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# TEHRAN TIMES

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Commander slams U.S. hawks over threatening Iran ships

## Tehran says UN draft resolution on Syria blind to root cause

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran d e s k says the Canada-led resolution on Syria, while partially acceptable, does ignore key aspects to the crisis, notably the cause root of terrorism. "It is evident that this crisis is only the effect, and the draft is totally silent on its root cause," said Deputy Permanent Representative of Iran to the United Nations Gholamhossein Dehqani in an address to the United Nations General Assembly, IRNA reported on Saturday.

Expressing "outrage" at the escalation of violence in Syria, particularly war-battered Aleppo, the General Assembly adopted a resolution on December 9, demanding an immediate and complete end to all attacks on civilians as well as an end to all sieges in war-ravaged country.

The resolution underscored, inter alia, the urgency of humanitarian aid to the Syrians trapped in Aleppo, which Iran has long before called on the international community to consider.

While acknowledging this part of the resolution, the Iranian representative to the international body called the resolution "a one-sided document and divorced from the reality on the ground in Syria," for being blind to extremism as the key factor to blame the situation on. ➔2

## Europe buys 30m barrels of Iranian crude in Jan.-Aug.

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Seven European countries imported 4.22 million tons (nearly 30 million barrels) of Iranian crude oil during the first eight months of 2016, according to the latest data released by

European Union's statistics agency (Eurostat). Belgium, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Poland were the buyers of Iranian crude. France imported 15.3 million barrels of crude oil

from Iran, accounting for 51 percent of Europe's total oil imports from the country.

Spain and Greece followed France with importing 8.9 million barrels and 8.1 million barrels of oil, respectively.

## Tehran seeking simplified visa frameworks with India, China

**TOURISM** TEHRAN — Having d e s k secured visa-free regimes with Armenia and Georgia, Iran is now seeking visa-simplification frameworks with India and China, as the country is increasingly realizing the importance of tourism following an international sanctions relief.

Iran is willing to commence visa-waiver discussions with China as it has already started the same talks with Russia, Azerbaijan, and India, ISNA quoted Ali Baqer Nemati-Zargaran, the director for promotion and marketing affairs at Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization as saying on Friday.

"For the time being, Azerbaijan offers visas on arrival to Iranian travelers while Iran has abolished the visa regime with Azerbaijani citizens," Nemati-Zargaran explained.

The CHTHO fosters close collaboration with Foreign Ministry's Consular Affairs Office which leads the visa waiver negotiations, he added.

In November, some sources reported that Iran and Russia have come to an agreement to waive visas for certain tour groups of 5 to 50 people for up to 15 days. The deal is expected to come into effect by 2017. ➔10

## Non-OPEC join OPEC in first global cut in 15 years

Russia and several other non-OPEC nations pledged to curb oil production next year by more than 600,000 barrels a day at a meeting in Vienna on Saturday, joining forces with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to end a global glut, a delegate familiar with the situation said.

The pact -- the first between the two sides in 15 years -- comes two weeks after OPEC agreed to reduce its own production by 1.2 million barrels a day. It's unclear whether the non-OPEC cuts include natural declines from countries such as Mexico, or consist entirely of genuine production cuts.

Russia had already announced it plans to reduce production by 300,000 barrels a day next year, down from a 30-year high last month of 11.2 million barrels a day. In a surprise move, Kazakhstan pledged a modest output cut after coming under strong diplomatic pressure, delegates said, asking not to be identified before an official announcement.

The International Energy Agency expected the Asian nation to boost production in 2017 by 160,000 barrels a day after a giant oilfield started pumping.

The agreement represents the strongest effort yet by oil-rich countries, from giants such as Saudi Arabia and Russia to tiny producers including Bolivia and Equatorial Guinea, to end a market share war that has shaken investors, hit energy companies and damaged economies.

Oil prices have surged more than 15 percent since OPEC announced it will cut production for the first time in eight years, rising this week briefly above \$55. Although prices are well below the \$100 a barrel level prevailing since the market share war started, they have more than doubled since January.

OPEC production reached an all-time high of nearly 34.2 million barrels a day, well above the group's target of 32.5 million barrels a day from January. Libya and Nigeria are exempted from the OPEC output cuts, while Iran has some room to boost its output.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Iran summons British ambassador over Theresa May remarks

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign d e s k Ministry said on Saturday it had summoned England's ambassador to protest over anti-Iran remarks by the country's Prime Minister Theresa May.

Addressing a [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".

May had also stressed England would help the council "push back" against what she

branded Iran's "aggressive regional actions".

"Following meddling remarks by England's Prime Minister Theresa May at the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, Nicholas Hopton was summoned to the Foreign Ministry," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi on Saturday.

Iran's strong objection to the remarks was conveyed to the ambassador, he added.

"Irresponsible, provoking, and decisive remarks of Theresa May at the summit are unacceptable and rejected," Iranian officials had

told the British ambassador, Bahrami added.

Earlier, Chairman of the Iranian parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Alaeddin Boroujerdi had warned England of re-downgrading relations over the "divisive" remarks.

"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.

Also, Hamid Baeedinejad, Iran's ambassador to London, on Friday condemned the remarks.

## Iranian Army to stage major military exercises

Iran's Army plans to hold large-scale military drills starting on Sunday.

Iranian Ground Force Commander Brigadier General Kioumars Heidari announced on Saturday that units from the Army's four forces, namely the Ground Force, Air Force, Navy, and Air Defense, will take

part in the extensive maneuver dubbed "Muhammad Rasullullah" 4 (Muhammad is the messenger of God).

The Army's three-day military exercise will begin on Sunday in southeast of Iran, he added.

General Heidari added that the drills will be carried out in an area

of 220 thousand square kilometers.

He further emphasized that one of the objectives of military exercises of this sort is to maintain and increase the readiness of the Iranian Armed Forces.

Over the past few years, Iran's Armed Forces have held several

military drills.

The Islamic Republic has repeatedly assured other nations, especially its neighbors, that its military might poses no threat to other countries, stating that its defense doctrine is based on deterrence.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Damascus FM: U.S. seeking to prolong Syrian crisis

The Syrian foreign ministry condemned the U.S. decision to lift the ban on weapons exports to terrorist groups in Syria, and said that it is a proof to Washington's support for terrorism and extremism in the region.

A senior Syrian foreign ministry official said on Saturday that President Barack Obama's

decision to lift the embargo on exporting arms to the armed terrorist groups in Syria aims at prolonging the crisis in the country so that the killing of people and destruction of the infrastructure will continue.

The official said that this decision is meant as a new dose to boost the morale of the

terrorist groups that are facing daily defeats and consecutive losses at the hand of the Syrian army, reiterating that the U.S. has never stopped its support for the terrorist organizations, including supplying them with weapons, since the beginning of the crisis in Syria.

(Source: Fars)



IRNA/ Akbar Tavakoli

## Care center, ISIS gift for Iraqi children

A care center in eastern Baghdad has turned into a playground for children who have lost their fathers in the war against the self-styled ISIS, a terrorist group which ravaged through Iraq in 2014.

Currently, 99 children are held at the center, which is home to scores of women who lost their men to ISIS militants, as well.

## U.S. rushes troops as Aleppo liberation nears

### Syria sends reinforcements to Palmyra to counter ISIL

The United States has announced plans to send 200 more troops to Syria to allegedly join operations aimed at retaking the Syrian city of Raqqa from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

"I can tell you today that the United States will deploy approximately 200 additional U.S. forces in Syria," U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter told a security conference in the Bahraini capital, Manama, on Saturday.

They will add to 300 American Special Forces already operating in Syria which has been fighting foreign-backed militancy for years.

Carter said troops were only about 25 kilometers away from Raqqa, adding they were helping the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) militants who are mainly comprised of Kurdish fighters.

The announcement came a day after Turkey said it was dispatching 300 special troops to Syria to reinforce its U.S.-backed incursion of the war shattered country.

The Turkish army said on Friday its troops and militants had seized control of a highway between the key regional towns of al-Bab and Manbij on Friday.

Damascus has already strongly criticized the United States and Turkey for deploying troops to the Syrian soil, saying it amounts to an act of aggression.

The new deployments come at a time of rapidly changing realities on the ground where Syrian troops are tightening the noose around foreign-backed militants.

The Syrian government now controls 93 percent of Aleppo, Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said on Friday, adding troops would continue to liberate the city's east after the removal of civilians is completed.

The U.S. and its allies have been pushing for a halt to military operations in the face of Syrian army advances in Syria. ➔13



### Iran's election law may change prior to presidential polls

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran's election law may undergo some amendments prior to the 2017 presidential election, according to Abbasali Kadkhodaei, spokesman of the Guardian Council.

"From talks we had with the Majlis speaker and some (Majlis) deputies, some necessary points may be reformed and included as amendments within the existing law," Kadkhodaei told reporters on Saturday, ISNA reported.

However, he said, it is unlikely for the Guardian Council to come up with a whole new election law for the upcoming election.



### 'Iran has been standard-bearer of peace and friendship'

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The commander of the Navy said on Saturday that Iran has always been a messenger of "peace and friendship" to regional countries.

Habibollah Sayyari also said there is no need for presence of foreign troops in the region.

"We believe that the security of the region is possible with the involvement of all regional countries. There is no need for presence of extra-regional countries," the rear admiral noted.

He also said the navy escorted about 10 thousand oil tankers during the eight years of the Iraqi war against Iran in the 1980s and oil export were not halted even for a single day.



### Interior ministry names new political deputy

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Minister of Interior Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli on Saturday appointed Ali Asqar Ahmadi as his new political deputy, Mehr news agency reported.

Ahmadi had previously held the position of deputy interior minister for law enforcement forces. He also has work experiences as the secretary general of the Iranian Red Crescent Society, parliamentarian, and secretary of the office for campaign against drugs and currency smuggling.



### MP: Iran should call for emergency meeting of 5+1

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — An MP has said Iran should call on the 5+1 group to convene an emergency meeting to raise its concerns over the violation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), ILNA reported on Saturday.

Heshmatollah Falahatpishe, who sits on the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, said there is no powerful apparatus in the JCPOA to guarantee the behavior of Western countries, the U.S. in particular, regarding their commitments based on the agreement.



### Pathseekers to name presidential candidate soon

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Society of Pathseekers of the Islamic Revolution will introduce its candidate for the 2017 presidential election within 10 days, said the society's secretary general.

Speaking to Tasnim news agency on Saturday, Parviz Sarvari said his fellow members of the society are discussing their candidates.

He said by the end of the Iranian month of Azar, December 20, they will disclose their candidate to the principlist coalition.

Society of Devotees of the Islamic Revolution and the Islamic Coalition Party also recently said they are about to introduce their candidates.



### Former Basij chief renews pledge to Supreme Leader

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Former Basij chief Mohammad Reza Naqdi on Saturday wrote a letter to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei to renew his loyalty to the Islamic revolution.

"I will remain devoted to my pledge to Your Excellency, Imam, and the martyrs as long as I am alive," Naqdi wrote, thanking the Leader for his kind regards, Mehr reported.

The Supreme Leader this week moved Naqdi from the Basij Organization to the IRGC unit for cultural and social affairs.

Naqdi was replaced by Zolamhossin Gheibparvar.

# Commander slams U.S. hawks over threatening Iran ships

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The deputy chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces has denounced certain U.S. warmongers for threatening to confront Iranian military in the Persian Gulf, ISNA reported.

"Those who aim to sink Iranian boats in the Persian Gulf are lacking military sanity," Brigadier General Massoud Jazayeri said on Saturday.

Denouncing the anti-Iran rhetoric as trash-talk and empty threats, Jazayeri said the armed forces of the Islamic Republic possess more influence than ever upon the Persian Gulf region.

He further warned the United States against taking military action against the Islamic Republic, saying "the enemy's forces and assets are in the target range of Iranian forces."

"In the event that the American warmongers and their mercenaries [in the region] carry out an immature and unprofessional act



[against Iran], they will be definitely met with a strong reaction from the Islamic warriors," the top commander warned.

He further cautioned the United States

not to mess with the Islamic Republic and its armed forces because "any action that threatens the country's security, will be countered decisively."

## Iran ready to deal with 'disloyalty' to nuclear deal: Shamkhani

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani has voiced Iran's readiness to confront any "irresponsibility" or failure by the other side to remain committed to the international nuclear deal.

In a Saturday meeting with the leader

of Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) Ramadan Shalah, Shamkhani said the nuclear deal is a clear sign of the Islamic Republic's soft power in opposing the hegemonic powers, Fars news agency reported.

"As well as defending our legal rights, we have predicted measures against any trivial or serious disloyalty [to the

nuclear deal]," he noted.

He also denounced the Zionist lobby for its impact on the implementation of the nuclear accord. The nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), went into force in January.

Under the deal, Iran is tasked to curb some aspects of its nuclear pro-

gram in exchange for sanctions relief. Elsewhere in his remarks, Shamkhani described the Palestinian cause as the most important priority for the Muslim world, saying, "Any action that leads to a distraction from fighting Israel as the main threat to the Muslim world, is a treason against all Muslims throughout the world."

Following the recent U.S. presidential election which led to the victory of Donald Trump, tension between Tehran and Washington has reached new peak.

During his campaign, Trump vowed to take aggressive action against Iranian naval vessels in the Persian Gulf, claiming the vessels "harass U.S. ships in the region."

Trump's cabinet picks have also been big opponents of the Islamic Republic and have expressed hard-line views about Iran's role in the Middle East and its nuclear program.

Among them, Gen. James N. Mattis, who was nominated to lead the U.S. Defense Department, has argued that Iran "is the single most enduring threat to stability and peace in the Middle East."

"We're going to have to plan for the worst," said Mattis in April, fuelling speculation about the possibility of military confrontation between Tehran and Washington.

## Tehran says UN draft resolution on Syria blind to root cause

**I→** "It is an established fact that terrorism and violent extremism are the root causes of the disaster, and it is the very issue that should be first and foremost addressed by the international community," he explained.

The extremism, he said, was introduced into the context by "militants and terrorists" who entered into the Syrian territory mainly through lax borders," and "are supported by some foreign countries".

Dehqani also urged the international community into multi-pronged efforts to halt the crisis and called for working out a Syrian-Syrian political settlement to the crisis.

"To resolve the crisis in Syria, we need to put an end to terrorist activ-



**It is an established fact that terrorism and violent extremism are the root causes of the disaster, and it is the very issue that should be first and foremost addressed by the international community.**

ities and at the same time continue our efforts towards a comprehensive and exclusively Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political settlement, based on dialogue among Syrians without preconditions to end hostilities and reestablish peace and tranquility. These two actions should go hand in hand."

The Syrian crisis, fought by numerous foreign-backed rebel and terrorist groups, has been on for five years now, leaving millions of Syrian nationals displaced and more than 200,000 dead and wounded.

The move comes at a time when the Syrian army is gaining ground in Aleppo, pushing back terrorists from one of their latest strongholds in the country.

## Decisions should be based on wisdom, national interests: VP

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Vice President Is'haq Jahangiri said on Saturday that all the decisions and actions should be based "wisdom" and "national interests" in the face of unfolding events in the region and beyond.

"Events happening in West and changes in the U.S. government and some of the European countries caution the Iranian people of being careful about the decision-makings and entail any action to be based on wisdom and national interests," he said during a speech at the 7th Summit of Iran's Chamber of Guilds.

He said that political and factional conflicts will be harmful to the Iranian people.

The vice president went on to say that Iran's situation in the "volatile" Middle East region is "favorable".

Elsewhere, Jahangiri said that the Zionist regime of Israel and some of the "imprudent" regional countries seek to create conflict in Iran.

For example, he said, "The British



prime minister is invited to a Persian Gulf Arab littoral state to speak against Iran in a meeting. Such actions humiliate those countries."

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.

May also stressed England would help the council "push back" against what she called Iran's "aggressive regional actions."

## Iranian ambassador condemns Theresa May's comments

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Hamid Baedinejad, Iran's ambassador to London, on Friday condemned remarks by British 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.

May also stressed England would help the council "push back" against what she called Iran's "aggressive regional actions."

Chairman of the Iranian Parlia-

ment's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission Alaeddin Boroujerdi has said, "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."

In September 2016, Iran and the United Kingdom restored relations to the highest level by assigning and dispatching their ambassadors to the other country each.

Baedinejad and Nicholas Hopton represent their countries in London and Tehran respectively.

## New Israeli settlement bill goes against international law: Iran

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran's Foreign Ministry condemned on Friday a new bill proposed by Israeli lawmakers that would legalize some 4,000 settler homes in the occupied West Bank, saying the measure is against "international law".

Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said the bill "runs contrary to international law and regulations especially the international human rights and international humanitarian law, and those who take such actions violate the international rights and should be prosecuted."

The move violates the Palestinians' right to determine their destiny, the Foreign Ministry official added.

Qassemi urged the international bodies to make Israel obey the international law.

Israeli lawmakers voted on Wednesday to advance the bill, which would retroactively legalize settler homes built on private Palestinian land, Guardian reported.

UN high commissioner for human rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein strongly criticized the settlement bill.

"Israel as the occupying power, must respect the private property of Pales-



tinians, regardless of whether or not compensation is provided," Guardian quoted him as saying in a statement.

He also said, "All Israeli settlements — whether outposts built without formal approval but often with the support of the Israeli authorities and which are currently illegal under Israeli law, or settlements approved by Israel — are clearly and unequivocally illegal under international law and constitute one of the main obstacles to peace."

All Israeli settlements are considered illegal under international law.

## Death penalty no efficient measure: lawyer

**IT d e s k** **POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — An Iranian lawyer has said that capital punishment does not have a deterrent effect, urging the authorities to seek other forms of punishment to fight drug-related crimes.

"So far, this type of punishment has not been successful in decreasing drug distribution, and unfortunately, the death penalty has been carried out regardless of its adverse effects on the society," Hossein Ahmadi Niaz said in an interview with ISNA published on Saturday.

Ahmadi Niaz noted that the Iranian society has been extremely vulnerable to harms inflicted by narcotics, adding

that the drug-related executions have backfired and led to more social harms.

"Harsh punishment, per se, would not lead to a decrease in crimes," he stressed, calling for more appropriate planning in order to deal with drug-related crimes.

The lawyer also said that crimes may have different causes. "We should find the underlying factors that lead to crimes instead of dealing with crimes through carrying out harsh punishments."

Such harsh punishments, he said, would only erase the problem temporarily and cannot act as permanent solutions.

# CIA: Russia intervened to help Trump win White House

Obama orders probe into Russia role in Trump election

The United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has concluded that Russia intervened in the 2016 election to help President-elect Donald Trump win the White House, and not just to undermine confidence in the U.S. electoral system, a senior U.S. official said.

