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# TEHRAN TIMES

16 Pages | Price 10,000 Rials | 38th year | No.12714 | Saturday | DECEMBER 10, 2016 | Azar 20, 1395 | Rabi' Al Awwal 10, 1438



Iran calls for international effort to counter extremism

## Iran threatens to reverse diplomatic ties with England

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Chairman of the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Alaeddin Boroujerdi has warned England of re-down-

grading relations following "divisive" remarks by Prime Minister Theresa May. During the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council's annual summit

in the Bahraini capital Manama on Wednesday, May said she was "clear-eyed" about what she called "the threat" Iran poses to the region. →2

### Zarif meets Japan's Abe to discuss issues of mutual interest

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif and Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met on Thursday to discuss various issues in Tokyo.

Zarif and Abe talked about Tehran-Tokyo relations as well as regional and international developments, Tasnim news agency reported on Thursday.

On Thursday morning, Zarif met with members of a Japanese parliamentary friendship group, who were all members of the ruling Liberal Democrat Party.

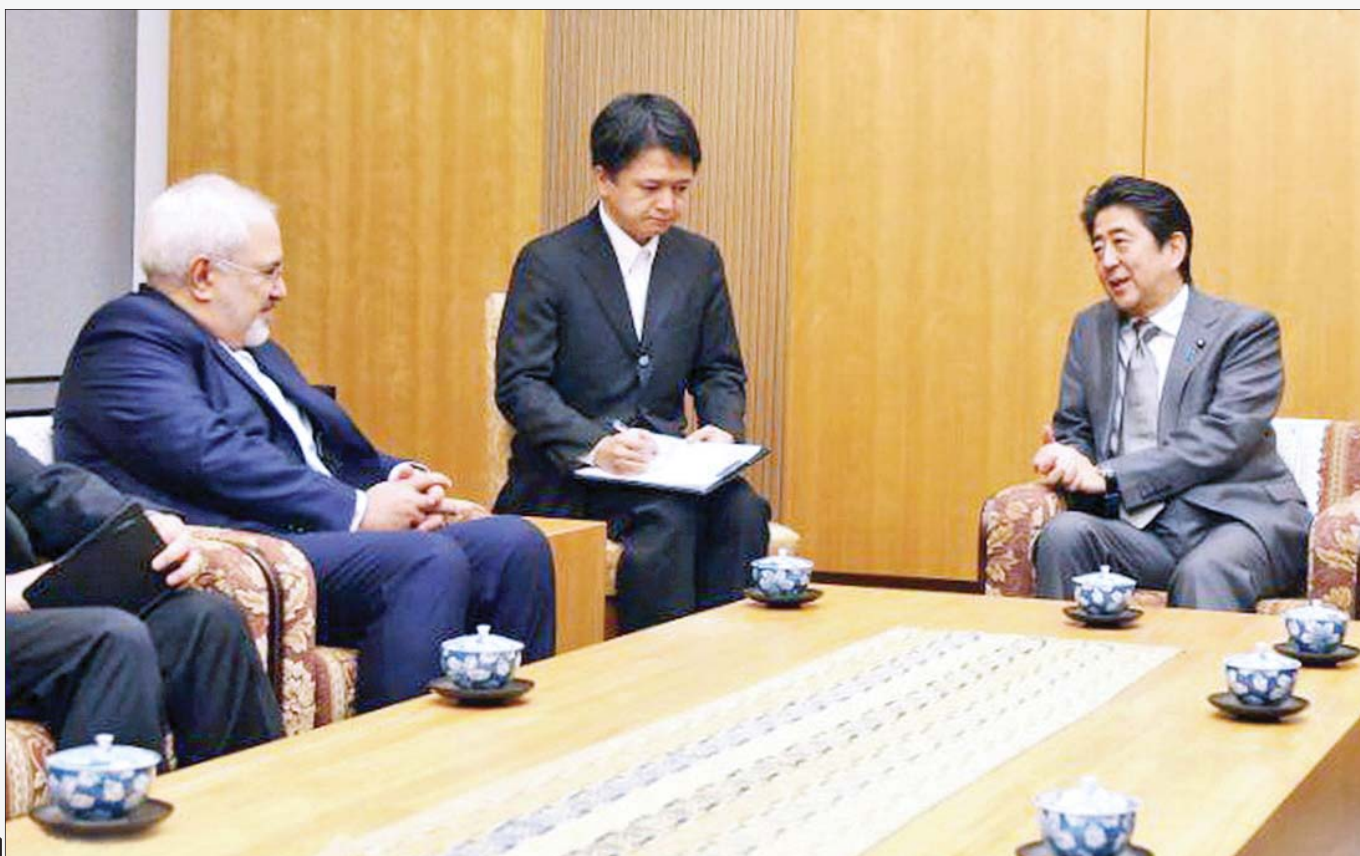
Also, Zarif had a working breakfast at Tokyo's Imperial Hotel at the invitation of Masahiko Komura, a member of Japan's House of Representatives and a former minister with who had led four ministries of foreign affairs, finance, defense and justice.

The two sides exchanged views on the expansion of parliamentary cooperation between Tehran and Tokyo and the issues of mutual interest.

The Iranian foreign minister arrived in Japan early Wednesday, following his visits to India and China.

Upon his arrival in Tokyo, Zarif said that economic issues are high on the agenda of his trip.

Trade between Iran and Japan dropped dramatically during the sanctions years and unlike China which did not leave the Iranian market, Japan proved a less strategic partner.



### IPCC 2016 kicks off in Tehran

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — The 16th edition of Iran's International Paint, Resin, Coating and Composites Fair (IPCC 2016) kicked off Tuesday at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

According to IRIB news, during this 4-day event the latest products and services of more than 270 domestic companies and over 150 foreign participants active in the field of paint and related industries are being presented.

Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Italy, Indonesia, Taiwan, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, China, Spain, India, France, the Netherlands, Sweden, Malaysia, Britain, South Korea, the United States, India, Russia, Lebanon, Thailand, Australia and Slovenia are among the countries participating in this year's event.

### Indonesian president due in Tehran next week

Indonesian President Joko Widodo will head a high-ranking delegation to Tehran on December 14, the Indonesian media said on Friday.

According to Metro TV Widodo, the visit aims to increase cooperation between the two countries in oil and gas sectors, oil management cooperation and Iran's investment in Indonesia refinery, according to IRNA on Friday.

President Hassan Rouhani had a tour to Indonesia last year and he negotiated with Indonesian officials to develop bilateral cooperation and an agreement was achieved to boost economic ties.

Metro TV emphasized that Iran and Indonesia are developing economic cooperation after the implementation.

### 'Iran's Aseman Airlines has no flights to EU'

Iran's Aseman Airlines says has downplayed an announcement that it has been banned from EU skies, stressing that no flight to the Union has been on its agenda, according to Press TV on Friday.

The European Commission announced on Thursday that Aseman Airlines had been added to EU's air safety list of airlines which do not meet international safety standards.

"Following a report by a foreign news agency that Aseman Airlines has been banned from making flights to Europe, it is

announced that this airline currently has no flights to Europe and has also received no requests from [Iran's] Civil Aviation Organization (CAO) to that effect," Reza Jafarzadeh, the public relations manager of Aseman Airlines said.

Jafarzadeh was further quoted by the domestic media as saying that as soon as there is a request to establish flights to the Europe Union, Aseman Airline would consider the required safety standards.

Reuters in a report on Thursday an-

nounced that the privately owned regional carrier which is Iran's third largest by active fleet size has been banned from European skies.

It also portrayed the development as a blow to Iran which is buying new jets to renew its ageing air fleet following the lifting of long-term sanctions.

"This issue has nothing to do with Iran's plans to purchase planes as portrayed by the foreign news agency," Jafarzadeh emphasized.

### OPEC states must work for stable oil market: Iran president

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani says all member states of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) must make joint efforts to stabilize the global oil market and reverse a slump in prices following their landmark supply-cut deal.

In a telephone conversation with Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro on Thursday, Rouhani said Tehran and Caracas have held extensive consultations with the purpose of restoring stability to the oil market and lifting crude prices.

He pointed to the agreements reached during OPEC meetings

in Algiers and Vienna this year, saying all oil-producing countries should work to pave the way for their implementation.

OPEC members agreed during their extraordinary meeting in Algiers, Algeria, late in September to limit production in an effort to raise the low crude prices. They decided to cut production by 750,000 barrels a day.

Iran, however, has been exempted from the decision because of its exceptional situation of having been under sanctions for a number of years.

During their meeting in Vienna on November 30, OPEC

members agreed to slash production by 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) in the first half of 2017 but exempted Iran from any production cuts - what the country had insisted on since Saudi Arabia raised the OPEC production cut proposal earlier this year.

OPEC - in its first production deal in eight years - even agreed to allow Iran to increase its crude oil production by 90,000 bpd, becoming the only OPEC member to boost production under the deal.

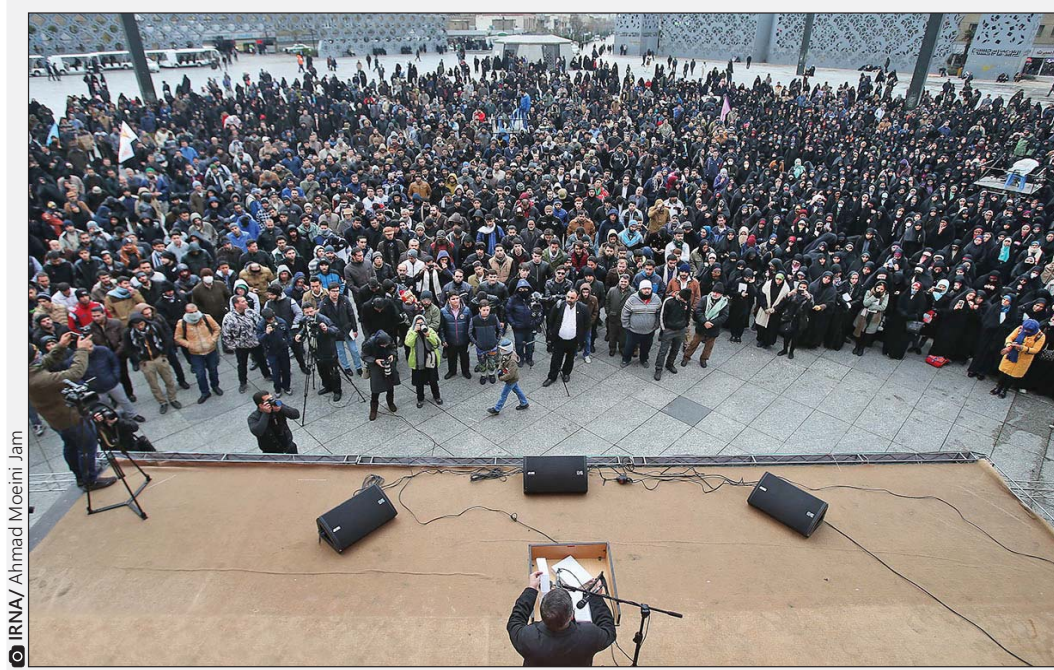
Since the removal of nuclear-related sanctions targeting its oil industry in January, Iran - OPEC's third largest producer

after Saudi Arabia and Iraq - has been boosting production in order to reach previous levels and has rejected as unfair calls on the country to freeze production.

The Iranian president further said Tehran remains resolved to support stabilization of the oil market and a surge in prices, adding that non-OPEC members also play a significant role in successfully implementing the agreements.

"Close cooperation among OPEC and non-OPEC countries is key to stabilizing the oil prices and their increase," Rouhani stated.

(Source: Press TV)



### Iranians mark Imamat of Imam Mahdi (AS)

A group of Iranians gathered on Friday at Imam Hossein Square, Tehran, to mark the beginning of Imamat (ascendancy to an Imam status) of Mahdi (AS), the twelfth of Shia Imams.

In Islamic eschatology, Imam Mahdi is the prophesied redeemer of Islam who disappeared hundreds of years ago and will re-emerge at a time of war to establish global Islamic rule to rid the world of evil.

### IRISL, Hyundai ink shipbuilding contract

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — According to a contract signed with Islamic Republic of Iran Shipping Line (IRISL), South Korea's Hyundai Heavy Industries Company, Ltd. (HHI) will build mega-container vessels as well as tankers for carrying petroleum products for Iran, IRNA reported on Friday.

The contract is the first of its kind in Iran's post-sanction era and includes construction of mega-container vessels with 14,500 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) capacity and tankers with 49,000 deadweight tonnages (DWT).

The mega-container vessels are to be built in HHI's yard and the tankers will be constructed in Hyundai Mipo Dockyard Company's (HMD) yard under International Maritime Organization (IMO) standards and applying Regulations for the Prevention of Air Pollution from Ships (NOX emission limits).

The funding for the orders would be provided by South Korean banks and financial institutions.

A Hyundai Heavy spokesman said on Monday that IRISL was in talks with the ship builder over a 10-ship order, but gave no details, WSJ reported.

The first deliveries are expected in 2018, according to the report.

IRISL hopes the containers order will give it the necessary capacity to eventually join one of three major shipping alliances that move the vast majority of global containerized cargo.

### Syrian government says ready to resume dialogue with opposition

Opposition groups blocking civilians from fleeing east Aleppo: UN

The Syrian government said Friday it was ready to resume dialogue with the Syrian opposition, but without external intervention or preconditions, a statement carried by state news agency SANA said, citing a Foreign Ministry source.

The statement said Syria was responding to comments by United Nations Syria mediator Staffan de Mistura on Thursday that it was time to look again at political discussions, and said Syria was ready to resume "Syrian-Syrian dialogue."

Meanwhile, the United Nations human rights office said Friday Syrian opposition groups are reportedly blocking civilians from fleeing the eastern part of Aleppo as regime troops advance in the city.

"Some of the civilians who are attempting to flee are reportedly being blocked by armed opposition groups," rights office spokesman Rupert Colville told reporters in Geneva.

Hundreds of men from eastern Aleppo have gone missing after leaving rebel-held areas, the United Nations' human rights office said on Friday.

Russia announced late on Thursday that the Syrian army was "suspending" attacks on the city's remaining rebel-held districts so that civilians could leave, but residents told Al Jazeera there was no let-up in the bombing and shelling.

Speaking in Germany after talks with U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said military experts and diplomats would meet on Saturday in Geneva to work out details of a rebel exit from Aleppo's eastern neighborhoods, along with civilians who wanted to leave the city.

Aleppo, once Syria's bustling commercial hub, has been largely divided between a government-held west and a rebel-controlled east since 2012. But government forces are now reported to be in control of about 75 percent of the east after a relentless three-week ground and air assault. →13

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MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Cleric advises  
Obama not to fall  
into Israel's trap

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Tehran's interim Friday prayers leader warned U.S. President Barack Obama not to be caught in Zionists' trap by signing a bill on extending sanctions against Iran, IRNA reported.

All officials have adopted an identical stand in dealing with the issue and all are united and listen to the advice of the Supreme Leader and should avoid selective measures, Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami said.

Global arrogance is not trustable; they have no respect for their own pledges, he added.



Army Ground  
Force to hold  
major drill in  
southeast Iran

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A senior Iranian military commander says the Army's Ground Forces will stage a major military maneuver in the southeastern parts of the country with the aim of boosting their combat readiness.

Brigadier General Kiomars Heidari, the new Commander of the Iranian Army's Ground Force, told IRIB on Friday that the three-day drill will start on Sunday in an area of 200,000 square meters.

"This maneuver will be staged at three tactical phases with the use of state-of-the-art equipment," Heidari said.



Iran's new  
ambassador  
presents credentials  
to Norwegian King

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran's new ambassador to Norway presented his credentials to King Harald V of Norway on Thursday.

During the meeting, Mohammad Hassan Habibollahzadeh offered an outline of ties between Iran and Norway in political and economic fields and expressed Tehran's readiness to further develop ties with Oslo, ISNA reported.

Harald V, for his part, referred to suitable conditions existing now for promoting relations, urging both countries to take advantage of the current opportunities to boost cooperation.



Qassemi raps  
Israel over  
settlement  
program

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian Foreign Ministry has strongly criticized Israel over its new bill on settlement projects in the West Bank.

The settlement programs are against accepted international norms, especially international human rights, and should be legally pursued, spokesman Bahram Qassemi said on Friday, IRNA reported.

In a different statement on Thursday, Qassemi offered condolences to Pakistan over a plane crash that killed all 48 people on board on Wednesday.



Iran deploys  
new helicopters,  
hovercraft in  
Persian Gulf

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Three helicopters and a hovercraft have been added to Iran's fleet in the Persian Gulf, said Iran Army Marine Force First Base Commander Ruh al-Amini.

The helicopters have been equipped with torpedo launchers and sonar surveillance systems, he said, Tasnim news agency reported on Friday.

The commander went on to mention that the helicopters and hovercraft will be the first of their kinds to be used by Iran to patrol the Persian Gulf.



Coalition to send  
representative to  
presidentials

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Islamic Coalition Party is going to introduce a representative for Iran's 2017 presidential election.

"We came upon the decision that whether or not principlists make a coalition, the Islamic Coalition should name its representative to the election," the party's Secretary General Mohammad Nabi Habibi said on Friday, Fars reported.

"A party that passes an election without a representative is not really a party," he said, but added, "If a coalition is made, we will surely prioritize the common viewpoint of principlists."

# Iran threatens to reverse diplomatic ties with England

**IT d e s k** May had also stressed England would help the council "push back" against what she branded Iran's "aggressive regional actions."

"The remarks by England's prime minister have nothing to do with the realities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and testify to England's divisive policy," said Boroujerdi in a televised program.

Boroujerdi further saw the comments unfitting for ambassadorial-level relations between to Tehran and London, threatening to re-downgrade relations.

"If England presses ahead with such policy towards the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Majlis (parliament) will once again take action to downgrade relations."

The remarks had already drawn strong condemnation from Iran's Foreign Ministry which considers the remarks motivated by England's efforts to win further lucrative arms deals with Arab countries.

**An ominous development**

Over the past five years, bilateral ties between Iran and England have seen both low and high points, yet on a sluggishly improving track.

In what was a low point in diplomacy between the two countries in November 2011, the Iranian Parliament voted to expel the British ambassador and reduce diplomatic relations with the country in retaliation for its new sanctions against Iran.

Following the vote, England's embassy compound in Tehran was raided by protestors who were demanding that the British ambassador be

sent home immediately.

England retaliated against the move, ordering Iran's embassy in London to be closed, with its staff given 48 hours to leave.

The two countries resumed their ties in 2015 by assigning chargés d'affaires, partially influenced by the prospect of a successful nuclear deal with Iran.

The deal was announced in July 2015 as foreign ministers of Iran, the U.S., Russia, China, England, Germany, and France posed victoriously for cameras in Vienna on July 14, signaling a thaw in ties with between Iran and the West.

One month later, Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond took a formal visit to Iran, re-opening the British Embassy.

"Today's ceremony marks the end of one phase in the relationship between our two countries and the start of a new one - one that I believe offers the promise of better," he said during an appearance at the embassy.

In September 2016, Iran and the United Kingdom restored relations to the

highest level by assigning and dispatching their ambassadors to the other coun-

try each.

Hamid Baeidinejad, a key figure in the Iranian nuclear negotiating team, and Nicholas Hopton, a Middle East specialist, represent their countries in London and Tehran now, respectively.

Theresa May's remarks come in stark contrast with Hopton's hope for greater confidence between Iran and England.

"For me as the ambassador it's a priority to try and establish greater trust to build more cooperation..." he told the Tehran Times in an exclusive interview in October.



**Senior Iranian parliamentary says the remarks by England's prime minister have nothing to do with the realities of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and testify to England's divisive policy.**

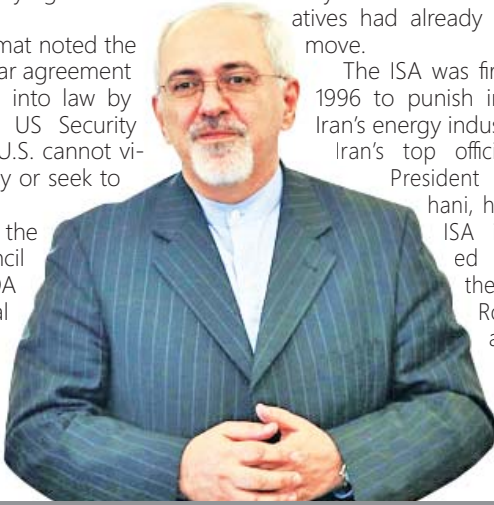
## Zarif says commitment to nuclear deal in U.S. interest

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Thursday that nuclear deal is an "international" deal and commitment to it is in the interest of the U.S. and the other sides.

"I believe it is in the interests of the United States as well as the rest of the international community to respect this multilateral agreement," Reuters quoted Zarif as saying in a seminar in Tokyo.

