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# TEHRAN TIMES



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## Four cineastes honored at Fajr

## Sanctions lift opens door to €10b of energy projects in Iran

By Ebrahim Fallahi

**TEHRAN** — After the removal of sanctions against Iran, once again the country has become an attractive market for the world's renowned energy companies so that more than €10 billion worth of energy projects has been proposed by foreign companies, Energy Minister Hamid Chitchian said on Sunday.

The minister made the remarks in a press conference which was held on the occasion of the Ten-Day Dawn (February 1-10, marking the victory anniversary of the Islamic Revolution) in Tehran.

China, Russia, South Korea, Japan, Turkey, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands and Britain are among the countries which have expressed willingness for contribution in Iran's energy projects and some of them including Russia, China, Germany, South Korea and Belgium have signed deals with the country, Chitchian added.

Energy Ministry hopes to attract over €2 billion of foreign investment for the country's energy projects by the end of current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017), the official told the Tehran Times. →4

## Iran takes reciprocal measure in response to Trump's visa ban

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — One day after U.S. President Donald Trump put his stump on a visa ban on citizens from seven Muslim countries, including Iran, the Iranian Foreign Ministry said in an announcement it "will take reciprocal measures in order to safeguard the rights of its citizens..."

The Foreign Ministry also vowed to "examine" and "legally pursue any negligence or violation of the international obligations of the United States under bilateral agreements and multilateral."

Here is the full text of the announcement published in English:

Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

The decision of the Government of the United States to impose restrictions on the travel of Muslims to the United States – though temporarily for three months – is a clear insult to the Islamic world, and especially the great nation of Iran; and despite claims of being made to combat terrorism and protecting the people of the United States, it will be recorded in history as a great gift to extremists and their supporters. →2



Tehran Times/ Mohammadreza Abbasi

Actor Mohammad Kasebi (C) accepts a Crystal Simorgh from his fellow Majid Mozaffari for his lifetime achievements during the opening ceremony of the 35th Fajr Film Festival at Tehran's Milad Tower on January 28, 2017. Actor Homayun Ershadi is also seen in the photo.

### PERSPECTIVE

By Ilia Aria

Political analyst

## The so-called president Trump

In spite of a lofty aura bestowed by a deep ruling system, even classical American politicians have by no means been so spotless as they have been pretending.

Beneath their imposing, disarming political rhetoric padded out with pejorative words, there are undertones of superiority, hubris, and authority: democracy, only its American type; color, the American society; race, all the same to a typically American mind, etc.

And this is exactly where a nuanced paradox sneaks in.

Unlike previous American presidents who each in a peerless way spoke and implied two ends of a continuum simultaneously, the upstart realtor-turned-president Donald Trump is hardwired with a one-track-mind, speaking his inmost Jungian sub-conscious straight and acting accordingly.

From cranky, lewd catcalls to his most recent disparagingly racist executive orders, the erratic, impossible personality has cast a shroud of skepticism virtually on the whole fabric of the American society and the principles it has been standing for.

Months of campaign's canvassing operation had already given the world a nasty taste of this Trumpian personality, not even bearable as a cartoon character who may get to the audience in the blink of an eye.

Trump made "Make America Great Again" a key element of his stump speeches, and he is delivering his promises now but in a Trumpian way.

He could simply make America great by expanding opportunity for the American society, embracing diversity and disregarding discrimination in a country of enormous diversity.

Neither construction of walls nor travel bans will contribute to a greater America.

Greatness is a concept which forms and is nurtured in inclusive, beautiful minds which abominate prejudice and dual standards in their entirety, from which Trump and his doppelgangsters are miles away.

America is no longer the beacon of democracy, and under Trump, a black-clad Statue of Liberty will make more sense to the world.

## Zarif: Trump's move 'a great gift to extremists'

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Foreign Minister Javad Zarif has called U.S. President Donald Trump's decision in banning visa for some Muslim nations including Iran "a great gift to extremists".

Zarif said this discriminatory behavior will only aid terrorist recruitment and Iran will take "reciprocal measures".

He said that Tehran's decision to ban entry of Americans "is not retroactive", and that all visitors "with valid Iranian visa will be gladly welcomed".

Trump signed executive order on Friday limiting immigration and imposing visa bans on citizens of seven Middle Eastern and African countries, including Iran, Iraq, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Yemen and Somalia, from entering the U.S. for 90 days. The same order also suspends the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for 120 days.

Before signing the order at the Pentagon, Trump said, "We only want to admit those who will support our country and love deeply

our people." He added, "We will never forget the lessons of 9/11". He claimed the move is aimed at keeping radicals and terrorists out of the U.S.

Worth noting is that the 19 hijackers implicated in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks came from Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. None of those countries are subject to the travel ban.

On Sunday, Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani slammed the travel ban and said concerns about terror threats from the Islamic Republic's nationals "sounds more like a joke". Larijani also said the move shows the U.S. is "even afraid of its own shadow."