The U.S. intelligence agencies have assessed that as the 2016 presidential campaign drew on, Russian government officials devoted increasing attention to assisting Donald Trump's effort to win the election, the U.S. official familiar with the finding told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

Citing U.S. officials briefed on the matter, the Washington Post reported on Friday that intelligence agencies had identified individuals with connections to the Russian government who provided thousands of hacked emails from the Democratic National Committee and others, including the chairman of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, to WikiLeaks.

The U.S. President Barack Obama ordered intelligence agencies to review cyber-attacks and foreign intervention into the 2016 election and deliver a report before he leaves office on Jan. 20, the White House said.

Obama's homeland security adviser, Lisa Monaco, told reporters the report's results would be shared with lawmakers and others.

"The president has directed the intelligence community to conduct a full review of what happened during the 2016 election process ... and to capture lessons learned from that and to report to a range of stakeholders, to include the Congress," she said during an event hosted by the Christian Science Monitor.



As summer turned to fall, Russian hackers turned almost all their attention to the Democrats. Virtually all the emails they released publicly were potentially damaging to Clinton and the Democrats, the official told Reuters.

"That was a major clue to their intent," the official said. "If all they wanted to do was discredit our political system, why publicize the failings of just one party, especially when you have a target like Trump?"

A second official familiar with the report said the intelligence analysts' conclusion about Russia's motives does not mean the intelligence community believes that Moscow's efforts altered or

significantly affected the outcome of the election.

Russian officials have denied all accusations of interference in the U.S. election.

A CIA spokeswoman said the agency had no comment on the matter.

The hacked emails passed to WikiLeaks were a regular source of embarrassment to the Clinton campaign during the race for the presidency.

The U.S. intelligence analysts have assessed "with high confidence" that at some point in the extended presidential campaign Russian President Vladimir Putin's government had decided to try to bolster Trump's chances

of winning.

The Russians appear to have concluded that Trump had a shot at winning and that he would be much friendlier to Russia than Clinton would be, especially on issues such as maintaining economic sanctions and imposing additional ones, the official said.

Moscow is launching a similar effort to influence the next German election, following an escalating campaign to promote far-right and nationalist political parties and individuals in Europe that began more than a decade ago, the official said.

In both cases, said the official, Putin's campaigns in both Europe and the United States are intended to disrupt and discredit the Western concept of democracy by promoting extremist candidates, parties, and political figures.

In October, the U.S. government formally accused Russia of a campaign of cyber-attacks against Democratic Party organizations ahead of the Nov. 8 presidential election. Obama has said he warned Putin about consequences for the attacks.

Trump has said he is not convinced Russia was behind the cyber-attacks. His transition team issued a statement on "claims of foreign interference in U.S. elections" on Friday but did not directly address the issue.

"I don't believe they interfered," Trump told Time magazine about Russia in an interview published this week. "That became a laughing point, not a talking point, a laughing point. Any time I do something, they say, 'Oh, Russia interfered.'"

(Source: Reuters)

## China 'blocks' Mongolia border after Dalai Lama visit

Mongolia says China has closed a key border crossing, creating huge congestion, nearly a week after the Tibetan Spiritual Leader, the Dalai Lama, visited the country.

Hundreds of truck drivers for the mining conglomerate Rio Tinto are stuck at the Gants Mod crossing in southeastern Mongolia in freezing temperatures.

In a sense, Mongolia is paying a very heavy economic price for putting religious freedom ahead of economic necessity.

Footage showed a long line of trucks on the Mongolian side of the border waiting to cross.

Rio Tinto, which operates vast copper and gold mines, has now suspended shipment to China of copper concentrate.

The Dalai Lama is cherished as a spiritual leader in predominantly Buddhist Mongolia, but is considered a separatist in China for supporting a long drawn-out campaign for independence for Tibet.

Beijing has been campaigning for a diplomatic boycott of the Dalai Lama since 1959, when he escaped to India and formed a government-in-exile.

The Dalai Lama retired from political life in 2011.

Last month, Beijing imposed new tariffs on commodity shipments between China and Mongolia. But Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang did not confirm whether or not the new border fees were connected to the Dalai Lama's visit, saying that he was unaware of the situation.

"As for the Dalai Lama's visit to Mongolia, China has expressed its position many times," he said at the ministry's regular press briefing on Thursday, covered by the Reuters news agency.

The diplomatic repercussions could hit Mongolia hard, with the crisis-hit government desperate to boost economic ties with its powerful southern neighbor and to use Chinese investment to kick-start key mining and infrastructure projects.

In advance of Dalai Lama's visit to the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh, China warned in October of "damage" to bilateral ties between the two countries.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Cameroon urged to investigate deadly protest dispersal

A human rights group on Friday called on Cameroon to investigate and prosecute police officers accused of using "excessive force" during an anti-government protest where at least four people were killed.

Officers reportedly shot dead four protesters and wounded 20 others on Thursday in the city of Bamenda, part of the country's minority English-speaking region, following months of demonstrations.

Residents of Cameroon's two English-speaking provinces say the government makes fewer funds available to them than to French-speaking areas.

"Authorities in Cameroon must shed light on the circumstances of these killings and injuries by immediately conducting thorough, impartial, and effective investigations," Amnesty International's Ilaria Allegrozzi said in a statement.

"Those reasonably suspected of criminal responsibility for these deaths must be brought to justice."

The protesters were marching against President Paul Biya and his ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (RDPC/Rassemblement démocratique du Peuple Camerounais), which was holding a meeting in

Bamenda when they were confronted by police.

Officers initially tried to scatter the demonstrators using tear gas.

A Reuters news agency reporter saw police open fire on the crowd, which had continued to grow in size.

Some demonstrators were armed with steel bars and stones, said one police official, adding officers acted in self-defense. One police officer was wounded in the unrest, he said.

"Some of our elements were surrounded by thugs," he said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to reporters. "They had come to kill. The police defended themselves."

"Four hostile targets were neutralized. It's possible there were more."

Demonstrations first broke out in early November in Bamenda, when lawyers and teachers demanded better working conditions in a rare act of defiance against President Biya, 83, who has ruled Cameroon since 1982.

Cameroon was divided into French and British regions until they formed the Republic of Cameroon in 1961, a year after the country gained independence.

(Source: agencies)

Iraqi government forces have established full control over three more neighborhoods in the eastern quarter of Mosul as they try to drive the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists out of the northern city in joint operations with allied fighters and Kurdish Peshmerga forces.

Iraqi Special Operations Forces managed to liberate the neighborhoods of Adl, al-E'lam and al-Ta'mim in the eastern part of Mosul, located some 400 kilometers north of the capital Baghdad, and raised the national Iraqi flag over a number of buildings there, Arabic-language al-Furat news agency reported.

Scores of ISIL terrorists were killed and injured during the fierce exchanges of gunfire between government forces and the extremists.

The development came on the same day that pro-government fighters from Popular Mobilization Units, also known by the Arabic name al-Hashd al-Sha'abi, defused a car bomb in the strategic Tal Abtah region west of Mosul.

Additionally, the Iraqi Defense Ministry announced that Iraq's Air Force fighter jets had carried out a string of airstrikes against ISIL positions in the eastern and western flanks of Mosul, killing dozens of the Takfiris in the process.

Iraqi warplanes pounded a missile depot in Mosul's eastern neighborhood of Rashidiya, before targeting a



workshop for booby-trapping vehicles and manufacturing bombs near a train station in western Mosul.

Another ISIL position was bombarded in Mosul's western al-Mansour district as well.

Separately, Iraqi jets, based on information from the Directorate General for Intelligence and Security, launched precision strikes against an ISIL arms depot in Qadisiyah district.

### ■ Iraq sends reinforcements to east of Mosul

Meanwhile, a senior Iraqi commander says a number of new contingents have been sent to the east of the northern city of Mosul to bolster the military forces already deployed there.

Major General Najim al-Jabouri, the head of the Op-

erations Command in Nineveh Province, of which Mosul is the capital, made the announcement on Saturday. The reinforcements comprise both Iraqi army units and officers with the country's federal police, he said.

The operation to retake Mosul began on October 17. The Takfiri terrorist group of ISIL seized the city in 2014, when it overran territory in a large-scale offensive in the country and named Mosul its so-called headquarters.

ISIL has been setting off hundreds of car bombs, unleashing mortar barrages, deploying snipers, and using locals as human shields to slow the advance of the security forces trying to liberate the city.

The troops have made significant gains both on the southern and eastern fronts of Mosul but were forced back last week within hours of seizing the al-Salam hospital in the east, which ISIL had been using as a base. More than 20 servicemen died in a ISIL attack there.

Iraqi army soldiers and their allied forces launched joint operations on October 17 to retake Mosul from ISIL terrorists.

The Iraqi forces' advance has however been slowed down due to the presence of hundreds of thousands of civilians, many of whom are prevented from leaving Mosul by ISIL.

The United Nations says more than 82,000 civilians have experienced forced displacement in the wake of Mosul liberation operation.

(Source: agencies)

## Promised victory coming for Syria, allies in Aleppo: Nasrallah

Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah says the "promised" victory is imminent for Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in the city of Aleppo.

The secretary general of the Lebanese resistance movement made the remarks during an address to the nation on regional developments.



Earlier in the day, Russia said Syrian army ground forces and allies had liberated 52 blocks in the eastern parts of the northwestern city from the grip of foreign-backed militants and were in control of 93 percent of the whole city.

Washington and some of its Western allies have supported Takfiri terrorist groups wreaking havoc in the region over the past few years, Nasrallah said, adding that cooperation and unity among nations are needed in the face of Takfiri threats in the region.

"Safeguarding the region as well as the Islamic civilization against Takfiri threats is the only way we have," Nasrallah said.

Hezbollah resistance fighters have been assisting government forces in Syria in the battle against terrorists.

The Hezbollah secretary general also commented on the presidency of Michel Aoun in Lebanon.

Relations between Hezbollah and the administration of the newly-elected president, Nasrallah said, will be based on mutual respect. He rejected rumors that the two sides would not get along well due to differences. The leader of the Lebanese resistance movement also stated that Hezbollah had been falsely accused of hindering the formation of a new government.

"Everyone is responsible for looking for ways out, for solutions, and to cooperate for us to reach the necessary conclusion on the government," the Hezbollah leader said, referring to Lebanon's political factions. He went on to say that "government... must be formed as soon as possible."

In early November, Lebanon's parliament elected Aoun, a Christian leader and strong ally of Hezbollah, as president, ending a vacuum in the post that had been dragging on since April 2014.

He has tasked Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri, a Western-backed Sunni politician, with setting up a government.

Lebanon is expected to hold parliamentary elections in May 2017, the first legislative vote in the country in eight years.

(Source: Press TV)

## Gambia's Jammeh rejects result of presidential election

Gambian President Yahya Jammeh has said that he rejects the outcome of last week's election that he lost to Opposition Leader Adama Barrow, only days after he conceded defeat to him in a public address.

The fresh announcement he made on state television on Friday throws the future of the West African country into doubt after the unexpected election results ended Jammeh's 22-year rule. Jammeh had conceded defeat on state TV last week, prompting wild celebrations over the ending of a government that human rights groups accused of detaining, torturing and killing opponents.

"After a thorough investigation, I have decided to reject the outcome of the recent election. I lament serious and unacceptable abnormalities which have reportedly transpired during the electoral process," Jammeh said, changing his position on the election results.

"I recommend fresh and transparent elections which will be officiated by a God-fearing and independent electoral commission," he said.

Jammeh's announcement presents an unexpected and severe challenge to the incoming Barrow administration, which was already grappling with how to take the reins of power and deal with the army that, for two decades, was loyal to the president.

The latest official figures gave Barrow a narrower win than initially announced - 43.29 percent of the votes for Barrow and 39.64 for Jammeh. Voter turnout was at 59 percent.

The African Union called Jammeh's rejection of the results "null and void" since he had already conceded defeat.

"The Chairperson of the Commission strongly urges President Yahya Jammeh to facilitate a peaceful and orderly transition and transfer of power," AU Chief Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma said, also calling on Gambia's security forces to remain neutral.

Meantime, soldiers were seen placing sandbags in strategic locations across the capital Banjul on Friday, a development that triggered widespread unease among the already-spooked population, who had been panic-buying food before the vote, due to fear of unrest.

Witnesses told the Reuters news agency that there was particular nervousness about the president's statement that he would deal harshly with any troublemakers who took to the streets.

Opposition spokeswoman Isatou Touray, on social media, criticized a "violation of democracy" and called for people to "remain calm, lucid, vigilant and not retreat."

The United States state department said in a statement that Jammeh's rejection of the results was an egregious attempt to undermine a credible election and remain illegitimately in power. Senegal's Foreign Minister, Mankeur Ndiaye, called for an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council and "solemnly" warned Jammeh not to harm Senegal's interests or its citizens in Gambia. Senegal, which has Gambia's only land border, and entirely surrounds the small riverside country, is a non-permanent member of the Security Council. Its army intervened in Gambia in 1981, during a coup.

(Source: agencies)

## Iraqi forces retake 3 east Mosul districts

## Kuwait emir appoints Essam al-Marzouq new oil minister

Kuwait's emir appointed Essam Abdul Mohsen Al-Marzouq as the country's new oil minister on Saturday, state news agency KUNA reported.

Marzouq has previously served as head of the country's stock exchange and as a board member of state-run Kuwait Petroleum Corp (KPC).

Opposition candidates won around half of the parliament's 50 seats last month in a poll seen by Kuwaitis as a referendum on austerity measures brought on by low global oil prices.

Many Kuwaitis fear the government will cut many of the perks they have enjoyed for decades. These include free healthcare, education, subsidized basic products, free housing or land plots and interest-free loans for many citizens.

The assembly can pass legislation and question ministers but the emir Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah retains a final say in political matters.

Anas al-Saleh, the former acting oil minister, retained his other role as Finance Minister.

(Source: Reuters)

## Brazil's austerity package decried by UN as attack on poor people

Brazil is poised to implement the most socially regressive austerity package in the world, a senior United Nations official has warned.

Despite violent street protests against budget cuts, President Michel Temer – who came to power after engineering the impeachment of his former running mate, Dilma Rousseff – is pushing through a 20-year social spending freeze that will be locked into the constitution.

Ahead of a final senate vote on the measures next Tuesday, the UN special rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, took the unusual step of decrying the plan as an attack on the poor – and a violation of Brazil's obligations under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

"This is a radical measure, lacking in all nuance and compassion," he said in a statement on Friday. "It is completely inappropriate to freeze only social expenditure and to tie the hands of all future governments for another two decades. If this amendment is adopted it will place Brazil in a socially retrogressive category all of its own."

The constitutional amendment, which is known as PEC55, solidifies fears that Temer's rightwing government will jerk Brazil back towards its historical position as one of the most unequal countries on the planet.

That reputation had somewhat softened after 13 years of Workers' party rule, which saw increased spending on healthcare and education, and modest income distribution measures.

But since Temer conspired to eject Rousseff from the presidency, he has switched priorities towards creditors in an effort to restore investor confidence and improve Brazil's battered financial ratings.

As a result the state will shrink rapidly and a greater share of tax revenues will go to bond holders.

PEC55 goes far further than austerity policies in other nations, according to Pedro Paulo Zahluth Bastos, associate professor in economics at the University of Campinas.

Bastos notes that only Singapore and Georgia hard-wired cuts into their constitutions – and even then not so deeply or for such a duration.

Given how inflation is benchmarked, he estimates education spending per child will fall by almost a third, and health outlays per patient will decrease by almost 10%. While social spending declines as a share of GDP, he says the demands will increase because of an ageing society and the forecast addition of 20 million people to the population.

Yet interest payments will remain generous: all future gains in taxation will be destined to the payment of public debt. And Brazil will remain one of the only countries in the world without a dividend tax or an income tax for company owners.

"Nothing like this has been executed in any other place in the world," Bastos said. "This is the most contractionist state and at the same time the most beneficial program for the holders of public debt in the history of humanity."

There has been little public debate considering the importance of a measure that will affect the country until 2037. Polls suggest less than half of the population have heard of PEC55.

None of them voted for it because Temer was elected vice-president in 2014 on Rousseff's coattails and a promise of no austerity.

Adding to frustrations, the government remains mired in a corruption scandal with dozens of senior politicians implicated in the ongoing Lava Jato (Car Wash) investigation into bribery and kickbacks at the state run oil company Petrobras.

Three ministers have resigned from the cabinet of Temer, who is also accused. To public fury, the head of the upper house, Renan Calheiros, refused to comply with a supreme court judge's ruling that he step down to answer charges earlier this week, and has subsequently struck a deal with other justices that enables him to cling to power.

Social tensions are already evident. Police used teargas and rubber bullets when more than 10,000 protesters rallied outside Congress during an earlier stage of voting on the bill.

Local government budget cuts and salary delays have also prompted violent demonstrations on other cities. The latest erupted in central Rio de Janeiro on Monday, when office workers and shoppers got caught up in clashes between riot police and striking firemen, police and other state employees.

"We are losing jobs and incomes so we have a right to protest, but the government responds with violence," said Pedro Oliveira, as teargas swirled through the city streets.

Jorge Darze, the president of the Doctor's Union of Rio de Janeiro, said he was worried both by the cuts to an already underfunded health system and the breakdown of dialogue between social organisations and the authorities.

(Source: The Guardian)

# Europeans highly welcome Iran's post-sanctions petchem sector

By Mahnaz Abdi

**TEHRAN** — After the implementation of Iran nuclear deal, the country's National Petrochemical Company (NPC) has received high willingness from European companies for cooperation with Iran in the petrochemical sector both in financing and licensing, Farnaz Alavi, the NPC director for planning and development, announced in a press conference on Saturday.

It also comes true about Asian companies, especially the petrochemical giants in Southeast Asia, the official added.

Alavi further referred to the establishment of Investment Management Department in the NPC in its new round of activities and said investment attraction is being seriously followed up by this department in a way that promotion of attracting more foreign direct investment (FDI) and supporting the private sector in this due is a top agenda of NPS's programs.

■ **'Highest value of NPC's products in region an agenda'**

Elsewhere in her remarks, Alavi mentioned ranking first in the region in terms of producing the highest value of petrochemical products a top priority in the NPC's outlook for 2025.

Completing the chain of value and pro-



© SHANA/Narges Mokhtar

ducing high value added products will be followed up in this due, she noted.

The official also mentioned boosting efficiency of current petrochemical complexes, completing unfinished projects and launching new plans, laying the ground for the balanced development of downstream petrochemical industries in order to complete the chain of value, developing research and knowledge-based activities, and becoming the most efficient petrochemical organization in West Asia in terms of development as some other objectives of the NPC in its outlook.