The top diplomat noted the multilateral nuclear agreement has been signed into law by approval of the US Security Council and the U.S. cannot violate it unilaterally or seek to renegotiate it.

In July 2015, the Security Council turned the JCPOA into international law by endorsing Resolution 2231, setting the stage for the lifting of the Security Council



**"I believe it is in the interests of the United States as well as the rest of the international community to respect this multilateral agreement."**

sanctions against Iran.

Zarif also said that sanctions against Iran had not worked in the past and would accomplish nothing if strengthened, especially since the other treaty partners would be unlikely to buy into them.

Sanctions cannot "break the Iranians' will", he added.

On December 1, the U.S. Senate voted the Iran Sanctions Act for another 10 years. The House of Representatives had already approved the move.

The ISA was first adopted in 1996 to punish investments in Iran's energy industry.

Iran's top officials, including President Hassan Rouhani, have said if the ISA is implemented it will violate the nuclear deal. Rouhani has asked his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama to use his authority to veto the act.

## Iran, Sweden explore ways to step up trade

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Presidential Chief of Staff Mohammad Nahavandian on Friday met members of the International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR) to exchange views on promoting economic ties.

In the meeting, Nahavandian described Iran's economy as an opportunity for the members of the Swedish council, ISNA reported. Compared to the past, he said, business owners and investors from all over the world can now collaborate with Iran much more easily.

The Iranian official called on Swedish companies to get more engaged with Iran's private sector, stressing that the country's private sector is increasingly involved in the economy.

"In preparations to expand Iran's economy, we have set aside the biggest part

of the economy for the private sector," he said, adding that because of the country's economic stability, Swedish companies can form closer collaborations with Iran's private sector.

During the meeting, the members of the NIR raised questions about the terms and requirements of such collaborations with Iran and discussed investment opportunities in Iran's various industries.

Nahavandian arrived on Thursday evening in Stockholm to confer with the country's top economic officials on expansion of bilateral trade.

Upon his arrival, he was welcomed by Iran's Ambassador to Stockholm Rasoul Mohajer, a number of Iranian businessmen and head of International Council of Swedish Industry (NIR).

The NIR is the biggest economic organization of the country, consisting of firms and financial administrations which carry out half of Sweden's exports.



**"In preparations to expand Iran's economy, we have set aside the biggest part of the economy for the private sector," Nahavandian says.**

## Tehran describes humanitarian situation in Syria, Yemen 'catastrophic'

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Abbas Araqchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, said on Thursday the humanitarian situation in Syria and Yemen is "catastrophic."

During a meeting with Peter Maurer, president of the

International Committee of the Red Cross in Tehran, Araqchi urged the Red Cross to increase aids to the Syrian and Yemeni people.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to provide the Red Cross with help in humanitarian actions in the re-

gion," he said.

Maurer said that the Red Cross is willing to cooperate with Iran in helping the people of regional countries, expressing hope that humanitarian aid to the regional countries would be increased.

## Iran calls for international effort to counter extremism

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the aide to the Majlis speaker on international affairs, said on Wednesday that an international unity is required to counter extremism and violence.

"We will have an insecure world if states do not counter extremism and violence unanimously," he said during a meeting with the Netherlands' special envoy for Syrian affairs Gerard Steeghs in Tehran.

Terrorism is an international problem and an "international will" is required to prevent it from spreading, he added, chiding the U.S. the U.S. and some other countries for not fighting the plague.



If the U.S. abandon its double standards, it will be possible to find a "peaceful political" solution to regional crises, the advisor reminded.

He also said that financial help to the terrorists should be stopped.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Amir-Abdollahian said that the Syrian government and people are fighting terrorism powerfully, and the country should be helped so as to find a political solution to the crisis.

For his part, Steeghs said all countries should support restoration of stability to Syria, adding that the European Union attaches great importance to find a "political solution" to Syrian crisis.



# Boris Johnson lashes out at Saudi Arabia and gets stung at home

Boris Johnson, Britain's famously undiplomatic chief diplomat, finally seems to have gone too far.

In an unusual upbraiding of a foreign secretary by a sitting prime minister, Downing Street on Thursday was forced to issue a statement that Johnson was not representing the "government's position" on Saudi Arabia. Johnson had accused the country, a British ally, of "puppeteering" in "proxy wars" across the Middle East and of "abusing Islam."

The comments by Johnson came to light on Thursday after The Guardian published video footage of a conference last week in Rome where Johnson was shown on a panel, punching his fist in the air while arguing that Saudi Arabia was destabilizing the Middle East.

"There are politicians who are twisting and abusing religion and different strains of the same religion in order to further their own political objectives," he said.

Johnson's comments are hardly shocking, perhaps, considering that before his appointment as foreign secretary, he suggested that President Obama had an "ancestral dislike of the British Empire." Johnson also wrote a poem insinuating sexual relations between Turkey's president and a goat, compared the European Union to Nazi Germany and wrote that Hillary Clinton looked like "a sadistic nurse in a mental hospital."

But by criticizing an ally publicly, Johnson not only breached diplomatic protocol but embarrassed Prime Minister Theresa May, who had recently returned from a two-day trip to the Persian Gulf. While there, she extolled the Saudi royal family's leadership, as part of a diplomatic drive to cement close relations between the two countries.

The timing also could not be worse because Johnson is scheduled to travel to Saudi Arabia to meet with government ministers there on Sunday. Britain, which is on the verge of starting difficult negotiations to leave the European Union, is eager to offset its dependence on the



**Johnson had accused the Saudi Arabia, a British ally, of "puppeteering" in "proxy wars" across the Middle East and of "abusing Islam."**

enormous European market. Saudi Arabia has been a lucrative market for British arms exports.

"The foreign secretary's views are not the government's position on, for example, Saudi Arabia and its role in the region," the prime minister's spokeswoman told the BBC. She also said that Downing Street had "full confidence in the foreign secretary."

The public distancing from Johnson underscored Downing Street's simmering frustration with the foreign secretary, an

ebullient former mayor of London whose self-deprecating wit, affability and evident passion for the city won him many fans — some who regarded him as an amusing jester. But he has struggled to adopt the thick skin and stiff upper lip befitting a British foreign secretary.

On Sunday, Johnson walked away from a television interview on Sky News after he was asked to name the president of South Korea. After jauntily and correctly naming the French foreign minister as "mon ami" Jean-Marc Ayrault, he

bristled over naming Park Geun-hye, the South Korean leader.

"We are not getting into a pub quiz about the leaders around the world, and I am going to, with great respect, invite you out to the pub," he told the show's host, Dermot Murnaghan.

In November, Johnson was forced into an embarrassing denial after four unnamed ambassadors to the European Union said he had told them privately that he supported the free movement of people across European borders. That opinion is an apparent departure from the government's official stance before negotiations on leaving the bloc. During the campaign over the exit, Johnson championed Britain's control over its borders as a reason for the country to leave the 28-member bloc.

Nor were supporters of leaving amused when he said at an awards event last month that leaving the European Union would be a "titanic success."

Lately, even his political allies have worried that his being mocked at home is making it harder for him to be taken seriously on the global stage.

Last month, Philip Hammond, the chancellor of the Exchequer, used an important economic speech to Parliament to poke fun at Johnson's failed bid to win leadership of the Conservative Party. Mrs. May quipped that Johnson could be "put down" like a dog once he outlived his usefulness. During the Conservative Party conference in October, she jokingly asked: "Can Boris Johnson stay on message for a full four days?"

Whatever his challenges at home, Johnson could struggle as he seeks to build close ties with allies abroad, including the United States. As mayor of London, he once said President-elect Donald J. Trump was "clearly out of his mind" for planning to stop Muslims from immigrating to the United States.

He has since said he was "looking forward" to working with the Trump.

(Source: NY Times)

## U.S. defense chief reassures Afghans amid questions over Trump's policies

The United States will "remain committed" to Afghanistan, U.S. Defense Secretary Ash Carter said on Friday, amid questions about what President-elect Donald Trump's foreign policy will mean for the country as it faces a renewed Taliban insurgency.

Carter arrived in the Afghan capital earlier on an unannounced visit and met U.S. troops and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

"America is, and will remain, committed to a sovereign and secure Afghanistan," Carter told a news conference with Ghani.

"America is, and will remain, committed to a sovereign and secure Afghanistan," Carter told a news conference with Ghani.

Trump has given few details of his foreign policy plans, with surprisingly few specifics on Afghanistan, where nearly 10,000 U.S. troops remain more than 15 years after the Taliban were toppled by U.S.-backed Afghan forces.

Afghanistan was barely mentioned during a bitterly fought election campaign, which largely focused on domestic issues, between Republican Trump and his Democratic rival, former secretary of state Hillary Clinton.

Trump, however has said the United States should stop carrying out "nation building."

Ghani and Trump spoke by telephone last week and the Trump transition team said in a statement they discussed the "terrorism threats facing both countries".



Speaking with reporters at Bagram air base north of Kabul later on Friday, General John Nicholson, the commander of U.S. and international forces in Afghanistan, said it was important for the United States to remain committed in Afghanistan.

"Our policy of having an enduring counterterrorism effort alongside our Afghan partners is, in my view, very sound and something we need to continue," Nicholson said.

Leaders of five out of the 20 designated militant organizations in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region had been killed and ISIL had lost two-thirds of its territory, some-

thing that needed to continue in future, he said.

Carter said the Trump transition team had not asked to speak to Nicholson, but he would be made available if requested.

One of the most important questions facing Trump on Afghanistan, former officials and experts say, is how many U.S. troops will stay on there.

Acknowledging that Afghan security remained precarious and Taliban forces had gained ground in some places, President Barack Obama shelved plans to cut the U.S. presence almost in half by year's end, opting instead to keep 8,400 troops there through to the end of his presidency in January.

Ghani thanked Carter for the U.S. military contribution and its sacrifices in the conflict.

James Dobbins, a former U.S. special envoy for Afghanistan, said Afghanistan would not figure highly for Trump, given the fight against ISIL militants in Syria and Iraq.

This, Dobbins said, was likely to mean that the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan would remain unchanged, at least in the short term.

Trump will inherit a challenging security situation in Afghanistan.

A number of provincial capitals have been under pressure from the Taliban while Afghan forces have been suffering high casualty rates, with more than 5,500 killed in the first eight months of 2016. (Source: AP)



which 240 people died. The Council of Europe's Venice Commission said it was aware of such allegations and of the seriousness of the coup.

But the constitutional experts said collective dismissals were not supported by evidence on a case-by-case basis. They raised questions about the speed at

The experts said the "method of purging the state apparatus creates a strong appearance of arbitrariness" and said that even if Turkey had good reasons to call a state of emergency, the decision to dismiss, rather than to suspend, staff was wrong.

Ankara says the scale of its crackdown is justified by the gravity of events on July 15, when rogue soldiers commandeered tanks, fighter jets and helicopters, bombing parliament and government buildings in their attempt to seize power.

Turkey's purge has deeply strained its relations with the European Union and also reached the NATO military alliance and its diplomats posted abroad. NATO's top commander this week said he had no suspicion that Turkish military officers under his command were planning a coup.

### ■ Dismissal lists

Turkey blames Fethullah Gulen, the U.S.-based Muslim cleric, for the coup in

Turkey's purge of state personnel since an attempted coup in July breaks international law and Turkey's constitution, a panel of law experts at the Council of Europe said on Friday.

The opinion, which has no legal effect, is some of the clearest official criticism of Turkey's response to the July 15 putsch, and comes from experts at a rights body of which Ankara is a member.

"Measures taken by the government went beyond what is permitted by the Turkish Constitution and by international law," said the experts, known as the Venice Commission, after evaluating the legal basis for the imprisonment of some 36,000 people pending trial and the suspension or dismissal of more than 100,000 state personnel.

The full legal opinion from the Council of Europe, Europe's leading human rights organization with 47 member states, will be published on Monday.

## South Korea parliament votes by wide margin to impeach president

South Korean lawmakers voted overwhelmingly on Friday to impeach President Park Geun-hye over an influence-peddling scandal, setting the stage for her to become the country's first elected leader to be expelled from office in disgrace.

The impeachment motion was carried by a wider-than-expected 234-56 margin in a secret ballot in parliament, meaning more than 60 of Park's own conservative Saenuri Party members backed removing her. The votes of at least 200 members of the 300-seat chamber were needed for the motion to pass.

The Constitutional Court must now decide whether to uphold the motion, a process that could take up to 180 days.



"I solemnly accept the voice of the parliament and the people and sincerely hope this confusion is soundly resolved," Park said at a meeting with her cabinet, adding that she would comply with the court's proceedings as well as an investigation by a special prosecutor.

Park, whose approval rating stands at just 5 percent, has resisted demands that she step down immediately.

Under the constitution, Park's duties were assumed by Prime Minister Hwang Kyo-ahn on an interim basis until the court rules.

"I stand here with heavy-hearted sadness," Hwang said in a televised address. "As an aide to the president, I feel deep responsibility about the situation we have come to face."

Cheers had erupted outside the chamber of the domed parliament building when the vote was announced. People held signs saying "Victory for the People" and "New Republic of Korea".

Earlier, anti-Park activists scuffled with police as they tried to drive two tractors up to parliament's main gate.

Choi Jung-hoon, a 46-year high school teacher, joined the rally outside parliament with his wife and daughters, age 7 and 18 months.

"I wanted my kids to be here, making history, at a historic moment, and show we people can win," he said.

### ■ Mass rallies

Park, 64, is accused of colluding with a friend and a former aide, both of whom have been indicted by prosecutors, to pressure big businesses to donate to two foundations set up to back her policy initiatives.

Park, who is serving a single five-year term that was set to end in February 2018, has denied wrongdoing but apologized for carelessness in her ties with her friend, Choi Soon-sil.

If Park leaves office early, an election must be held within 60 days.

The poll frontrunners are United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and ex-lawmaker Moon Jae-in, the former leader of the main opposition Democratic Party, who lost the 2012 election to Park by 3 percentage points.

"The power of candles has made a big change without any arrest or casualty," said third-placed presidential hopeful Lee Jae-myung, mayor of the city of Seongnam, referring to the candle-lit anti-Park rallies that have drawn huge, peaceful crowds to central Seoul for the last six Saturdays.

Another rally was planned for this weekend.

"It has opened up a new era in the history of the Republic of Korea's democracy," Lee - who has said he wants to be the South Korean Bernie Sanders - told Reuters.

Kang Dong-wan, a professor at Dong-A University in Busan, said the large impeachment vote from Park's own party was probably a result of rising crowds at weekly demonstrations.

"It looks like more from the ruling Saenuri Party gave their support than many had expected after realizing that the party could collapse if the bill doesn't get approved," Kang said.

Prime Minister Hwang, whose post is largely ceremonial, assumed interim presidential powers while the court deliberates.

He takes the helm at a time of heightened tension with North Korea, and said after the vote that the chances of a provocation by Pyongyang were high. Various agencies, including the Finance Ministry and financial regulators, planned emergency meetings later on Friday.

South Korea's economic outlook is also worsening, in part because of the internal political uncertainty.

Investors are likely to be spooked when trading resumes on Monday and remain jittery until the Constitutional Court ruling, analysts said. The won = KRW was forecast to lose further ground against the dollar on Monday.

### ■ Presidential immunity - for now

The daughter of a military ruler who led the country for 18 years before being assassinated by his disgruntled spy chief in 1979, Park would lose presidential immunity if she left office early, and could be prosecuted for abuse of power and bribery, among other charges.

The Constitutional Court will determine whether parliament followed due process and whether there were sufficient grounds for impeachment. Arguments from the two sides will be heard in public hearings, which Park is unlikely to attend.

The nine-member Constitutional Court is considered conservative in its make-up, but some of its former judges have said the case against Park is strong and was likely to be approved.

In 2004, parliament impeached then-president Roh Moo-hyun, suspending his powers for 63 days while the court reviewed the decision, which it overturned. Unlike now, on that occasion public opinion was against Roh's impeachment.

The prime minister at the time, Goh Kun, said in a 2013 memoir that he had decided to stay "low-key" while he held the reins of power. (Source: Reuters)

(Source: Daily Star)



## Iran calls for further banking bonds with Czech Republic

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Finance Minister Ali Daei said that Iran's cooperation with the Czech Republic in his Friday meeting with the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Czech Republic Parliament Jan Hamacek in Prague, IRNA reported.



Highlighting Iran's capabilities and the country's significant growth in commerce, energy, industries and mining, Tayyebnia said Iran has a remarkable status in the region and welcomes investment of Czech companies in the country.

The Iranian minister traveled to Prague to attend Iran-Czech Republic Joint Economic Committee meeting.

The Czech speaker, for his part, voiced the readiness of his country's investors for making joint investment in Iran mainly in auto industry and building rail tracks.

## Iran-Indonesia business forum to be held next week

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Following the Indonesian President Joko Widodo's visit to Iran, an Iran-Indonesia business forum is due to be held in the building of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) on December 14 and 15.

According to ICCIMA's portal, the forum aims for development of economic ties between the two countries. Active Iranian and Indonesian businessmen and entrepreneurs are to attend the event.

Last week, in a meeting with Chairman of Indonesia's People's Consultative Assembly Zulkifli Hasan in Tehran, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani called for expansion of trade ties with Indonesia and stronger cooperation in the oil and gas industry and engineering projects.

## Venezuela says agrees with Iran to call for OPEC, non-OPEC heads of state summit

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said on Thursday he had agreed with Iran to call for a summit of heads of state from OPEC and non-OPEC countries in the first quarter of next year to decide on strategy for the oil market.

"I told President (Hassan) Rouhani, let's jointly call for an OPEC summit of presidents, heads of state and governments in the first quarter of 2017 to establish a new mechanism for markets and oil prices and we agreed to do that, inviting non-OPEC countries and President Putin," Maduro said in a televised broadcast.

Maduro, whose comment referred to Russian President Vladimir Putin, did not provide further details.

Price hawk Venezuela, reeling under a brutal recession, has for years been pushing for measures to boost prices for oil, its only major source of foreign revenue.

(Source: Reuters)

## The UK's trade deficit shrunk by £3.8b in Oct.

The UK's trade deficit in goods and services fell by £3.8 billion (\$4.7 billion) in October, according to data from the Office for National Statistics.

The deficit was £2 billion in October 2016, after exports increased by £2 billion and imports decreased by £1.8 billion from the previous month.

The figures are the first from the Office for National Statistics since it admitted calculating the UK's trade deficit wrong earlier this week.

The ONS discovered a "processing error" related to the trade in "erratic" goods, which includes gold, silver, precious stones, aircrafts, and ships.

(Source: Business Insider)

## China offers Trump to settle trade disputes in WTO

China and the United States should decide their trade disputes using the World Trade Organization (WTO) mechanisms, Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesman Lu Kang said Friday.

On Thursday, US President-elect Donald Trump said that China was not a market economy as it hasn't played by the rules.

"As for whether China plays by the rules or not, I want to say that China is acting in accordance with the generally accepted rules of international trade system. This system is called the WTO. If there are some differences on trade between the two countries, these are very easy to solve. Being the two largest economies in the world, as well as members of the WTO, China and the United States can also address these issues in the WTO," Lu said, commenting on Trump's remarks. During the 2016 presidential race, Trump accused China of currency manipulation and proposed to raise the issue of country's commitment to the WTO rules. The president-elect also vowed to impose a 45-percent tariff on imports from China, blaming the cheap

(Source: Sputniknews)

# Iran-U.S. trade reaches \$190m in 10 months

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — According to the latest data released by the American Statistical Association (ASA), the value of trade between Iran and the U.S. stood at \$190 million during the first ten months of 2016, Tasnim news agency reported on Friday.

The figure shows 11 percent drop from \$213.9 million in the same period of time in 2015.

Of the \$190 million worth of bilateral trade, \$152.4 million was related to the U.S. exports to Iran, with 28 percent fall from \$213.9 during January-October of the past year.

Iran's exports to the U.S. stood at \$76 million during the ten-month period this year. The country had no export to the U.S. in the same time span of 2015.

Also, the U.S. worth of exports to Iran in this October stood at \$37.6 million, a 31 percent growth from \$28.7 million in the last October. The country's value of imports from Iran was \$13.9 million in October 2016, while it had no export to the Islamic Republic in the tenth month of the previous year.

After the implementation of Iran's nuclear deal, official-



ly called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in January, the U.S. government lifted bans on imports

of some commodities including carpet, saffron, pistachio and caviar from Iran.

## Germany's Bild lambasts Draghi over ECB "money bomb"



Mass-selling German newspaper Bild heaped criticism on European Central Bank President Mario Draghi on Friday, a day after the ECB said it would extend its massive stimulus program for the euro zone.

"When does Draghi's money bomb go off?" Bild asked, with a picture of the Italian's face on a bomb with a lit fuse.

