, Brazil's masseur, on Mexico 1970

"Pele was one of the few who contradicted my theory: instead of 15 minutes of fame, he will have 15 centuries."

■ Andy Warhol

"You may be right. But you know nothing about football and I've seen Pele play."

Brazil coach Vicente Feola to the psychologist who said Pele was too immature to play at Sweden 1958

"Pele was the only footballer who surpassed the boundaries of logic."

■ Johan Cruyff

"His great secret was improvisation. Those things he did were in one moment. He had an extraordinary perception of the game."

■ Carlos Alberto Torres

"I sometimes feel as though football was invented for this magical player."

■ Sir Bobby Charlton

"Pele played football for 22 years, and in that time he did more to promote world friendship and fraternity than any other ambassador anywhere."

J.B. Pinheiro, the Brazilian ambassador to the United Nations

Malcolm Allison: "How do you spell Pele?"

Pat Crerand: "Easy: G-O-D."

British television commentators during Mexico 1970

(Source: FIFA)

Guangzhou Evergrande win sixth straight Chinese Super League title

Guangzhou Evergrande clinched a record sixth straight Chinese Super League title on Sunday as a 1-1 draw with Yanbian Funde meant they cannot be caught with two games remaining.

Former Tottenham Hotspur midfielder Paulinho scored on the stroke of half-time to give Luiz Felipe Scolari's lead.

And although South Korean Yoon Bit-Garam levelled the scores with two minutes remaining, Guangzhou were able to celebrate.

"I'm very happy that we nailed down the title and achieved our mission of winning a sixth title in a row," Scolari said.

"Today our opponents did a great job. They fought hard and they were very serious about this match."

"I am so happy with this result and I have to thank the fans so much and also show my appreciation to my hard-working players. This team deserves all the applause."

"This title has been a difficult one for us because we have had so many injuries and the players have sacrificed a lot."

Guangzhou remain seven points clear of second placed Jiangsu Suning, who drew 2-2 with Chongqing Lifan, extending a remarkable run of success since gaining promotion to the top division at the start of 2011.

The title is Scolari's second in a row since taking over from Fabio Cannavaro last year, but the Brazilian's future remains uncertain.

His contract is due to expire at the end of the season and he has yet to begin negotiations on a new deal.

"Personally, I'd like to complete my current agreement with the club," he said. "There is no substantial progress about a future contract."

(Source: Soccernet)

Roger Federer: 'Life is beautiful also without tennis. Djokovic? He's having a crisis'



Tages Anzeiger had a long and interesting interview with Roger Federer in Mallorca after the inauguration of the Nadal Academy.

"Life is beautiful also without tennis, I always thought so," said Federer, who chose to not play any tournament after Wimbledon to give his knee more time to heal. "But I have the feeling it's something new for me. I have never been in this situation."

On Tuesday, I met Pierre (Paganini, his fitness trainer) and I told him that I would be going to Mallorca. I asked him, "How do you see me?" He said, "I don't see you depressed or sad." As a matter of fact the disappointment of withdrawing from French Open and Olympics lasted three days. Not playing Roland Garros has been harder."

Federer went through a very difficult season, first the knee surgery in February, then the back injury in May and then the decision of shutting down the season. Which was the toughest moment? "The one between Rome and Wimbledon because I understood that there was something wrong with my knee. I understood I was not playing well, I wasn't improving, I wasn't well prepared for Wimbledon. But when I decided to shut down my season it was all easier. I had much time. And I also liked that I had to plan: where do I practice, how and with who? I had to plan so many things."

Federer's retirement is still far away. He turned 35 but does not want to stop, and according to some sources, he already projected his 2018 US Open outfit. Asked if 2017 will be his last season, Roger replied, "It depends from which prospective you are looking at it. I expect to play well not only for a tournament or match, otherwise I would have not stopped for a such long time. When I decided to skip Olympics I told myself it was good for my

body, maybe also for my post-career life. Stopping for a such long time after 20 years of tennis cannot be anything but positive. Playing in 2018? It's a year away but I clearly still hope to play. But first of all I have to keep calm and play these four tournaments: Hopman Cup, Australian Open, Dubai and Indian Wells. Retirement is still far away, I only hope that I will decide it and not my body."