■ **'Noticeable growth anticipated for Iran's polymer products'**

Alavi further highlighted that some noticeable growth is anticipated for Iran's polymer products in the global markets in the coming years.

The official also said the country's petrochemical output, which stood at 46.4 million tons in the past Iranian calendar year (which ended on March 19, 2016), is anticipated to reach 50-51 million tons by the end of current calendar year (March 20, 2017).

She put the output at 28.8 million tons

from the beginning of this year until the end of the seventh calendar month of Mehr (October 21).

Alavi said Iran's annual petrochemical exports, which stood at 18.8 million tons in the past calendar year and at 11.6 million tons during the first seven months of this year, is forecast to be 20 million tons by the yearend.

She, meanwhile, noted that the worth of petrochemical exports, which was \$9.6 billion in the preceding year and \$4.8 billion by the end of Mehr, is anticipated to reach \$9 billion by the yearend.

Elsewhere in her remarks, the NPC director expounded upon the activities of the country's petrochemical complexes in the past Iranian year and announced that the complexes which receive gas as their feedstock accounted for 85.5 percent of the net profit of the national petrochemical sector and those that receive liquid feedstock account for the rest of net profit.

In early November, NPC Managing Director Marziyeh Shahdaie announced that Iran plans to triple its installed capacity of petrochemicals in the next ten years.

She also put the current nominal petrochemical output of the country at 64 million tons and the operating output at 46 million tons.

## 60 foreign companies exploring investments in Iran's mining sector

**ECONOMY DESK** **TEHRAN** — "Some 60 European and Asian companies are investigating making their investments in Iran's mining sector," Iranian Deputy Industry Minister Mehid Karbasian announced on Saturday, IRNA reported. Making the remarks during the 2nd Iran's Mines and Mining Industries Summit (IMIS 2016) in Tehran, Karbasian, who is also the head of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), underscored that foreign investors should regard Iran not only as a country

with 80-million market but a country with access to the region's 400 million market.

The two-day IMIS 2016, held at IRIB International Conference Center by IMIDRO, focuses on Iran's mines and mining industries role in the country's economy, the government's incentives to develop mining activities for economic growth, applying compatible finance strategies for Iran's mines and mining industries development projects, introducing new technologies in mining industry, holding B2B and B2G meetings and etc.

## Zanganeh, Novak to meet in Tehran on Tuesday

**ECONOMY DESK** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh and Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak will meet in Tehran on Tuesday (December 13) to hash out expansion of bilateral oil ties, ILNA reported.Heading a 300-member trade delegation Novak will leave Moscow for Tehran to attend the 13th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting from December 11 to 13.

Iranian Communications and Information Technology Minister Mahmoud Vaezi

and Novak are to co-chair the meeting.

As a subsection of the 13th Iran-Russia Joint Economic Committee meeting, the first Iran-Russia Joint Energy Committee meeting is due to be held in Tehran on December 12.

It will be the first joint energy committee meeting which aims to boost cooperation in this sphere. As reported, the energy committee will be chaired by Iran's Deputy Oil Minister Amir-Hossein Zamaninia and Russian Deputy Energy Minister.

## Iranian ports 8-month loading, unloading up 6.6% yr/yr

**ECONOMY DESK** **TEHRAN** — According to Iran's Ministry of Roads & Urban Development, some 93,527 million tons (mt) of goods were loaded and unloaded at ports of Iran during the first eight months of current Iranian calendar year (March 20-November 20) registering a 6.6 percent rise compared to the same period of time in the past year.

During the mentioned period, 61.56 mt of non-oil commodities were transited through the country's ports, of which

26.25 mt were unloaded and 35.31 mt were loaded, Mehr news agency reported on Saturday.

Meanwhile, in the said time 2.24 mt of oil products were imported to the country and the figure for exports of such commodities stood at 16.64 mt.

During the eight Iranian calendar month of Aban (October 22- November 20) the total amount of goods loaded and unloaded at Iranian ports was reported to be 10.57 mt from which 8.31 mt was loaded.

## Iranian airlines negotiating purchase of SSJ100

**ECONOMY DESK** **TEHRAN** — Secretary of the Association of Iranian Airlines Maqsood As'adi Samani told Mehr news agency on Saturday that Iranian airlines are holding talks with the Russian Kom-somolsk-on-Amur Aircraft Production Association (KnaAPO) to buy Sukhoi Superjet 100 (SSJ100).

"The Russian aircraft-manufacturing company is to present its produced SSJ100 in a Tuesday meeting to Iranian customers," As'adi Samani

said, "Iranian airlines will decide about making the purchases after the meeting."

He further pointed to the continuation of talks with Boeing and Airbus adding that the models of the 17 Airbuses to be purchased through Lease-Purchase Contract will remain unknown until the deal becomes finalized.

The SSJ100 is a modern fly-by-wire twin-engine regional jet with 8 (VIP) to 108 (all economy) passenger seats.

# Bruised ECB hopes Monte Paschi rescue would open door for more

The European Central Bank hopes its decision to confront struggling Italian bank Monte dei Paschi at last will draw a line under a multi-year crisis that has risked tarnishing its reputation as a credible supervisor.

Reuters reported on Friday that the ECB rejected Monte dei Paschi's request for more time to complete an ambitious, five billion euro (\$5.3 billion) cash call - effectively leaving it up to the Italian government to bail out the bank.

ECB officials told Reuters they hoped that a "precautionary recapitalization" of Monte dei Paschi by the Italian state will pave the way for similar injections of government money into other Italian banks plagued by bad loans totaling 360 billion euros.

A precautionary recapitalization is a type of state intervention in a struggling bank that is still solvent.

It means only a modest bail-in or write down in the value of a bank's bonds is likely, though the Italian gov-

ernment can buy shares or bonds in Monte dei Paschi only on market terms endorsed by EU state aid officials in Brussels.

"There is consensus that Monte dei Paschi needs a precautionary recap," one of the officials said, requesting anonymity. "Once that is done, it could serve as a template for other banks."

This scenario is subject to a number of open political questions, such as who will be in the new Italian government following Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's decision to resign and how much fiscal room the European Commission is prepared to give Rome for bank rescues.

Deutsche Bank analysts estimated in a note that 30 billion euros, equal to less than two percent of Italian gross domestic product, could be enough to address market concerns about all the troubled lenders.

Italy's anti-system 5-Star Movement said on Friday the government should intervene to save Monte dei Paschi

and protect the small savers from losses. However, next year's state budget passed on Wednesday already exceeds the deficit level agreed with the European Commission.

A government-led recapitalization will also raise questions about whether rules introduced since the 2007-09 financial crisis to prevent taxpayers having to fund bailouts in future banking crises have been worth it.

Monte dei Paschi's problems date back several years but until now the ECB, as the bank's main supervisor since November 2014, has avoided confronting matters head on.

This is despite the bank failing the EU's regular stress test of lenders twice in a row - the latest was in July this year - showing how Monte dei Paschi is suffering from bad loans and too little capital.

Further delays by the ECB would start to undermine its reputation as a banking supervisor or single supervisory mechanism (SSM) that is meant to cut through national vested interests in the euro zone.

(Source: Reuters)



### Fyffes banana sale unpeels fortune for Irish business dynasty

The world's oldest banana brand Fyffes is to be sold to Japanese giant Sumitomo for €751m (£630m), resulting in a big payout for the McCann family, one of Ireland's most prominent business dynasties.

The deal brings together the two largest banana distributors in Asia and Europe.

The McCann family, whose links with Dublin-based Fyffes date back to 1902, has agreed to sell its 11.79% stake in the Irish fruit supplier, worth nearly €87.5m. The South-Carolina based Zucker family is in line for a similar payout for its 11.83% stake.



### EU upsets China with new steel price investigation

The European Union has launched a new investigation into whether Chinese manufacturers are selling steel into Europe at unfairly low prices, angering China which says Europe's steel problems are due to the region's own economic weakness.

The European Commission has determined that a complaint brought by EU steel makers' association Eurofer regarding certain corrosion resistant steel merits an investigation, the EU's official journal said. The Commission also said it would start another anti-dumping investigation into certain cast iron products from China and India as well as determining whether existing duties on Chinese steel seamless pipes and tubes should continue for another five years.



### South Korea CB: market impact of impeachment vote seems limited

South Korea's central bank said on Saturday the financial market impact of parliament's vote to impeach President Park Geun-hye seemed limited, but vowed to closely monitor the markets.

"There seems to be limited impact," the Bank of Korea said in a statement after a meeting to review policy measures to contain any fallout from Friday's impeachment vote.

The bank's Governor Lee Ju-yeol asked his officials to closely monitor the markets as uncertainties are high, the bank said.

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## South Korea's susceptibility to scandal

The impeachment of South Korean leader Park Geun-hye should herald the end of a painful and drawn-out political scandal. As they move forward, Koreans should be thinking about how to avoid another one.



With Friday's 234-to-56 vote in the National Assembly, Park's powers as president have been suspended. For weeks, she tried to fend off public anger over influence-peddling allegations involving a private confidant, Choi Soon-sil. Park admitted sharing speeches and other information with Choi; prosecutors claim she also encouraged aides to help Choi squeeze millions of dollars in "donations" from large Korean conglomerates, or chaebol. Public outrage pushed Park's popularity below 5 percent, and hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets. Even if she had escaped impeachment, she could hardly have accomplished anything further of substance.

It seems unlikely that the Constitutional Court, which must ratify Park's impeachment, would defy such a clear expression of public will. It should now act quickly to eliminate any uncertainty so the next government can take shape without delay. Ideally, an election for a new president can be held within a few months.

South Korea's next leader will want to follow through on Park's actions to strengthen national security: her decision to station a U.S. missile defense shield in South Korea, for instance, and the deal to increase intelligence-sharing with Japan.

And it will be essential to keep sight of the country's long-term economic needs. As the Choi scandal demonstrated, the chaebol remain as powerful and politically connected as ever. Calls to professionalize their management and ease their stranglehold on the Korean economy have grown louder than ever and should be heeded. →13

By Tom Rogan

Around the world, U.S. allies await the Trump administration with bated breath.

To be sure, the majority of our foreign friends don't like the President-elect. They fear he is unstable and unpredictable. They worry he might shred NATO, or start a trade war, or give Eastern Europe to Russia.

But in the last two weeks these allies have become a little more optimistic. That's because Trump's Cabinet appointees, thus far, are seen as prudent and intelligent.

Defense Secretary-designate James Mattis is a case in point. Soon, our allies hope, Mitt Romney will take his place at the Cabinet table as secretary of state.

Their confidence is well-placed.

As secretary of state, Romney would be a win for both America and the world.

First off, Romney, the 2012 Republican presidential nominee, is a known quantity.

His background and character has already undergone careful scrutiny by many foreign governments. And where foreign embassies watched Trump's campaign with a mixture of amusement and terror, they've always seen Romney as serious -- and, to be honest, a little boring. But facing Trump's excited personality, boring is fine.

The British and French are likely the keenest on a Romney pick. Senior British officials met Romney during his 2012 visit to London.

And while Romney ruffled some UK feathers by outing a secret meeting with Britain's foreign intelligence service, MI6, he made a good impression overall.

The French reflexively like Romney because he speaks their language and is seen as a man of cultured tastes. While some regard Trump Tower as a tribute to decadent beauty, the French see that gold-plated palace as condemnably classless.

In France, perception of personality greatly informs foreign policy. As an extension, the

# Why a Romney pick would be a coup for Trump



Donald Trump

Mitt Romney

**The French government is deeply disappointed with President Barack Obama's foreign policy. They want the next U.S. administration to play a more decisive role in the world.**

French regard Romney as someone who would form a close bond with their likely next president, François Fillon. But France also likes Romney because of his tough words on foreign policy.

The French government is deeply disappointed with President Barack Obama's foreign policy. They want the next U.S. administration to play a more decisive role in the world.

### Romney's record

Nevertheless, Romney's record as a well-traveled businessman means he also finds favor with executives. On this count, he is seen as the best possible interlocutor -- and influencer -- for Trump's foreign policy. That influence matters to allies who fear Trump may abandon free trade in favor

of protectionism.

Today, many of America's Eastern European allies fear that Trump might sacrifice their national sovereignty to placate the Russian leader as part of a broader "deal." Yet, avowedly skeptical of Putin (remember the Romney-Obama debate showdown over Russia in 2012), Romney would cool allied nerves. More generally, he is seen as someone who would remain insulated from manipulation by U.S. adversaries.

Romney's realism, allies hope, would offer a new approach.

Ultimately however, the main beneficiary of a Romney appointment would be Trump himself. Ironically, the insults that Trump and Romney shared earlier this year are a

source for opportunity.

After all, if Trump picks Romney to be his secretary of state, Romney would be grateful.

At the same time, Romney would take his nomination as a sign that Trump values his honest advice.

The President would thus have not only a loyal official, but one who is implicitly (albeit privately) expected to challenge him. As Trump moves to avoid new conflicts and mitigate existing chaos, that loyalty would be crucial.

Managing U.S. foreign policy, Trump needs good assistants. In Mattis, he has an arrow against U.S. adversaries. In Romney, he would have an olive branch.

(Source: CNN)

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## INTERVIEW

By Lachin Rezaian

First part of our interview with Research Director of International Business at the India, China & America Institute Dr. Dan Steinbock was published yesterday. Here is the second and final part of our conversation with him over Iran-U.S. relations and the recent Congressional approval of Iran Sanctions Act (ISA).

*Time for European leaders to walk the talk*

■ **Do you think that European sides of the deal have showed proper reaction to this ISA approval in the Congress? What about other parties involved in the deal, especially Iran's ally Russia? Would they hold any position on the issue to react against the measure?**

As they decided to support the Republican position regarding Iran, Congressional Democrats said they were acting in agreement with US partners. "I have not heard strident objections from our key allies in the JCPOA," Democratic Senator Chris Coons told reporters.

If the Democrats' stated view of US allies' Iran policy truly would be valid, it would imply that all key European partners of the JCPOA would also have reversed their position in a matter of weeks and that they would have accepted at face-value the incoming Trump administration's arguments – after months of serious, public and purposeful criticism of the Trump platform and everything it stands for.

Since the agreement was signed by the US, the UK, Russia, France, China, Germany and Iran, those statements suggest that neither London nor Paris or Berlin had objected to US reversal of the West's long-standing position. In light of past statements, that would be very odd.

After all, since spring 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel has urged "unified approach to removal of sanctions against Iran." UK's Prime Minister Theresa May just stated that the Iran nuclear agreement "must stand." After the US election, French President Francois Hollande noted that the nuclear "accord gives us all security...Could the US with Donald Trump put into question this accord? I don't think so". In reality, Trump has made up his mind. Now it is up to the key European partners of the JCPOA to walk the talk.

In the past few years, Iran-Russia relations have broadened economically, politically and strategically.



**In reality, Trump has made up his mind. Now it is up to the key European partners of the JCPOA to walk the talk.**

While Americans see Iran primarily as a threat, an overwhelming majority of Russians view Iran's influence positively. During the JCPOA talks, Russia played a vital and constructive role, which is likely to continue. While the world has much to gain from the hoped-for détente between President Putin and President-elect Trump, the former does not share the latter's inclination to 'bilateralize' multilateral international issues. Moreover, Trump has made it clear that US-Russia cooperation could have neutralized much of the jihadist threat, Syrian civil war and migration crises in the Middle East. To gain President Putin's support, however, Trump, too, should compromise – particularly in the case of Iran.

*Avoid bilateral traps, favor multilateral cooperation*

■ **Iranian authorities have slammed the ISA's extension as a blatant violation of the nuclear agreement, vowing proper counter-measures. How do you evaluate Iran's retaliatory measures? What is the best response?**

Iran's concern and strong criticism of the ISA's extension is understandable and legitimate. If international

multilateral accords are ignored after domestic elections, global governance and the West's international

multilateral organizations would be swept by political quicksand. Amid current volatility in international relations, it is instructive to remember the simple metaphor of China's paramount leader Deng Xiaoping to describe great environmental uncertainty. It is like "crossing the river by feeling the stones." While it is important to choose one's steps cautiously, it is equally important to move ahead.

While President-elect Trump prefers bilateral venues, the JCPOA is a "multilateral agreement", whose implementation must not be affected by any country's "domestic affairs," as China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi has stressed. It is thus vital to ensure the support of the JCPOA's other signatories: UK, France, and Germany. Some of them have already done so in public rhetoric, but more will be needed in the coming weeks. If Trump will remain true to his campaign pledges, the JCPOA may be one of the first but certainly not the last international agreement that the new White House would prefer to re-negotiate, re-define or reject. As a result, a calm but decisive multilateral and international approach is preferable in the beginning.

Furthermore, the JCPOA signatories remain equally apprehensive about US policies. While US House and Senate have opted for the extension of the ISA, much apprehension remains about Washington's tactical and strategic objectives. Only a few weeks ago, there were great concerns that the Republican Party could disintegrate. While the Trump triumph changed the status quo, some of the current positioning may be posturing for the Electoral College and to unite the Republicans' Trump proponents, neoconservatives, Tea Party leaders, Russia hawks and Russia doves, anti-Trump advocates, and so on. Moreover, while President Obama is fading out, President-elect Donald Trump's rule will officially start after January 20, 2017. And yet, every second American has a very negative view of Trump whose administration choices are likely to reinforce such views in the near future.

Amid these developments, Iran has reacted appropriately. Recently, Iran's Parliamentary JCPOA Supervising Committee, chaired by President Rouhani, held a meeting to discuss ways for reciprocal measures against



**The JCPOA signatories remain equally apprehensive about US policies. While US House and Senate have opted for the extension of the ISA, much apprehension remains about Washington's tactical and strategic objectives.**

the decisions made by US Congress. Similarly, Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, a top military aide to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, warned that "the annulment of the nuclear deal will be a strategic mistake" urging America and its allies to join Iran in creating "regional peace and stability." During his visit in Tokyo, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met Japan's Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida who made clear his country's continuous support for the JCPOA.

For now, it is important to push for the timely implementation of the JCPOA through multilateral, international pressure. Nevertheless, it is also important to prepare for alternative and adverse short- and medium-term scenarios.

*The right to economic development*

President-elect Trump is pushing a new Iran policy that is likely to result in one of three possible scenarios: a US withdrawal from the JCPOA, an attempt to renegotiate the deal, or an enhanced enforcement of the deal.

Since the JCPOA was negotiated and adopted under executive authority in the US, congressional review of the arrangement has been limited. Consequently, the deal can conceivably be reversed by the incoming Trump administration in cooperation with the Republican Congress. Nevertheless, the JCPOA is a multilateral accord rather than a bilateral deal between the US and Iran.