The ECB has already spent more than 1.4 trillion euros (1.2 trillion pounds) buying bonds and is at risk of running out of assets. Germany's Bundesbank argues that this blurs a legal line and amounts to financing of government budgets, which would go beyond the remit of the central bank.

German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaeuble, who regularly presses countries in southern Europe to shape up their economies with reforms, has called on the ECB to start unwinding its expansive monetary policy.

"The ECB chief is again putting billions at the disposal of crisis countries," added Bild, which during the euro zone crisis gifted Draghi a spiked Prussian helmet from

1871 to show its confidence the Italian would adhere to German-style discipline.

The ECB trimmed back its asset buys in a surprise move on Thursday but promised to extend the stimulus to December next year from March, in order to aid a still fragile recovery. It dismissed any talk of tapering the program away.

Markus Soeder, finance minister in the conservative southern state of Bavaria, said the extension of the ECB's low interest rates and asset purchases sent the wrong signal to countries in the south of the euro zone, especially Italy.

Soeder told the Funke Mediengruppe newspaper chain: "Savers and owners of life insurance in Germany are paying the price for the reform sloppiness with interest losses in three-digit billions (of euros)."

The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper reported that Bundesbank President Jens Weidmann did not agree with Thursday's ECB decision to extend its bond purchases. The Bundesbank declined to comment on the report. (Source: Reuters)

## Oil edges higher on optimism over non-OPEC output cuts

Oil prices edged higher for a second consecutive session on Friday on hopes that non-OPEC producers meeting in Vienna would agree to cut output to bolster the group's own agreement to limit production.

Still, both benchmarks remained roughly two percent below the highs reached just after the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries announced plans to cut production late last month, and were on track to close the week with small losses.

On Saturday, oil ministers from OPEC countries will meet non-OPEC producers in Vienna to seek help in curbing a global glut.

Brent crude for February delivery was up 25 cents at \$54.14 a barrel by 1034 GMT, after rising 1.7 percent on Thursday. The contract hit its highest since July 2015 at \$55.33 on Monday.

U.S. crude for January delivery was up 40 cents at \$51.24 a barrel.

Russia has said it would cut 300,000 barrels per day, meaning other non-OPEC producers combined would need to pledge the same amount to lower output by the 600,000



bpd OPEC wants - half the reduction OPEC is making.

Azerbaijan has said it will come to the Austrian capital with proposals for its own reduction. Kazakhstan may offer to freeze output at last month's level, Kazakh Energy Minister Kanat Bozumbayev said.

Still, questions remained over such output plans. "The market wants to find an excuse to move higher and is therefore inclined to believe," Commerzbank analyst Eu-

## Nigeria to sell \$63m of 'Green Bonds' in Q1



Nigeria plans to raise 20 billion naira (\$63 million) by March to help fund renewable energy projects, the first issuance of so-called green bonds in West Africa's biggest economy.

"We are on track to sell the bond in the first quarter, a sovereign, and could have another by the end of the year," Environment Minister Amina Mohammed said in an interview Friday in the capital, Abuja. The sale will also help fund an electric-vehicle commuter project in the city and tree-planting in the country's arid north, she said.

Nigeria, Africa's most-populous nation with 180 million people, needs more than 6 trillion naira, the equivalent of almost its entire annual budget, to plug its infrastructure deficit, according to information from the Budget and National Planning Ministry. The government increased its 2016 budget by 20 percent, allocating one-third to projects including roads, rail, ports and bridges, to stimulate an economy battered by a drop in oil production and that's pro-

jected by the International Monetary Fund to contract by 1.7 percent this year.

"The exchequer can't get all the money we need," Mohammed said. "That's why we must leverage these innovative ways to get funds from the international community."

Finance Minister Kemi Adeosun said this week the nation will issue its third Eurobond, worth \$1 billion, in January.

Mohammed said her ministry is targeting off-grid solar-power projects producing as much as 1,200 megawatts in the country's north. Nigeria's electricity generation capacity is about 6,000 megawatts, according to the power ministry. South Africa, whose population is a third of Nigeria's, has a capacity of more than 40,000 megawatts.

Proceeds from the green bonds will also support environment-friendly projects in the oil-producing Niger River delta, where the government aims to eliminate gasflaring by 2019, Mohammed said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

gen Weinberg told the Reuters Global Oil Forum. "It's questionable whether those beliefs are sustainable."

Weinberg said "so many questions remain" on the implementation of non-OPEC cuts that the plan could fall to pieces.

"Since the oil sector in Russia is only partly state-owned the companies will need to get compensated for any production freeze/cuts," he said, adding: "Talking to the Russian companies, there is no indication or intention to cut as well."

OPEC last week agreed to slash production by 1.2 million bpd in the first half of 2017.

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said on Thursday he had agreed with Iran to call for a summit of heads of state from OPEC and non-OPEC countries in the first quarter of next year to decide on strategy for the oil market.

Saudi Arabia and Iraq plan to supply full contracted volumes of crude to Asia in January, despite the cut commitments.

The market awaits weekly data on U.S. oil rig counts issued by oil services firm Baker Hughes later on Friday.

(Source: Reuters)



### More British hedge funds say may have to move after Brexit

Over thirty percent of British hedge funds say they are uncertain about remaining in the UK following Britain's vote to leave the European Union according to an industry survey, a larger proportion than immediately after the referendum.

Of 276 hedge fund managers surveyed by industry tracker Preqin in November, 24 percent said they were now uncertain about staying in the UK, up from 17 percent in July. Another 6 percent said they were actively considering moving, compared with 3 percent previously.



### EU launches new investigation into Chinese steel imports

The European Union has launched an investigation into whether Chinese producers of certain corrosion resistant steels are selling into Europe at unfairly low prices, in its latest action against cheap Chinese steel imports.

The European Commission has determined that a complaint brought by EU steel makers association Eurofer merits an investigation, the EU's official journal said on Friday.

The EU has imposed duties on a wide range of steel grades after investigations over the past few years to counter what EU steel producers say is a flood of steel sold at a loss due to Chinese over-capacity.



### Japan's frugal millennials a bad omen for its economy

Japan's millennials have grown up in an economy that never seems to grow.

Accustomed to stagnant wages, jobs without benefits and a debt-burdened government, they came of age during the global financial crisis and the 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster - events that set them apart from other generations, especially in their spending patterns.

That carries grave portents for Japan's economic policymakers, hampering their ability to spur consumption and lift the world's third-largest economy from decades of tepid growth and deflation.





Iran Tobacco Company

## ONE TIER GENERAL INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

Iran Tobacco Co. located at Qazvin Ave, Qazvin square, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, P.O.Box 1331838734, intends to purchase below non tobacco raw materials through international tender:

### Please note the following

Type and the amount of the bid bond should be in the form of unconditional and extendable bidbond for at least 6 months, outstanding claims or by payment of abovementioned amounts in Euro to the account number 1976770006 of Sepah bank , Mirdamad branch in favor of ITC.

Tender documents in English and Farsi will be obtainable from 10/12/2016 till 20/12/2016 at Iranian tobacco company, Commercial department, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor , Setadi building, Qazvin Ave, Qazvin square, Tehran, Iran,

or from the national tender website: [www.iets.MPORG.ir](http://www.iets.MPORG.ir)

register the participation process and receive tender documents. The samples of each item and the related data sheet and safety data sheet should be dispatched in standard reinforced packing format as below to Iranian Tobacco commercial department, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor , Setadi building, Qazvin Ave, Qazvin square, Tehran, Iran, P.O.Box : 1331838734 exact and complete information of seller should be indicated on each sample.

Description	Quantity of sample	Description	Quantity of sample
Tipping Paper	5 Bobins of each size	Cigarette paper	5 Bobins of each size
		Plug Wrap Paper	5 Bobins of each size
Golden & Clear Self Adhesive Tear Tape	5 Bobins of each size	Card board inner frame	5Bobins of each size
Acetate Cellulose Tow	2 bales 200kgs of each type	Glue and triacetine	60 kgs of each kind
Filter rod	10000 rods	-	-

Thesamplesarereceivablefrom10/12/2016till9/1/2017andOffersmust be submitted to our security department secretariat **office located at, 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Shahid Golchin building,Qazvin Ave.,Qazvin square, Tehran Islamic Republic of Iran.P.O.Box:1331838734 Iranian Tobacco Company** until 19/1/2017.

**The offers will be opened in the Iranian Tobacco Company located at Qazvin Sq, Qazvin Av, Tehran .Islamic Republic of Iran, at 9.00 on Monday 23.01.2017.**

**Validity period of the proposed price must be at least six months from the opening date of the envelopes.**

For more information, you can contact to 0098 21 51261928 ITC commercial department

The Management of Communication and International Affairs, Iran Tobacco Company

Item	Description	Unit	Quantity	Bank guarantee (Euro)	Bank guarantee (USD)	Bank guarantee (CNY)	Bank guarantee (AED)	Bank guarantee (TRY)	Bank guarantee (GBP)	Bank guarantee (R.I.S)
1	Cigarette paper 22mmX4000	Bobin	40,000	6732	7187	47407	25760	24316	5733	28207080
2	Cigarette paper 22mmX6000	Bobin	45,000	11360	12127	79999	43470	41034	9675	47599448
3	Cigarette paper 27mmX6000(Light 80 cu)	Bobin	28,000	8932	9535	62899	34178	32263	7607	37425080
4	Cigarette paper 27mm DoubleX6000(Ultra light 80 cu)	Bobin	3,000	1912	2041	13467	7318	6908	1629	8012747
5	Cigarette paper 19mmX6000 Bahman super slim	Bobin	16,000	4242	4528	29869	16230	15321	3612	17772304
6	Cigarette paper 21mmX6000 Tir slim (40 cu)	Bobin	17,000	4095	4372	28839	15671	14793	3488	17159307
7	Cigarette paper 27mmX6000 (40 cu)	Bobin	16,000	4954	5289	34889	18958	17896	4219	20758936
8	Cigarette paper 27mmX4000	Bobin	3,000	842	898	5926	3220	3040	717	3525885
9	Cigarette paper 54mm(Light 80 cu)	Bobin	5,000	4554	4861	32069	17426	16449	3878	19081260
10	Cigarette paper 54 mm 40 cu	Bobin	720	546	583	3846	2090	1972	465	2288092
11	Zica light tipping paper 50mmX2400	Bobin	5,100	3080	3288	21689	11785	11125	2623	12904739
12	Tipping paper 70mmX2400 Bahman super slim black	Bobin	1,700	1759	1877	12385	6730	6353	1498	7369100
13	Tipping paper 70 mmX2400 Bahman super slim blue	Bobin	1,650	1234	1318	8691	4723	4458	1051	5171298
14	Tipping paper 70mmX2400 Zica super slim	Bobin	1,250	1306	1394	9199	4998	4718	1112	5473188
15	Tipping paper 38mmX2400	Bobin	20,000	8470	9042	59646	32410	30594	7213	35489300
16	Tipping paper 62mmX2400 Tir slim black	Bobin	2,500	2043	2181	14389	7818	7380	1740	8561218
17	Tipping paper 50mmX2400 Tir light	Bobin	1,160	701	748	4933	2681	2530	597	2935196
18	Tipping paper 50mmX2400	Bobin	33,000	18967	20247	133564	72576	68509	16153	79470683
19	Tipping paper 64mmX2400 Ultra Light	Bobin	4,000	2922	3119	20574	11179	10553	2488	12241504
20	Tipping paper 64mmX2400 T4	Bobin	1,100	1670	1783	11759	6389	6031	1422	6996462
21	Tipping paper 64mmX2400 Bahman Nano black	Bobin	2,720	3065	3272	21586	11729	11072	2610	12843624
22	Tipping paper 64mmX2400 Tir Nano black	Bobin	700	770	822	5422	2946	2781	656	3226300
23	Tipping paper C Light	Bobin	3,460	2731	2915	19230	10449	9864	2326	11442073
24	Caspian LightTipping paper 50mmX2400	Bobin	1,680	1015	1083	7144	3882	3665	864	4250973
25	Bahman Light Tipping paper 50mmX2400	Bobin	6,550	4676	4992	32929	17893	16890	3982	19592629
26	Bahman ketabi 62mmX2400 Tipping paper	Bobin	3,500	2549	2721	17948	9753	9206	2171	10679053
27	Plug Wrap 27mmX6000	Bobin	16,000	5210	5561	36686	19934	18817	4437	21828224
28	Plug Wrap 22mmX6000	Bobin	11,800	3141	3353	22120	12020	11346	2675	13161460
29	Acetate cellulose tow 3y35000	Kg	800,000	202400	216065	142530 4	774480	731083	172369	848056000
30	Acetate cellulose tow 5y30000	Kg	300,000	75900	81024	534489	290430	274156	64638	318021000
31	Acetate cellulose tow4y35000	Kg	20,000	5060	5402	35633	19362	18277	4309	21201400
32	Bahman super slim black 120 mm Dual Filter rod	Rod	190,000,000	47652	50869	335566	182340	172122	40582	199661880
33	Bahman super slim blue120mm filter rod	Rod	222,000,000	48840	52137	343932	186885	176413	41593	204639600
34	Bahman ketabi 108 mm filter rod	Rod	209,800,000	36925	39418	260025	141292	133375	31446	154714912
35	T4 108mm filter rod	Rod	234,500,000	41272	44059	290638	157927	149077	35148	172929680
36	Tir slims dual charcoal filter rods	Rod	134,380,000	25573	27299	180082	97853	92370	21778	107148834
37	Inner frame black 84mm Tir slim black	Kg	16,730	2227	2377	15681	8521	8043	1896	9330137
38	Inner frame white 95mm-220gr/m2	Kg	89,000	6119	6532	43088	23413	22101	5211	25637563
39	Inner frame white 97mm-220gr/m2	Kg	57,000	3417	3648	24064	13076	12343	2910	14317859
40	Inner frame white 84mm	Kg	13,100	901	961	6342	3446	3253	767	3773619
41	Inner frame white 96mm Ultra Light	Kg	29,700	2418	2581	17025	9251	8732	2059	10129660
42	Inner frame white 75 mm	Kg	5,000	344	367	2421	1315	1242	293	1440313
43	Inner frame black I 75 mm	Kg	17,200	1542	1646	10859	5900	5570	1313	6460896
44	Black Inner frame 76 mm	Kg	24,000	2363	2522	16639	9041	8535	2012	9900132
45	White Inner frame 76 mm	Kg	4,230	291	310	2048	1113	1050	248	1218504
46	Tipping adhesive (Max Glue)	Kg	90,000	9059	9670	63790	34662	32720	7714	37955115
47	Triacetine	Kg	45,000	4826	5152	33987	18468	17433	4110	20221988
48	Side seaming (SE Glue)	Kg	37,000	3724	3975	26225	14250	13452	3171	15603770
49	Hot Melt Glue	Kg	12,500	1959	2092	13798	7498	7077	1669	8209781
50	Packaging Glue (7302)673253	Kg	60,000	7722	8243	54378	29548	27892	6576	32355180
51	Packaging Glue L7301	Kg	6,500	1019	1088	7175	3899	3680	868	4269087
52	Golden Tear Tape 1.6X12000m	Bobin	8,900	4758	5079	33505	18206	17186	4052	19935769
53	Self adhesive Tear Tape1.6X12000m	Bobin	2,500	1128	1204	7940	4314	4073	960	4724225
54	Self adhesive Tear Tape1.6X50000m	Bobin	125	227	242	1598	868	819	193	950606



## Boris Johnson doesn't deserve our mockery for calling out Saudi Arabia – he deserves our admiration

By Sean O'Grady

Look everybody – we've got an ethical foreign policy run by a liberal Foreign Secretary. Instead of dropping real bombs, he's dropping truth bombs. Surely that's good news?

OK, everyone's laughing at Boris again. This time his "undiplomatic" language has been directed at the Saudis, who, as we keep getting told, are a major trade partner and



military ally. He's accused them of "puppeteering" in proxy wars, in effect allowing the innocent civilians in other countries to lay down their lives, unwillingly, for the House of Saud. Cue the outrage, the tut-tutting from the "camel corps" of old Middle East hands, and some opportunistic mickey-taking by Bozza's enemies, of which there are many.

Well, we shouldn't mock Boris for telling a few home truths about the nature of politics in that part of the world. As it happens, these things do need to be said, and why not in public (or at least, in this case, semi-public)? After all, the traditional approach hasn't done much good for the orphans of Yemen or the refugees of Syria. For the liberal critics of Boris Johnson the hypocrisy is astonishing; our Foreign Secretary is merely saying exactly what they have been urging every representative of HMG to declare since time immemorial.

When New Labour came to power in 1997, the prickly but principled then-Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, made vast trouble for himself by calling for an "ethical dimension" to British foreign policy. The approach did not survive his departure from office, and he didn't make that much headway when he was still running foreign policy because the British never lived up to the ethical dimension anyway, so we ended up with the worst of all worlds. Oddly enough the neo-cons in the George W Bush administration also wanted to tilt American policy towards a more democratic and liberal approach – hinting to the Saudis that they'd rather they went in for a little reform.

The Saudis continued to do what they have always done, and now they have overreached themselves dangerously in the region, threatening the very stability they crave.

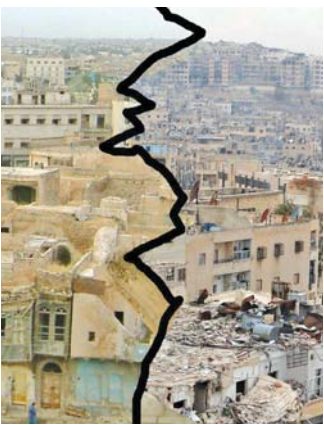
So someone needs to tell them where they are going wrong, and it may as well be Boris Johnson. We should be impressed and supportive of his efforts, not use them to make fun of the poor chap.

(Source: Independent)

## The real battle in Aleppo and Mosul

Iraq's war on Islamic State (ISIL) in Mosul has one big difference from Syria's war on Aleppo. It tries to protect civilians while Syria either attacks them or basic facilities. Iraq is on the side of history for humanitarian law.

The world's main body for protecting civilians in war zones, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), is closely watching two tense and pivotal battles in the Middle East. One is Iraq's assault on ISIL's forces in Mosul. The other is Syria's attack on pro-democracy rebels in Aleppo. Each is telling, in opposite ways, about global progress toward nations honoring humanitarian law in conflicts.



The ICRC gives high marks to Iraq's tactics in avoiding civilian casualties as its Army slowly retakes the country's second largest city. If Iraq's official concern for the innocent in Mosul continues, it might set a strong precedent in the region for living up to the ideals of the Geneva Conventions.

On Wednesday, the rising civilian carnage led Britain, Germany, Italy, France, Canada, and the United States to demand an immediate cease-fire. They also asked the United Nations to investigate possible war crimes against civilians.

Based on a new ICRC survey of 17,000 people in 16 countries. The survey found that 8 out of 10 people say combatants should avoid killing civilians as much as possible. That holds for attacks on health facilities. The vast majority of people, in other words, believe in international laws of war.

Ten of those countries surveyed are currently in conflict, such as Iraq and South Sudan. In those places, 78 percent said it was wrong to attack enemy combatants hiding in urban areas. In Western countries, only 50 percent of people say such attacks in civilian areas are wrong. Those closest to war violence, in other words, are more prone to empathize with innocent civilians and advocate their protection.

For more than a century, the principles of the Geneva Conventions have become steadily accepted by much of humanity. In Aleppo and Mosul, the world can hope that this progress continues.

(Source: The CSM)

# Donald Trump is the next Richard Nixon

'Democrats must publicly push for accountability'

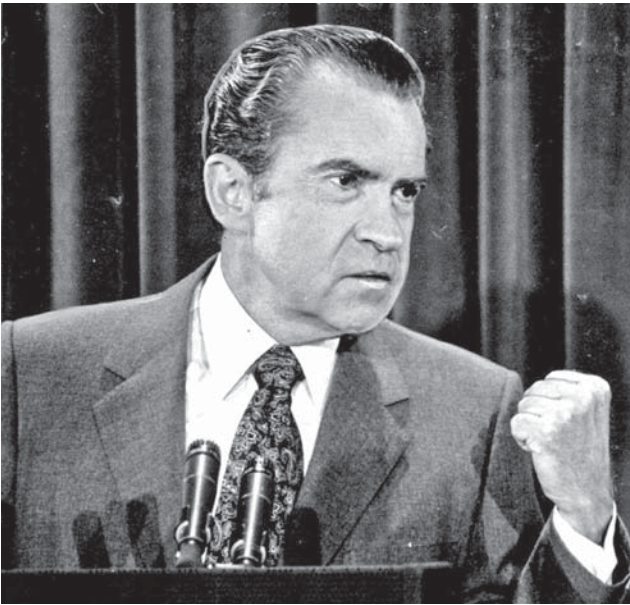
By Rep. John Conyers

Nearly four decades ago, former President Nixon told us that "when the President does it, that means it's not illegal." Recently, President-elect Donald Trump echoed those comments when he declared, "The president can't have a conflict of interest," a statement that disregards all customs and norms of the modern presidency. As someone who has endured numerous undeclared wars, two presidential impeachments, the attacks of 9/11 and passage of the PATRIOT Act, this mindset causes me to fear that our nation may again be veering towards a constitutional crisis, but with far fewer safeguards than we have had in the past.