Federer is getting better and better, but does not want rush in. "I am practicing well, we are going step by step although we could do more. We are practicing 90 minutes per day and I am almost 100%. Now we will increase the intensity both in the gym and on the tennis court. By next week Ivan (Ljubicic) will be there as well. In the last two months I played less tennis, maybe ten or twelve times and three times I played more than an hour. For the rest, half an hour and sometimes hitting against the wall. I did not want to take risks after all the physical practice I did."

Federer is not competing but watches the competition: "I often check the results, Marco Chiudinelli's on Challenger Tour. I thought it would not be like this and instead I am too much interested in tennis."

The age is just a number for Roger. "It can be a positive factor. I have always tried to have a mix of experience and youngness mentally, being open to new ideas, to reinvent myself."

Asked if he intended to open an academy like Nadal, he said, "I received several offers to do something but it's difficult to do it in Switzerland because it would go against the Federation."

He finally revealed an interesting opinion about two of his biggest rivals, Stan Wawrinka and Novak Djokovic, who played the US Open final against each other. "I did not think Wawrinka could win. Not for something against him but because I thought it was impossible for Djokovic to lose US Open final. Novak is going through a crisis, and it surprised me. I expected him to win an important tournament after Roland Garros, Toronto aside. But once you realize Career Grand Slam, a new career begins. You have to ask yourself: why do I keep playing? You have to change your mentality: what are your goals? Sometimes it requires a week, sometimes a month, a year or you do not find the right feeling anymore. But it's not that Djokovic played bad. And until he continues to play, he will win because he is just too good."

(Source: tennisworldusa)

Arsenal's Petr Cech is the best in the Premier League - Mark Schwarzer

Former goalkeeper Mark Schwarzer says that Arsenal's Petr Cech is the best in the Premier League.

Cech, 34, joined the Gunners from Chelsea for £11 million in 2015 and impressed in the 0-0 draw with Middlesbrough on Saturday, making a number of crucial saves to ensure the home side came away with a point.

And his former Chelsea teammate Schwarzer insists that such a performance was no surprise.

"For me, Petr Cech is the best goalkeeper in the Premier League and probably has been for the last few years," he told Match of the Day.

"I've had the privilege to work with him, I class him as a good mate and he's an incredible professional."

"He stands big and he really kept Arsenal in the match which was quite strange considering nobody gave Middlesbrough a chance."

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger had said after the game that he owed a lot to the former Czech Republic international.

"They had chances but our goalkeeper saved us today," he said. "Petr Cech had a good performance in decisive phases. We tried. You don't

win on command though. We lacked our creative potential around the box. That is part of it."

(Source: ESPN)



Sir Alex Ferguson can't take credit, says Cristiano Ronaldo 'made himself'

Sir Alex Ferguson has declined to take any credit for turning Cristiano Ronaldo into a superstar.

In 2003, Ronaldo joined Ferguson's Manchester United, where he won the Ballon d'Or in 2008 before moving on to Real Madrid.

But Ferguson, speaking while accepting the Walther Bensemann prize for outstanding work in football on Friday night, said he really had little to do with Ronaldo's development.

"Ronaldo is a perfect example of someone who made himself," Ferguson said. "It's easy for me to say, 'yeah, I made Ronaldo.'"

"Many coaches might say I made this player and I made that player, but Ronaldo made himself."

"We just gave him the tools and the platform to excel. His practise ethic was incredible."

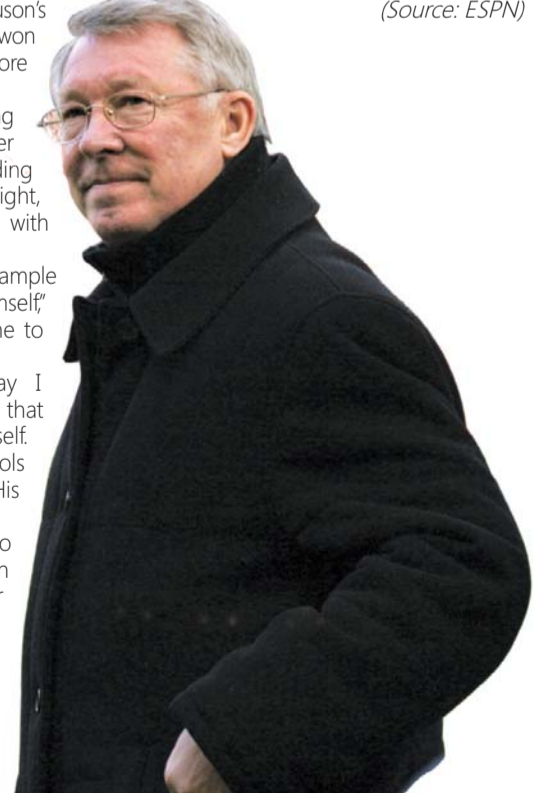
Ferguson also said Ronaldo plays on a different level, even when compared to some other United legends.