What Iran and the Middle East need today is economic development, not new violations of international multilateral accords. When the US House prepared to vote for the extension of ISA, Foreign Minister Zarif gave a very important speech in which he urged the Islamic world to condemn incompetence and failures and to focus on cooperation rather than conflict to avoid "failed states" in the region. Recently, China, having lifted over 700 million people out of poverty, released a white paper about the "right to development." It is this focus on economic development that today unites all emerging and developing economies and that is vital to global growth prospects.

If – as it now seems quite clear – Washington will opt for a new Iran policy, it risks not only its own international credibility, as it did only a decade ago. It also risks alienating its allies, which are critical to multilateral decision-making, and its adversaries, which US negotiators in the past have criticized for violating multilateral norms and responsibility.

## Article 99 of UN Charter and Ban Ki-Moon's beleaguered legacy in Middle East

By Abbas Torabi

The United Nations' first Secretary-General (1946-1952), Trygve Halvdan Lie, the Norwegian diplomat who never explicitly invoked Article 99 before the Security Council, portrays the post of Secretary-General (SG) as the most difficult job in the world. U Thant, Burmese diplomat and the third Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1961 to 1971, was a strong proponent and practitioner of "preventive diplomacy" the man who practically experienced this most difficult duty, by putting the world deeply in his debt when he played a crucial mediatory role in diffusing Cuban Missile Crisis and abating Congolese civil war. Ban Ki-Moon himself as UN's eighth Secretary General, the South Korean politician who took office on 1 January 2007, and is due to end his second term on December 31, 2016, after being 10 years in this position, describes United Nations a dream which has become a nightmare.

### ■ United Nations, a dream or nightmare?

Playing the role of "father confessor" to the UN's Member States, is the next description in which can be utilized for Egyptian politician, Boutros Boutros Ghali, who became the sixth SG of the UN (1992-1996). Conversant and effective notwithstanding, he was caught in a rift between the United States and the United Nations and this led him a controversy between administrative and political. "The greatest, although it is the least advertised of the functions of the Secretary-General is to be a father confessor to the member governments, to be a man in whom they can confide, and who knows, therefore, from continued, private, privileged information,



**Ban Ki-Moon himself as UN's eighth Secretary General, after being 10 years in this position, describes United Nations a dream which has become a nightmare.**

the real position in an international controversy," Walter Lippmann, the author of "Public Opinion" the founding book in American media studies, wrote.

"World moderator", is the other description of this post, which was coined by 32nd United States President (1933-1945), Franklin Delano Roosevelt, many years prior to the UN's creation. This prediction materialized at a time the UN charter alluded to it as "chief administrative officer" in Article 98. For this style of management, we can name the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations (1997-2006), Kofi Atta Annan a Ghanaian diplomat who can be categorized within President Roosevelt's

framework as "world moderator" style Secretary General. Actually, as Roosevelt outlined, secretary-general's schedule is consumed by a mixture of 'futile Diplomatic rituals' that has been outlined in Article 98 and 'urgent crises' which has been detailed in Article 99 of the UN charter. Therefore, the prominent part of the Schedule to this position of SG of the United Nations, which is purely political and is the distinguished part of this post, has been summarized in Article 99 of the United Nations' charter.

Considering this, amongst concise list of articles (97-101) in the UN charter assigning functions to the SG, Ar-



ticle 99 has been considered the most influential article that precisely gives the SG dominant political power. Having regard to the words of Article 99, which announces that "the Secretary-General may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security," it should be noted that, this article permits and grants the Secretary-General the power of 'preventive Diplomacy' to oblige the Security Council to talk certain crises they may threaten world peace and security.

### ■ Secretary or General, that's the question

In the book "Secretary or General", Simon Chesteron and Thomas M. Frank say the holder of this post is occasionally treated as "an errand boy and punching bag," expected to be simultaneously an independent political force and a public servant. Actually, the dilemmatic issue here is about the ambiguous nature of the position of the Secretary-General, because this is a position which is like a path that forked off in two directions: the duty of "Secretary" and "General." "A Secretary-General is like a Supreme Court justice, you never know what you're going to get" Lee Andrew Feinstein, a former senior official in the Obama and Clinton administrations and the United States ambassador to Poland from 2009 to 2012, said. "We should be more modest in our words, but not in our performance" Ban Ki-moon said in his acceptance speech in October 3, 2006. "The true measure of success for the UN is not how much we promise, but how much we deliver for those who need us most" he added.

(End of part one)



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# Spice up your holidays with brain-healthy seasonings

By Uma Naidoo

Many of the flavorings that add a special touch to our favorite holiday foods confer the gift of brain health at the same time. Researchers have discovered that cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, and other spices that we mix into baked goods and savory dishes contain nutrients that sharpen memory, reduce stress, or improve sleep, among other benefits.

## Delicious and beneficial

Your kitchen cabinet contains a number of seasonings that have been linked to positive effects on brain health and functioning. These flavorings are often incorporated into holiday cooking, adding a special touch to our holiday festivities. Spices and herbs have a long history as a safe component of human diets and traditional health practices. Their effects on the brain can be significant, and we need more research to determine the potential of using compounds found in common seasonings as medications.

I don't recommend taking any spice in large quantities, and it's always best to check with a doctor before making significant changes in your diet. However, unlike many pharmaceutical products, common seasonings generally cause no undesirable side effects for most individuals when used as part of a normal diet. Enjoying them all year long—not just during the holidays—seems to be a natural and delicious way to strengthen the brain.

Many herbs and spices contain nutrients that have been linked to brain benefits, and ongoing research is adding to the list of their positive effects. The seasonings most likely to be featured in cakes, cookies, breads, and favorite savory dishes served over the holidays are described below.

## Cinnamon

The bark of a tree native to Southeast Asia, cinnamon has been shown to have antioxidant, antidiabetic, and antibacterial properties. An animal study published in the July 2015 issue of Nutritional Neuroscience found that



**Many herbs and spices contain nutrients have been linked to brain benefits, and ongoing research is adding to the list of their positive effects. The seasonings most likely to be featured in cakes, cookies, breads, and favorite savory dishes served over the holidays.**

an extract made from the spice helped protect lab rats from cognitive impairment and brain damage associated with oxidative stress. Brain benefits associated with cinnamon consumption in humans include reduced inflammation, improved memory, increased attention, and enhanced cognitive processing. Serving ideas: Sprinkle cinnamon into your coffee, add it to fresh fruit, or mix it into your breakfast oatmeal. Better yet, enjoy a cinnamon bun!

## Nutmeg

Nutmeg grows on a type of evergreen indigenous to Indonesia. The spice contains various compounds that boost mood, help relieve pain, and relax blood vessels and lower blood

pressure. Some research suggests that a nutrient found in nutmeg may help slow cognitive decline in individuals with Alzheimer's disease and promote the recovery of brain tissue following a stroke. Sprinkled in warm milk, it appears to help induce sleep. Serving ideas: Great with baked goods, or added to egg dishes, casseroles, and even burgers. Try adding it to brown rice, or grating it over whipped cream.

## Cloves

Made from the dried flower buds of the evergreen clove tree, cloves are also native to Indonesia. The spice is loaded with antioxidant power. Research comparing clove with more than 1,100 other foods found that it had three times the anti-

oxidants of the next highest source, dried oregano. Cloves are also a natural anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial agent, a local anesthetic, and have been found to have antifungal properties. A compound found in cloves has been shown to be 29 times more powerful than aspirin in helping to prevent blood clots. Serving ideas: Delicious added to baked goods, cooked grains, bean soups and chili, applesauce, smoothies, and cooked cereals.

## Ginger

This spice, made from the root of the ginger plant, has been shown to be an effective pain reliever, with active compounds that resemble those of capsaicin, another well-known pain reliever found in hot peppers. The spice also helps reduce nausea, control inflammation, counters the activities of cell-damaging free radicals, acts as a blood thinner, and has been found to help protect brain cells from deterioration associated with Alzheimer's. A 2012 study involving 60 middle-aged women found that a daily dose of 800 mg of ginger extract helped improve working memory and attention. Serving ideas: Use grated fresh ginger in salad dressings and marinades. Cook ginger with vegetables, such as squashes, sweet potatoes, and green beans. Add ginger powder to baked goods, tea, or fruit smoothies.

## Cardamom

A relative of ginger and turmeric, cardamom has shown antibacterial properties, and antioxidant properties that help protect brain cells from free radical damage. A study published several years ago in the Indian Journal of Biochemistry and Biophysics found that consuming just ½ teaspoon a day for three months along with a healthy diet helps normalize blood pressure and lower risk for stroke by relaxing the arteries and the muscles of the heart. Serving ideas: Brew your coffee or tea with cardamom, add it to stews or soups, or sprinkle it into batters and dough for tasty baked goods. It's also delicious with smoothies and hot breakfast cereals.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

## Some breast cancer drugs and blood vessel damage

But findings from small study are unlikely to change current practice, doctors say

By Amy Norton

Women on breast cancer drugs called aromatase inhibitors may show signs of early blood vessel damage that could lead to heart disease, a small study suggests.

Researchers found that compared with healthy women their age, women on aromatase inhibitors were more likely to show signs of "endothelial dysfunction." That refers to problems in how the blood vessel lining responds to blood flow.

The findings are based on just 36 women who were prescribed the drugs. And experts stressed it's too early to know what to make of the results.

Still, the study adds to evidence linking aromatase inhibitors to elevated risks of high blood pressure, high cholesterol and possibly full-blown heart disease.

Aromatase inhibitors include the drugs Aromasin (exemestane), Arimidex (anastrozole) and Femara (letrozole). These drugs work by lowering a woman's estrogen levels, and are often prescribed to postmenopausal women with early stage breast cancer that is hormone



receptor-positive.

Most breast cancers are positive for hormone receptors, which means they use estrogen and/or progesterone to fuel their growth.

Studies show that for women with early stage, hor-

mone-sensitive tumors, aromatase inhibitors can help prevent a return of breast cancer and reduce a woman's risk of dying from the disease.

"I'm not saying women shouldn't take these drugs," said Dr. Anne Blaes, the lead researcher on the new study. "I prescribe them regularly."

But, Blaes said, as more and more women with early stage breast cancer are beating the disease, it's important to study the long-term impact of their cancer treatments.

In fact, most U.S. women with early stage breast cancer are at greater risk of eventually dying from heart disease than from their cancer, said Blaes, an oncologist at the University of Minnesota.

Aromatase inhibitors work by blocking the body's ability to convert other hormones into estrogen. That's a positive effect when it comes to preventing a breast cancer recurrence. But, in theory, it could be harmful to cardiovascular health because estrogen protects against heart disease, the researchers noted.

(Source: webmd.com)

## The best stretches to avoid "text neck" and neck pain

By Brett Larkin

I don't even flinch anymore when I see someone crossing a busy intersection typing on their cell phone. I just "heart" whatever Instagram pic I'm looking at and cross the street myself.

This is the new normal: smartphones at the center of our lives. Of course, technology can be amazing. Yesterday I edited a yoga video on my phone while riding the bus. The bad news is that constantly hunching over these devices is destroying our posture.



In 2008, the term "text neck" was coined by a doctor to describe the phenomenon. Just by looking at people around the office, on the street, or at the bar, it's clear it's become a national epidemic. According to research, your head weighs about 10 pounds in a neutral position. But if you move it forward just 15 degrees, it feels more like 27 pounds to your neck. At 30 degrees, it feels like 40 pounds, and at 45 degrees, almost 50 pounds. Ouch.

The result: muscle strain, pinched nerves, herniated disks, painful headaches, and more. And as our phones evolve into mini-computers, we're glued to them for hours—up to four per day, research suggests. This adds up to 700 to 1,400 hours per year—and up to 5,000 for high schoolers, who are most at risk for developing spinal issues and even needing surgery, experts say. The good news? Doing some simple stretches can help you eliminate the pain and strain on your neck and spine. Even better, you don't need a yoga mat, yoga clothes, or even the willpower to stand up—you can do these seated at your desk right now! In addition to the feel-good stretches in the video, check out my other tips to avoid neck pain below. And remember, prevention is the best cure.

## 1. Paint a mental picture

Imagine your palm and the back of your neck (where your hairline meets your neck) are connected. When you feel your cell phone in your palm, think about drawing your head back in space. Train yourself to feel this connection, and you'll avoid text neck naturally.

## 2. Look with your eyes

This may feel weird, but try to look down at your phone with just your eyes, keeping your head and chin back.

## 3. Think "text and press"

As you text, think about pressing your head back into an imaginary wall behind you. This will keep your head in alignment with your shoulders and hips.

## 4. Befriend Siri

Most modern phones have incredible speech-to-text capabilities that even work within social apps, essentially eliminating the need to type at all. Next time you're writing a witty comment, stand up straight and dictate your remarks instead.

## 5. Prioritize your tasks

Just because I can edit a movie on my iPhone doesn't mean I should. Think about your to-do list and which tasks are best suited for your phone compared to your PC, placed nicely at eye level.

## 6. Stand against a wall

Need a quick readjustment? At the office or at home, position yourself against wall you can press your whole spine against (including your head). This keeps your vertebrae aligned and forces you to raise your arm and hold your phone up to your face, instead of looking down.

## 7. Utilize armrests

Anytime you're sitting in a chair with armrests, put your elbow on one to hold your phone up to your face. This is so much better than having your hand and phone in your lap, which forces you to look down.

## 8. Take a time-out

Put your phone in your pocket. Stand or take a walk with your hands interlaced behind your back in a fist. Think of drawing that fist down and back to open your chest and shoulders as you stroll, forcing yourself to take a mandatory cell-phone break and mini-stretch at the same time.

(Source: greatist.com)

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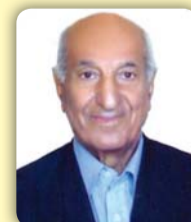
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## Iran’s pottery bank to be inaugurated this week

**THE HERITAGE** TEHRAN — University of Tehran in close desk collaboration with Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization will inaugurate Iran’s pottery bank this week.

The bank would be a rich national source of knowledge to researchers, students, and archaeologists as it houses half a million pieces which date from 7,000 BC onwards, ISNA reported on Friday.



A historical drinking vessel being kept at Tehran University

“Due to the fact that Iranian plateau has been one of the cradles of technology, culture, and civilization since prehistoric times, so the unearthed potteries are of importance, and some of which are absolutely unique in the world,” ISNA quoted Hassan Talaei, who presides over the Institute of Archaeology at University of Tehran, as saying.

“The bank’s importance lies in the fact that its collections have been built up since 1959 from various historical sites across the country, most of which are now buried beneath modern urban expansions,” Talaei added.

## EU unblocks visa-free travel for Ukraine, Georgia

The European Union will soon let Ukrainians and Georgians visit the bloc without needing a visa after officials said a deal had been struck on Thursday to end an internal EU dispute that had been holding up the promised measures.

Late-night talks involving EU member states and the European Parliament had reached a compromise on the terms of a mechanism that can be used to suspend the visa-free schemes in emergencies.

The two former Soviet republics are seeking to move further away from their former master Moscow and closer to the West but have grown frustrated that the EU was failing to deliver.

After last year’s migration crisis, EU governments had grown nervous of popular reaction against a move to make visits easier for 45 million Ukrainians, as well as 5 million Georgians. (Source: Reuters)

## Kuala Lumpur International takes travelers on a journey of dining discovery

Malaysia has launched a month-long campaign to promote the dining experience at Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

The airport has collaborated with Friedchillies.com for the campaign. The Malaysian food media company has ‘mystery shopped’ and evaluated the dishes served and overall experience at the airport’s F&B outlets and named its ‘top food discoveries’.

Malaysia Airports said the term ‘discoveries’ was intentionally chosen by Friedchillies to show that there are many hidden gems at the terminals. (Source: Moodie Davitt Report)

## ROUND THE GLOBE

### Historic center of Salzburg

Salzburg in Austria is an outstanding example of an ecclesiastical city-state, peculiar to the Holy Roman Empire, from Prussia to Italy. Most disappeared as political and administrative units in the early 19th century and adopted alternative trajectories of development. No other example of this type of political organism has survived so completely, preserving its urban fabric and individual buildings to such a remarkable degree as Salzburg.



A view of the historic center of Salzburg, Austria

Salzburg is the point where the Italian and German cultures met and which played a crucial role in the exchanges between these two cultures. The result is a Baroque town that has emerged intact from history, and exceptional material testimony of a particular culture and period. The center of Salzburg owes much of its Baroque appearance to the Italian architects Vincenzo Scamozzi and Santino Solari.

The Salzburg skyline, against a backdrop of mountains, is characterized by its profusion of spires and domes, dominated by the fortress of HohenSalzburg. It contains a number of buildings, both secular and ecclesiastical, of very high quality from periods ranging from the late Middle Ages to the 20th Century.

Inscribed on the UNESCO Cultural Heritage list, Historic center of Salzburg is rich in buildings from the Gothic period onwards, which combine to create a townscape and urban fabric of great individuality and beauty.

Salzburg is also intimately associated with many important artists and musicians, preeminent among them Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. (Source: UNESCO)

# Tehran seeking simplified visa frameworks with India, China

1→ “Based on the new agreement tour groups of 5 to 50 people heading to Russia from Iran or vice versa will be granted a visa-free stay of up to 15 days,” Sputnik reported on November 27.

Earlier in July, Iran extended visa on arrival from 1 month to 3 months to open its doors for the return of foreign tourists following the landmark agreement nuclear deal, under which Iran is committed to curb its nuclear activities in exchange for international sanctions relief.

Bases on statistics compiled by Passport Index, Iranian passport currently ranks 92 that is based on the freedom of travel it provides, in other words the number of countries the passport holder can travel to without applying for a visa.



## Skiing in Iran blends off-slope rich culture with famous Iranian hospitality

### A guide to snowboarding and skiing in Iran

While not the first destination that comes to mind for powder hounds, skiing in Iran is a growing choice for those keen to ride somewhere different in a country rich in culture off the slopes.

With sanctions easing, the country is expected to open up even further and attract even more skiers to its slopes in the Alborz Mountain Range near the capital Tehran. Moreover, the cheap prices mean that powder chasers can go easy on the hip pocket while enjoying famous Iranian hospitality.

#### ■ Season dates

As the mountains are quite high, the ski areas retain their snow quite well. The season usually stretches from November all the way through to May.

#### ■ Obtaining a visa to Iran

To encourage tourism, Iran now offers 30 day visas on arrival for citizens of most countries. You are able to get a visa on arrival at the airports in Tehran, Mashad, Shiraz, Tabriz and Isfahan.



Cable cars connecting northern Tehran to the Tochal ski resort

#### ■ Money and costs

Be aware that Iran still is not linked to the rest-of-the-world banking system. This means you can't pull money out of ATMs using your Visa or MasterCard for the moment. This will hopefully change soon with the lifting of sanctions.