As one who experienced the toxic politics of Vietnam and the riots of the 1960's, I have never witnessed mindless name-calling, insults or demagoguery on the scale or scope of the Trump campaign. Among other things, Trump accused Democrats of "trying to rig the election at the polling booths, where so many cities are corrupt and voter fraud is all too common." He has intermittently called for a "total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States," and sought to intimidate the media, promising to "open up our libel laws so when they write purposely negative and horrible and false articles, we can sue them and win lots of money." During the presidential debates, he told Secretary Hillary Clinton that if he wins "you'd be in jail."

### ■ Loose cannon

Not only does such "loose cannon" rhetoric divide our nation, but if acted upon is flatly inconsistent with our Constitution and our values. Throwing around reckless and unsubstantiated accusations of election fraud undermines our democracy, the Voting Rights Act and the 15th Amendment. Banning Muslim entry or creating a registry would violate First Amendment freedom of religion. Legislatively targeting news outlets based on their views would abrogate freedom of press. Promising to lock up political opponents upends long-held notions of fairness and due process. And changing your mind about prosecution after the election does not make things better—it just illustrates a continued misunderstanding of the proper role of



## Throwing around reckless and unsubstantiated accusations of election fraud undermines our democracy, the Voting Rights Act and the 15th Amendment.

federal law enforcement.

The potential threat to our democracy comes at a time when our incoming president will have lost the popular vote by more than 2 million votes and many of the controls and safeguards that allowed our nation to weather prior constitutional storms have been severely weakened. One-party control of Washington means tepid oversight of a Republican President. Our independent judiciary is seen as increasingly politicized in the aftermath of Bush v. Gore and the determination by Senate Republicans to deny President Obama the opportunity to fill a Supreme Court vacancy. The media may well be compromised due to President-elect Trump's continuing efforts to attack, undermine and humiliate his critics.

### ■ Constitutional crisis

This set of circumstances means that if and when we face a constitutional crisis—perhaps Trump's Administration will have taken actions with respect to a foreign government to benefit his financial interests; or his Attorney General will have secretly authorized unlawful torture or surveillance—we will be operating without our usual

institutional or structural safety nets.

There will be no Sam Ervin or Peter Rodino to investigate executive misconduct as there was during Watergate. Nor can we expect a Republican in the mold of Howard Baker to step forward (risking a Tea Party primary challenge the next election), or an Attorney General such as Elliot Richardson to resign rather than participate in a White House cover up. And we can only wonder whether there are any more Woodwards or Bernsteins willing to risk their careers or the solvency of their employer by challenging a Trump Administration.

In the absence of subpoena authority, Democrats must publicly push for accountability. We still have the authority to pursue independent investigations by the GAO (Government Accountability Office) and Agency Inspectors General. And we will need to hold our own informal forums and issue minority reports documenting the inevitable abuses. Even if we cannot prevent excesses, our job will be to make sure our citizens are fully aware of what is happening and why.

Of course, in the end, it's the people themselves who have the most important

role in safeguarding our constitutional form of government. I witnessed firsthand how the 1963 March on Washington galvanized the civil rights movement and led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. With the party in power typically losing 30 House seats or more during midterm elections, we can't lose sight of the fact that a more meaningful legislative check may not be that far away.

I truly hope that we can avoid the constitutional abyss. After all, it was Gerald Ford who appointed the esteemed jurist Edward Levi as Attorney General, helping to restore faith in the Justice Department after the stain of Watergate. And it was George H.W. Bush who began his campaign with race baiting against Willie Horton before eventually signing legislation reauthorizing the Voting Rights Act.

Unfortunately, as of yet, we have seen no such meaningful olive branch from Trump—only more angry and unpresidential tweets, more attacks on the press, appointments of divisive figures such as Steve Bannon, Jeff Sessions and Michael Flynn, and an ongoing risk to our nation's values.

(Source: Time)

## Israeli wildfires expose Netanyahu's burning hatred

By Yvonne Ridley

As wildfires tore through large swathes of the land a week or so ago, some Israeli politicians used the disaster as an opportunity to fan the flames of hatred against Palestinians by calling it a "fire intifada". Foreign firefighters from many countries came to Israel's assistance, but it seems that those politicians had different priorities; they rushed to judgement in newspaper columns and appeared to show scant concern for the tens of thousands forced to flee their homes.

This was a time for politicians to demonstrate leadership and calm the people; to reassure the wider world that everything was being done to protect and save life. Legend has it that the reckless Roman emperor Nero fiddled as a blaze raged through ancient Rome for seven nights in 64 AD; while Benjamin Netanyahu picked up neither lyre nor violin, he did seize the moment to orchestrate a burning campaign of hatred against the Palestinians.

Never one to miss such an opportunity, the Israeli prime minister blamed "terror" as courageous firefighters from Italy, Croatia, Russia, Cyprus, Turkey and even the neighboring Palestinian Authority risked their lives to help their exhausted Israeli colleagues. Words of support instead of hateful rhetoric should have been the order of the day, but from Netanyahu there was very little.

### ■ Guilty of arson

Now, though, as Israelis are beginning to count the true cost of the forest fires, the words and motives of Netanyahu and his cabal are being scrutinized more closely. The Israeli leader and other ministers — including Interior Minister Aryeh Deri and Culture Minister Miri Regev — pledged to revoke the residency rights of those found guilty of arson. This is a threat normally reserved for Arab Israelis, so it was clear where Tel Aviv was pointing the finger of blame.

Of course, Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman typically went one step further and, along with Education Minister Naftali Bennett, called for the expansion of the illegal West Bank settlements in response to the alleged wave of terror.

However, it appears that some of the claims about terrorism have been wildly premature. Forensic investigators as well as fire and security experts believe that not all of the fires were started deliberately. "In most areas you won't find many things that say whether it was arson," explained Ran Shelef, the Fire and Rescue Authority's chief investigator.

Another senior investigator, Herzl Aharon, said that the authorities still don't know anything. "I wish I had a direction," he told Israel's Channel Two. "I go to a place



## Representing a coalition of Arab political parties called the Joint List, Ayman Odeh called on Netanyahu to be investigated for incitement for accusing Palestinians of deliberately starting the fires.

and get an insight — and then I go to another place and everything changes. This is what you call an illusion of the topography, the bedlam of the mountainous region, and it is very difficult to investigate."

Of the 35 people initially arrested on suspicion of arson or inciting others to commit arson, fewer than 10 remain in custody; only two suspected arsonists have been charged, one of whom insists that he was simply burning rubbish.

In the meantime, Netanyahu's unsubstantiated blame has drawn blunt criticism from a former Israeli intelligence officer and the head of terrorist research at the Institute for National Security Studies. "The habit of inflaming the atmosphere by politicians is playing into the hands of the terrorists," said Yoram Schweitzer. "A basic principle of fighting terrorism is to differentiate between the community which is allegedly or potentially supportive of such acts and the terrorists themselves. This is the first principle that was breached."

Representing a coalition of Arab political parties called the Joint List, Ayman Odeh called on Netanyahu to be investigated for incitement for accusing Palestinians of deliberately starting the fires. Odeh said that he would formally request a probe by the attorney general.

"Everyone knows that there wasn't a wave of terrorism, that there wasn't a 'fire intifada,'" he said, citing the headline phrase used by some Israeli media following Netanyahu's outburst.

While police officials say they suspect arson in 29 of the 39 major fires, and in about one-third of the 90 blazes investigated, they also admit there are no suspects in the largest fires, nor clear proof of arson.

As the investigators continue to rake through the embers of the wildfires, it's worth remembering that the Palestinian Authority sent its own team of firefighters to help the Israelis. In other words, Palestinians set aside their differences and risked their lives to help those who enforce a brutal military occupation on their land. They don't expect gratitude from the likes of Netanyahu for their humanitarian efforts as the forest fires raged. Even so, the international community might want to consider whether they'd like to help the Palestinians firefighters in Gaza when Netanyahu next orders a blitz of blazes caused by hellfire missiles and bombs on the tiny coastal enclave.

As the firefighters from Ramallah showed, when it comes to putting out fires and extinguishing the flames of hatred, the Palestinians lead from the front.

(Source: middleeastmonitor.com)



# U.S. attempt to 'bilateralize' multilateral intl. accords doomed to failure

By Lachin Rezaian

A recognized expert on international business told Tehran Times that the U.S. recent act to extend Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) is clear violation of international law and a new effort to harm Iran, for another 10 years.

Following recent effort of U.S. Congress to pass ISA, it is distressing that the Obama White House, after years of talks and intense promotion of the deal, has not raised serious objections against the effort to undermine and mitigate the pact, says Research Director of International Business at the India, China & America Institute Dr. Dan Steinbock.

He described President-elect Trump's push for a new Iran policy is likely to result in one of three possible scenarios: A U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA, an attempt to renegotiate the deal, or an enhanced enforcement of the deal.

Steinbock elaborated more in his comments addressed to Tehran Times correspondent:

■ **Tacit goals of the Iran Sanctions Act**  
**■ The U.S. Senate on Thursday unanimously voted to extend the Iran Sanctions Act for one decade after it was easily cleared in the House of Representatives last month. What goals lay behind the extension of Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) and why U.S. is now violating its obligations after months of negotiations?**

The comprehensive nuclear accord (JCPOA, July 2015) offered relief from U.S., UN and multilateral sanctions on Iran's energy, financial, shipping, automotive and other sectors. These (primary) sanctions were lifted after the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) certification in January 2016 that Iran had complied with the agreement. Yet, secondary sanctions (on firms) remained in place, along with sanctions



applying to U.S. companies, including U.S. banks.

During the past month, there has been hectic activity in Washington to reverse the White House's Iran policy during the two Obama terms. In its November report on Iran sanctions, the Congressional Research Service typically argued that the Iran Sanctions Act (ISA) "might not be inconsistent with the JCPOA" and that it is "unclear" whether the position of the incoming Trump administration on the JCPOA and on legislation "might conflict with U.S. commitments in the JCPOA."

As political exigencies have been seized to justify the extension of sanctions, their legal status is questionable even in the U.S.. Reportedly, the new efforts seek to harm Iran, for another 10 years. Between 2010 and 2013, the sanctions significantly hurt Iran's economy contributing to the fall of crude oil exports from 2.5 million barrels per day (mbd) to 1.1 mbd by mid-2013. That, in turn, was compounded by the plunge in oil prices since early 2014. Furthermore, the sanctions made Iran's \$120 billion in reserves held in banks

abroad inaccessible. Before stabilization in 2015, Iran's economy reportedly shrank by 9% in the two sanctions years. Current growth projections are predicated on sanctions relief.

The new strategic objective seems to be thus to harm Iran's economy through a new 10-year long fall in crude oil exports, relatively low prices, and continued obstacles against access to remaining Iranian reserves abroad. Such strategic primacies – whatever their nominal rationale – represent a unilateral move that seeks to undermine a multilateral agreement.

Iran policy amid power transition in the U.S.

■ **JCPOA is not a bilateral deal between Iran and the U.S., but in fact a multilateral accord between seven countries and confirmed by the UE and UNSC, which a single party could not block it. Do you think the U.S. can undermine the multilateral agreement, and if so, how do you expect international response?**

In the evolving status quo, Iran should be prepared for all contingencies, including a potential U.S. effort to undermine the multilateral agreement and an accompanying effort to do so with (or possibly without) a tacit support of all or some of its partners.

In the U.S., the effort to extend sanctions is taking place during the transition of power as alignments are shifting in the White House, among the two major parties, and even the incoming administration. In these circumstances, it is distressing that the Obama White House, after years of talks and intense promotion of the deal, has not raised serious objections against the effort to undermine and mitigate the pact.

During his campaign, President-elect Donald Trump railed

against the nuclear pact, while members of the Republican Party have called him to tear up the agreement. Among the critics, neoconservatives play a critical role as they did in 2003 when the Iraq war was legitimized with arguments that were known to be flawed.

Within the Republican Party, Iran efforts reflect both tactical goals, which involve timing, and strategic objectives, which reflect the incoming administration's tenets. These efforts began in the House in mid-November – right after the election in the U.S. – and in the Congress in early December – only a week or so before the Electoral College is due to vote for President and Vice President. From the standpoint of Trump and Republican neoconservatives, the "Iran card" has allowed the new administration to strengthen its position as some anti-Trump Republicans continue to lobby against him before the Electoral

College vote. Indeed, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker, also a possible candidate for Trump secretary of state, has said that the renewal ensures Trump can re-impose sanctions Obama lifted under the deal.

However, the JCPOA is a multilateral accord. Earlier in the week, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi stressed that, while the implementation of the JCPOA is a long process and may face occasional obstacles, the deal is "a multilateral agreement endorsed by the UN Security Council, and its implementation must not be affected by any country's domestic affairs."

Any multilateral deal is a compromise. Nevertheless, a deal is a deal.

Democrats' odd Iran reversal

■ **Given that, the Democrats who supported JCPOA in Congress like Elizabeth Warren, Benjamin Cardin and Harry Reid unanimously voted for ISA claiming that the**

**measure will not lead to the violation of JCPOA, do you think the U.S. is sending a strong signal that any U.S. president would have the ability to snap back sanctions on Iran? Is the extension a shortcut to tear JCPOA up, as President-elect Donald Trump has promised?**

Not all Democrats agreed with the reversal in the Iran policy. When the Senate voted to extend the sanctions against Iran, Senator Bernie Sanders was absent. During his campaign, Sanders portrayed Iran as a major player in the Middle East arguing that diplomatic relations between Iran and the West would be critical for both regional stability and long-term security of the U.S. and its allies. Yet, most Democrats have been surprisingly quick to reverse their longstanding position regarding the Iran pact in a matter of weeks, for purely political calculations.

Yesterday, Democrats still accused the Trump campaign for unilateral moves that sought to undermine the multilateral JCPOA and for dragging Washington again into the kind of international quicksand that severely impaired America's credibility in the Bush era. Yet today, Democrats claim the ISA extension does not violate the pact because it continues a sanctions regime that is already in place. Obama is expected to sign the extension and, after failed personal lobbying against the extension, his Secretary of State John Kerry has been marginalized.

The new rationale seems to be that "it is OK to return to primary sanctions, which we agreed to lift, because we never agreed to nullify the secondary sanctions, which remain in place." That's a bad excuse for a flawed argument and a pretext for a new decade for political bullying.

(End of part one)



**During his campaign, President-elect Donald Trump railed against the nuclear pact, while members of the Republican Party have called him to tear up the agreement.**

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# Fishing for a better diet

## Stopping to think more about our food from the sea

By David L. Katz

Fish has long been a mainstay in my Mediterranean diet. We still eat fish in the Katz household, but far less often and much more carefully than formerly.

This is not because I have changed my mind about the health benefits of eating fish for people. Rather, it's because I have ever more concerns about the adverse health effects for the fish. Specifically, the growing, global human population is depleting the world's fisheries and doing to the oceans just what we have done to the land.

Our appetites for various animals as food have ramifications far beyond our own nutrition, spanning ethics, ecosystems, biodiversity, environmental disruption, and the climate.

It is, admittedly, inconvenient to have to consider all that at chow time, but we are all obligated to deal realistically with the times in which we live. This is our time, and such is the reality.

### ■ The good and the bad of eating fish

Fish is clearly good for us. Epidemiologic research—studies looking at health outcomes in groups of people—has long and consistently indicated better overall outcomes for people who eat fish routinely.

There are several potential reasons for this. One is that fatty fish and seafood provide concentrated doses of long-chain omega-3 fatty acids that are essential to our metabolism and hard to obtain anywhere else. Our Stone Age ancestors likely got some of the higher doses of omega-3 to which we are adapted from land animals that fed on wild plants.

A theory gaining prominence in paleo-anthropology, however, is that humans evolved preferentially at the interface of land and water, and that we have long been obtaining omega-3 fats from seafood.

Still, there are valid concerns about contaminants in fish. These include industrial chemicals, like PCBs, and heavy metals.

Heavy metals, such as mercury, are subject to "bio-concentration," meaning they accumulate up the food chain as larger animals eat smaller ones. Mercury



is, thus, a particular concern in large, predatory fish, including swordfish and the bigger varieties of tuna.

The research showing health benefits from eating fish is despite the presence of such contaminants, meaning that the benefits outweigh the harms. That said, there is a general advantage to eating medium-size rather than very large fish to avoid higher exposures to contaminants, with special attention to limiting potential exposure to mercury during pregnancy.

### ■ Fish instead of what?

A key consideration related to the health effects of eating not just fish but any food that is often overlooked is what is eliminated from one's diet to make room for it. Another reason for the health benefits of fish, beyond the omega-3s, is that fish in the diet generally displaces foods that are less good for us. People who eat more fish are prone to eat less red and/or processed meat.

The benefits of eating fish routinely may derive in part from displacing meat and reducing saturated fat intake.

But the "instead of what?" question cuts both ways. What about adding fish to a well-balanced vegetarian or vegan diet? We have no studies yet to answer this question directly, but data from a 2010 study out of Harvard are informa-

tive, as shown in this table from the paper. The bars depict the relative risks for coronary heart disease associated with replacement of one major dietary protein source by another; bars to the right mean higher risk, bars to the left mean lower risk. Fish reduces risk when it replaces any other animal food. But when plant sources of protein, namely nuts and beans, replace fish, they reduce risk further.

What this means is that eating fish is clearly good in the context of the typical American diet, where it is apt to replace meat. There is no convincing case, however, for making an effort to add fish to an otherwise balanced vegetarian or vegan diet, and there are important environmental arguments against doing so. Since populations with well-balanced vegetarian and vegan diets are among the healthiest and longest-lived in the world, it seems likely that fish confers greatest benefit by displacing other animal foods.

### ■ Wild-caught or farmed?

For those who do eat fish, an important question is whether farmed is as nutritious as wild. The answer really depends on farming methods, just as it does with animals on land. We know, for instance, that grass-fed, pasture-raised beef is nutritionally superior to grain-fed beef. The same is true for fish; the nutrition is best

when the fish eat their native diets. Fish farming can compromise the diets of fish in a way that reduces their omega-3 content. Fish farms can also concentrate water-borne toxins, so that these are found at higher doses in the flesh of farmed fish.

As fish farming methods improve and become more transparent to us, there is every reason to expect farmed fish that is as nutritious as wild, and more sustainable. For now, though, the safest bet is to favor wild fish when you can.

### ■ Making smart choices

But as noted at the start, the most important concern for me is increasingly the issue of sustainability. It really doesn't matter how "good for us" wild salmon or swordfish is when we have eaten the world's last one. Let's be sure not to do that.

Here, then, are my tips for anyone fishing for the best possible diet:

1) In the context of a standard American diet, eating fish will almost certainly improve your diet, and your health. The best choice for nutrition is fatty fish, such as salmon.

2) For the time being, I would recommend wild fish over farmed, although farmed fish is still generally preferable to animal-foods farmed on land. So, feel free to swap out other meats for farmed fish, and be confident you are trading up.

3) Sustainability is a crucial consideration. The Environmental Working Group has a useful reference that can help you make smart choices at the market.

4) While we don't know for sure if the "best" diet for humans includes or excludes fish, the research we have provides reason to favor plant foods even over fish. So, if you have a balanced vegetarian or vegan diet, you don't need to add fish for the sake of your health; sticking with plants is, in fact, better for the environment.

5) Omega-3 fats are essential. You can get plant omega-3s from walnuts and flaxseeds. The long-chain omega 3s found in fish can come from a supplement if you don't eat fatty fish routinely. Good options include sustainably harvested krill, farmed mussels, or—best of all—algae. We can all reel in better nutrition. Fish is optional.

(Source: [verywell.com](http://verywell.com))

## New study explores the best exercise for heart health

By Sarah Berry

Physical activity reduces the risk of heart disease, but are specific sports better or worse for your heart's health?

Vigorous physical activity has been found to have a greater impact on our health than moderate activity, but there is a scarcity of research into the health promoting properties of particular sports. So Associate Professor Emmanuel Stamatakis from the University of Sydney and an international team of researchers decided to get to the heart of the matter.

In the new study, published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine, they analysed the data of 80,306 adults (with an average age of 52) who filled out health surveys between 1994 and 2006, looking specifically at the association between the regular participation in six common sports and premature death.

The participants were asked specific questions about the type, frequency, intensity and duration of their activity as well as other questions about their overall health.

After adjusting for factors including socio-economic status and health habits such as smoking and drinking, the researchers found a surprising sport reduced the risk of premature death most significantly.