"He was a fantastic player, he was the best," Ferguson added.

"We had fantastic players in [Paul] Scholes, [Ryan]

Giggs, and [Eric] Cantona. We had some fantastic footballers, but Ronaldo was just something else."

(Source: ESPN)



Pep Guardiola keeps Man City players back after Southampton draw

MANCHESTER — Pep Guardiola kept his players in the dressing room for 50 minutes after Manchester City's 1-1 draw with Southampton.

His side remain top of the Premier League but have now gone five games in all competitions without a victory after winning their opening 10 matches of the season.

Guardiola said he has to analyse what is going wrong with his side after their thrilling start to the season but insisted they remain together.

Asked in his news conference why he kept the players behind, the Spaniard joked: "The red wine was good and I took a little bit longer with my glasses."

"We were together, we spoke but nothing special. We spoke about what is the situation we have and from this situation try to go up."

"I was a football player and I know this can happen. You are able to win 10 times in a row and after you are not able to win five times. That is part of football. You have to accept that but I am not a guy who regrets. So I have to discover the reason why and I'm going to fight for that."

Southampton were gifted a 27th minute lead when Nathan Redmond pounced on John Stones under-hit backpass to score before Kelechi Iheanacho levelled things in the second half.

It was the latest in a number of individual errors that have cost City -- in midweek Claudio Bravo was sent off for handball after fluffing a clearance while Aleksander Kolarov made defensive mistakes in the draw with Celtic and defeat to Tottenham Hotspur.

However, Guardiola said the reason for dropping points against Southampton was a lack of intensity in the first half.

"Today I think it is not part of the reason, the difference between the first half and the second half was obvious and that is what we have to realise," he added.

"Today with John and Wednesday with Claudio, that is not the reason. Against Everton we miss two penalties and we play amazing and didn't win. It is something more and about the team and how you rebel, how you react."

"When you see the second half it is because these guys are good and I have to help them to achieve and to reach in the second half, when it is 11 against 11 in Barcelona and in the second half against Everton."

(Source: Soccernet)

Iran seeks to return to FIFA U-20 World Cup

Coach Amir Peiravani and his players will be focusing only on the threat posed by Uzbekistan when the teams meet in the quarter-finals on Monday evening at the AFC U-19 Championship Bahrain 2016 as Islamic Republic of Iran seek to return to the finals of the FIFA U-20 World Cup for the first time in 16 years.

Victory will see the Iranians qualify for the global championship for the first time since 2001, when they advanced after finishing as runners-up to Iraq in the AFC U-19 Championship in Iran, but Peiravani has told his players to look to the future rather than casting glances back at history.

"We're not thinking about the past, or about last year or two or three years ago," said Peiravani. "We are only thinking about today and we are one of the best teams in the competition and we are ready."

"Maybe four, five or six years ago we had a chance to go but we were unlucky, but we are ready and we are only thinking about good tactics, good technique and fair play."

Iran advanced to the last eight by finishing second in Group C behind Japan and, as a result, have had one day's extra rest compared to the Uzbeks, who won Group D despite being held to a 0-0 draw by China in their final group game on Friday evening.

Peiravani, however, does not believe the extra day between games will give his side an advantage.

"It's the programme of the AFC and we have one day more rest, but it's not very important," said the Iranian coach.

"When we started the tournament we were ready for six matches, maybe two days' rest or three days' rest so it's not important. We have had some good training and we will be 100 percent ready for the competition against Uzbekistan."

Uzbekistan coach Jasur Abduraimov made wholesale changes to his starting line-up for their meeting with China, switching nine of the players who had won the previous game 3-2 against Australia.