This means you will need to bring in enough USD or Euros to change to last you for your time in Iran. Money can be easily changed at the airport and at banks and exchange centers around the major cities.

Iran is generally quite cheap. You can get a taxi around most places in Tehran for 200,000 Rial (around USD 6). You can get a burger or pizza (favored Iranian food) for around 150,000 Rial (around USD 4). But you should always bring in extra cash just in case.

#### ■ Skiing and boarding in Iran

The main resorts are located just north of the capital Tehran, in the Alborz Mountain range. There are four ski resorts in the Alborz Mountain Range.

#### ■ Dizin

The biggest of the resorts is Dizin, considered to be the global resort of Iran with three gondolas and 12 chairlifts. It is 120km north of Tehran and takes around 2 hours to get there if the road is open, and around 2.5 hours to get there if the road is closed and you need to take the western route up.

Dizin reaches an altitude of 3,600 m and therefore boasts more than a one kilometer of vertical difference. Terrain at this resort is great for those intermediate skiers and boarders trying to move into that more advanced category. It also has smaller and easier hikes for skiers and boarders beginning to dabble in backcountry terrain. Overall, it is best for intermediates. It is by far the biggest resort in Iran.

Dizin is the liveliest of the resorts and is where the younger, progressive-thinking and upper-class north Tehranis go to unwind on their weekend. If you are go-



A view of the Dizin ski resort with the towering Mount Damavand in the background

**People say that the Persians are the most hospitable people on Earth and, after experiencing it, you will probably be inclined to say this bold statement is actually not that far off the truth.**

## Hospitality off the slopes and elsewhere in Iran

One of the biggest advantages of going to ski in Iran is the experience, not only at the ski resorts, but all across the country. People say that the Persians are the most hospitable people on Earth and, after experiencing it, you will probably be inclined to say this bold statement is actually not that far off the truth.

For example, people on the street may invite you over for tea and food after just meeting you. This kind of hospitality is not out of the norm at all. In fact, barely a day will go past when you will not be in some way touched by Iranian kindness and hospitality. It seems that everyone is very keen to help travelers, which makes travelling around Iran quite easy. As far as a party goes, as you might expect, there is not that much to be done in Iran but if you are observant enough at the ski resorts, then there is a good chance to find something happening on a Thursday night (Thursday night is the Iranian equivalent to Friday night - the end of the working week). Dizin is the best bet for nightlife.

Despite their being so much to ski in the Alborz mountain range, Iran has so much to offer elsewhere that it is really worth seeing the rest of the country while you are there.

Iran has been inhabited by many different civilizations over the past centuries (even millennia) so it is a country rich in history. It is well worth going all the way south to Shiraz to immerse yourself in some of the famous literature of Hafez or Saadi. It is absolutely recommended to check out the Shah-e-Cheragh shrine or most importantly, to go to Persepolis, to see where the Persian Empire began.

Moving north into the desert (which is not that hot during the winter months, don't even think about it during summer) you can see the mud houses and Badgirs (a kind of cooling tower) of the old town of Yazd. You could also check out some of the incredible handicrafts (maybe pick up a famous Persian rug for next to nothing) or the beautiful Persian architecture in Isfahan.

Making your way further north back to the bustling capital of Tehran, you will find a significant difference in class between the poorer south and the wealthier north. The most exhilarating experiences you will encounter in Tehran are crossing a road and getting absolutely lost in the Bazaar.

ing to stay overnight up on the mountain, this is the best place to do so.

#### ■ Shemshak and Darbandsar

Along the way to Dizin, you will find another ski area where two resorts are located next to each other - Darbandsar and Shemshak. They are around 90 minutes from Tehran. Dizin is another 35 minutes on from Shemshak when the road is open. Shemshak is around 5km from Darbandsar or 10 minutes. Runs here are between 2,550m to 3,050m.

Despite Shemshak and Darbandsar both being quite a bit smaller than Dizin, they boast much more interesting terrain on-piste and towering mountains behind the ski areas that will leave avid backcountry goers licking their lips.

Shemshak has two main lifts which

are double chairs. While they are quite slow, they take you quite high up the mountain and open up some nice intermediate runs on-piste and some very nice off-piste runs. The run top-to-bottom is quite a leg-burner! It is usually not too busy either, especially if you go during the week (Iranian weekend is Thursday and Friday).

Darbandsar is a little smaller than Shemshak with just one main lift. It is sloped on one side which means you are skiing on the side of the mountain a little bit. However, there is probably a little more in the way of off-piste runs at Darbandsar than at Shemshak as the mountain is very open at the top.

Enduring some of the trickier hikes that getting to the summit of these peaks

involves is well worth it as it will allow for runs that can last for 30 minutes and, best of all, will be untouched the whole way down. You do have to be very careful of avalanches so it is highly recommended that people who want this kind of experience should carry all of their avalanche gear and know how to use it.

#### ■ Tochal

The last of the 4 resorts, Tochal, is located much closer to Tehran. In fact, the bottom of the lift can be considered as the northernmost part of Tehran. To get up, you take two telecabins - one which takes around 30 minutes and one which takes around 15 minutes.

This is definitely the smallest of the four resorts as it has just two lifts servicing a small area which is mostly beginner terrain. While there is a bit of in-bound hiking you can do to access some steeper terrain, there is not that much back country to be done here. Tochal is good



An array of chalets adjacent to the Dizin ski resort

for convenience and price, but the better terrain is found at the other resorts.

#### ■ Finding accommodation

Both Dizin and Shemshak have large hotels that will almost always have space. Compared to other ski resorts, this on-mountain accommodation is quite cheap. You can find a room that contains a private bathroom and two singles or a double for about USD 50 a night.

There are also several privately-owned cottages around that can be rented out. Prices for these vary on the quality of the cottage.

If you have a large group, you might consider hiring a chalet for the night for a bit of extra luxury. If you don't believe all this about Iran, check it out for yourself. In fact, check it all out for yourself next time you want to get away from the daily grind.

#### ■ Travelling around Iran

Fortunately travelling around Iran is much easier than travelling to and from the ski resorts with every major city having bus terminals that are easy to get to and with regular connecting buses that will go for around USD 7 (not bad for a 3 hour bus ride).

You can simply turn up at the terminal and buy a ticket to wherever you want to go. Hamsafar and Royal Safar are two of the bigger bus companies which are generally reliable. Your hotel or hostel will also generally offer to book tickets for you, for an extra fee of around USD 1.

A little tip for those really long journeys (Tehran to Shiraz is a 13 hour trip, for example), take a VIP bus. With extra-wide seats that incline to 160 degrees and the extra leg-room, you will appreciate the tiny extra money you pay.

Flights around Iran are also quite cheap. You can fly from Shiraz to Iran for around USD 40. Airlines include Mahan Air (which has international flights also), Iran Air and Aseman Air.

(Source: Snow Season Central)

# Japan's successful launch takes trash collection to a new height

It's inevitable, wherever people go there is trash left behind. And so it is in deep-space, with cast-off equipment from old satellites and pieces of rocket. Now a Japanese company is introducing a vessel, named "Kounotori" (stork in Japanese), blasted off from the southern island of Tanegashima just before 10:27 P.M. local time (1327 GMT) attached to an H-II rocket and the "satellite was removed from the rocket" and put into the planned orbit about 15 minutes after the liftoff, JAXA spokesman Nobuyoshi Fujimoto on Tanegashima told AFP.

The cargo ship is bound for the International Space Station, carrying a 'space junk' collector that was made with the help of a fishnet company, Nitto Seimo, to develop the cord, which has been about 10 years in the making.

## ■ Plaiting technology

The "tether uses our fishnet plaiting technology, but it was really tough to intertwine the very thin materials," company engineer Katsuya Suzuki told AFP. "The length of the tether this time is 700 meters (2,300 feet), but eventually it's going to need to be 5,000 to 10,000 meters-long to slow down the targeted space junk," he added. Previous experiments using a tether have been done in recent years.

Another spokesman for the space agency has said it hopes to put the junk



collection system into more regular use by the middle of the next decade.

"If we are successful in this trial, the next step will be another test attaching one tip of the tether to a targeted object,"

he added.

The collection company and scientists at the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) are experimenting with a so-called electrodynamic tether made

**The cargo ship is bound for the International Space Station, carrying a 'space junk' collector that was made with the help of a fishnet company, Nitto Seimo, to develop the cord, which has been about 10 years in the making.**

from thin wires of stainless steel and aluminum to pull junk out of orbit around Earth.

If this method proves successful it will enable the vessel to clearing up tons of space clutter including cast-off equipment from old satellites and pieces of rocket. There are estimated to be more than 100 million pieces in orbit, posing a growing threat to future space exploration, scientists say. The plan is for one end of the strip to be attached to debris that can damage working equipment—there are hundreds of collisions every year.

## ■ Earth's magnetic

The electricity generated by the tether as it swings through the Earth's magnetic field is expected to have a slowing effect on the space junk, which scientists say should pull it into a lower and lower orbit. Eventually the waste will enter the Earth's atmosphere, burning up harmlessly long before it has a chance to crash to the planet's surface.

This is an issue that has been in-the-making for more than 50 years of human space exploration since the Soviet-launched Sputnik their first satellite in 1957. Since then the debris has begun to form a hazardous belt of orbiting debris.

"If we are successful in this trial, the next step will be another test attaching one tip of the tether to a targeted object," he added.

(Source: Satnews Daily)

## Why don't monkeys talk? Their vocal tract might not be the problem

A talking monkey seems like a thing of science-fiction, cartoons, and goofy advertisements. But new research suggests monkey speech may be closer to reality than commonly thought.

Macaques actually have vocal anatomy capable of human-like speech, according to a study published Friday in the journal Science Advances.

"This suggests that what makes people unique among primates is our ability to control the vocal apparatus, not the apparatus itself," Thore Jon Bergman, an evolutionary biopsychologist at the University of Michigan who was not part of the research, writes in an email to The Christian Science Monitor.

Researchers studying non-human primates had previously hypothesized that the shape, size, or structure of the vocal anatomy in the animals' heads might be holding them back from making the sorts of sounds that make up human speech. To test this idea, scientists decided to look at the vocal anatomy itself.

## ■ Computer model

In the 1960s, linguist and cognitive scientist Philip Lieberman conducted a study in which he and his colleagues examined the vocal anatomy of a dead rhesus macaque and built a computer model of the motions it might have been able to make. That model found that

the rhesus monkey could only produce a limited range of vowels compared with humans.

But some researchers recently weren't satisfied with the study of a cadaver, so they decided to study a live macaque.

The team captured X-ray video of a monkey vocalizing, making facial expressions, and eating. Then, they used this data to build computer models and parameters of what motions the macaque's vocal tract may be capable of—similar to Dr. Lieberman's 1969 study.

And, as one of the study authors Asif Ghazanfar, a neuroscientist at Princeton University in New Jersey, says, those models suggest the "range of different sounds that a living macaque can produce actually overlaps quite a bit with the sounds that a human can produce."

## ■ Strong evidence

This study provides "strong evidence to believe that macaque monkeys have a vocal tract capable of supporting a spoken language," Marcus Perlman, a cognitive scientist at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in the Netherlands who was not involved in the research, writes in an email to the Monitor.

This could help researchers figure out how speech evolved in our own ancestors, Dr. Perlman says. "Presumably this potential extends to great apes and thus would



characterize a baseline for all of our hominid ancestors. It appears clear now that the vocal anatomy of our ancestors was not an impediment to the evolution of speech."

So perhaps it was the neural anatomy or some other factor that was key to evolving human speech, researchers suggest.

"This is a solid piece of modeling and experimental work," Adriano Reis e Lameira, an anthropologist and cognitive scientist at England's Durham University who was not involved in the research, writes in an email to the Monitor.

(Source: The CSM)

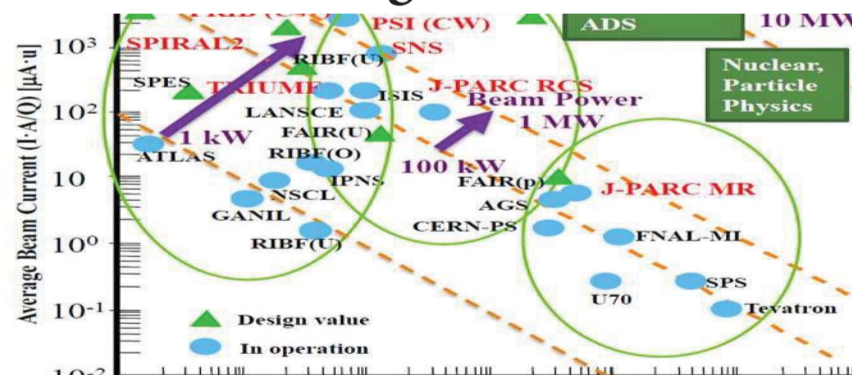
## Next-generation accelerators get boost from new beam physics

UNIST has taken a major step toward laying the technical groundwork for developing next-generation high-intensity accelerators by providing a new advanced theoretical tool for the design and analysis of complex beam lines with strong coupling.

The research results achieved by Professor Moses Chung of Natural Science at UNIST in collaboration with the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory (PPPL) of United States and the Helmholtz Centre for Heavy Ion Research GmbH (GSI) of Germany was published in the November issue of the prestigious journal, Physical Review Letters.

Accelerators are devices that accelerate the movement of atomic-sized particles, such as electrons, protons, and ions to very high energies. They produce prompt radiation by accelerating atoms or their subatomic particles, which strike other target atoms. This striking effect of an accelerator is, then, used to examine the physics deals with natural law, including the study of nuclear structure.

The next-generation high power accelerators, on the other hand, refer to



accelerators for high intensities and high energies. The high-intensity beams, generated by high power accelerators not only has the potential to reduce the half-life of a radioactive substance, but can be also used to produce best candidate materials for fusion reactors.

## ■ High-power accelerators

High power accelerators get the energy they need by accelerating particles of the same charge. Increasing the beam current results in a repulsive force between charged particles and this has a

strong influence on the path of the entire beam particles, which is known as "Space Charge Effect".

In 1959, two Russian physicists came up with a theory using Space Charge Effect. However, this theory excluded the phenomena, involving the vertical and horizontal motion of particle incorporation. This has made it even more difficult to design and develop a new type of high power accelerators.

In the study, Professor Chung and his team proposed a new beam physics the-

ory, addressing the vertical and horizontal motion of particle incorporation.

The research team reported the full generalization of the KV model by including all of the linear (both external and space-charge) coupling forces, beam energy variations, and arbitrary emittance partition, which all form essential elements for phase-space manipulations.

"This theory provides important new theoretical tools for the detailed design and analysis of high-intensity beam manipulations, for which previous theoretical models are not easily applicable," Professor Chung says. The "development of next-generation high power accelerators can greatly contribute to the fusion reactor materials research, the nuclear waste management, the study on the origin of the universe, as well as the optimization of the performance of existing accelerators."

The study has been supported by the Science Research Center (SRC) Support Project and the Individual Basic Science & Engineering Research Project through the National Research Foundation of Korea.

(Source: EurekAlert)

## IMIDRO Chief Calls on Investors to Invest in Mines' Infrastructural Sector

Deputy Industry Minister and President of Iranian Mines & Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO) Mehdi Karbasian urged domestic and foreign investors to make investment in mines and mineral infrastructural sector, Public Relations Dept. of the Organization reported.

Speaking in 2nd Iran Mines & Mining Industries Summit (IMIS), he pointed to the programs for increasing production capacity of steel, copper, aluminum, zinc and gold industries and said: "Investing in water, power, gas, port, power stations sectors and also rail and road sector is of priorities of developing Iran's mines and mineral sector."

The significance of the said issue caused the Organization to allocate its first specialized panel of this Forum to the subject of "Infrastructure", he maintained.



Turning to the programs for reducing consumption of energy, he said: "IMIDRO along with the Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade and government supports in-

vestment in the field of presenting new technologies in order to reduce energy consumption."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to the measures taken in exploratory plan and said: "Planning is underway on a land area as large as 250,000 square kilometers in the country in recent three years, so that the country has attained significant reserves in the fields of iron ore, copper, gold, coal, zinc, etc. in a way that only 50 tons has been added to the existing gold reserves."

It should be noted that 2nd Iran Mines & Mining Industries Summit (IMIS) was held on Dec. 10 in IRIB Intl. Conferences Center in the presence of reliable mines and mineral companies, financial and banking affairs, domestic and foreign consultants, and also respected foreign ambassadors to Iran.

## Your own motion could one day power your cell phone

Researchers at Michigan State University have developed a device they've dubbed a nanogenerator that lets motion charge a mobile device or a wearable.

A cell phone using this technology, for instance, would need no battery. Your own motion would provide power.

"What I foresee, relatively soon, is the capability of not having to charge your cell phone for an entire week, for example, because that energy will be produced by your movement," said Nelson Sepulveda, associate professor of electrical and computer engineering at Michigan State University, in a written statement. "We're on the path toward wearable devices powered by human motion."

According to the university, the nanogenerator is built with a silicone wafer that is then layered with films made of silver, polyimide and polypropylene ferroelectret. Then ions are added so each layer of the device has charged particles.

The nanogenerator, which is as thin as a sheet of paper, is adaptable to different sizes and applications. Researchers have been able to use it to power an LCD touch screen, a bank of 20 LED lights and a flexible keyboard.

The device used to power the LED lights was palm-sized, for example, while the one used to power the touch screen was as small as a finger, according to the university.

"Each time you fold it, you are increasing exponentially the amount of voltage you are creating," Sepulveda said in the statement. "You can start with a large device, but when you fold it once, and again, and again, it's now much smaller and has more energy. Now it may be small enough to put in a specially made heel of your shoe so it creates power each time your heel strikes the ground."

(Source: Computerworld)

## Running home from work in high air pollution could be deadly, study suggests

Running or cycling home from work when air pollution is high could damage the lungs and lead to heart failure, a new study suggests.

Researchers in Belgium have discovered that the pollution causes blood vessels in the lungs to narrow, which prevents oxygen circulating effectively through the body, and could lead to cardiovascular disease.

"This is a major public health issue for people living in polluted urban areas where exercise could damage the lungs and potentially lead to decompensated heart failure," said lead author Dr. Jean-Francois Argacha, a cardiologist at the University Hospital Brussels.

"Our main advice is to limit physical activities during heavy air pollution. No strong evidence exists on effectiveness of face masks to eliminate or reduce particle exposure."

Researchers looked at more than 16,000 people who had been admitted to hospital in Belgium between 2009 and 2013 and who had an echocardiogram taken to show the movement of blood through the heart.

They then compared the results to air pollution records and found that on average patients had worse circulation on days where pollution was high, or had been in the week before admission.

In a second experiment scientists exposed 10 healthy male volunteers to pollution in a chamber and tested their lung function at rest, and when taking a drug which simulates heart function during exercise.