Although swimming was the most popular activity, followed by cycling, aerobics, running, racquet sports (tennis, squash, badminton) and football, it did not have the greatest effect.

In Australia, the most popular physical activity is walking followed by aerobics, swimming, cycling and jogging.

"The most consistent finding was an association between racquet sports and cardiovascular health," says lead author Stamatakis, National Health and Medical Research Council senior research fellow at the Charles Perkins Centre, faculty of health sciences and school of public health.

Among racquet sports players, the risk of death by any cause was 47 per cent lower and 56 per cent lower from cardiovascular disease.

"You have to take into account the characteristics of this activity," Stamatakis says. "It's characterised by short bouts of intense activity in a way that they mimic high-intensity interval training."

"It could be that this is the main reason. There's also a social interaction element which could be another protective effect for racquet sports."

After racquet sports, swimming offered the most protection (28 per cent reduced risk of death by any cause and 41 per cent lower from cardiovascular disease).

"Swimming has unique properties - it's a whole-body exercise, it is aerobic when it's done in laps," Stamatakis explains. "Speculatively, there could be added benefit from working out in water - it's pleasurable."

Aerobics, which came in third and can include any kind of dancing activity, was also consistently associated with both outcomes (a 27 per cent reduction in any cause death and 36 per cent in death by cardiovascular disease).

Stamatakis speculates that teacher-led classes may offer benefits because the instructor pushes participants to move more vigorously.

"There could be another benefit from exercising to music," he suggests. "There are some indications that music could motivate people to do longer exercise."

Cycling reduced the risk of premature death by any cause by 15 per cent, but did not affect the risk of cardiovascular disease, while there was negligible protection on all fronts by running and football.

"Our study found ... a surprising lack of association between running and football and cardiovascular disease," Stamatakis says.

"We did some more investigation into it ... it seems to be mostly due to the fact that those who participated in running and football were younger ... five to six years younger on average - fewer of them died. We would need another five years to see what happens with running and football."

He adds: "Our findings indicate that it's not only how much and how often, but also what type of exercise you do that seems to make the difference."

That said it does not necessarily mean that racquet sports are the best for heart health.

"The best kind of physical activity is what people enjoy doing and can do in the long term," he says.

"The key thing is can they stick with it - there's very little benefit to doing physical activity once a year."

(Source: [smh.com.au](http://smh.com.au))

## Times when being mediocre is more than just ok

By Jeremy Glass

In a world where we're constantly told to "Give 110 percent!" and "Take it to the limit!" it's no wonder people have such a hard time accepting mediocrity. But by the time you've reached adulthood, you've probably learned to accept mediocrity in at least some aspects of your life. Because, hey, you're never going to be perfect at everything (Unless you're Bradley Cooper). Here are some moments where it's totally OK to be just OK.

1. Staying in bed until the last second

Some mornings, you're up at the crack of dawn working on that side hustle, hitting the gym, or journaling like a freakin' pro. Other mornings? You hit the snooze button until it breaks, staying in that warm, womb-like bed until you're forced to race around your room and dash out the door without brushing your hair. It's called balance, people.

2. Eating the same sad desk lunch every day

Lunch is perhaps one of the finest mediocre meals. Sure, you could prepare an elaborate, healthy dish to bring to work, but there's nothing wrong with picking up a semi-edible salad that won't make you feel sleepy or bloated. Even better is devouring it at your desk



while you surf the web and respond to your conservative aunt's FB posts with the dankest memes.

3. Being totally ok with never having six-pack abs

You went to the gym but did not crush it, get swole, or leave it all on the floor, bruh. But you showed up, and sometimes, that's good enough. Stop sweating it and celebrate the body you have - belly jelly, cellulite,

stretch marks, and all.

4. Having a non-instagram-worthy day

Today's agenda: Wake up. Put on pants. Go to work. Return home. Repeat.

5. Drinking cheap coffee instead of fancy pour-over

No one will ever say that drive-thru coffee is tastier than Hawaiian beans lovingly brewed with a French press, but who has time for that? Mediocre coffee is like mediocre pizza: better than nothing. Plus, a lukewarm cup of Dunkin' Donuts is way more nostalgic than single-origin, froth-topped joe served out of a soup bowl.

6. Enjoying totally forgettable nights with friends

And not because you mixed boxed books with Fireball. Remember that time you and your bestie watched that movie (wait, which movie?) while chilling on your couch (wait, whose couch?) and ordered from that amazing take-out place (wait, what was that dish you always got?). Exactly.

7. Not being the life of the party

Some people are happier hanging in a cozy corner and chatting with the same crew they've had since fourth grade. No need to force yourself to be an extrovert. Plus, you don't want that dip on the snack table to get cold. Oh, it's supposed to be served cold?

(Source: [greatist.com](http://greatist.com))

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## 10 hot titles of IT world

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

**1** Google has opened up Assistant's developer platform called Actions.

It's ready to let developers create "conversation actions," little bots that you'll be able to interact with using the Google Home speaker. The actions will let you ask the speaker a question and then have a chat about it — the example Google gave in October was ordering an Uber, then clarifying you want an Uber XL.

**2** Facebook was dominated by the presidential election in 2016.

The social network revealed the most popular topics that hit your News Feed in 2016. As you might expect, the US presidential election took the top spot while Brexit was the hottest subject in the UK. Other popular topics include Pokémon Go, Black Lives Matter, the Olympics, David Bowie, Muhammad Ali and soccer's Euro Cup.

**3** Malware infects computers by hiding in browser ad GIFs.

The attack starts with javascript-infected ads for a "Broxu" screenshot app and, ironically, "Browser Defense," pushing them into large ad networks, where they appear on major news sites seen by millions of users.

**4** Play Super Mario Run in Apple Stores starting today. Super Mario Run launches on December 15 in 100 countries exclusive to iOS devices, but what if you want to play right now? Starting Thursday, December 8, you can visit your local Apple Store to play a demo version of the game.

**5** BlackBerry's transition to a software and services-based business took another step forward with the announcement of what the company describes as an "Enterprise of Things" management platform. Dubbed BlackBerry Secure, the platform folds together BlackBerry's acquisitions of Good Technology, WatchDox, AtHoc and Encryption into a comprehensive software suite designed to connect and secure all devices and endpoints in the enterprise, including mobile devices, computers, tracking sensors and vehicles.

**6** AT&T vice chairman Ralph de la Vega will retire at the end of 2016 after a 42 year career with the telecom giant, CNET first reported and AT&T confirmed on Thursday. AT&T Mexico CEO Thaddeus Arroyo will take over de la Vega's responsibilities as head of international and business operations. Kelly King, senior vice president of AT&T's business group, will take over as head of AT&T's Mexico business.

**7** Windows 10 is coming to Qualcomm's ARM processors in 2017. 'Windows 10 on Qualcomm' is Microsoft's attempt to drag the PC into the 21st century.

Right here we see Microsoft innovating, and changing what a PC is, but just as with the Surface Studio, doing it in small steps so as not to scare or confuse the market. This is far more innovative than Touch Bars and the "thinner and lighter" mantra that Apple is pushing.

**8** Top manager Jeff Gordon confirmed that HTC has not given up, working on future flagships. The decline in HTC phone sales has continued for years now, so much so that outside observers have been wondering whether the company will even make another flagship phone.

**9** Moto "Cedric" could be one of the first Motorola phones to run Android Nougat out of the box.

Although it already updated some of its handsets to Android 7 Nougat, Motorola currently doesn't have any phones that run Nougat out of the box. But this will probably change pretty soon.

**10** New report from Japan's MacOtakara web site claims that Apple will call its 2017 handsets the iPhone 7s and iPhone 7s Plus. Last month, KGI Securities analyst Ming Chi Kuo said that Apple would be releasing three handsets next year, including the Apple iPhone 7s and Apple iPhone 7s Plus. In addition, there will be a special 10th anniversary edition of the phone sporting an OLED display, an all glass front and back and a Touch ID button embedded in the front screen.

## Qualcomm eyeing the desktop market, new Snapdragon will be able to run full Windows 10

Mobile processors have come a long way since the beginning of cell phones. What we consider standard for mobile processors today used to be high-range for desktop not too long ago, when it comes to productivity. So, it's only natural that Qualcomm, one of the leaders in mobile processors manufacturing, is looking to enter the desktop market.

On last Thursday Microsoft held a Windows Hardware Engineering Community (WinHEC) event and Qualcomm made a surprising appearance. The two companies announced that they're partnering up to bring the full Windows 10 experience to the Qualcomm line of processors, starting with the next Snapdragon.

This is a pretty big deal, mostly because Qualcomm processors are based on an architecture that, until now, has been used on desktop machines only with some Linux distributions. The new Snapdragon will be the first chip of its type to run a 64-bit operating system, different from iOS or Android, ever.

Microsoft and Qualcomm said that Snapdragon-powered laptops could become available as early as next year, so this partnership has probably been cooking for quite some time. Such devices will run Windows 10 without any hiccups, including a variety of CPU-heavy apps and programs, while providing thin design and long battery life.

In the demo below, Microsoft shows a Snapdragon machine running Adobe Photoshop, known for its heavy impact on a computer's performance, and some other apps that run as smoothly as they would with any other desktop processor.

(Source: MSPowerUser)

# TSMC to build \$16bn world's most advanced facility to pump out 3 nm chips

Contract chipmaker Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co., which controls a leading 55% share of the global market, said on Wednesday it plans to build a \$500 billion New Taiwan dollar (\$15.7 billion) facility in Taiwan that would churn out the world's most advanced chips.

"We're asking the government to help us find a plot that is large enough and has convenient access so we can build an advanced chip plant to manufacture 5-nanometer and 3nm chips," TSMC spokesperson Elizabeth Sun told the Nikkei Asian Review.

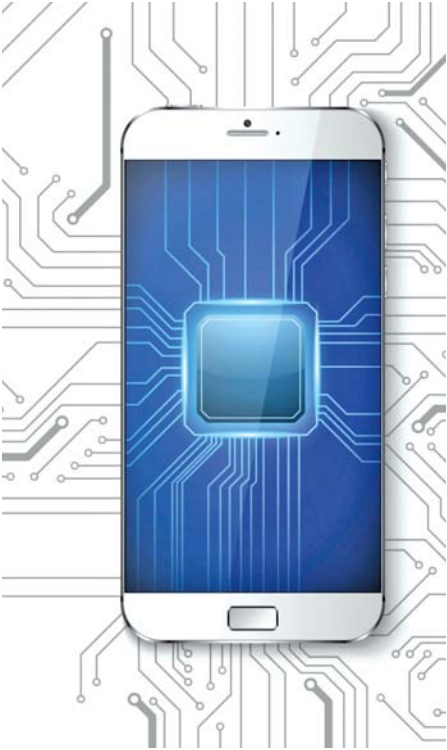
The smaller the nanometer size, the more advanced the chip -- but also the more challenging to develop. Apple, for example, uses TSMC's 16nm process technology for the core processor chips packed in its latest iPhone 7 handsets. The Taiwanese company is looking to produce 10nm chips beginning early 2017.

TSMC's announcement about the plant came a day after Yang Hung-duen, Taiwan's minister of science and technology, told local media on the sidelines of a government meeting on technology that the company will build the facility and launch production there as early as 2022. Yang also said the ministry may select a site in southern city of Kaohsiung for the plant.

Some 50-80 hectares of land (1 hectare being roughly the equivalent of a soccer field) would be needed for the factory, said Sun, who declined to provide details about the timing of the construction and production.

TSMC is looking to get an edge on major rivals Samsung Electronics of South Korea and Intel of the U.S., as well as to tap opportunities in the fast-growing areas of artificial intelligence, machine learning and self-driving autonomous cars, which require powerful chips, said Jerry Peng, an analyst at IEK, Industrial Technology Research Institute.

"However," Peng said, "only those premium tech players with deep pockets such as Apple, Qualcomm, Nvidia of the U.S., Huawei of China and MediaTek of Taiwan can afford such advanced chip



**TSMC has some 470 customers worldwide. Its biggest clients are Apple and Qualcomm, with each accounting for 16% of the company's revenue of NT\$843.5 billion for 2015. TSMC also makes chips for Nvidia, Huawei's semiconductor arm Hisilicon Technology, and MediaTek.**

technology -- and there are fewer and fewer of them."

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"As long as we have those benefits in power consumption, performance, size and cost, we will continue to push the [chip] process technology," Raj Talluri, senior vice president of Qualcomm, said in a press conference in Taipei on Wednesday when asked whether his

company sees a need for 5- and 3nm process technology.

"We are now on 10nm node, but we can't comment what we are going to do in the future. We will continue to evaluate, and when there is an advantage, we will do it," added Talluri.

While Qualcomm turned to Samsung for both 14- and 10nm process technology, an industry source said the world's largest mobile chip provider has decided to return to TSMC for 7nm chips, which are scheduled to go into mass production in the first quarter of 2018. Qualcomm declined to comment on the matter.

In late September, TSMC co-CEO Mark Liu broke the news that the company was working on 5nm chips and had assigned 300-400 engineers the task of developing 3nm technology and conducting research on 2nm technology.

While TSMC will begin mass-producing 7nm chips in the first quarter of 2018, its main competitor, Intel, said it will begin making 10nm chips in the second half of 2017. Samsung Electronics, meanwhile, said it will introduce 7nm chips by the end of 2018. Neither Intel nor Samsung has said whether they plan to develop 5- and 3nm chips.

(Source: nikkei)

## Bluetooth 5 Now Available, offering a huge jump in speed and range for devices

Bluetooth 5 is finally ready for release to developers and manufacturers — and your smart home might benefit more than your smartwatch.

The latest version of the wireless technology, which was announced in June 2016, still links a host of different products together, but the days of it being used solely for speakers or smartwatches are gone. Bluetooth 5 focuses on range, bandwidth, and speed, making it suitable for controlling and managing smart home devices and systems, as well as our growing smart cities.

The headline benefits of Bluetooth 5 are a four-fold increase in range, twice the speed to 2Mbps, and eight times the capacity for sending data, all compared to Bluetooth 4.2. These features, along with Bluetooth's low power consumption and its ubiquitousness, makes it ideal for controlling smart homes and all the products connected to them. The group behind the Bluetooth specification has been promoting the idea of its technology revolutionizing smart homes for some time, and this is an important step towards that goal.

Increasing the range by such a vast amount means Bluetooth can more easily cover an entire



house, faster speeds ensures less waiting around, and crucially when combined with the 800 percent increase in message capacity, will help deliver more data. Better quality Bluetooth audio, faster and more reliable over-the-air firmware updates, and more informative Bluetooth beacon information are just some of the benefits promised with Bluetooth 5.

Dig deeper into Bluetooth 5, and it promises less interference caused by other, closely matched, bandwidths, plus the chance for developers to manage the individual aspects of the connection. A smartwatch doesn't require a massive range, but speed is really important, for example; but your connected lightbulb will probably benefit from the opposite. Working with Bluetooth this way means more specially tailored apps and hardware, that manage smartphone power effectively.

When will Bluetooth 5 arrive? Devices with it are expected to be here starting early 2017, but we're warned the wait could be up to six months from now. Bluetooth 5 doesn't replace Bluetooth 4.2, 4.1, or 4.0, it simply adds functionality to the core Bluetooth technology, and is backward compatible.

(Source: digitaltrends)

## The Internet Archive doesn't feel safe in Trump's America

The Internet Archive collects the history of the internet, one webpage at a time, in order to power services like the Wayback Machine, the free e-book site Open Library and the Political TV Ad Archive. It's a non-profit based in the United States, but today, staffers announced plans to establish a copy of the Internet Archive's digital collections in Canada. The decision is fueled by concerns over President-elect Donald Trump's statements about the First Amendment and net neutrality.

"On November 9th in America, we woke up to a new administration promising radical change," the Internet Archive's blog post reads. "It was a firm reminder that institutions like ours, built for the long-term, need to design for change. For us, it means keeping our cultural materials safe, private and perpetually accessible. It means preparing for a Web that may face greater restrictions. It means serving patrons in a world in which government surveillance is not going away; indeed it looks like it will increase."

Throughout 2015, Trump said he supported the government's collection of surveillance metadata and that the NSA "should be given as much leeway as pos-



**In a campaign speech on December 7th, 2015, Trump talked vaguely about shutting down the internet in an effort to combat online extremism, disparaging the First Amendment in the process.**

sible."

Additionally, Trump has shown contempt for the open internet. In a tweet on November 2014, he said net neutrality would target conservative media and compared it to the Fairness Doctrine, a WWII-era rule that required broadcasters to air contrasting viewpoints on controversial topics. The FCC eliminated the Fairness Doctrine in 1987.

In a campaign speech on December 7th, 2015, Trump talked vaguely about shutting down the internet in an effort to combat online extremism, disparaging the First Amendment in the process.

"We have to go see Bill Gates and a lot of different people that really understand what's happening," he said. "We have to talk to them -- maybe in certain areas, closing that internet up in some way. Somebody will say, 'Oh, freedom of speech, freedom of speech.' These are foolish people."

The Internet Archive says it saves 300 million webpages per week, and its plans to build a copy of this information in Canada will cost millions. It's asking for donations to help cover the costs.

(Source: motherboard)



# NASA may launch supersonic jets for fastest traveling by 2025

NASA is working on futuristic supersonic planes having radical 'hybrid wing body' and revealed some designs of such planes that will make travelling around the world faster and more fuel efficient.

Our ability to fly at supersonic speeds over land in civil aircraft depends on the ability to reduce the level of sonic booms. NASA has been exploring a variety of options for quieting the boom, starting with design concepts and moving through wind tunnel tests to flight tests of new technologies. This rendering of a possible future civil supersonic transport shows a vehicle that is shaped to reduce the sonic shockwave.

Its archive of designs reveals just how different planes may appear in as little as ten years, with radical designs featuring needle-like bodies, sleek fuselages and delta wings. One of the most popular designs is something called the 'hybrid wing body', which is sometimes described as a blended wing body, according to a report in Gizmodo.

## Research team

The 'double bubble' D8 Series future aircraft design concept comes from the research team led by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Based on a modified tube and wing with a very wide fuselage to provide extra lift, its low sweep wing reduces drag and weight; the embedded engines sit aft of the wings. The D8 series aircraft would be used for domestic flights and has been designed with a 2030-2035 timeframe.



mestic flights and has been designed with a 2030-2035 timeframe.

In this design, the wing blends seamlessly into the body of the aircraft, which makes it extremely aerodynamic and creates dramatic cuts in fuel consumption,

noise and emissions.

This future aircraft design concept comes from the research team led by GE Aviation. Much lighter and more aerodynamic than current aircraft with the same capacity, the 20-passenger aircraft would

reduce fuel consumption and noise and enable business jet-like travel between more than 1,300 airports. It features ultra-quiet turboprop engines and virtual reality windows.

## Supersonic planes

In 2012, NASA successfully tested the X-48C – a 'hybrid wing-body' plane with a greater internal volume for passengers and cargo. The triangle-shaped plane is reminiscent of spy planes and designed to cut through the air more efficiently. With a 21 ft (6.54 meter) wingspan, the aircraft was an 8.5 percent scale model of a heavy-lift, subsonic airplane with a 240-foot wingspan that could be developed in the next 15 to 20 years for military applications.

The 'Icon-II' future aircraft design concept for supersonic flight over land was created by Boeing with the help of NASA. Its design is meant to save fuel. It also achieves large reductions in sonic boom noise levels that will meet the target level required to make supersonic flight over land possible.

This is radically different to the 'double bubble' D8 Series future aircraft design concept which comes from a research team led by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Based on a modified tube and wing with a very wide fuselage to provide extra lift, its low sweep wing reduces drag and weight; the embedded engines sit aft of the wings.

(Source: Customs Today)

**In 2012, NASA successfully tested the X-48C – a 'hybrid wing-body' plane with a greater internal volume for passengers and cargo. The triangle-shaped plane is reminiscent of spy planes and designed to cut through the air more efficiently.**

## Soil's potential might increase the Earth's CO2, researchers say

Soil, an important part of the carbon cycle, might compound the world's carbon dioxide problem, according to a global study involving Kansas State University researchers and Konza Prairie Biological Station.

The study, "Quantifying global soil carbon losses in response to warming," recently published in Nature, predicts that soils may release large quantities of carbon dioxide in response to warming, leading to even faster rates of warming globally. The authors, who include Kansas State University's John Blair, university distinguished professor of biology and director of the NSF-funded Long-Term Ecological Research program at Konza Prairie, used data from 49 sites in different ecosystems around the world.

According to the collaborative study, led by Tom Crowther at Yale University, Arctic soils containing large amounts of soil carbon are the most sensitive to warming and will release the most carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. The study also found the carbon stored in temperate grassland soils, such as Konza Prairie, is much less sensitive to comparable warming.