Defender Islomjon Kobilov will be available again after he was suspended for the China clash following



his sending off for a second bookable offence against the young Socceros and Abduraimov is expected to field a side more closely resembling the one that defeated the Australians.

"Tomorrow we will play against one of the strongest and best teams in this competition," said Abduraimov. "We know Iran are physically strong and they have

shown beautiful football with good tactics, so we expect a difficult and interesting game.

"I made the changes yesterday because first of all I wanted to give them some days to relax before the important game, and secondly it's important to check all of the players. We have 22 players in our squad and we need to check their condition." (Source: AFC)

Mohammad Khalvandi still hungry for more success



S P O R T S After winning back-to-back gold medals in the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, Mohammad Khalvandi looks still hungry for more trophies.

The Iranian claimed a gold medal in Rio 2016 with a throw of 46.12 in the Men's Javelin Throw - F57, setting a new world record as well.

"I will have surgery on my left ankle and it may take months to properly heal. Afterward, I will start my training to win another medal in the Asian Para Games in Indonesia and a trophy at the 2020 Tokyo," Khalvandi told Paralympic.

"I won my first gold medal in London 2012 and bagged the second in Rio 2016. From now on, I would like to go to my third Paralympics gold

medal. It's a great feeling to make your people happy," the 26-year-old thrower said.

It seems that London's gold medal is more valuable than Rio gold for Khalvandi.

"I had a better throw in Rio but, honestly, I have to say I am more interested in my gold medal that I won in London," Khalvandi said.

He also predicts that the next edition in Tokyo would be the most glorious Paralympics ever.

"In my opinion, Rio managed to host a successful Paralympic Games despite many doubts, but I think we will see the best ever Paralympics in Tokyo because of their infrastructure and transportation," he stated.

Iran fails to cruise to 3x3 FISU World University League semi-finals



Iranian basketball players have failed to get through to the semi-final round of the 3x3 Fédération Internationale du Sport Universitaire (FISU) World University League 2016 in China, after losing in their quarterfinal match to Croatian opponents.

On Sunday, the Payame Noor University outfit, which is representing the Islamic Republic of Iran in the three-day tournament in the southeastern Chinese city of Xiamen, lost to University of Split 11-21, the website of the National University Sports Federation of the Islamic Republic of Iran reported.

The defeat came a day after Payame Noor University players had chalked up a narrow 16-15 win over counterparts from Serbia's University of Kragujevac.

The 3x3 FISU World University

League 2016 started in Xiamen, China, on October 21 and will conclude on October 23, 2016.

A total of 32 teams — 16 teams of each gender — from 23 countries, including Argentina, Canada, China, Iran, Italy, Macau, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Uganda and Venezuela, are representing five continents in the tournament.

The 3x3 (pronounced three on three) basketball is a form of the game played with three players on each side and one hoop.

The basketball discipline is currently being promoted and structured by the Fédération Internationale de Basketball Amateur (FIBA), and the highest profile tournament for national 3x3 teams is the FIBA 3x3 World Championships.

(Source: PressTV)

Barcelona's Andres Iniesta to miss 6-8 weeks with knee injury

BARCELONA — Barcelona's fitness woes continued on Saturday as Andres Iniesta suffered a knee injury in the first half of their La Liga game against Valencia.

The midfielder has damage to the lateral collateral ligament in his right knee and Barcelona confirmed after initial tests that he will be sidelined for six to eight weeks.

Iniesta hit the ground after a firm challenge from Enzo Perez and immediately signalled for a stretcher.

After being attended to by the club's medical team for several minutes, he was carried off the pitch at the Mestalla in tears.

Barca boss Luis Enrique appeared furious with the challenge from Perez, which did not draw a booking from referee Undiano Mallenco, and he told reporters after the 3-2 win: "The worst thing [about the game] was the injury to Andres."

"It's a moment we've seen clearly, because of how close we were, and we saw immediately that the player was injured and there was no yellow card. We'll see how



long he's out for tomorrow, but yes, it will be a while. It's a serious injury."

Iniesta later expressed his relief at the diagnosis on social media and that the injury was not more serious.

"It's not an easy moment, it'll be a few weeks but it could have been a lot worse..." he wrote on his official Twitter page. "I want to thank you for all the messages of support! Hugs!"