Although there was no impact when resting, circulation worsened when the drug was administered.

"This suggests that pollution is more harmful to the lung circulation during exercise," added Dr. Argacha.

"Our dual approach provides original data on the impact of air pollution on the pulmonary circulation."

The research was presented at the EuroEcho-Imaging annual meeting in Leipzig, Germany. (Source: The Telegraph)

## NASA's Juno to make its third Jupiter flyby

During today's flyby, when the spacecraft will pass just 2,580 miles above Jupiter's cloud tops, seven of its eight science instruments would be switched on.

NASA's Juno spacecraft, locked in orbit around Jupiter since July 4, will make its next close flyby of the planet at 12:04 P.M. EST today, the space agency announced Friday. This would mark the solar-powered spacecraft's third close flyby of the gas giant.

Although the science instruments on board Juno collected data during the first close pass over Jupiter in August, revealing that the planet's magnetic fields and aurora are bigger and more powerful than originally thought, they failed to do so during the second flyby in October, when the spacecraft unexpectedly went into a safe mode.

"This will be the first time we are planning to operate the full Juno capability to investigate Jupiter's interior structure via its gravity field," Juno Principal Investigator Scott Bolton from the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio, Texas, said in a statement. "We are looking forward to what Jupiter's gravity may reveal about the gas giant's past and its future."

During its closest approach in the upcoming flyby, the spacecraft would soar just 2,580 miles above Jupiter's cloud tops. Seven of its eight science instruments would be switched on to gather data when this happens.

A few days before its second close flyby on Oct. 19, NASA was forced to postpone a maneuver that would have shortened the Juno's orbital period from its current 53.4 days to 14 days. The decision was made after scientists at NASA discovered that a pair of check valves that regulate the flow of helium to Juno's engines was malfunctioning.

(Source: ibtimes.com)



## Canada sets its first national carbon price at C\$10 a ton

Eight of 10 provinces have signed deal to implement carbon tax or cap-and-trade markets, says Justin Trudeau

The Canadian government has agreed a deal with eight of the country's 10 provinces to introduce its first national carbon price, Justin Trudeau has told reporters.

The prime minister said the move would help Canada meet its international climate change obligations.



The agreement was struck on Friday only after heated talks. The energy-producing province of Saskatchewan did not sign up, saying the cost would be too great. Manitoba also declined to sign but officials said it might do so later.

Trudeau is promising to impose a carbon price on any province that refuses to sign on.

Under his plan, carbon pollution would cost C\$10 (£6, US\$7.60) a ton in 2018, rising by C\$10 a year until it reaches C\$50 in 2022. The provinces can either implement a carbon tax or a cap-and-trade market.

In November Canada announced it would phase out the use of coal-fired electricity by 2030.

"Taking traditional coal power out of our energy mix and replacing it with cleaner technologies will significantly reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, improve the health of Canadians, and benefit generations for years to come," the environment minister, Kathleen McKenna, said.

Trudeau is broadly aligned politically with The US president, Barack Obama, who has pushed hard to cut emissions of greenhouse gases.

The US vice-president, Joe Biden, told the meeting he doubted the president-elect, Donald Trump, could undo much of the administration's policies since many of them had taken firm hold.

The premier of Saskatchewan, Brad Wall, said the carbon price would make Canadian firms less competitive at a time when Trump looked likely to adopt policies cutting energy costs.

Four of Canada's 10 provinces still use coal-based electricity. Alberta has been working toward phasing out coal-fired electricity by 2030.

(Source: The Guardian)

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Bargaining With Store Owners

Connie: You speak McQuillanese. Ask the store owner the price of this vase.

Ivan: All right. He says it is \$60.

Connie: That's actually a great price, but let's see if I can **talk him down** a little. You should never accept the starting price and the prices in these stores are all **negotiable**. Ask him what his **rock bottom price** is for the vase.

Ivan: He said that he'll take \$50, but not one penny less.

Connie: The vase is really a steal at \$50, but maybe he's still willing to **bargain**. Tell him that I won't pay a penny more than \$40.

Ivan: I told him and he says that at that price, he'd be **giving it away**. I don't think he's going to **budge**. I think you should just buy it. He doesn't look like he's willing to **haggle** with you.

Connie: Don't be impatient. **Good things come to those who wait**. Tell him that I'm ready to **walk away** if he doesn't take \$42 for it. Hey, where's he going?

Ivan: He says that he's walking away because he doesn't sell to **cheap** Americans.

Connie: Hmph!

(Source: espod.com)

■ **Words & phrases**

**talk somebody down:** to persuade someone to lower the price of something

**negotiable:** an offer, price, contract etc. that is negotiable can be discussed and changed before being agreed on

**rock bottom price:** a rock-bottom price is as low as it can possibly be

**bargain:** to discuss the conditions of a sale, agreement etc., for example to try and get a lower price

**give something away:** to give something to someone without asking for any money, rather than selling it to them

**budge:** to change your opinion, or to make someone change their opinion

**haggle:** to argue when you are trying to agree about the price of something

**good things come to those who wait:** a patient seeker will be satisfied in due time; patience is a virtue

**walk away:** leave

**cheap:** not liking to spend money; mean



# Stand up for someone's rights today

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message on Human Rights Day, 10 December 2016, said all of us can – and must – act in our daily lives to advance the human rights of the people around us.

■ **The full text of his message reads:**

As United Nations Secretary-General over the last decade, I have repeatedly stressed the interdependence of the three pillars of the United Nations -- peace, sustainable development and human rights. Together, they form the basis of resilient and cohesive societies rooted in inclusion, justice and the rule of law.

I have also underscored that human rights are at the heart of the work and identity of the United Nations. This understanding is at the core of our Human Rights up Front initiative.

At a time of multiplying conflicts, intensifying humanitarian needs and rising hate speech, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reminds us that recognition of "the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the



foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world". Step by step, we can build a future based on our shared values of equality and human dignity.

That is the spirit that underlies our recently launched "Together" campaign to fight the xenophobia faced by so many refugees and migrants. That is also the

spirit we will need to combat extremism, halt the erosion of respect for international humanitarian law, and defend civil society groups facing increasingly harsh measures aimed at preventing them from fulfilling their vital role.

Upholding human rights is in the interest of all. Respect for human rights

advances well-being for every individual, stability for every society, and harmony for our interconnected world.

And this work can be done by all, at every level of society. States have the primary responsibility for upholding human rights. The United Nations, along with partners around the globe, must continue to strengthen responses to abuses, and work better to prevent human rights crises.

All of us can – and must – act in our daily lives to advance the human rights of the people around us. This is the driving force behind a new global campaign being launched by the UN Human Rights Office -- "Stand Up for Someone's Rights Today."

Wherever we are, each of us can make a difference for human rights -- in our neighborhoods, in school, at work, on social media, at home and even in sporting arenas across the world.

Together, let us stand up for someone's rights. Today, tomorrow, and every day.

(Source: UNIC)

## What's Bundespraesidentenstichwahlwiederholungsverschiebung?

**VIENNA (AP)** — For all those who don't speak German — and indeed for those who do — here is Austria's word of the year, adding to the challenges of reading and speaking the language.

It's "Bundespraesidentenstichwahlwiederholungsverschiebung," or "postponement of the repeat of the runoff

of the presidential election."

The tongue-twister was born of the record time it took to elect Austria's president, and was announced following a poll of 10,000 people carried out by the Research Unit for Austrian German at the University of Graz, in cooperation with the Austria Press Agency.

A first round in April was followed by a May runoff between the two most popular candidates. This was annulled because of irregularities. A new date set for October was then postponed because of faulty absentee ballots to Dec. 4, when the vote was won by Alexander Van der Bellen.

**IN FOCUS** 📷 Tehran Times/ Farhad Safari



Nader Noori, an environmentalist who holds a degree in civil engineering, along with his American wife and four children are in charge of an exceptional zoo in Qazvin province called "Qazvin nature village". It is a research and a rehabilitation center. The zoo is stretching over 10 hectares of land with various species receiving professional care.

## ENGLISH IN USE LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

### ‘An hour with rangers’ to raise environmental awareness of students: local official

"An hour with rangers" scheme designed to improve students' grasp of environmental issues will be launched at schools in the city of Tehran, the director of Tehran department of environment has said.

Quite a few rangers are scheduled to attend schools to teach students some fundamental environmental issues throughout the school year, which began on September 21, Fars news agency quoted Mohammad-Hossein Bazgir as saying.

"We are also planning on doing the same thing for the students' parents and teachers," Bazgir noted.

## ENGLISH PROVERB

### Silence gives consent

■ **Explanation:** if you do not object to what someone says or does, you can be assumed to agree with or condone it

■ **For example:** Jill: What did Fred say when you told him we were thinking about leaving the office early? Jane: He didn't say anything. Jill: Then he must not mind if we go. Silence gives consent.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Bring somebody/ something down

■ **Meaning:** to force a government or ruler to stop ruling a country

■ **For example:** a crisis that could bring down the government.

## ENGLISH IDIOM

### In the bag

■ **Explanation:** people use this expression when it becomes obvious that success or victory is going to be achieved

■ **For example:** An hour before the polling stations closed, victory seemed in the bag for the Conservative candidate.

### رئیس اداره محیط زیست شهر تهران: اجرای برنامه ساعتی با محیط بانان برای افزایش دانش محیط زیستی دانش آموزان

رئیس اداره محیط زیست شهر تهران گفت: برنامه ی ساعتی با محیط بانان برای افزایش درک دانش آموزان از مسایل محیط زیستی در مدارس تهران اجرا خواهد شد. محمدحسین بازگیر در گفت‌وگو با خبرگزاری فارس گفت: برای شروع سال تحصیلی عده زیادی از محیط بانان در مدارس حضور پیدا می‌کنند و مفاهیم پایه‌ای از بحث محیط زیست را در طول سال تحصیلی به دانش آموزان منتقل می کنند. بازگیر خاطرنشان کرد: همزمان با این کار برنامه ریزی می‌کنیم برای معلمان و هم اولیای دانش آموزان اقدام مشابه و فعالیت مشابهی را داشته باشیم.

# Giuliani pulls out of consideration to serve in administration

Former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani said on Friday he had removed his name from consideration for a position in Donald Trump's new administration as the president-elect narrows the field of people he is considering for secretary of state.

Giuliani's withdrawal from consideration came after Trump made clear that he was broadening his search for a secretary of state beyond the four finalists transition aides had identified: Giuliani, former Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, former CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) head David Petraeus and Senator Bob Corker of Tennessee.

In recent days, Trump has expanded his search for a secretary of state to include additional lawmakers and corporate executives, such as Rex Tillerson of Exxon Mobil Corp and Alan Mulally, a former executive at Ford Motor Co and Boeing Co.

The Wall Street Journal, citing two transition team officials, said Tillerson had emerged on Friday as the leading candidate for the State Department job. It said some Trump advisers saw Tillerson as a mold-breaking pick who would bring an executive's experience to the post of top U.S. diplomat.

Giuliani, speaking to Fox News, said he had actually sent a letter withdrawing himself from consideration back on Nov.



29 but that the transition team had rejected it, saying they wanted to continue to keep him in the running for the State Department.

He said he had met Trump on Friday and they agreed it was worth going ahead and releasing the letter as the president-elect narrows his choice for secretary of state. Trump indicated to supporters in Louisiana on Friday that he would have another Cabinet announcement next week "you're really going to like."

He said he had been considered for other positions in the Cabinet but was not keen on a role other than State Department.

"That was the only one I had any real interest in. But it wasn't so overwhelming that I'm terribly disappointed," Giuliani added, noting that he would continue to act as a friend and informal adviser to Trump.

Asked his view on Romney as a possible secretary of state, Giuliani said he agreed with other "very loyal supporters of President-elect Trump" that "Mitt went

over the line" in his criticism of the candidate during the campaign.

"You can make friends and make up, but I wouldn't see him as a candidate for the Cabinet," Giuliani said, though he added he would accept whatever decision Trump ultimately made.

Giuliani's withdrawal was likely to disappoint some of Trump's most loyal aides, who appreciated how he had supported the president-elect all along and had been resistant to Romney.

Earlier on Friday, CNN, citing an unnamed source, reported that Giuliani was told he was no longer in contention for secretary of state. Trump, who takes office on Jan. 20, praised the former New York mayor in a statement.

"Rudy Giuliani is an extraordinarily talented and patriotic American," the New York businessman said. "He is and continues to be a close personal friend, and as appropriate, I will call upon him for advice and can see an important place for him in the administration at a later date."

Reince Priebus, Trump's incoming White House chief of staff, said in the statement that Giuliani "was vetted by our team for any possible conflicts and passed with flying colors." Giuliani also told Fox the vetting process had turned up no conflicts.

(Source: Reuters)

## Nigeria: Suicide attacks kill dozens in Madagali

Two schoolgirl suicide bombers killed 45 people and wounded dozens in a coordinated attack on a crowded market in the northeastern Nigerian town of Madagali, an army spokesman said.

"From our updated records we have 45 dead and 33 injured in the twin suicide bomb explosions in Madagali," said Sa'ad Bello of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) in Adamawa state.

The attack on Friday morning happened in Madagali, which was recaptured by Nigerian forces from Boko Haram fighters in 2015.

Ahmadu Gulak, a driver who was buying tea at the market, said the two blasts struck simultaneously at opposite ends of a grains and vegetable market. He saw many wounded taken to a nearby hospital by ambulance.

"The two bombers were disguised as customers, detonated their suicide belts at the section of the market selling grains and second-hand clothing," said Yusuf Muhammad, the chairman of Madagali local government.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility, but the blasts bore all the hallmarks of Boko Haram, which has carried out numerous suicide attacks in its seven-year campaign against the Nigerian government in the troubled region.

A bus station near the same market was targeted by two female suicide bombers who killed at least 30 people in December 2015. In June, Boko Haram fighters opened fire on mourners at a funeral in Madagali, killing 18 people.

Nigeria's military has been bombard-



ing the Sambisa Forest, near Madagali, ahead of ground assaults.

Boko Haram's seven-year uprising has killed more than 20,000 people and forced 2.6 million from their homes.

Boko Haram, referred to by themselves as al-Wil'yat al-Islamiyya Harb Afr'qiyyah (Islamic State West Africa Province, ISWAP), is a terrorist group based in northeastern Nigeria, also active in Chad, Niger and northern Cameroon. The group was led by Abubakar Shekau until August 2016, when he was succeeded by Abu Musab al-Barnawi. The group had alleged links to al-Qaeda, but in March 2015, it announced its allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group. Since the current insurgency started in 2009, it has killed 20,000 and displaced 2.3 million from their homes and was ranked as the world's deadliest terrorist group by the Global Terrorism Index in 2015.

The name "Boko Haram" is usually translated as "Western education is forbidden".

(Source: agencies)

## Ghana: Akufo-Addo wins presidential election

Ghana's main Opposition Leader Nana Akufo-Addo won the country's national election, defeating President John Mahama, electoral commissioner Charlotte Osei said.

Crowds of jubilant supporters gathered outside the house of the 72-year-old New Patriotic Party (NPP) leader, who had already claimed victory on Thursday, a day after the voting took place.

Akufo-Addo defeated President Mahama by 53.8 percent to 44.4 percent, Osei said.

"It is my duty and my privilege to declare Nana Akufo-Addo as the president-elect of Ghana," she told a news conference in the capital, Accra, on Friday.

Prior to Osei's announcement, Akufo-Addo said on Twitter that Mahama called him "congratulating me on winning the 2016 presidential election".

"I make this solemn pledge to you tonight: I will not let you down. I will do all in my power to live up to your hopes and expectations," Akufo-Addo told supporters in front of his residence.

Speaking to Al Jazeera, Akufo-Addo explained what he believed to be the hopes and expectations of Ghanaians: "The expectations they have of me, that I'm gonna bring them a new government, a new style; a government of honesty, a government that is concerned about the welfare of our people - that basic commitment is the one I am determined to fulfill."

Earlier, Mahama had appealed for calm and told his supporters he would respect the outcome of the vote,



whether he won or lost, in comments aimed at defusing tension in advance of the release of official results of the vote.

"I want to assure the nation that we will respect the outcome of the election, positive or negative, and so let us just be calm," he told supporters gathered outside his house.

Mahama, who came to power in 2012 after beating Akufo-Addo, urged voters to "stay the course", promising to deliver more infrastructure projects.

Akufo-Addo was making his third bid for the top job.

Ghana's elections have been historically close, with Mahama narrowly winning against Akufo-Addo in 2012 with 50.7 percent. Akufo-Addo unsuccessfully challenged Mahama's victory in the courts.

Ghana is the world's second-largest producer of cocoa after Ivory Coast and Africa's second biggest gold producer after South Africa.

But it was forced to turn to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in 2015 for a bailout as global commodity prices tanked.

(Source: agencies)

## U.S. rushes troops as Aleppo liberation nears

Western and Middle Eastern backers of militants fighting to topple the legitimate Syrian government were meeting in the French capital Paris on Saturday to discuss the situation.

The U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and foreign ministers from Europe and their counterparts from Qatar, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the House of Saud regime were likely to renew calls for an end to the onslaught.

Retreating terrorists now control only a pocket of Syria's second city, whose fate is seen as pivotal to the outcome of a nearly six-year-old war that has killed more than 400,000 people.

"My goal in all this is... to get both sides, all of the forces, to the table in Geneva. And that's what we're working on," Kerry said as he arrived for the meeting.

The European Union meanwhile said on Friday it would introduce more sanctions on Syria over the offensive in Aleppo.

"The EU will act swiftly ... with the aim of imposing further restrictive measures against Syria targeting Syrian individuals and entities supporting the regime as long as the repression continues," the bloc's top diplomat Federica Mogherini said.

In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov warned the United States against easing its alleged arms embargo on militants.

Peskov said U.S. weapons could end up in wrong hands if Washington went ahead with the plan to lift restrictions on arms deliveries to the so-called "moderate" militants.

The warning came a day after the White House said U.S. President Barack Obama had relaxed the so-called Arms Export Control Act for the militants in Syria.

"Certainly, the worst result of this decision would be those weapons, including MANPADs [man-portable anti-air missiles], ending up in the hands of terrorists," Peskov said.

Last year, Washington earmarked almost \$500 million to arming and training of the "moderates." It had also

slackened its arms embargo against certain militants back in 2013.

**Syria sends reinforcements to Palmyra to counter ISIL**

Meanwhile, the Syrian army says reinforcements have been deployed to the ancient city of Palmyra (Tadmor) in the west-central Homs Province to prevent the Takfiri ISIL terrorists from further advancing toward the city.

The army said in a statement on Saturday that clashes are underway between government forces and the terrorists, who have advanced to the city's outskirts.