"Globally, soils hold more than twice as much carbon as the atmosphere, so even a relatively small increase in release of carbon from the Earth's soils can have a large impact on atmospheric greenhouse gases and future warming," Blair said. "Tallgrass prairie holds more soil carbon than other grasslands in the Central Plains of North America, but the greatest amounts of soil carbon globally are stored in colder high-latitude ecosystems, such as boreal forests and tundra, where it has accumulated over thousands of years."

## Arctic ecosystems

According to the study, soils in the Arctic ecosystems are the most susceptible to releasing stored carbon when warmed, which could drive further global change and upset the delicate balance in the carbon cycle, resulting in carbon feedback instead of sequestration.

The study was the first to compile data on responses of soils to warming from field experiments in a variety of ecosystems for a global view of soil carbon's sensitivity to warming.

The "real power in the study is using a network of sites including grasslands to address the relative sensitivities of these different ecosystems," Blair said. "Scientists working independently can say something about how responsive or how sensitive their specific ecosystems are but it really takes an analysis of data from multiple sites and multiple ecosystems to draw robust conclusions about how warming will affect global carbon cycling."



The warming study at Konza Prairie -- an 8,600-acre native tallgrass prairie research station jointly owned by Kansas State University and The Nature Conservancy and managed by the university's Division of Biology -- is part of a larger ongoing project that has been assessing the effect of climate change since 1998. Konza Prairie researchers used infrared heaters to raise the ground temperature by approximately one degree Celsius, which, Blair said, is well within the current prediction for climate change in the next several decades.

(Source: EurekAlert)

## Spiny lobsters tap into a strange food source, scientists find

In elementary school science class, children learn that the food chain begins with photosynthesis in plants. The leafy organisms convert the energy of sunlight into energy and biomass. Herbivores then munch on the plants, and carnivores, in turn, eat those vegetarians. The whole process transfers that sunlight energy into biomass up the food chain. It seems pretty simple, right?

It turns out, an alternative food production process may actually play a more significant role in food webs than previously thought, scientists say, complicating the picture. In chemosynthesis, bacteria get their energy from chemicals in their environment – not from sunlight. And

some of that energy may end up in the food on humans' plates too.

Researchers studying deep-sea vents saw animals deriving sustenance from these chemosynthetic bacteria but thought that the process was a bit of a dead end in shallower environments. But a new study of spiny lobsters living the shallow waters of the Bahamas found that they, too, have been tapping into a chemosynthetic food source.

The Caribbean spiny lobster, *Panulirus argus*, snacks on pretty much anything, study lead author Nicholas Higgs, a marine biologist at Plymouth University in Devon, England, tells The Christian Science Monitor in a phone interview. The

crustaceans have been known to snack on snails, sea stars, sea cucumbers, algae, and even the occasional seahorse or sea sponge.

## Symbiotic relationship

Lucinid clams, which are known to derive energy from a symbiotic relationship with chemosynthetic bacteria, also make it into these lobsters diet. So Dr. Higgs and his colleagues decided to investigate just how much of the lobsters' diet came from chemosynthetic production.

And it turns out the lobsters are getting about a fifth of their food from outside the traditional photosynthesis-based food chain, the researchers report in a

paper published Thursday in the journal Current Biology.

Here's how it works: The lucinid clams live deep in the sediment beneath seagrass beds. The symbiotic bacteria that live in their gills converts chemical compounds in the those sediments into food for themselves and their hosts, the clams.

Higgs isn't quite sure how the lobsters get to these clams, as the lobsters live on the seafloor and the clams live about half a foot below it, but they do. And when they crack open the clams' shells, they tap into this extra source of food that wouldn't exist if it weren't for chemosynthesis.

(Source: The CSM)

## Mysterious gap in the four-legged fossil record might not be a gap at all

A fish sprouts four limbs, wriggles onto dry land, begins to walk around, and then, BAM!, animals are living on land: It's a classic image of a key moment in evolution, oft repeated in comic strips.

But, as popular as that image is, scientists actually don't really know what that crucial evolutionary transition looked like. A 15-million-year gap in the tetrapod fossil record, called Romer's Gap, made that classic tale more of an estimation than something set in stone – until now.

An interdisciplinary team of paleontologists, geologists, and other specialists describe five new tetrapod species from fossils dating within just that gap, from about 360 million to 345 million years ago, in a paper published Monday in the journal Nature Ecology & Evolution. And these new fossils are already revealing insights into the deep evolutionary history of life on Earth.

Some vertebrates (animals with backbones) had already begun to sport four limbs that may have made them capable of moving onto land by the end of the

Devonian, around 360 million years ago. But these animals were still mostly aquatic and had many other fish-like features. In the fossil record on the other side of Romer's Gap, the four-limbed animals had already become well-adapted to life on land, with long, five-digit-tipped limbs, and the ability to breathe air. And the life forms were quite diverse, suggesting that the early evolutionary radiation of these modern animals had already happened.

(Source: The CSM)

## Eyeing Income-Yielding Projects, Main Strategies of MIGC: Chief Executive

Chief Executive of Maskan Investment Group Company (MIGC) Mohamm-Reza Amini said that the Group is seeking projects with the possibility of being developed in future, Public Relations Department of the company announced.

Entering the income-yielding projects is the main strategies of the company, he said, adding: "Vast-scale projects and also projects with the capability of receiving facilities for constructing and selling have been prioritized."

He pointed to the implementation of projects with world's most modern technologies and said: "As a large



company in the field of mass-housing construction, MIGC should take advantage of most modern technol-

ogies for construction of projects."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the capital market and said: "Capital market is a suitable capacity for financing construction industry, so that Land and Building Funds have been set up, licensed by Securities and Exchange Organization (SEO) as a well-established capital market."

In the end, Chief Executive of Maskan Investment Group Company (MIGC) Mohamm-Reza Amini said: "Publishing sukuk (Islamic bonds) with renting option, as much as 40 billion tomans has been put atop agenda."

## John Glenn, first American to orbit the Earth, dies at 95

The first American to orbit the Earth has died. John Glenn was the last surviving member of the original Mercury astronauts. He would later have a long political career as a U.S. senator, but that didn't stop his pioneering ways.

Glenn made history a second time in 1998, when he flew aboard the shuttle Discovery to become the oldest person to fly in space.

Glenn was 95 when he died; he had been hospitalized in an Ohio State University medical center in Columbus since last week.

Glenn had been battling health issues since a stroke a few years ago. His death Thursday was confirmed by Hank Wilson, communications director of the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at the Ohio State University.

President Obama said that Glenn's trailblazing showed "with courage and a spirit of discovery there's no limit to the heights we can reach together." The president said, "John always had the right stuff, inspiring generations of scientists, engineers and astronauts ... on behalf of a grateful nation, Godspeed, John Glenn."

NASA Administrator Charles Bolden said, "Senator Glenn's legacy is one of risk and accomplishment, of history created and duty to country carried out under great pressure with the whole world watching. The entire NASA Family will be forever grateful for his outstanding service, commitment and friendship."

Today we lost a great pioneer of air and space in John Glenn. He was a hero and inspired generations of future explorers. He will be missed.

On Feb. 20, 1962, when John Glenn rocketed into space, it was momentous and nerve-wracking. Space travel was in its infancy. Every launch and mission captivated the imagination of America.

A few minutes after liftoff, Glenn's Friendship 7 capsule reached orbit. People listened in with excitement and awe.

(Source: npr.org)

## Remarkable feathered dinosaur tail found in chunk of amber

Some 99 million years ago, a juvenile dinosaur got its feathery tail stuck in tree resin, a death trap for the small creature.

But its misfortune is now giving scientists unique insight into feathered dinosaurs that prospered during the Cretaceous Period.

Researchers said on Thursday a chunk of amber - fossilised resin - spotted by a Chinese scientist in a market in Myitkyina, Myanmar, last year contained 1.4 inches (36 mm) of the tail of the dinosaur, complete with bones, flesh, skin and feathers. The dinosaur itself was no more than 6 inches (15 cm) long, about the size of a sparrow.

"This is the first of its kind," said palaeontologist Ryan McKellar of the Royal Saskatchewan Museum in Canada, one of the researchers involved in the study published in the journal Current Biology. "I'm blown away."

The scientists suspect the tail belonged to a type of two-legged, bird-like dinosaur called a maniraptoran, one of several groups of dinosaurs that possessed feathers. Birds, which first appeared about 150 million years ago during the Jurassic Period, evolved from small, feathered dinosaurs.

The researchers used sophisticated scanning and microscopic observations to study the tail. They determined it boasted a chestnut-brown upper surface, with a pale or white underside, a pattern known as countershading.

"We're seeing feathers still attached to the tail, and we can see how they attach, the shapes that they have down to the micrometer scale, and things like pigment patterns within the feathers," McKellar said.

The tail consisted of eight vertebrae, soft tissue and feathers exquisitely preserved in three dimensions.

McKellar said getting its tail stuck in resin "would have been a game-ender for that particular animal. They don't drop their tails like some lizards."

(Source: Business Insider)

## Cassini sends back intriguing pictures of Saturn

Talk about a glamour shot! NASA's Cassini spacecraft has completed the first of its ring-grazing orbits and snapped stunning images of the strange hexagon-shaped jet stream at Saturn's northern pole.

With less than a year left to go in its mission, Cassini's new orbits mark the start of special maneuvers that could offer scientists fresh insight into the evolution of the planet's moons and iconic rings.

Cassini's cameras captured the latest images of the giant hexagon on Dec. 2 and 3, a few days after the spacecraft first began its new orbit on Nov. 30. Each side of that six-sided figure is about as wide as Earth. At the center, a giant storm swirls on the north pole. It's a surprising structure, surrounded by Saturn's smoother rings, and scientists have long wondered how it maintains its shape. (Saturn's larger cousin, Jupiter, has no such shape at its northern pole.)

One of the strangest things about this hexagon is the fact that it's been around for decades: It was first spotted by NASA's Voyager mission in the 1980s.

"It's still an interesting puzzle," Linda Spilker, Cassini's project scientist, told The Times shortly before the ring-grazing orbits began. "How could this jet stream keep this six-sided shape and rotate as a unit for such a long time?"

(Source: Sci-tech Today)



## Mistakenly sold lottery ticket earns couple \$1 million

A mistakenly sold lottery ticket has earned a New Jersey couple \$1 million.

State lottery officials say 70-year-old Dante Castillo usually picks his own numbers. But when the Manchester man bought some tickets for last Thursday's Cash4Life jackpot at a convenience store in Lakewood, the clerk accidentally sold him a ticket with computer-generated numbers.

That ticket proved to be the winner, matching the five main numbers drawn but not the cash ball number.

Castillo and his wife chose the \$1 million prize instead of the option to receive \$1,000 a week for life. The convenience store will receive a \$10,000 bonus check from lottery officials for selling the winning ticket.

Cash4Life also is played in Georgia, Indiana, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia.

(Source: Yahoo News)

## Florida woman in half-marathon lost for 12 hours, then found

**NORTH PORT, Fla. (AP)** — A Florida woman who became lost during a half-marathon trail run was found past nightfall after wandering around a 25,000-acre park for nearly 12 hours.

The Sarasota Times-Herald reports Melissa Kitcher was in good spirits after being found Sunday evening. She says she made a wrong turn more than three miles into the 13.1-mile run.

Race director Thierry Rouillard says he had no idea Kitcher was still on the trail until her husband called late Sunday afternoon, hours after the Trail Hog run finished. Sarasota County Sheriff's Office deputies began searching soon after.

Kitcher says her cell phone froze before the race but she never really worried since she knew her family would come looking for her. She plans to run the Sarasota Half Marathon in March and finish.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Donating Blood

Michelle: Did you hurt yourself?  
Gabriel: No, why?  
Michelle: You have a Band-Aid on your arm.  
Gabriel: Oh, that. I **donated** blood today.  
Michelle: You did? That's great. I'd like to donate blood, but every time I get close to a needle, I feel **light-headed**. I'm afraid if I **go through with it**, and they actually **draw blood**, I'll **faint**.  
Gabriel: I'm use to it. I give blood all the time. The needle doesn't bother me.  
Michelle: That's very **admirable**. I know how important it is for hospitals to have a good supply of blood for use in **transfusions**.  
Gabriel: I don't mind doing it. It's not a big deal.  
Michelle: But it is a big deal. If **relief** organizations didn't have enough blood when they traveled to **disaster areas**, they couldn't help the **injured** people there. I'm sure that's why you do it, right?  
Gabriel: Well...  
Michelle: Well, what?  
Gabriel: There is a particularly pretty nurse who works in the **bloodmobile**...  
Michelle: Ah.

(Source: eslpod.com)

#### Words & phrases

**donate:** to allow some blood or a body organ to be removed from your body so that it can be used in a hospital to help someone who is ill or injured  
**light-headed:** unable to think clearly or move steadily, for example during a fever or after drinking alcohol; dizzy  
**go through with something:** to do something you had promised or planned to do, even though it causes problems or you are no longer sure you want to do it  
**draw blood:** to inject a needle in someone's hand in order to take blood using a needle  
**faint:** to suddenly become unconscious for a short time; pass out  
**admirable:** having many good qualities that you respect and admire  
**transfusion:** the process of putting blood from one person's body into the body of someone else as a medical treatment  
**relief organization:** aid in time of danger  
**disaster area:** a place where a flood, storm, fire etc. has happened and caused a lot of damage  
**injured:** the people who have been hurt  
**bloodmobile:** an automotive vehicle staffed and equipped for collecting blood from donors



# Tehran to become more disability friendly

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — Teh-ran Municipality has allotted some 103 billion rials (nearly \$3 million) to ensure improved accessibility for people with disability living in the metropolis.

Making life easier for people with disability by making the city more accessible is a top priority for the municipality, IRIB quoted deputy mayor for traffic and transport affairs Maziar Hosseini as saying.

To this end, providing people with mobility hardships or disability of some kind with more accessible bus and train stops, installing elevator or stair lifts at their houses, making

pedestrian crossings more convenient by for example adding ramps enabling people in wheelchairs to access the walkway easily, and removing obstacles obstructing sidewalks are of the measures taken to make cities more accessible for people with limited mobility, Hosseini explained.

As many people with disabilities such as disabled war veterans are bound to use wheelchair so far we've installed some 145 elevators over the past three years for those living on the floors other than ground floors, he highlighted.

"We are now planning on making at least one park in each of the

22 districts of Tehran accessible to the people with disability by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017)," he added.

Mentioning the transport fleet allocated to people with disabilities, Hosseini explained that 26 buses and 62 vans are currently offering services to 2,503 individuals suffering from some kind of disability.

He further said that the budget allotted to guarantee enhanced accessibility for people with disability living in urban areas was some 118 billion rials (nearly \$3.4m) for the past Iranian calendar year (March 2015-March 2016).



## On this international day, the world is #UnitedAgainstCorruption

Friday 9 December is the International Anti-Corruption Day, with UNODC and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) calling for people across the globe to join a worldwide campaign to raise awareness about corruption and encouraging people from all walks of life to take action against this crime. The slogan 'United against Corruption, for development, peace and security' urges Governments, the private sector and the general public to jointly tackle this issue by changing their attitudes and taking action against the problem.

The campaign focuses on how corruption is an impediment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to promote safe societies, end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all, among others. Speaking about corruption, United Nations

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in his statement that "No country is immune, and every country bears a responsibility to end it. Corruption strangles people, communities and nations. It weakens education and health, undermines electoral processes and reinforces injustices by perverting criminal justice systems and the rule of law."

UNODC Executive Director Yuri Fedotov meanwhile noted that "the G20 estimates that 90 trillion US dollars in infrastructure investment is required between 2015 and 2030 to support global growth and development. To protect this investment corruption's destructive impact should not be ignored. There needs to be a wholehearted and determined contribution to global anti-corruption efforts from the world's public and private sectors."

Activities marking International Anti-Corruption Day are being carried out around the globe, including in all regions. Events focusing on anti-corruption efforts range from meetings with the press to national conferences, through to trainings and youth engagement activities and mass parades and commemorations as part of the wider public outreach.

An extensive social media campaign has been rolled out in the lead up to the day. Campaign materials are available at the International Anti-Corruption Day microsite and include a set of multi-language posters, which illustrate different ways in which the funds stolen each year through corruption impact Sustainable Development in many areas: education, health, infrastructure, and others.

(Source: UNIC)



Samaneh Sa'adatmand is an Iranian woman who has perfected her skills at the art of marquetry after years of hard-work and practice. She is now trying her hand at becoming a musical instrument craftswoman to design and build musical instrument, which she has longed for and trained for 15 years now.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ع

## 7 missing Iranian climbers rescued

Rescue and relief forces saved seven climbers who had gone missing for hours in Sijan village heights, Alborz province, from death on Wednesday, Fars news agency reported.

The seven climbers who went missing for hours in the area could finally manage to call relief forces and ask for help, said an official with the Rescue and Relief Organization affiliated with the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

Soon after receiving the call a team of rescue and relief forces were dispatched to the area and found the missing climbers early morning, Shahin Fat'hi said, adding, thankfully all the climbers were alive and received proper relief services.

## نجات ۷ کوهنورد مفقودی ایرانی

به گزارش خبرگزاری فارس ۷ کوهنورد که ساعت ها در ارتفاعات روستای سیجان در استان البرز مفقود شده بودند با تلاش امدادگران روز چهارشنبه از مرگ نجات یافتند. یکی از مسئولین سازمان امداد و نجات هلال احمر اعلام کرد: ۷ کوهنورد ساعت‌ها مفقود شده بودند که نیروهای امدادی پس از تماس تلفنی و درخواست کمک آنها وارد عملیات جستجو شدند.

شاهین فتحی افزود: بلافاصله پس از اطلاع از این حادثه تیم امدادی هلال احمر به ارتفاعات مربوطه اعزام شدند خوشبختانه همه ۷ کوهنورد ساعات اولیه صبح با تلاش امدادگران از مرگ نجات یافته و اقدامات امدادی لازم جهت کمک به آنها انجام گرفت.

## ENGLISH PROVERB

### One thing leads to another

■ **Explanation:** one event sets things up for another event, and so on; used as an explanation of how little things lead to big problems  
■ **For example:** I kept spending more and more money until I was broke. You know how one thing leads to another.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Bring somebody around

■ **Meaning:** to manage to persuade someone to do something or to agree with you  
■ **For example:** She won't listen to me. Let's see if Sue can bring her around.

## ENGLISH IDIOM

### Bag of tricks

■ **Explanation:** if you use your (whole) bag of tricks to do something, you try (all) the clever methods you know in order to succeed  
■ **For example:** Let's call on George and his bag of tricks; maybe he can help us solve the problem.



# Persian Gulf Arab states shedding crocodile tears: Syria

Syria's Foreign Ministry has criticized the Persian Gulf littoral states over their inability to take independent decisions, heavy reliance on foreign powers and enmity towards the Syrian government and nation.

The ministry, in a statement released on Thursday, said the Syrian nation and army soldiers, who are recording straight victories against Takfiri terrorist groups and their regional and international sponsors, take no notice of the "crocodile tears shed by the advocates of sham democracy" and their agents in the Persian Gulf region.

These tears are viewed by the Syrian people as signs of defeat and frustration as their plots have failed to yield results, the statement added.

It also said Britain, which is trying to seize the opportunity left vacant by the United States to "restore the British Empire," exploits the desperation and weakness of Persian Gulf monarchs to "blackmail them and get more of their fortunes."



The leaders of the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) countries -- Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman -- and British Prime Minister Theresa May said in a joint communiqué on Wednesday that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has lost all legitimacy and has no role in

the country's future.

"The leaders agreed to increase regional pressure on the Assad regime and its backers by heightening financial disruption and economic constraint," part of the statement read.

It came as the Syrian troops and their allied forces are now in control of about

85 percent of militant-held eastern part of Aleppo as they press ahead with an all-out offensive to fully dislodge foreign-backed terrorists from the north-western city.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov announced on Thursday that Syria's army forces had paused military operations in Aleppo to allow for trapped civilians to evacuate.

"There is going to be to a column of 8,000 evacuees" traveling 5 kilometers, the top Russian diplomat noted.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported on Wednesday that Syrian government forces liberated the entire neighborhoods of Aleppo's Old City as part of a large-scale military operation to flush foreign-backed Takfiri militants out of the strategic city.

The London-based monitoring group added that Syrian soldiers had established complete control over the historic area after militants withdrew in the face of army advances overnight.

(Source: SANA)

## Philippine senators tell Duterte drug war must be legal, punish rogue police

Philippine senators have criticized the way President Rodrigo Duterte is carrying out his anti-narcotics campaign, saying it should be done within the bounds of the law and he must punish erring police officers.

Police say 2,004 people have been killed by officers in self-defence during anti-drug operations since the president took office on July 1. Another 3,060 killings have been classified as "under investigation".

Senators said while they had found no clear proof that the rising number of extrajudicial killings was state-sponsored, they told Duterte to observe due process and give the accused their day in court.