Barca midfielder Sergio Busquets added: "Andres' injury is a shame. It's a dangerous place to get a knock and it can leave you out for several weeks. We hope he can recover as soon as possible."

The Catalan club are already without defenders Gerard Pique and Jordi Alba for the coming weeks, while Arda Turan and Rafinha pulled out of the trip to Valencia with injuries sustained in training.

Backup goalkeeper Jasper Cillessen is also injured and Enrique had to delve into the B team to complete his squad this weekend, with Carles Alena called up.

The club take on Granada next in the league before a trip to Manchester City in the Champions League on Nov. 1.

(Source: ESPN)

Persepolis's psychologist Khanbani laid to rest

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Persepolis football club's psychologist Mehdi Khanbani was laid to rest on Saturday.

Khanbani suffered serious injuries in an accident at Sirjan in Kerman Province in August.

He passed away after two months. Khanbani had worked at two Iranian

football clubs Persepolis and Steel Azin. The funeral drew a number of sports officials in the ceremony.

He was laid to rest at Tehran's Behesht-Zahra cemetery.

Tehran Times staff express the deepest condolence on the sad demise of Khanbani.

Iran's Ahmadnejad wins bronze at Youth World Weightlifting Championships

1 → American James Maurus won all three silver medals, with his best snatch lift of 145kg somewhat adrift of Lopez's effort.

The US lifter's clean and jerk performance saw him lift 176kg, for a combined 321kg.

The bronze medals in the snatch and

clean and jerk were shared, with the former going to Kazakhstan's Yevgeniy Lomanov who lifted 140kg.

Iran has sent a full squad of eight men to the event.

The competition is being held in Penang, Malaysia from October 19 to 25.

Asians excel as history is made in the Middle East

For Jordan 2016, a mix of the familiar and the unfamiliar, the predictable and the historic, proved to be a winning blend.

The first major women's football competition in the Middle East broke new ground in so many respects, and yet the winners' podium was not among them. Asia's stranglehold there - the continent having produced all but one of the tournament's champions - was not so much maintained as tightened, with Japan and eventual winners Korea DPR a discernible cut above the rest.

Even Spain and Venezuela, both of whom made the top four for a second successive edition, could not compete, losing their respective semi-finals by identical three-goal margins. USA, Germany and Canada - all traditional giants of the senior women's game - also failed to make headway, with the North American duo failing to survive the group stage. African champions Nigeria fared worse still, heading for home without a single goal to show for their efforts. And the curse of the hosts continued, with Jordan the fifth in as many editions to fall at the first hurdle - and the third in succession to lose all three of their matches.



Stars and moments of magic

Overall, this was the lowest-scoring FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup so far and yet, as its enthralling but goalless final proved, the quality has never been higher. No-one did more to raise the bar than the Japanese and North Koreans, and while the latter claimed gold thanks to a nerveless and near flawless penalty shootout showing, either would have been worthy champions.

The Korea DPR coach graciously acknowledged as much after seeing the Young Chollima, champions in 2008, become the first team to win this trophy on multiple occasions. "Japan's technical level is higher than ours, I admit that, and they missed some golden opportunities," said Sin Jong-Bok, who credited his side's win to "mental strength".

These were not empty words. When Sin and his players formed an impromptu guard of honour to applaud the Japanese - a gesture typical of the sportsmanship on show in Jordan - they did so to recognise a team who, in many respects, continue to set the standard at this level.

The Little Nadeshiko's slick, stylish performances did not go entirely unrewarded, though, as playmaker and captain Fuka Nagano - the youngest member of their title-winning 2014 team - was named Jordan 2016's outstanding player. The adidas Golden Ball winner was just one of several individual success stories, with the likes of Ri Hae-Yon, Riko Ueki, Laia Aleixandri, Giulia Gwinn, Sung Hyang-Sim, Jacqueline Ovalle and Sandra Owusu-Ansah also emerging as players well worth watching.

And then there was Deyna Castellanos. Although the Venezuela No9, beset in the latter stages by niggling injuries and the tightest of marking, missed out on the top awards, she undoubtedly produced some of the tournament's most memorable moments. Who can forget, for example, her audacious last-gasp halfway-line winner against Cameroon, or the sublime turn and unstoppable finish that brought La Vinotinto victory against Canada? After a Golden Boot-winning campaign at the age of 15 in Costa Rica two years ago, Castellanos certainly cemented her reputation as a superstar-in-the-making.