The statement said that the militants had seized areas to the northwest and southeast of the historic city.

According to the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, the terrorist group launched the recent offensive late on Thursday, when it seized grain silos northeast of Palmyra, and has since taken at least partial control of oil and gas fields to the city's northwest.

(Source: agencies)

## South Korea's susceptibility to scandal

Innovative small and medium-sized companies require financing and greater support. And South Korea's rigid labor market needs to be loosened up. What growth the country has managed recently has been bought at the expense of rising debt, and that's not a sustainable strategy.

Finally, South Korea's next leader will

have to address the country's special vulnerability to presidential scandal. All of Park's elected predecessors were investigated for corruption or cronyism, and one even killed himself in response. Part of the problem is the Korean constitution, which limits presidents to one five-year term yet allows them wide-ranging powers while in office.

This encourages overreach: Leaders are driven to ram through big initiatives quickly rather than build consensus. By the time they leave office, presidents can, as Park has, find themselves isolated and dependent on a few, sometimes dubious loyalists.

Whoever replaces Park should immediately begin building consensus around

a set of constitutional reforms to check presidential powers, while at the same time allowing incumbents to run for a second term -- to encourage continuity of policy and longer-term thinking. The present scandal has been a tragedy for South Korea, but it can also be an opportunity for change.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## AP sources: Mattis received anonymous email in Petraeus case

The United States President-elect Donald Trump's choice for defense secretary was among U.S. military officials who, the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) concluded, received anonymous emails from the woman whose affair with then-CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) director David Petraeus led to his downfall, The Associated Press has learned.

The emails to now-retired Marine Gen. James Mattis and others, warning them to stay away from Tampa, Florida, socialite Jill Kelley, led to the discovery of the affair and revelations that Petraeus had shown classified secrets to his lover and biographer, Paula Broadwell.

The FBI concluded that the emails were from Broadwell, and as they investigated, they also learned of the affair and determined that Petraeus had shared classified materials with Broadwell.

According to an FBI report and a U.S. official, agents interviewed Mattis, who said he always had proper interactions with Kelley. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to discuss the investigation publicly.

The bizarre scandal surfaced four years ago but has crept back into headlines in recent weeks because Petraeus is among candidates Trump is considering to become secretary of state.

Petraeus resigned as CIA director in November 2012, and later pleaded guilty to one misdemeanor charge of mishandling classified information. He was also fined \$100,000 and remains on probation.

The scandal unfolded when the FBI investigated anonymous emails sent to high-ranking military officials and to Kelley's husband, warning them about what was described as Kelley's inappropriate behavior toward the men. The FBI concluded that the emails were from Broadwell, Petraeus' biographer, and as they investigated, they learned of the affair and learned that Petraeus had shared classified materials with Broadwell.

One of the officials who received an anonymous email was Mattis, who Trump announced last week would become his nominee for secretary of defense.

Mattis had been interviewed by the FBI about the email and his statement was memorialized in FBI reports. He told investigators he could not understand why anyone would send him a warning because he always had above-board interactions with Kelley, who he described to the FBI as holding an honorary ambassador title. Mattis had met Kelley when he served as a top officer at U.S. Central Command headquarters in Tampa.

Mattis did not immediately respond to a message left with Trump's transition team.

Emails between Mattis and Kelley were disclosed last year, released under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act. In some emails, Mattis referred to Kelley as "Young Jill." Kelley has said she never behaved inappropriately with Petraeus or any of the military officials she was emailing.

Separately, agents from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service Office of Special Projects had interviewed Mattis about counterintelligence aspects of the case, a U.S. official told the AP. It was considered by the agents to be an especially sensitive assignment because of the allegations against Petraeus about mishandling classified information. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorized to discuss details of the investigation publicly.

Broadwell was not accused of a crime. She told "CBS This Morning" this week that "it was a bit of a shocker that Petraeus was being considered for a Cabinet position," but said both she and Petraeus should be allowed to move on with their lives.

In a text sent on Friday to the AP, Kelley wrote: "Paula Broadwell's stalking brought months of unwanted terror to my innocent family, not to mention the national security breaches she created by her anonymous emails to our most senior generals by illegally accessing General Petraeus' government emails — based on her irrational & sexist suspicions. Of course she wants to 'move on' after she ruined countless careers and reputations of the victims she stalked because her affair ended."

(Source: AP)

## Muslim teen who reported NYC subway harassment reported missing

A Muslim teen who said she was verbally attacked by three drunk men on the subway last week has been reported missing, CBS New York reports.

Yasmin Seweid, 18, was last seen leaving her New Hyde Park, Long Island, home on Wednesday, police said.

She was wearing a black jacket, blue sweater, black yoga pants, and black head scarf and carrying a bag of clothing.

Last Thursday, Seweid told CBS New York that she was on the 6 train heading home from a school event when she was verbally attacked by the men, who she said made references to the United States President-elect Donald Trump and called her an "f-ing terrorist."

"They kept saying, 'you don't belong here, get out of this country, go back to your country,' and finally they came really close and they were like, 'take that rag off your head,'" she said.

Nassau County police said the Missing Person Squad is investigating.

Seweid was described as 5 feet 9 inches tall and 150 pounds.

(Source: CBS News)

## Beckham faces deadline on Miami MLS franchise

Major League Soccer fired a warning shot across the bow of David Beckham's plans for a franchise in Miami on Friday, with the MLS chief saying the clock was ticking down on time to get a deal done.

"There is a deadline on the Miami deal," MLS commissioner Don Garber said in his annual state of league address ahead of Saturday's MLS Cup final between Toronto FC and Seattle Sounders.

Garber, abiding by a confidentiality agreement between the league and Beckham's group, declined to say what exactly that deadline is but confirmed Miami will be on the agenda when the MLS board meets next week to discuss expansion plans.

Beckham's Miami team is slotted in to become the league's 24th franchise following Atlanta and Minnesota United, who are set to start playing next season followed by a second team in Los Angeles scheduled to begin operations in 2018.

"I have said before we need to resolve the Miami situation so we can go forward with our expansion plans from 25 to 28 because they are team 24," said Garber.

"If they are not going to be team 24 there are going to be a lot of things that need to move around.

"We all know how teams evolve in certain markets and the challenges of getting stadiums built, we try to do everything we can to ensure we have the right recipe for success."

Beckham, who obtained the rights to buy into an MLS franchise at a discount as part of the deal he signed to play for the Los Angeles Galaxy, has been frustrated in attempts to secure a home for his team.

### ■ FURTHER DELAYS

The former England captain and his partners in Miami Beckham United (MBU), agent Simon Fuller, Bolivian billionaire Marcelo Claure and Tim Leiweke, who masterminded the midfielder's move to the Galaxy in 2007, recently purchased a parcel of land in the Overton area of Miami.

MBU, however, is facing further delays, according to a report in the Miami Herald, as the group searches for new investors to help fund the building of a stadium and the purchase of additional land.

The MLS board is due to meet on Thursday in New York to discuss the process, timetable and fees for bringing on board four new franchises to take the total number of teams to 28.

At least 10 markets are looking into joining the MLS, including Austin, Cincinnati, Detroit, Nashville, Raleigh, Sacramento, St. Louis, San Antonio, San Diego and Tampa.

Interest in the league has skyrocketed, Garber said.

For the sixth time in seven seasons the league smashed total and average attendance records with almost 21,700 fans per game, which Garber said put the MLS sixth among global football leagues.

Merchandise sales rose 25 percent over last season, while franchise evaluations have jumped 80 percent from 2013.

"We're continuing to evolve and develop and remain focused on building a league that can be among the top leagues in the world," said Garber. "It seems there is no city in America where you can't have a viable professional soccer team."

(Source: Reuters)

## Andy Murray heads the list of six British stars at the Australian Open

Great Britain have a guaranteed six players in the main draw of the Australian Open next month with new world No 1 Andy Murray leading the way.

Murray, Kyle Edmund and Dan Evans will all be in the men's first round in Melbourne while Johanna Konta, Heather Watson and Naomi Broady will compete in the women's singles.

Murray will be heading to his first Grand Slam as the top seed and will be hoping to finally win a tournament he has finished runner-up of five times, while Edmund and Evans, ranked 45th and 66th respectively, both head into 2017 on the back of their best-ever seasons.

Konta, born in Australia, will return to the scene of her first major semi-final ranked in the top 10 after a stellar 2016 season saw her surge up the listings.

Watson (76th) and Broady (90th) also get in the main draw due to their ranking inside the top 100.

Tara Moore, ranked 160, and Laura Robson, way down at 221st, will have to go through qualifying if they are to join their compatriots, with Aljaz Bedene also forced to qualify on the men's side.

Every player in the world's top 99 bar pregnant Victoria Azarenka have been confirmed for the tournament, including Roger Federer and Serena Williams as they return from injury.

"We have an exceptionally strong field for Australian Open 2017, and it's exciting to welcome two new world number ones, and two new top seeds in Angie (Kerber) and Andy (Murray)," said tournament director Craig Tiley.

"We have been in regular contact with Roger and Rafa and both are ready and excited for the Aussie summer, with Roger heading to Perth and Rafa to Brisbane for the first time.

"Like all the players, they can't wait to get to Melbourne and start the year off well."

(Source: SkySport)

# UEFA in the dark over possible World Cup formats

European football's governing body has been left in the dark over the future format of the World Cup and was not certain it would vote for an expanded tournament, its president said on Friday.

Aleksander Ceferin said UEFA had been getting information from the media because the game's world ruling body FIFA had not replied to their request for more details of the proposals.

The FIFA Council, whose 37 members include seven from UEFA, is due to vote in January on the format of the tournament from 2026 onwards.

FIFA chief Gianni Infantino was elected in February after promising in his campaign to increase the number of teams at the World Cup from 32 to 40 starting with the 2026 finals.

He then said he wanted a 48-team tournament including a preliminary knockout round followed by four groups of eight.

This week he changed his mind again, proposing 48 teams divided into 16 groups of three.

Asked if UEFA would back an expanded tournament, Ceferin said: "I am not sure we are getting that way.

"We don't have much information from FIFA, we mainly read from newspapers about what is supposed to go on...(and) we get different formats every day.

"Until we get some concrete information about the format, about everything else, we simply don't have any information."

Ceferin said he hoped UEFA would get more details when the secretary generals of the continental confederations meet in Tokyo in December.

"We asked in October for an appropriate analysis to show what it means to extend the World Cup and FIFA didn't produce it...



so without proper information, we can't say that we will be interested in that kind of World Cup."

### ■ BEST PRODUCT

UEFA confirmed that controversial changes to the Champions League announced in August would come into effect from the 2018-19 campaign and Ceferin dismissed suggestions that the showpiece competition had become too predictable.

UEFA rearranged the group-stage slots in favour of its four top-ranked leagues - in effect Spain, England, Germany and Italy - by guaranteeing them four places

each and reduced the slots available for the champions of smaller leagues.

"The Champions League is the best sports product in the world, I'm sure," he said.

UEFA also said all knockout stage matches would kick off at 2000 GMT.

Ceferin promised a transparent bidding process for choosing the hosts of the Champions League and Europa League finals, decisions which until now had been chosen behind closed doors by UEFA's executive committee.

"There will be no more political favours concerning (the) decision of

who will host the finals of Champions League and Europa League, there will be a clear bidding procedure from now on," he said.

He added that joint bids would be allowed for Euro 2024 although if three or more countries made a joint bid, only two would qualify automatically.

Potential host nations for the tournament have until March 3 to confirm their interest with the winners to be announced in September 2018.

Lyon was named as the host city for this season's Europa League final.

(Source: Reuters)

## Eder adamant Inter can still reach Champions League



Inter attacker Eder remains optimistic about his side's chances of qualifying for the Champions League this season.

The Nerazzurri have endured an underwhelming start to the 2016-17 campaign and sit just 10th in the Serie A table after 15 games.

Their poor run of form cost head coach Frank de Boer his job, with Stefano Pioli replacing him as the man in charge.

And Eder is confident they will climb up the table in the months to come.

"There are loads of points left to play for and a long way to go," the forward told Mediaset Premium.

"Anything could happen, we just have to keep believing. What we all want is to get back in the Champions League. We know we are off the pace at the moment, but you can soon change things with a run of wins.

"The only way you get out of a situation like this is by knuckling down. We are doing just that and I think we are on the right path.

(Source: Goal)

## Cavani: I'd like to play with Griezmann one day



Paris Saint-Germain's Edinson Cavani would relish the opportunity to play alongside Atletico Madrid striker Antoine Griezmann.

The future of France international Griezmann - who signed a new five-year deal in June - was the subject of widespread speculation following an impressive Euro 2016 campaign in which he inspired his nation to the final.

Late last month, Cavani sparked rumours of a possible union when he posted on Twitter to invite Griezmann to join him in enjoying some mate, a traditional drink in Cavani's native Uruguay.

Cavani said the media had got carried away with the situation but did express his desire to one day count Griezmann as a team-mate.

"It's the press that said I wanted to invite Antoine Griezmann to Paris," he said.

"I sent him a message to take a Uruguay mate. I'd like to play with him one day, he is a great striker and a beautiful person too."

(Source: Soccerway)

## Champions League to change kickoffs in group stage to two timeslots

The UEFA Champions League will play games at two different kickoff times in each matchday starting in 2018, the European governing body announced on Friday.

Currently, all games are played Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 20:45 CET (2:45 p.m. ET), allowing for exceptions for earlier start times when necessary.

But for the competition cycle running from 2018-21, two matches will kick off each day at 19:00 CET (1 p.m. ET), with six starting at 21:00 CET (3 p.m. ET). Those timeslots are similar to those already used on Thursdays in the Europa League.

The change was made at UEFA's executive committee meeting on Friday to allow "fans opportunities to watch more matches," a statement said. UEFA did not specify if the new times would extend beyond the group stage.

Further announcements from UEFA included a change to club coefficient structures, removing the 20 percent contribution of the national association coefficient to ensure clubs are ranked on their individual merit. Clubs' history of previous titles will contribute to how much prize money they earn, but not to how they will be seeded.

Following changes in August that saw the four top-



ranked leagues -- currently Spain, Germany, England and Italy -- guaranteed four direct entries to the 32-team group stage, from 2018 only two teams will advance to the group stage from the qualifying rounds involving non-champions.

In addition, domestic champions eliminated in the Champions League qualifying rounds will have the chance to instead qualify for the Europa League via a dedicated champions' qualifying path. An extra €50 million per season will also be diverted from Champions League prize

money to the Europa League.

The bidding process to host Euro 2024 was detailed, including a provision for joint bid. The host nation or nations will be announced in September 2018. The first deadline in the process is March 3 for member federations to confirm their interest in bidding.

Germany set sights on hosting Euro 2024 alone when it made a deal with England, which will host the Euro 2020 final and semifinals. A Scandinavian project of up to four hosts has also been suggested. However, UEFA says while two co-hosts would get automatic entry to the tournament, it will give no guarantees to countries bidding as a group of three or four hosts.

Lyon will host next season's Europa League final. The 59,286-capacity Parc OL was opened in time for Euro 2016, where it hosted six games.

The European Under-21 Championship will be hosted in Italy in 2019, with the under-19 event in Armenia and under-17 in the Republic of Ireland. In 2020, the under-19 tournament will be in Northern Ireland, while Estonia hosts the under-17s.

(Source: ESPN)

# Iran to face giants at FIVB World Grand Champions Cup

**T T S P O R T S** Iran will meet the volleyball giants at the 2017 edition of the FIVB World Grand Champions Cup.

The competition, which is played in the year following the Olympics, will feature the four highest ranked continents from the 2016 Olympic Games, with countries selected as per their continental ranking. Host Japan and a wild card entry complete the six-team lineup for the competition.

The men's competition features an equally impressive lineup. Current Olympic gold medalists and world no. 1, Brazil, will be looking to claim its fourth consecutive title.

France, who currently sits in ninth place in the world rankings, will make its debut in the competition against host Japan (WR 14), Iran (WR 7), Olympic bronze medalist USA (WR 2) and wild card entry, Italy (WR 4).

Brazil has been the most successful team in the competition with the men's team winning four gold medals (1997, 2005, 2009 and 2013) and the women's team two titles in 2005 and 2013, fivb.org wrote.

Japan has hosted every edition of the FIVB Volleyball Men's World Grand Champions Cup to date. The inaugural edition of the quadrennial competition took place in 1993.

Brazilian men's and women's teams were victorious in the last edition in 2013.

The 2017 World Grand Champions Cup will be held in Japan from September 12 to 17.



## Persepolis secures a late win against Padideh to move top



**T T S P O R T S** Persepolis football team has defeated Padideh in the 13th week of Iran Professional League in Mashhad on Saturday.

Last season's top scorer Mehdi Taremi gave visitors the lead in the 21st minute with a header from inside the six yard box.

Four minutes later Padideh made a dangerous counter attack as Mohsen Yousefi dribbled past several Persepolis defenders and found the back of the net from six-yard area. The score line was leveled until the 92nd minute when Vahid Amiri converted Ahmad Nouroloahi's corner with a close range header to give Persepolis a late win.

"We were the better side in the second half and we deserved to win. I would like to thank my players, who fought until the last second. Without a doubt, Padideh

goalkeeper was their best player. I'm totally satisfied with all of my player's performance. I hope Amiri and Taremi continue this goal scoring form in the upcoming matches," Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic told reporters in the post-match press conference.

Padideh coach Reza Mohajeri bemoaned his team's performance in the final minutes.

"We conceded the second goal when there was no time to make up. Persepolis players are more experienced while my players are so young, they knew how to earn the three points in tough games like this," Mohajeri said.

The game was originally scheduled to kick off on Friday but it was moved to Saturday due to the bad weather condition. Persepolis moves top with 29 points from 13 games while Tractor Sazi is second with 27.

## Farhad Kazemi takes charge of Machine Sazi

**T T S P O R T S** Farhad Kazemi has been appointed as new head coach of Machine Sazi football team on Saturday.

The former Siahjamegan coach replaced Rasoul Khatibi in Tabriz-based team.

Under tutelage of Khatibi, Machine

Sazi secured promotion to the Iran Professional League (IPL) last season.

The team won just one match in IPL after 13 weeks, suffered nine defeats, and drawn three times.

Farhad Kazemi, Yahya Golmohammadi, and Toni Oliveira were among the

candidates.

Kazemi, who started his coaching career in Bahman in 1995, has coached many clubs in Iran. Most of which have been in the Premier division. He managed to have a very successful spell at Sepahan from 2002 to 2005.



## French squash player ranks first in Tehran open tournament



Young French squash player Auguste Dussourd has delivered commendable performances at the first edition of the International Navy Martyrs Memorial Squash Tournament in Iran and been named the greatest athlete of the event.