Duterte has denied the police are conducting extrajudicial killings.

But at the same time, he has welcomed the death toll. In September, he said he'd be "happy to slaughter" three million drug addicts.

The president has repeatedly told the police to "kill" accused drug dealers if they violently resist, or if officers feel their lives are in danger.

"The war against illegal drugs must be won within the legal system, and the president must lead in reminding the people of this important message," the senators said

in a report after conducting an inquiry into extrajudicial killings.

The senators, including the president's allies, also cautioned the unpredictable Duterte to be "careful with his words (and) avoid inappropriate statements lest they be construed as policies of the state."

The president's spokesman and communications secretary were not available for comment on the report.

Duterte won a May election on a promise to wipe out drugs and dealers.

Amid concerns human rights groups about the surge in drug-related killings, Duterte has repeatedly defended the police, saying he was willing to go to jail for them.

On Wednesday, Duterte defended police officers who killed a detained mayor on a list of top drug suspects even after another law enforcement agency concluded the death was an extrajudicial killing.

"When the police deem themselves to be omnipotent, they are emboldened and more killings ensue; the duty to protect the people is thrown out the window," the senators said in their report, a copy of which was obtained by Reuters on Friday.

"The offshoot will be silencing accused drug pushers



and drug lords without affording them the bill of rights guaranteed to them by the constitution."

The president must raise police standards and accountability, they said.

"When the police violate the law, they must be punished," they said.

"The time to act and end the impunity of killing is now," the senators said.

(Source: Reuters)

## UN urges Suu Kyi to visit Rakhine over carnage

The United Nations has called on Myanmar's de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi to take action to end a brutal military crackdown on the Muslim Rohingya minority in the country's northern Rakhine state.

In a statement, the UN's special adviser on Myanmar, Vijay Nambiar, appealed directly to Suu Kyi to intervene and halt the atrocities.

"The adoption of a generally defensive rather than proactive approach to providing security to the local population has caused frustration locally and disappointment internationally," the statement read.

Nambiar said Suu Kyi had to visit Rakhine in person and restore confidence in the Muslim population there.

Suu Kyi, a Nobel peace prize laureate who has been lionized in Western media as Myanmar's "democracy icon," has failed to take any meaningful action to stop the crackdown on the Rohingya in Rakhine.



The northern state has been under a military siege since October over a raid on a police post that was blamed on the Rohingya. There have been reports of rape, murder, and arson against the Muslim population in the state. Over 20,000 Rohingyas have also been forced to

leave for neighboring Bangladesh, where they are also kept at dilapidated refugee camps.

Suu Kyi, however, has described the crisis in Rakhine as "under control" and demanded that the international community stop stoking the "fires of resentment."

The bloody crackdown on the Muslims by the military has now prompted an international outcry and poses the biggest challenge to Suu Kyi since her National League for Democracy party won Myanmar's first democratic elections in a generation last year.

On Sunday, Malaysia has accused Myanmar's army of "genocide" against the Rohingya. Malaysia's Prime Minister Najib Razak taunted Suu Kyi in an address before a crowd of about 5,000 protesters in Kuala Lumpur.

"What's the use of Aung San Suu Kyi having a Nobel prize?" he said. "The world cannot sit and watch genocide taking place."

Before the current escalation in violence, over 120,000 Rohingya Muslims had already been trapped in squalid displacement camps dating back to the last major outbreak of violence by Buddhists in Rakhine in 2012.

(Source: Press TV)

## UN slams Israel's bill on settler units

The United Nations has condemned as "unequivocally illegal" a recent Israeli bill to legalize some 4,000 settler units in the occupied West Bank, saying the move would be in contravention of international law.

In a statement, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein called on elements inside the Israeli regime to revise their support for the bill, which would retroactively grant legal status to settler units built on private Palestinian land.

"Israel, as the occupying power, must respect the private property of Palestinians, regardless of whether or not compensation is provided," Zeid said in a statement, warning that if enacted, the bill would have far-reaching consequences.

Israel has built thousands of illegal settler units for over half a million Israelis in the occupied West Bank.

The international community regards all settlements as illegal. The Tel Aviv regime has, however, continued to expand its illegal construction activities, defying warnings that the move could hamper the so-called Middle East peace talks.

The controversial bill on settler units has already sparked huge anger, even inside the occupied territories. However, members of the Israeli parliament on Wednesday voted to advance the bill.

Zeid said the settlements are "the principal cause of a wide range of human rights violations inside the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem."

"All Israeli settlements -- whether outposts built without formal approval but often with the support of the Israeli authorities ... or settlements approved by Israel -- are clearly and unequivocally illegal under international



law and constitute one of the main obstacles to peace," he said.

(Source: Press TV)

## Hezbollah denies pledge not to target Israel

Hezbollah denied Friday media reports saying it had promised Russia not to retaliate against Israeli raids on targets within Syrian territories.

"[The] alleged pledge from Hezbollah to Russia not to respond to the Israeli raids against targets inside Syria... is absolutely baseless and falsified," a statement from Hezbollah's media office said.

Several Israeli surface-to-surface mis-

siles struck areas surrounding the Mazzeh air base outside Damascus Wednesday overnight without causing any casualties.

The attack was the third time in eight days that Israel targeted positions near Damascus.

Israel also conducted airstrikes Tuesday on Zabadani, west of Damascus, where Hezbollah maintains a considerable armed presence.

It remains unclear whether the strikes targeted Hezbollah or Syrian rebels.

Meanwhile, a Lebanese judge has ordered Saudi-based satellite communications operator Arabsat to resume broadcasting the al-Manar TV, which was abruptly stopped last year without prior notice.

Hassan Hamdan, the judge of urgent affairs at Baabda Court, said in the Thursday verdict that the Lebanese Code

of Civil Procedure allows him "to look into any lawsuit regarding conflicts that emerged in his district of duty."

The ruling asked Arabsat to re-launch the Beirut-based channel "as soon as possible."

The court ruling is, however, not binding as the operator moved its offices from Lebanon to Jordan right after taking al-Manar off air.

(Source: Daily Star)

## Dutch court convicts anti-Islam politician Wilders of inciting discrimination



A Dutch court on Friday convicted politician Geert Wilders of insulting a group and inciting discrimination, but it imposed no penalty on him.

The charges stem from a 2014 incident in which Wilders led supporters to chant that they wanted "Fewer! Fewer! Fewer!" Moroccans in the Netherlands.

Wilders said his conviction on Friday of insulting a group and inciting discrimination was "insanity" and said the three judges who handed down the ruling were "haters" of his far-right Freedom Party (PVV).

"Three PVV-hating judges declare Moroccans a race and convict me and half of the Netherlands. Insane," he wrote in a tweet shortly after the verdict.

(Source: Reuters)

## Hannibal Gaddafi fails to appear for questioning in Sadr case

A court session for Hannibal Gaddafi, accused of involvement in the disappearance of Amal Movement founder and Shia Imam Musa Sadr, was adjourned Friday because the defendant refused to appear without a lawyer.

Gaddafi's lawyer last month suspended his duties "indefinitely," accusing Lebanese authorities of conspiring against the judiciary.

"Gaddafi's case, who has been abducted for the past year, shows the malfunction in Lebanese judiciary," Akram Azouri, Gaddafi's ex-lawyer, said.

Hannibal has been in Lebanese custody since December 2015.

Sadr and his two companions, Sheikh Mohammad Yaacoub and journalist Abbas Badreddine, went missing on Aug. 31, 1978, during an official visit to Libya at the invitation of Libya's former leader and Hannibal's father, Moammar Gaddafi.

Sadr family lawyer Chadi Hussein accused Gaddafi in a statement of seeking to stall his interrogation "not to disclose the information he has in the case."

The attorney said that Gaddafi's acts indicate "his involvement in the case."

Gaddafi is scheduled to reappear in court on Dec. 23.

(Source: Daily Star)



## Syrian government says ready to resume dialogue with opposition

1 → ■ U.S.-led air raid in northern Syria kills 20 civilians

In another event Nearly two dozen civilians have lost their lives when the so-called anti-Daesh (ISIL) U.S.-led coalition carried out an airstrike in Syria's troubled and militant-held northern province of Raqqah.

The attack struck al-Msheirfeh region north of the provincial capital city of Raqqah, located about 160 kilometers east of Aleppo, on Thursday and claimed the lives of nearly 20 civilians, Syria's official news agency SANA reported on Friday.

The report added that several people also sustained injuries in the blitz. The death toll is expected to rise as many of the wounded victims are in critical condition.

The Russian Foreign Ministry later condemned the airstrike against civilian targets in Raqqah as "unacceptable."

"These reports cause deep concern. Air and missile strikes that result in deaths and suffering of peaceful Syrians are unacceptable and deserve decisive condemnation. The suffering of civilian population must be stopped," the ministry said in a statement.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported on November 9 that at least 23 people, including a child, were killed when an airstrike by the US-led coalition struck the village of al-Heesha, situated about 40 kilometers north of Raqqah.

On October 4, at least 20 civilians were killed and 40 others injured after US-led coalition warplanes bombed the Kurdish-majority village of Thulthana in the northern province of Aleppo.

The development came only two days after airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition pounded the town of Mare', located some 25 kilometers north of Aleppo, and left nine civilians dead.

The U.S.-led coalition has been conducting airstrikes against what are said to be the Daesh terrorists inside Syria since September 2014 without any authorization from Damascus or a UN mandate.

The coalition has repeatedly been accused of targeting and killing civilians. It has also been largely incapable of fulfilling its declared aim of destroying Daesh.

(Source: agencies)



## Mario Balotelli says Ballon d’Or ‘not impossible,’ likes Arsenal

Nice striker Mario Balotelli says it is possible he could challenge Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo for the Ballon d’Or if he can have an injury-free season, and suggested he would be open to joining Manchester City or Arsenal in the future.

Balotelli, 26, has found some of his best form since joining Nice from Liverpool in the summer, yet his season has nevertheless been disrupted by injury.

He returned from a month on the sidelines to play 45 minutes of Nice’s 2-1 Europa League win over Krasnodar on Thursday, putting him into contention to play against Paris Saint-Germain at the weekend.

There, he will look to add to his six goals in six Ligue 1 appearances so far this season, and to prove that he can be one of the best in the business.

“Ronaldo and Messi are in this moment the best and nobody’s like them. Impossible,” he told the

Chinese news agency Xinhua. “But if I had a good year, without [being] injured and [staying focused], I think it’s not impossible [for me] to win the golden ball [Ballon d’Or].

“Even [if] one day I won the golden ball, I think Ronaldo and Messi are the best because they won like four or five times.”

Balotelli joined AC Milan on loan last season after having scored just one Premier League goal in 16 appearances for Liverpool, but his return to the Rossoneri brought only one Serie A goal in 20 appearances, with 12 of those coming from the bench.

“Last season I didn’t play a lot, so I couldn’t really score. And I was injured, I’ve been out for a long time,” he said. “So when I was feeling good, I played and I kept scoring.

“I had just some injury in the past which wasn’t a big deal. The problem was they keep coming. So when I feel good, I score.”

The Italian’s form has prompted suggestions he could leave Nice next summer but he said he is just focused on a successful season with the Ligue 1 leaders.

“I’m looking to win the league here,” he said. “Then when the year is finish, I’ll see.”

If he were to move on, he said he would be more likely to re-join AC Milan than Inter, despite spending three years with the Nerazzurri at the start of his career.

“I’ve always been a Milan fan, even after I played for Inter,” he said. “Never say never, but Inter is very complicated. If I have to go back to Italy, I will think Milan.”

Balotelli’s agent, Mino Raiola, has said he is convinced the former City striker will return to the Premier League in the future.

Asked about a return to England, the striker stressed that he would not return to Liverpool, where he fell out of favour under Brendan Rodgers and was then told he was surplus to requirements by Jurgen Klopp in the summer.

“For sure not Liverpool,” he said. “Because I find myself very bad in Liverpool. I said the team was good and the fans are amazing, but I would never go back to Liverpool.

“The first one I think in England is Manchester City, and the second team I always like is Arsenal.

“That doesn’t mean I’ll go to play there. I just like them.”

(Source: Soccernet)

## British police say football child sex scandal may affect 98 clubs

British police investigating allegations of widespread child sex abuse at football clubs dating back to the 1970s said on Friday they had identified 83 potential suspects and possible links to 98 clubs, including some from the Premier League.

Police forces across the country launched inquiries after former player Andy Woodward revealed he had been abused as a boy by a youth team coach, prompting other ex-professionals to come forward with more allegations.

The National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) said 639 referrals had been made to officers from a helpline set up by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children charity, involving about 350 potential victims.

“Allegations received by police forces across the country are being swiftly acted upon,” said Chief Constable Simon Bailey, the NPCC lead for child protection.

“We are also liaising closely with the Football Association to ensure all relevant information they hold is shared to inform investigations moving forward.”

The harrowing tales of abuse suffered by the former players, some of whom have broken down in tears in television interviews, have shocked Britain. They raise questions about the scale of the problem, how much clubs and football authorities knew, and whether they tried to cover it up.

English football’s governing body, the Football Association, has launched an internal review into what it admitted could be one of the sport’s biggest crises, and promised to fully publicise its findings.

The NPCC said not all the 98 clubs whose names were mentioned to the police were under investigation. “The figure spans all tiers of football, from premier clubs through to amateur,” it said in a statement. It added that 98 percent of the victims were male, aged between seven and 20 at the time.

The football abuse revelations are the latest in a series of paedophile scandals to have hit Britain in recent years.

Victims said the scale of wrongdoing was likely to be worse than in the case of TV star Jimmy Savile, a cigar-chomping BBC television host who abused hundreds of youngsters over six decades until his death in 2011.

(Source: Reuters)

# Guardiola and the record summer spree could cost Manchester City the title

It was a long-term, ideological pursuit and could pay off in time, but Pep Guardiola’s summmer recruitment drive is not doing Manchester City much good right now, writes Richard Jolly.

It was a new high. Manchester City had welcomed Pep Guardiola and parted company with around £165 million in a transfer window. Combine the most coveted manager in the world with the biggest spending spree in the history of English football and it promised to be a recipe for glory.

It certainly looked so when City started the season by reeling off 10 successive wins in all competitions. It may yet prove so over the course of Guardiola’s three-year contract. Yet now, as City have slipped from first to fourth in the Premier League, won only one of their last five Champions League games and exited the EFL Cup, the relationship between expenditure and excellence looks increasingly indirect.

City can look in need of reinforcements, a damning statement after an extraordinary outlay. Guardiola’s transfer record can be questioned before his most exciting arrival, Gabriel Jesus, has even actually arrived. When seeing the fault lines in the City defence, it can be tempting to wonder where the money went.

What it highlights is a purist’s reluctance to adopt a policy of pragmatic purchasing that would have offered the promise of greater success this season. Guardiola bought less out of necessity than ideology. He conformed to principles, acting with a romantic’s instincts rather than a realist’s hard-headed assessment of where improvement was most required.

He signed four wingers while leaving City lumbered with the four thirty-something full-backs whose shortcomings, in most cases, had already been advertised. He bought a goalkeeper, in Claudio Bravo, to suit a passing philosophy, but one who looks an inferior shot-stopper to the exiled Joe Hart. He brought in one defender, in John Stones, but now, with Vincent Kompany unsurprisingly injured again and Nicolas Otamendi suspended for Saturday’s trip to Leicester, the Englishman is the only senior specialist centre-back available. Having taken over a team who conceded 1.07 goals per league game last season, he has one letting in 1.07 now.

It illustrates Guardiola’s emphasis on attack, his preference for possession and a potential failing in his planning, whereby insufficient attention appears to be paid towards defending, but the money has not made a difference.

The same can be said in individual cases. Leroy Sane cost £40 million. He is the most expensive German ever which, given his country’s tradition of success, is quite some accolade, but the probability is that City would have no fewer points without him. He has no goals and two assists, both for Kelechi Iheanacho goals: a largely irrelevant injury-time strike in September’s 4-0 win over



Borussia Monchengladbach and a more meaningful equaliser against Southampton, but which owed more to a Fernandinho pass than Sane’s centre. In his defence, he has been injured and, lost among the drama of a ludicrous game, attacked with verve and incision against Chelsea last week, yet no player of his cost has delivered as little in the Premier League this season.

But Sane was identified because he belongs in the select group who can conform to Guardiola’s vision of a player. It is a common denominator. Ilkay Gundogan is a technical talent who has excelled at times, but City have been at their most devastating when Fernandinho, David Silva and Kevin de Bruyne were the trio in the centre of the pitch, not him. Stones’ confidence in possession is encouraged by his manager and some criticism of him has been overblown, but he gifted Southampton their goal in what proved a damaging draw.

Like Sane, Stones offered potential, something to excite the educator in Guardiola. Certainly in an industry where short-termism is institutionalised, the Catalan should not be condemned for taking a long-term view. He signalled that by making Gundogan his first signing even though the injured German would miss the start of his reign.

Some managers buy aiming for an immediate impact. Guardiola is their antithesis. Jesus, Marlos Moreno and

Oleksandr Zinchenko were bought at 19 and loaned out, Sane signed at 20, Stones brought in at 22. Only Gundogan, who came at 25, Nolito, 29 when purchased, and the 33-year-old Bravo, were recruited at or near their respective peaks.

It is one reason why the Chilean offers most scope for Guardiola’s band of detractors. With his propensity to wave shots past him, he has been an expensive downgrade, a vanity project who makes those irritated by Joe Hart’s arrogance nostalgic for his goalkeeping.

City’s recruitment was flawed long before the Guardiola’s appointment, whether by Txiki Begiristain’s propensity to pay over the odds and history of signing Eliaquim Mangala or Manuel Pellegrini’s preference for ageing Spanish speakers. When hiring the Catalan, it makes sense to let Guardiola be Guardiola and pursue his idiosyncratic path.

Long-termism is not a flaw in itself but the sense that City could have done with another centre-back, a better goalkeeper and at least one new full-back points to the problems with ideological buying. It speaks of confused priorities. It does not always address the major needs. It threatens to be the £165 million spending spree that costs City the title.

(Source: Eurosport)

## Liverpool’s Joel Matip declines African Nations Cup chance with Cameroon

LIVERPOOL — Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has been reassured by defender Joel Matip that he will not be competing at the upcoming African Nations Cup.

Matip, who has not played for his country since 2015, spoke in September about his desire to stay at Liverpool during the African Nations Cup, but Cameroon have recently been making efforts to try to convince the 25-year-old to end his international exile.

A source told ESPN FC that the defender held talks with Cameroon coach Hugo Broos last week, with the manager leaving it up to the player to make a final decision.

Speaking at a news conference on Friday morning to preview the game against West Ham United, Klopp revealed that he was pleased his centre-back would be staying with the club this winter.

“We had this talk a few weeks ago,” Klopp said. “I was not surprised anymore. Of course, I’m happy about this -- that’s no doubt.

“Players have to make these decisions by themselves, it’s nothing that the clubs can do.

“For Joel, it’s different because he has



grown up in Germany and stuff. That’s always different of course and I’ve had a few players like this. He decided this for himself and good for us.”

Cameroon plan on including Matip as part of the preselection of 35 players in the hope of a sudden change of heart. However, they are do not hold much hope, according to a source.

Meanwhile, Liverpool’s Sadio Mane will be playing for Senegal at the tournament, which takes place in Gabon between Jan. 14 and Feb. 5.

(Source: ESPN)

## Conte issues response to Alexis Sanchez to Chelsea rumours

Antonio Conte has issued a response to reports that Chelsea are interested in signing Alexis Sanchez from Arsenal.

The Gunners talisman has been linked with a sensational move to Stamford Bridge after reports in England suggested he had made astronomical wage demands to the north Londoners.

And Chelsea’s boss has now issued a response to the rumour, telling reporters at a press conference: «I don’t think it is right to talk about other players and other teams.

«It is not right and we are totally focused on the next game.

«January and next season are very far away for us. It is important not to talk about other players because it is a lack of respect. We have four games before January. It’s important to be focused on these games.

«January is far away for me. Now I’m pleased, very glad, with this squad and to work with these players. For this reason, I repeat: stay concentrated on this game, go game-by-game, and then we’ll see.»

Wenger had denied that Arsenal would sell Alexis to their rivals, with the



former Barcelona star having been in superb form in the 2016-17 season, scoring 13 goals in all competitions for the club.

And while it is unclear whether the Chilean would be a target, the Blues could look to do business for new arrivals in midfield and defence when the transfer window reopens.

The likes of Fiorentina star Milan Badelj, Inter midfielder Geoffrey Kondogbia and Middlesbrough defender Ben Gibson could all be at the top of the wanted list.

(Source: Goal)

# Over 1000 Russian athletes involved in doping scandal - McLaren Report

The release of the McLaren Report has revealed that over 1000 athletes were involved in or benefitted from the Russian doping scandal.