A lasting legacy

While developing this next generation of outstanding female footballers might be seen as this tournament's central purpose, Jordan 2016 had even grander ambitions. The host country's monarch, Her Majesty Queen Rania, expressed these before a ball was even kicked, stating her belief that football could help "change attitudes and perceptions as to how society perceives girls and young women". Samar Nassar, CEO of a 75 per cent-female Local Organising Committee, went further still, saying that the competition's players were "not just kicking the ball for themselves or their countries, but for all girls out there - for women's empowerment and for promoting gender equality."

The desire to further such causes and leave a long-term legacy in the region undoubtedly underpinned FIFAs desire to bring the U-17 Women's World Cup to Jordan, and that remained evident throughout the competition. A string of courses, seminars and other events were held to promote and encourage female footballers, coaches and referees, and support was also given to children in Jordan's refugee camps. No fewer than 250 of those youngsters attended the hosts' opening match, and one of them, Laila, emerged from the experience saying that she too wanted to become a footballer and one day captain her country.

Whether she will succeed, only time will tell. But the mere fact that such dreams have even been stirred in a refugee girl from the Middle East suggests that Jordan 2016 succeeded not only to excite, but to inspire.

Participating nations

Brazil, Cameroon, Canada, England, Germany, Ghana, Japan, Jordan, Korea DPR, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Paraguay, Spain, USA, Venezuela

Ranking

1. Korea DPR
2. Japan
3. Spain
4. Venezuela

Host cities and stadiums

Amman International Stadium (Amman), King Abdullah II International Stadium (Amman), Al Hassan International Stadium (Irbid), Prince Mohammed International Stadium (Al Zarqa)

Top scorers

adidas Golden Boot: Lorena Navarro (ESP) (8 goals, 1 assist)
adidas Silver Boot: Ri Hae-Yon (PRK) (5 goals, 1 assist)
adidas Bronze Boot: Deyna Castellanos (VEN) (5 goals)

Awards

adidas Golden Ball: Fuka Nagano (JPN)
adidas Silver Ball: Sung Hyang-Sim (PRK)
adidas Bronze Ball: Deyna Castellanos (VEN)
adidas Golden Glove: Noelia Ramos (ESP)
Fair Play trophy: Japan

Number of goals

104 (an average of 3.25 per game)
Number of spectators
104,095 (an average of 3,253 per game) (Source: FIFA)



Poem of the day

Let not the blandishments be checked
That slender beauties lavish on me.

Hafez

Prayer Times

Noon: 11:48 Evening: 17:36 Dawn: 4:56 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 6:20 (tomorrow)

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Chennai festival to disclose Iran's "Identity"

TEHRAN — Iranian director Behruz Sebt-Rasul's drama "Identity" will be screened at the 14th Chennai International Film Festival, which will be held in the Indian town from December 15 to 22.

The Tehran-based Iranian company Nama Film, which is the producer of the film, announced in a press release on Sunday.

The film tells the story of Mehdi, a 13-year-old boy who lives with his mother, but their impoverished living conditions force him to work.



IRIB, CCTV win ABU Green Broadcast Engineering Award

TEHRAN — Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) and China Central Television (CCTV) shared the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Green Broadcast Engineering Award during the Technical Committee meeting in Bali, Indonesia on October 21.

Plans for power-saving TV lighting, new transmission technologies, teleconferencing and the use of green power for audiences in rural areas were evaluated in competing for the Green Broadcast Engineering Awards.



"12" to compete in Serbian filmfest

TEHRAN — Iranian director Ayyub Bolandini's 3D animation "12" will be screened at the 7th International Green Culture Festival, also known as Belgrade Green Fest, in the Serbian capital, the Iranian Youth Cinema Society (IYCS) announced on Sunday.

The festival will be held under the slogan "One Day on Earth" from November 15 to 18.

Cumberbatch joins Marvel universe in 'Doctor Strange'

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — British heartthrob Benedict Cumberbatch loved his close encounter with special effects when he swapped his Sherlock Holmes deerstalker for a superhero cape in his latest movie outing, "Doctor Strange".