According to a report published on the Islamic Republic of Iran Squash Federation website on Friday, the 20-year-old Dussourd stood at the top position with the highest number of points tallied.

Tayyab Aslam from Pakistan claimed the second spot behind the French

sportsman.

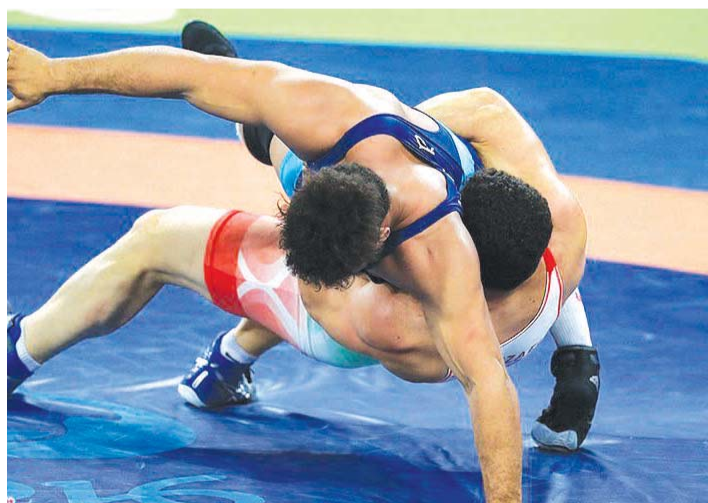
Junior Iranian squash player Sajjad Zare'ian and Pakistan's Ahsan Ayaz shared the third spot.

The first edition of the International Navy Martyrs Memorial Squash Tournament started in Tehran, Iran, on December 3, and wrapped up on December 9, 2016.

The sports event brought together more than 100 squash players from a dozen countries, including Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Iran, Pakistan, and Qatar.

(Source: PressTV)

## Iran's Sina Sanat wins greco-roman World Wrestling Club Cup



Sina Sanat Izeh of Iran claimed the title of the Greco-Roman World Wrestling Club Cup on Friday.

The Iranian team defeated Istanbul Buyuksehir of Turkey 5-3 in the competition's final match.

In the third-place match, Iran's Bimeh Razi defeated Hungary 6-2.

The competition took place in Budapest, Hungary.

Last week, Bimeh Razi became runner-up at the Freestyle World Wrestling Clubs Cup in Kharkif, Ukraine.

The Iranian team lost to Titan

Mercury of USA 4-3 in the final match in Kharkif, Ukraine.

World Wrestling Clubs Cup is an international wrestling competition among teams representing member nations of the United World Wrestling (UWW), the sport's global governing body.

The tournament was founded in 2014 at the suggestion of the Islamic Republic of Iran Wrestling Federation, with the first edition held in Iran.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Liverpool striker Divock Origi reveals Man United, Bayern interest

Liverpool striker Divock Origi says there was interest from Manchester United and Bayern Munich before he chose to move to Anfield.

Orig, 21, impressed at the 2014 World Cup for Belgium and moved to Anfield that summer from Lille. However, he revealed that he had been scouted by some of Europe's elite before he went to Ligue 1 aged 15.

"I started with the national team at Under-16s. It was a very good year for me, a lot of scouts were coming to my dad. I heard Manchester United wanted to sign me, some Italian clubs and German clubs,"

Orig told the Daily Mirror.

"I visited Lille's training centre. I was amazed how good it was. I saw how Eden Hazard had grown from young player to big player winning the league with them and that was something very nice. They have a very good reputation at developing young players."

"My heart said: 'go to Lille'. I remember coming home from school, sitting in the kitchen and my dad said: 'the choice is yours, what do you want to do?' I decided to go to Lille.

"[In 2014] there were offers from everywhere.

Bayern were interested, all these clubs. But I came to Liverpool, I saw the facilities, I took some time out of my vacation to visit Melwood and speak with [then manager] Brendan Rodgers.

"When I came in, everyone knew my name, they knew who I was and they were looking at a video of me even from the Under-15s.

"They knew about my qualities and when I saw the values of the club - passing, pressing, fast players - I was like: 'this is the place I want to go.'"

(Source: ESPN)

## Paris Saint-Germain v Nice: Champions hunting down shock leaders

Match of the Week: Nice are aiming to boost their chances of a first Ligue 1 title since 1959 by upsetting PSG at the Parc des Princes.

Few could have predicted how the Ligue 1 season would pan out for Paris Saint-Germain and surprise-package Nice before the start of the season.

PSG, once more heavily bankrolled by their wealthy Qatari owners, may have lost all-time leading goalscorer Zlatan Ibrahimovic, but in Edinson Cavani they had a ready-made star in place to fill his hefty void, while losing David Luiz was offset by keeping hold of the in-demand Marquinhos and a more prominent role for youth-academy graduate Presnel Kimpembe.

The additions of Hatem Ben Arfa, Grzegorz Krychowiak and Jese Rodriguez only added further credence to the argument that PSG would dominate domestically again and with a fifth straight league title.

By contrast, Nice had to deal with losing Ben Arfa - who scored an impressive 17 goals in 34 league outings to help the team to fourth last season - and many expected a season of struggle for Lucien Favre's men.

However, thus far the script has not been followed in France's top flight.

Unai Emery was drafted in to replace Laurent Blanc at PSG to try and improve the club's fortunes in the Champions League following his exploits with Sevilla in the Europa League.

But PSG have yet to hit top form under Emery. They have lost three of their opening 16 league matches, more than in the entirety of last season, and dropped points on two other occasions.

Nice, meanwhile, upset the odds from the off thanks in part to their shrewd work in the transfer market.

Mario Balotelli was plucked on a free transfer from Liverpool and the Italy international has six goals in as many league appearances, with injuries denying him the chance of an even better return.

Younes Belhanda, signed on loan from Dynamo Kiev, is also enjoying somewhat of a renaissance having seen his career stall in recent seasons.

A 1-0 loss at Caen last month threatened to derail their progress, but Favre's men responded with three wins and a draw from their past four league matches.

The surprise league leaders consequently travel to the Parc des Princes two places and four points better off than PSG.

Nice are enjoying their best start to a league campaign and another upset in the capital will see them put a seven-point gap between the teams, with second-place Monaco also in title contention.

### ■ THE NUMBERS GAME

PSG's defence has proven particularly stoic at the Parc des Princes this season, but they face a tough task to keep Nice's frontline quiet on Sunday.

Nice have failed to find the net just once in the top flight this term. With Balotelli set to feature having returned from injury in the Europa League on Thursday and Alassane Plea in sublime form, the visitors will fancy their chances.

- PSG have kept a clean sheet in 10 of their last 11 home games in Ligue 1.

- Nice have scored in 17 of their last 18 games in Ligue 1.

- Balotelli has a conversion rate of 38.46 per cent and has scored six times, missing three big chances this term.

- Plea has been involved in three of Nice's last five goals in Ligue 1 (two goals, one assist).

- Edinson Cavani has scored 14 goals in Ligue 1 in 2016-17, only Borussia Dortmund striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang has scored more in the big five leagues this season (15).

- Despite topping the Ligue 1 goal scoring charts, Cavani has already missed 14 big chances, more than any other player in Ligue 1.

(Source: FourFourTwo)

## Andrea Anastasi likely to reject Iran's offer

Italian coach Andrea Anastasi says that he prefers to stay at Gdansk.

The Iranian Volleyball Federation has negotiated with former Italy coach Mauro Berruto and Bulgarian Radostin Stoychev as well in the last few days.

"I've received an offer from Iran Volleyball Federation but I would rather stay in Gdansk. I have a good relationship with my club," Anastasi said.

"I have a difficult task ahead of me but I know we can be successful," Anastasi told sportowefakty.wp.pl.

Iran is not going to renew Raul Lozano's contract.

Under guidance of the Argentinean coach, Iran finished in fifth place in the 2016 Olympic Games.

(Source: Tasnim)





## Poem of the day

A horse with slender girth is of use  
On the day of battle, not a fattened ox.

Sadi

## Prayer Times

Noon:11:58

Evening: 17:12

Dawn: 5:35 tomorrow

Sunrise: 7:05 (tomorrow)

DECEMBER 11, 2016

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## Spanish theater instructor Iva Horvat holding workshop in Tehran

**T I A R T TEHRAN** — Spanish instructor Iva Horvat has begun a three-day workshop in Tehran's City Theater Complex as part of the 35th Fajr International Theater Festival's series of workshops.

"Project Management and International Marketing of Theatrical Productions" is the major topic to be discussed at the workshop, which opened on Saturday, the organizers have announced.

A professor of kinesiology (the study of the mechanics of body movements), Iva lives and works in Barcelona. She has over twenty years of stage experience as a dancer, choreographer, director and contemporary dance teacher.

Iva is also the cofounder of Agente129. Agente129's team is of composed five international performing arts distributors with a vast experience in circulating and producing artistic projects.

The team has worked with a wide array of genres of dance and theater, visual art and street art.

Artistic director Antonio Pinto Ribeiro from Portugal held the first workshop on cultural management and programing artistic projects in Tehran last week.

The 35th Fajr International Theater Festival will be running from January 20 to 31, 2017.

# Iran's "Bodyguard" wins first at Baghdad festival

**T I A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian director Ebrahim Hatamikia's acclaimed political drama "Bodyguard" has won the first prize of the Baghdad International Film Festival 2016, the organizers have announced.

Starring Parviz Parastui, winner of the best actor Crystal Simorgh for the film at the 34th Fajr Film Festival, the film tells the story of a middle-aged bodyguard who protects a politician from a suicide bomber, and then begins to question his dedication to his job.

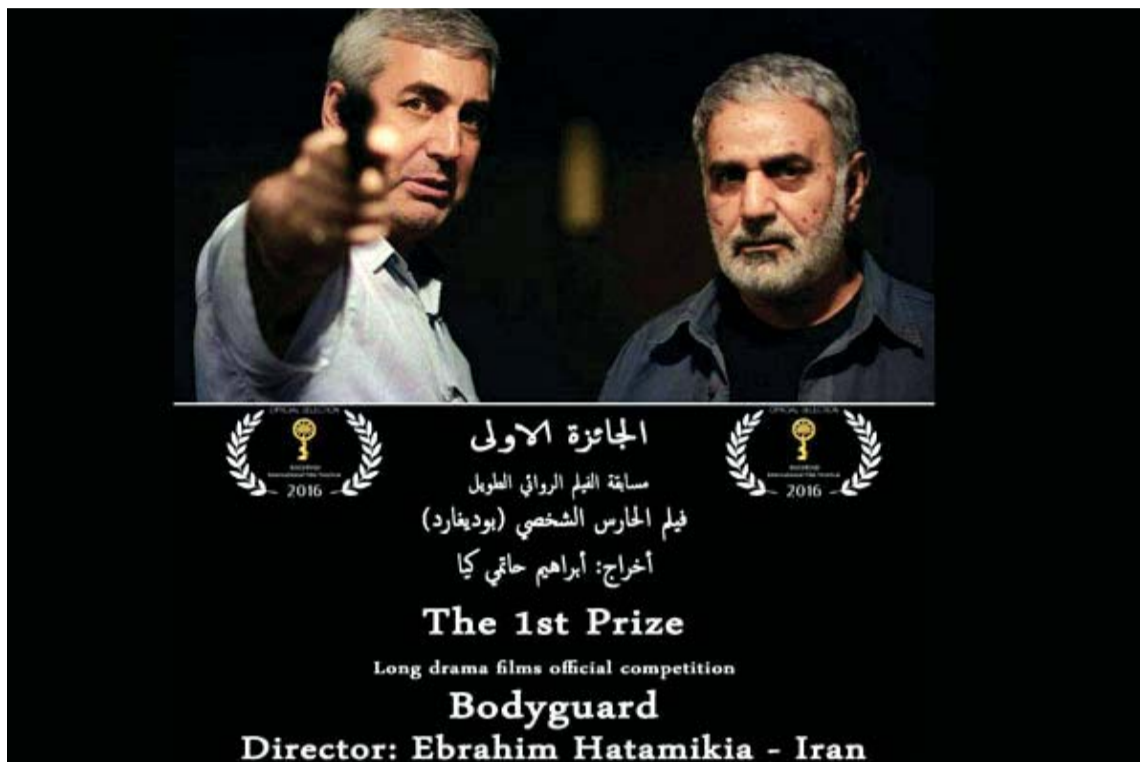
The second prize went to "Fallow" by director Laurent Vanlancker from Belgium, and "Kingdom of Ants".

By Adnan Osman from Iraq received the Jury prize. In addition, in the Short Drama Films Competition section, "Lavaf" by Iraj Mohammadi Razini from Iran won the second prize, while the first prize of this section went to "When the Heron Flies" by Lionel Laget from France.

A selection of ten films from Iran was screened in the "Made in Iran" section of the gala.

"Mazar-i-Sharif" (Hassan Barzideh), "Mobarak" (Mohmmadreza Najafi Emami), "Third Generation" (Mohammad-Ali Rakhshani), "Looking for Peace" (Mohsen Eslamzadeh), "Parole" (Hossein Mahkam), "Night Shift" (Niki Karimi), "Pruning Season" (Loqman Khaledi), "The Promise" (Mohammad-Ali Talebi) and "Sweet Taste of Imagination" (Kamal Tabrizi) were the films from Iran.

The 2016 edition of the festival opened with "Bodyguard", and the 7th edition of the Baghdad



festival opened with "Hussein, Who Said No", director Ahmadreza Darvish's movie about the uprising of

Imam Hussein (AS) against the Umayyad dynasty in 680 CE.

## Second festival of Prophet Muhammad (S) to focus on "salawat"

**T I A R T TEHRAN** — The second international festival of Prophet Muhammad (S) has been dedicated to the inscription of "salawat" (greetings to the Holy Prophet Mohammad (S) and his infallible household).

The top selected works of calligraphy and calligraphic-paintings will go on display in Tehran and several other cities, Majdi Majidi, director of "Muhammad, the Messenger of God" said in a press conference held in Tehran's Barg Gallery on Saturday.

The festival is scheduled to open in May, 2017 to commemorate Be'that (the day in which the Prophet Muhammad (S) was appointed to his prophethood).

He also remarked that there are plans to establish a foundation of Prophet Muhammad (S) and the festival,

which is due to be held biannually, will be part of the foundation's programs.

"Interested applicants are invited to register before February 28, 2017 and the top selected works will be displayed in three different sections," said secretary of the festival Mojtaba Musavi, also attending the conference.

"The first section will exhibit competing works, the second will be dedicated to works by masters of calligraphy and calligraphic-paintings and the third will showcase old and rare copies of inscriptions of salawat," he added.

Tehran Municipality's Beautification Organization Director Isa Alizadeh also noted that a large number of billboards across the capital, Tehran, will be dedicated



to showcasing the top selected works.

The first edition of the festival was dedicated to the creation of a logotype representing Prophet Muhammad (S).

## PICTURE OF THE DAY FARS/Soheil Sahranavard



Visitors pose for a selfie at the "10 Days with Iranian Photographers" exhibition, which opened in the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) on December 9, 2016.

## Puccini's original 'Madama Butterfly' back at La Scala after 112 years

**MILAN (Reuters)** — Milan's La Scala opera house opened its new season on Wednesday with the original, more brutal version of Giacomo Puccini's "Madama Butterfly", not shown there since its poorly received premiere in 1904.

The opera follows the story of the Japanese geisha Cio-cio-San, who marries a U.S. army officer, F.B. Pinkerton, for love, only to see him leave Japan, then return three years later - with an American wife.

Conductor Riccardo Chailly chose to revive Puccini's first take on the opera, in two acts rather than three, which has

no aria expressing Pinkerton's regrets at leaving the geisha.

"This makes the drama even more brutal," Chailly said.

Unlike the 1904 production, which was greeted with hisses, Wednesday's showing earned a 13-minute standing ovation.

"It's Puccini's revenge, 112 years later," said baritone Carlos Alvarez, who sang the role of the U.S. consul, Sharpless.

Gino Vezzini, president of the Amici del Loggione ("Friends of the Gallery") association, praised Chailly's "accurate and emotional" rendition.

## Trump remains executive producer on reality TV show: Schwarzenegger

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — President-elect Donald Trump will remain an executive producer on the reality TV show "Celebrity Apprentice", new host Arnold Schwarzenegger said on Friday, defending the situation as similar to his own transitions between politics and entertainment.

Trump, who famously barked the catchphrase "You're fired!" as he dismissed competitors on the "Apprentice" and "Celebrity Apprentice" programs, stepped down from the show last year when he entered the Republican presidential race. "Celebrity Apprentice" returns to the

air with Schwarzenegger, star of the "Terminator" films and former two-term California governor, as host on Jan. 2, 18 days before Trump is sworn in as president.

"I knew from the beginning he is executive producer of the show...His credit was on there," Schwarzenegger told reporters at a promotional event for the next season.

"It is no different than when I was running for governor and I became governor. My credit for starring in 'Terminator' still said Schwarzenegger and everything stayed the same and I continued getting my royalties," he said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### Khaseb stages "Mud" in Bangladesh

**T I A R T TEHRAN** — The Iranian theater troupe Crazy Body led by director Yasser Khaseb performed "Mud" on the closing day of the 2nd edition of the BotTala Rangamela, a local theater festival, which was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh from December 1 to 10.

In the play Khaseb's co-performer Hamid Etemedi, in the role of a sculptor, forms Khaseb out of mud. Caked in dirt, Khaseb is poured from a barrel and shaped, and ultimately asserts himself before the artist.



### Tehran institute to review German poem

**T I CULTURE TEHRAN** — German poems and lyrics will be reviewed during a session at Tehran's Book City Institute on Tuesday.

German poet and author Jan Wagner and Iranian translator Ali Abdollahi will deliver speeches during the program entitled "New Tendencies in German Lyrics".



### "Hitman Anders and the Meaning of It All" translated into Persian

**T I CULTURE TEHRAN** — "Hitman Anders and the Meaning of It All" by Swedish writer and journalist Jonas Jonasson has recently been translated into Persian by Abolfazl Allahdadi.

Published in 2016, the book is about a hitman, Anders, who has served a long sentence in prison. Through a series of unlikely events, Anders meets two people, a hotel receptionist and an ex-priest who never believed in God. They decide to run a business together.

Behnegar Publications in Tehran is scheduled to publish the book in the near future.



### Tehran's Niavaran Palace to hold charity auction

**T I A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian art collector Saeideh Abshenasan plans to auction 100 paintings of her collection to raise funds for children with immunodeficiency diseases, ISNA reported on Saturday.

Immunodeficiency disorders prevent the body from fighting infections and diseases.

The auction will be held in Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Historical Palace on December 16.

A number of artists, art collectors and foreign diplomats are expected to attend the auction.