The first part of Richard McLaren’s investigation into Russian state-sponsored doping revealed an unprecedented scandal that led to the country’s athletics team being banned from this summer’s Rio Olympic Games.

And the release of the second part of his report on Friday has unveiled the staggering scale of the crisis stretching back five years.

“We are now able not only to confirm the findings of the first report but also to put them into sharper and clearer focus,” McLaren said. “We are increasing the number of athletes involved, as well as the scope of the conspiracy and cover-up. A cover-up that dates back to at least 2011 and continued after the Sochi Winter Games.

“A cover-up that evolved over the years from uncontrolled chaos to an institutionalised and disciplined medal-winning strategy and conspiracy. A cover-up that operated on an unprecedented scale.”

The report states that the doping scandal operated across 30 sports and impacted on 1000 athletes - making

this the biggest doping scandal in the history of sport.

“Over 1000 Russian athletes competing in summer, winter and Paralympic sport, can be identified as being involved in or benefitting from manipulations to conceal positive doping tests. Based on the information reported to International Federations through the IP to WADA there are 503 (82%) summer athletes and 92 (18%) winter athletes.”

In further revelations contained within the new report, investigators said:

- There was evidence of tampering involving 12 medalists, and four gold medals, from the Sochi Games in 2014.

- Football is among the 30 sports implicated in the scandal.

- Nescafe granules and salt were used to corrupt urine samples.

The report said a urine sample-swapping technique used at Sochi became regular practice at the Moscow laboratory that dealt with elite athletes.

It added that four Sochi gold medalists had samples with physiologically impossible salt readings, while 12 Russian Sochi medalists had evidence of tampering with

the bottles containing their urine samples.

The report detailed how a clean urine bank existed in the Moscow laboratory, where salt and coffee were added to clean samples to try to fool officials testing “B samples” in supposedly tamper-proof bottles.

The report included evidence of DNA mismatches, where a tampered B sample did not match the DNA of previous specimens and cases of sample swapping between male and female athletes.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) said the full findings of the report were unprecedented and astonishing.

“They strike right at the heart of the integrity and ethics of sport,” Paralympic sport’s governing body said in a statement.

### ■ Russia Responds

Yelena Isinbayeva, the twice Olympic pole vault champion and now a Russian anti-doping official, however, said it was unfair to single out Russia for criticism.

“If we want to clean up world sport, let’s start,” she said. “We don’t need to concentrate on just one country. I think banning clean Russian sportsmen is impractical and unfair.”

(Source: Eurosport)



# Sareh Javanmardi raises awareness about people with impairment

**SPORTS** A series of women made indelible marks on the shooting range at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. Sareh Javanmardi stormed to two pistol golds, the first Iranian woman to win a title in shooting, and the USA's McKenna Dahl became her country's first female medallist in shooting Para sport.

In fact, female athletes claimed more than half of the 12 golds on offer in Brazil.

These amazing performances come in at No. 24 in the International Paralympic Committee's Top 50 Moments of 2016.

With two months now passed since the Paralympic Games, one might assume the dust has settled on Javanmardi's golden Rio moments.

On the contrary, the 31-year-old world champion, multiple world record holder, and now two-time Paralympic champion, still receives fan messages and congratulations from her compatriots on a daily basis.

"The amount of respect and gratitude that people have extended to me has been overwhelming," Javanmardi said. "The Iranian people have always been very nice to me but the welcome I have received after my return from Brazil has been even more special. I would like to thank everyone for it."

The Iranian, who was also voted the Allianz Best Female Athlete of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, is particularly happy because more attention for her story means more attention for what people with an impairment can be capable of.

"Raising awareness for that has always been an important byproduct of my personal achievements. I am happy that I could do so once more with my performances in Rio."

Speaking of those Rio performances, Javanmardi repeatedly pointed out that neither the P2 (women's 10m air pistol SH1) that made her the first woman to win shooting gold for Iran, nor the P4 (50m pistol mixed SH1) competitions were easy achievements.



"I had a hard time adapting to the situation and I definitely felt more stress than in past events. Particularly the P4 was a very difficult competition for me because I still lack experience in the P4."

This might be the reason why her P4 win is her most favorite Rio moment, despite her historic victory in the P2.

"Of course, being the first woman to ever claim a shooting gold medal for Iran was also very special," Javanmardi asserted about the P2 win. "But standing on top of the podium in the P4 had always been my biggest dream so winning that was even slightly more

special for me."

Yet, despite all the positive memories, Javanmardi also recalls a very painful moment for the Paralympic family as a whole and Iranian athletes in particular.

"It is impossible for me to think of the Games without immediately also remembering the tragic accident of the Iranian cyclist Bahman Golbarnezhad [Golbarnezhad died in an accident during the Paralympic C4-5 cycling road race]. That was one of the worst events for me as well as for the entire Paralympic community, I think. I will never forget this sad and tragic loss."

## Tractor Sazi stuns Esteghlal to move top, Sepahan thrashes Saba

**SPORTS** Tractor Sazi football team came from behind to beat Esteghlal 2-1 in the 13th week of Iran Professional League in front of more than 40,000 fans at Tehran's Azadi stadium on Friday.

Esteghlal took the lead in the 7th minute when Tractor Sazi goalkeeper Mohammad Reza Akhbari made a crucial mistake and gifted the ball to Esteghlal's Kaveh Rezaei who slotted it into the empty net.

But former Esteghlal striker Farzad Hatami was the hero for Tractor Sazi as he scored twice, sealing comeback and three points.

Hatami first scored in the 56th with a powerful close range header to level the score. Twelve minutes later he scored the second goal from the six yard box to give Tractor Sazi three vital points.

Elsewhere in Mashhad, Persepolis was scheduled to



play against Padideh but the game was called off due to bad weather condition. The match will kick off on

Saturday 14:00 local time.

In Isfahan, Sepahan, who earned just two points from the last three games, thrashed Saba Qom 4-1 to end the miserable run. Mehrdad Mohammadi (twice), Hossein Papi and Jalaleddin Alimohammadi scored for the host while Ghasem Dehnavi scored the sole goal of Saba from the penalty spot.

In the other games, Paykan edged past Siah Jamegan 1-0 and Foolad beat Esteghlal Khuzestan with the same score thanks to Sasan Ansari.

Earlier on Thursday, Zob Ahan defeated struggling Machine Sazi 2-1, Sanat Naft suffered a 1-0 loss against Saipa at home and Naft Tehran and Gostaresh Foolad match finished a 1-1 draw.

Tractor Sazi is currently at the top with 27 points from 13 games while Persepolis is second with a game in hand.

## Iran seeks to host 2020 FIFA Futsal World Cup

Iran is fully-ready to earn the right to host 2020 FIFA Futsal World Cup, Minister of Sports and Youth Affairs Masoud Soltanifar said.

Soltanifar on Thursday said that the ministry will support the country's football federation to host the event.

The 2020 tournament will be

the ninth edition of futsal's premier competition, which has so far been played on four of the six confederations, since beginning life in the Netherlands back in 1989.

Egypt, Georgia, Kazakhstan, the Czech Republic, Croatia, the Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates and the United

States expressed interest, but eventually did not bid.

Iran, Japan, Lithuania and Costa Rica, who are bidding to stage the prestigious event, have not hosted the event before.

The host will be appointed in December 2016.

(Source: Tasnim)



## Bernie Ecclestone: 'Nico Rosberg a world champion and nothing else'



Bernie Ecclestone has swerved listing Nico Rosberg among the Formula 1 greats, instead referring to the German as a "world champion and nothing else".

Rosberg pipped Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton to the drivers' title in 2016 and quit the sport shortly afterwards.

However, his triumph has received a muted reception by some, who believe he profited from Hamilton's technical issues.

F1 supremo Ecclestone refused to rank Rosberg alongside the multiple world champions currently on the grid – Sebastian Vettel (four), Hamilton (three), Alonso (two) – instead keeping

his praise short.

"Well, let's just say he is a world champion," Ecclestone said.

"The other names that you mentioned (Hamilton, Vettel, Alonso) have obviously won more than a few times and have achieved more. So I would just call Nico a world champion and nothing else."

However, the 86-year-old did concede that Rosberg will be missed in 2017.

"He's not as popular as Lewis but Nico was a very popular driver," he added. "So his absence is certainly not good for Formula One."

(Source: AutoSport)

## Ribery: Bayern my last club in Europe



Franck Ribery says Bayern Munich will be his last club in Europe and revealed he could even sign another new contract at the Allianz Arena.

The 33-year-old agreed fresh terms last month, tying him to the German champions until the end of 2018.

And Ribery has no intention of playing for any other team in Europe, suggesting he could even renew beyond the expiry of that deal if the next 18 months go well.

"In Europe, Bayern is my last club - 100 per cent," Ribery said to Eurosport.

"Do I need a different experience

or idea? If so, only just for fun, not like now at Bayern.

"Maybe I'll quit after my time at Bayern; maybe I will play somewhere else for one more year.

"How do they say in Munich? 'Schau'n mer mal' ['We'll see']. We'll see how this season goes and then the one after that.

"I know that the door for me to renew again here is always open."

Ribery joined Bayern from Marseille in 2007 and has won six Bundesliga titles and the Champions League among a total of 18 trophies.

(Source: Goal)

## Kim SunHyung: Iran at top level in Asia

One of the highlights of Kim SunHyung's international career happened in the FIBA Asia Championship 2013 when, during Korea's group stage game against China, he stole the ball, drove down the length of the court, and slammed one home despite Yi Jianlian's defensive challenge.

SunHyung has been a mainstay for the Korean national team in the years that followed. He played in the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2014 and once again in the FIBA Asia Challenge 2016, where he was the team's second-leading scorer with 9.4 points per game. He is currently among the best point guards in the Korean Basketball League (KBL), averaging 14.9 points, 6.8 assists, 4.0 rebounds and 1.5 steals per outing for the Seoul SK Knights, and this augurs well for his chances of being selected to be, once again, part of Korea's team for the FIBA Asia Cup 2017 and the qualifiers for the FIBA Basketball World Cup 2019 in China.



SunHyung, however, knows that for his country to make waves in international scene and return to the top tier of Asian basketball, they will need more than his ball-handling wizardry and scoring flair. He is aware of the fact that Korea's main weakness has been their inside play, and that the only way to really rectify this is to secure the services of top-level big men, even if it means turning to naturalization.

SunHyung clarified this when he talked to FIBA.com.

**■ FIBA.com: With the FIBA Asia Cup 2017 coming up next year, what improvements should be made to the Korean team to challenge the likes of Iran and China?**

**SunHyung:** The most important thing is to improve our low post presence. Right now, we are focusing on drills that make us more dangerous on the fastbreak.

**■ FIBA.com: Playing the FIBA Asia Challenge 2016 Final in Iran was Korea's first for some time now; why were Korea not playing much in the Finals in the last decade?**

**SunHyung:** The hardest challenge for us has always been to secure good big men against the likes of China and Iran. There is no doubt that Iran and China have been on top level for the last few years as they have the best big men in Asia, and some Middle East countries have also improved their performance with naturalized players. To get back at the top level, there are two options for us: vastly improve our local big men or secure a naturalized player.

**■ FIBA.com: The New Competition System will give players like you the opportunity to represent your country in front of the home fans. How big do you think is that?**

**SunHyung:** The New Competition System will significantly improve the sport's exposure to fans. Having regular official national team games to be played at home gives us a chance to generate new interest for basketball.

(Source: FIBA)

## Cristiano Ronaldo's tax form released, shows he earned over €227m in 2015

Cristiano Ronaldo's management company on Thursday published financial records showing that the Real Madrid star declared an income of €227.3 million in 2015.

The revelation comes amidst accusations of tax evasion after a large data leak contained documents that said Ronaldo hid €150 million in image rights in the British Virgin Islands.

Gestifute, run by super agent Jorge Mendes, released Ronaldo's "Model 720" tax form online, saying that the data released was previously supplied to Spanish tax officials.

The document says that Ronaldo declared just €23.5m of income earned from inside Spain, with €203.7m made outside of Spain.

Although the documents did not show how many taxes Ronaldo paid, a statement accompanying the documents said they showed his willingness to cooperate with authorities.

"This document confirms that Spain's Tax Agency is knowledgeable of all of Cristiano Ronaldo's assets and income. From now on, the player will not make any further statement on this subject," the statement said.

"As reported in recent days, the player has been aware of his tax obligations right away from the beginning of his professional career in all of the countries in which he has resided, and has not and has never had any issue with the tax authorities of any of those countries.

"This communication, which was not required by law, constitutes irrefutable proof that Cristiano Ronaldo and his representatives are in good faith and cooperate with the authorities in a spirit of transparency and compliance with legality."

Ronaldo spoke briefly about his financial situation on Wednesday while he left Real Madrid's Champions League game, telling Portuguese TV station RTP, "You believe I am worried? He who owes nothing, fears nothing."

Earlier on Wednesday, Madrid had come to his defence in the matter, saying Ronaldo deserves "the maximum respect."

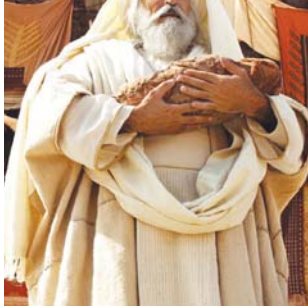
(Source: Soccer.net)





## Photos of Majidi's "Muhammad (S)" shown in Tehran

**T A R T TEHRAN** — An exhibition of photos *d e s k* by Mohammad (Nader) Foqani, the photographer of "Muhammad (S), the Messenger of God", Majid Majidi's latest movie on Prophet of Islam, has opened in the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF).



A scene from "Muhammad (S), the Messenger of God" (Photo by Nader Foqani)

The showcase is a part of the "10 Days with Iranian Photographers" program, which displays photos by different photographers on various subjects.

Co-written by Majidi and Kambuzia Partovi, "Muhammad (S), the Messenger of God" portrays the life of Muhammad (S) until he was 13 years old along with the religious and social atmosphere in Mecca at the time.

Sareh Bayat, Mohsen Tanabandeh, Rana Azadivar, Alireza Shojanuri and Mina Sadati star in the film.

The exhibit will run until December 18 at the forum located on Musavi St., off Taleqani Ave.

## Austrian specialist in "Memories for All Seasons" to visit Iran

**T A R T TEHRAN** — Professor Dr. Gerhard *d e s k* Freilinger, who has appeared in Mostafa Razaq-Karimi's "Memories for All Seasons", will be visiting Iran.

"Memories for All Seasons" is an acclaimed documentary that narrates the memories of a group of Iranian soldiers wounded by Iraqi chemical weapons during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

The 90-year-old professor is a specialist in plastic reconstructive surgery and has treated the chemically-wounded Iranian soldiers in those years, Razaq-Karimi told the Persian service of MNA on Friday.

"Prof. Freilinger is expected to arrive in Tehran today and several programs have been arranged for the professor during his three-day stay in Iran," he added.

"He is scheduled to visit the Tehran Peace Museum, while there are plans to screen 'Memories for All Seasons' during the 10th Cinema Verite with him in attendance," he remarked.

"We will also visit the hospitals in which a number of chemically-wounded war veterans are still hospitalized," Razaq-Karimi asserted.

Cameramen Mehran Malakuti and Victor Sneider



have collaborated with Razaq-Karimi in his production.

"Memories for All Seasons" has won the first place award at the 7th edition of Cinema Verite.

## World film reps attend Cinema Verite market

**T A R T TEHRAN** — Film distributors and *d e s k* executives of several international festivals of documentary cinema have attended the meetings held at the market of the 10th Cinema Verite, Iran's major international festival for documentary cinema.

They discussed major issues, including how to attract world distributors and how to find ways into international festivals, with Iranian filmmakers during the meetings held on the sidelines of the festival at Charsu Cineplex from December 7 to 9, the organizers announced on the website.

Among the participating foreign guests were Bosnian producer Alma Tataragic, and Radovan Sibrt, the Czech director and producer and co-founder of the production company, PINK, as well as Daniel Kim, the Busan International Film Festival's General Manager of Asian Film Market.

Radovan Sibrt talked about the first steps young

filmmakers must take to attend international festivals and hold talks with foreign filmmakers and distributors.

He also talked about filmmakers who would like to attend the festivals with their unfinished projects and said that the unfinished projects would either be attractive for investment by a producer, while it could also be an obstacle since many producers like to invest in projects that are in the beginning stages.

However, he said that the best ways to promote their projects is to attend major—but not all—festivals to find producers.

Daniel Kim also distributed copies of application forms to the Busan fest to interested applicants for the next edition of the festival and asked them to attend workshops held on the margins of the festival.

He added that the workshops are usually held by professional filmmakers and help participants learn more about techniques of filmmaking while they also provide



good chances to meet and hold talks with recognized producers.

The 10th Cinema Verite is running from December 4 to 11.

**PICTURE OF THE DAY**  *Honaronline/Alireza Farahani*



Cartoonist Kambiz Derambakhsh (R) and artist Shahin Noruzi present the performance art 1+1 in Tehran's Saless Gallery on December 8, 2016.

## Book hand-written and illustrated by J.K. Rowling up for sale

**LONDON (Reuters)** — "Harry Potter" fans will be able to bid for a piece of history next week when a book designed, hand-written and illustrated by J.K. Rowling goes on sale at Sotheby's auction house in London.

"The Tales of Beedle the Bard" is one of six copies the author produced to give as gifts to those who helped bring the story of the boy wizard to life, and is seen fetching 300,000-500,000 pounds (\$378,000-\$630,000) at Tuesday's sale.

A seventh copy was produced for a 2007 auction to raise money for the author's charity, Lumos, raising 1.95 million pounds.

"The Tales of Beedle the Bard" is a volume of five wizarding fairy tales

left to Hermione Granger by Albus Dumbledore in the final book in the "Harry Potter" series, "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows".

The manuscript being offered for sale was presented to editor Barry Cunningham who signed Rowling and published her magical debut "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" and contains a personal dedication from Rowling.

"This one has an inscription to Barry, thanking him," said Sotheby's books and manuscripts specialist Philip Errington.

"It says, 'To Barry, the man who thought an overlong novel about a boy wizard in glasses might just sell', which is a lovely little insight into the role of author and editor."

## "La La Land", "Moonlight" among AFI's best films of 2016

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Modern musical "La La Land", independent drama "Moonlight" and sci-fi movie "Arrival" were among the diverse genres selected as the year's best films by the American Film Institute (AFI) on Thursday.

AFI's top 10 films and television shows of the year were announced ahead of next week's Golden Globe nominations and Screen Actors Guild nominations, and help shape the contenders in Hollywood's annual awards season.

The list also includes Denzel Washington drama "Fences", Mel Gibson's war movie "Hacksaw Ridge", Western heist story "Hell or High Water", grief drama "Manchester By the Sea", Martin Scorsese's "Silence",

## Please do touch! Exhibition for blind opens in Prague

**PRAGUE (Reuters)** — An exhibition aimed at blind people has opened in Prague, inviting visitors to touch artwork and enjoy pieces they would normally only read or hear about.

An exhibition aimed at blind people has opened in Prague, inviting visitors to touch artwork and enjoy pieces they would normally only read or hear about.

The artworks have been provided by the Czech National Gallery, with some provided by the artists directly, and are made out of a variety of materials such as metal, wood, glass or plastic.

"This exhibition is special because it allows touching the originals of sculptors' pieces which is unusual in galleries," curator Jana Klimova said.

"Everywhere there are signs 'Please don't touch' and the motto of this exhibition is just the opposite – 'Touch, please'."

The exhibition is free and open to all. Sighted people are encouraged to cover their eyes and experience the art that way.

## WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

### Photo

■ An exhibition of photos by Zahra Khorami is currently underway at Dena Gallery.



The exhibition named "Aquarium Syndrome" runs until December 19 at the gallery located at 4 Sussan Alley off Qarani St.

■ A collection of photos by Mehrdad Mirzai is on display in an exhibition at Knack Gallery.



The exhibit titled "The Republic" runs until December 23 at the gallery located at No. 7, Sina Alley, Takharestan St., Zafar Ave.

■ Photos by Mohammad Shams are currently on display in an exhibition at Aliha Gallery.



The exhibition titled "Loneliness" will run until December 19 at the gallery, which can be found at No. 31 Ramezani Alley, Mahurzadeh St., Shariati St.

### Painting

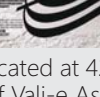
■ A collection of paintings by Samira Darya is on display in an exhibition at Vista Gallery.



The exhibit entitled "Suspension" runs until December 19 at the gallery located at No. 11, 12th Alley, Mir Emad St.

### Sculpture

■ Atbin Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of sculptures by Azar Sheikh-Bahaedinzadeh, Mohammad Marvasti, Hamidreza Sadeqzadeh and Negin Bagheri.



The exhibit will run until December 20 at the gallery located at 42 Khakzad Alley, Parkway Intersection, off Vali-e Asr Ave.