Stepping into the Marvel comics universe for the first time, the Oscar nominee plays the lead character in the Hollywood blockbuster, a neurosurgeon who encounters a hidden world of sorcery after losing the use of his hands in a car accident.

"You could spin a camera 360 degrees and shoot on anything and it would be a frame in the final cut...You also had some green screen moments which were mind-blowingly difficult," he said at the movie's premiere in Los Angeles on Thursday.

"The... preparatory kind of storyboarded animation they use to map out really complex sequences is so thorough, it's an art form in itself."

Cumberbatch, known for playing the famous detective in the "Sherlock" television series and Oscar nominated for his role as mathematician Alan Turing in "The Imitation Game", was joined on the red carpet by fellow Briton Tilda Swinton.

She addressed criticism of her casting in the film as The Ancient One, a character of Asian origins who hails from the Himalayas.

"People making a lot of noise about there not being... enough diversity in world cinema or particularly Hollywood cinema are right on and they must shout nice and loudly and they'll have me shouting beside them," she said.

'Iranian publishers willing to join Universal Copyright Convention of Berne'

TEHRAN — Tehran Publishers and Booksellers Association (TPBA) Director Mahmud Amuzgar, also attending the session, said that Iranian publishers would like a new law to be approved that would increase their trust.

"The truth is that publishers in Iran have not paid sufficient attention to worldwide publishing issues. We try to make the best of this opportunity to observe the copyright law and increase our income as well," he remarked.

However, the representative of the Assembly of Islamic Revolution's Publishers Hossein Shahmoradi, attending the session, criticized Iran's efforts in joining the Universal Copyright Convention of Berne.

"The advantages of joining the convention are, no doubt, fewer than the disadvantages. As long as we cannot support the rights of Iranian publishers, it is not right (wise) to think of advancing the interests of foreign publishers," he concluded.

Iranian designs shine at 2A Asia Architecture Award

TEHRAN — Eight designs produced by Iranian architects are among the winners in different categories at the 2A Asia Architecture Award 2016 (2AAA 2016) in Vienna, the organizers announced last week.

"Saba Apartment" designed by Reza Sayyadian and Sara Kalantari finished first in the Residential (Apartment) category, while "Jey Shir" designed by Hamed Moradi Aleshtar received third prize in the same category.

"Mehrshahr Villa" designed by Hooman Balazadeh was presented with the third prize in the Residential (Villa) category.

In the Interior Architecture section, "This Is Not a Cafe!" by Sanaz Qaem-Maqami and Mojtaba Mazaheri took second prize. "Parsin Dental Clinic" by Moin Jalali, and "Parsmilan" by Babak Tusipur and Babak Nasirabadi also won second prize in the same section.

"IMPI Office Building" by Mohammad

Khavarian took second prize in the Future Projects/Innovative Designs category.

And finally "The Renovation and Restoration Project of Imam Ali Square in Isfahan" designed by Hamid Mirmiran received Special Acknowledgement Mention in the Old and New (Reuse and Adaptation, Renovation, Restoration, Regeneration) category.

The 2016 jury comprised of Wolfgang Tschapeller, Murat Tabanlıoğlu, Nasrin Seraji, Françoise Fromont and Hiromi Hosoya decided on the winners for each category in a jury deliberation, which took place in the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna.

The nominated projects were displayed at the same venue in an exhibition running from October 17 to 22.

Organized by 2A Magazine, the Second 2A Asia Architecture Award was held with the theme: "Innovation Architecture in Asia".



"Saba Apartment" designed by Reza Sayyadian and Sara Kalantari stands first in the Residential (Apartment) category

Swedish Academy says up to Dylan if he wants to come to receive Nobel Prize

NEW YORK (Reuters) — The committee that awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature to Bob Dylan said on Saturday it was up to the American singer-songwriter whether to attend the prize-giving ceremony later this year or not.

The notoriously media-shy Dylan has not yet made any comment on the 8 million crown (\$900,000) prize, despite repeated attempts by award-givers the Swedish Academy to contact him since it named him as the winner on Oct. 13.

On Saturday, Swedish media reported that Academy member Per Wastberg had said that if Dylan remained silent, it would be "rude and arrogant".

The Academy, however said Wastberg's comments did not reflect their view.

"The author awarded the Noble Prize makes up his or her own mind regarding the ceremonies involved in the presentation of the prize," Sara Danius, Permanent Secretary of the Academy, said in a statement.

"The Swedish Academy has never held a view on a prize winners decision in this context, neither will it now, regardless of the decision reached."

The Academy gave 75-year-old Dylan the prize for "having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition". It was a controversial choice.

Dylan revolutionized American popular song with numbers such as "Blowin' in the Wind", "The Times They Are A-Changin'", "Subterranean Homesick Blues" and "Like a Rolling Stone". Yet some have questioned whether his work qualifies as literature.

Others have complained that the Swedish Academy missed an opportunity to bring attention to lesser-known artists.

The award ceremony takes place each year on Dec. 10, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death, when the King of Sweden hands each laureate a diploma and a medal, followed by a lavish banquet at Stockholm's City Hall for about 1,300 people.

If Dylan maintains his silence, he would be the first to simply ignore the Academy's decision.

Some Nobel laureates have been too ill to travel to the ceremony. French writer Jean-Paul Sartre refused the 1964 prize. The Academy said his refusal did not affect the validity of the award, but they would not be able to give it to him.

PICTURE OF THE DAY Honaronline/Masud Mimir



Babak Hamidi acts in a scene from "Mississippi Dies Seated" based on Swiss writer Friedrich Dürrenmatt's play "The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi" at Tehran's Vahdat Hall on October 22, 2016. Homayun Ghanizadeh is the director and writer of the play, which will run until November 10.

Jake Gyllenhaal on his return to Broadway

NEW YORK (NY Times) — Jake Gyllenhaal is delaying his return to Broadway.

A revival of Lanford Wilson's "Burn This", starring Gyllenhaal, that was scheduled to begin performances in February at a soon-to-reopen Hudson Theater, is instead being postponed, the producers Stacey Mindich and Jessica R. Jenen said in a brief statement Friday evening.

They said the postponement was "due to scheduling conflicts with the show's star," and that "the show is now aiming for its Broadway bow during the 2017-2018 season."

Gyllenhaal, primarily known for his work on film, has appeared on Broadway once before, in "Constellations", a well-reviewed play by Nick Payne, which ran for three months in 2014 and 2015.

The Ambassador Theater Group, which is re-converting the Hudson from a hotel event space into a theater, said it plans to announce another production soon.

Gyllenhaal's fans, however, have another opportunity to see him onstage in New York: Next week he is scheduled to star in four concert performances of "Sunday in the Park with George" at New York City Center.

U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ginsburg to make opera debut

NEW YORK (Reuters) — U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg will make her opera debut next month in Donizetti's "Daughter of the Regiment" at Washington's Kennedy Center, the opera company said on Friday.

The liberal 83-year-old justice will make a one-night appearance in the non-singing role of the Duchess of Krakenthorp when the comic opera opens on Nov. 12, the Washington National Opera said in announcing the casting.

"While the opera is best known for the

vocal acrobatics required of its singers, the high-comedy antics of the non-singing role of the Duchess of Krakenthorp often steal the show," it said in a statement.

Although the one-night stand will mark Ginsburg's official opera debut, she and the late Justice Antonin Scalia appeared as extras in a party scene of Richard Strauss' "Ariadne auf Naxos" in 2009, the Washington Post reported.

The Washington National Opera said she also was an extra in "Ariadne auf Naxos" in 1994 and in Johann Strauss II's "Die

Fledermaus" in 2003.

"We definitely sold a lot of tickets today after our announcement," said Michael Solomon, a Washington National Opera spokesman.

"Hopefully it will be a fun evening for everyone," he added.

Ginsburg has been celebrated in progressive legal circles for her defense of reproductive rights, equal pay for women, affirmative action in colleges and voting rights.

She also has commented publicly about politics and other divisive issues, something high court justices generally

shy away from.

Trump uses policy speech to attack media, promises to sue accusers

Clinton far ahead in Electoral College race: Reuters/Ipsos poll

This month Ginsburg backtracked on criticism she had leveled against National Football League player Colin Kaepernick for his refusal to stand during the playing of the national anthem before games.

In July, she also said she regretted criticizing Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump, calling her remarks "ill-advised."