During the 90-day period, the Trump administration will assess if the foreign governments on the list are providing enough information in 60 days about their citizens seeking visas to enable the U.S. to assess whether they pose a terrorism risk. In case the information is not forwarded the citizens will be barred from entering the U.S.

## White tigers attraction

after the Siberian tiger. But what is the white tiger?

### White tigers' main stronghold

Within their huge range, tigers have adapted to conditions ranging from bleak mountain forests to mangrove swamps and jungle. Tigers are the biggest species of Felidae Family. Tigers breed well specially in captivity, so they are unlikely to become extinct. Habitat fragmentation, loss of natural prey, human conflicts and trophy poaching consid-

ered as the main reasons of tigers' extinction. However, the captive population has become seriously inbred in the past, and there has been genetic mixing between different subspecies.

But the story of white tigers is different; they are unbelievably rare due to trophy hunting and also capture for the exotic pet trade. Recently a circus white tiger also died in Iran and all of this shows why we must be conscious about different types of creatures. →12

## Trump's sweeping Muslim ban sparks protests at U.S. airports

President Donald Trump's sweeping ban on people from seven Muslim-majority countries has sparked confusion and anger at major U.S. airports.

Protests erupted at airports in Dallas, Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, New York and elsewhere after border agents began detaining refugees and immigrants who arrived in the country a day after Trump issued an executive order reshaping the U.S. refugee and immigration policy.



AFP



### ARTICLE

By Yuram Abdullah Weiler

Analyst and journalist

## Trump's inaugural speech: Populist prattle with Islamophobic innuendos

"From this moment on, it's going to be America First."

--U.S. president Donald Trump

On January 20, 2017, real estate mogul and reality TV show producer Donald Trump was sworn in as the 45th president of the United States. Reinforcing his populist and often inflammatory campaign rhetoric, Trump delivered an inauguration speech suggesting an American foreign policy lurch in the direction of isolationism and protectionism. Yet in the midst of it all, the master of tweets announced a renewed crusade against "radical Islamic terrorism."

Trump avowed the dawning of a new era in American history in which "January 20th 2017, will be remembered as the day the people became the rulers of this nation again." He assured Americans, "Everyone is listening to you now," and that the desire for good schools, safe neighborhoods and good jobs "are the just and reasonable demands of a righteous public."

Accusing the U.S. public education system of being "flush with cash," Trump claimed that students within the system were nevertheless "deprived of knowledge." While total education spending in the U.S. exceeds the amount spent on so-called defense, Trump's statement masks the systemic inequality in the American educational system, which largely remains racially segregated. In fact, the term "apartheid school," meaning a school with a 99 percent or higher white student population, has recently entered the scholarly discourse.

While some progress was made in the 1970s and 1980s, effective resegregation of schools ensuing from a series of supreme court decisions has resulted in newer, well-funded and equipped, largely white majority suburban schools, and older, crowded, poorly equipped and underfunded inner city schools. →13



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



UN's Afghanistan envoy meets Zarif

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The special desk representative for United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan on Sunday met Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif in Tehran.

Tadamichi Yamamoto and Zarif discussed ways to help stabilize Afghanistan, the Foreign Ministry reported. The UN official urged Iran to continue its constructive role in neighboring country.

Zarif praised the Afghan national unity government and said Tehran will cooperate with UN agencies to bring peace and stability to the country.



Tehran to hold funeral for fallen firemen on Monday

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — A funeral procession will be held in Tehran on Monday for the firefighters who lost their lives in a massive fire and subsequent collapse of the Plasco building on January 19, the governor of Tehran announced.

Issa Farhadi asked citizens to congregate at the Grand Musalla (prayer hall) of Tehran at 8:30 Monday morning to attend the funeral service and pay tribute to the martyrs, ILNA reported.



'IRGC able to build missiles to hit moving targets'

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran is among few desk countries that has the knowhow to produce missiles capable of hitting moving targets, the IRGC deputy chief said on Sunday, noting the IRGC needs to take R&D seriously.

According to Tasnim, Hossein Salami also said the enemies have been using "complicated and special tactics" against Iran.

"To confront them, we need to take the initiative and employ special methods, techniques and tactics," he explained.



Defense Ministry opens archive in Tehran

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The Defense desk Ministry of Iran opened on Sunday an archive of military documents in Tehran that includes records as old as 180 years.

Located on the premises of the Defense Ministry, the center was inaugurated by Defense Minister Hossein Dehqan, Mehr reported.

In comments at the opening of the center, Dehqan said the archive includes three million paper and digital documents from the Qajar dynasty to the Islamic Republic era.



Bahonar named Expediency Council assessment committee chairman

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — On Sunday desk Mohammad Reza Bahonar was appointed as head of the Expediency Council's Incorporation and Assessment Committee, ISNA reported.

Expediency Council Secretary Mohsen Rezaee, speaking in a session to introduce Bahonar in his new capacity, said the committee has so far been a great help to other committees' expert content production.

Rezaee hoped that Bahonar's long political career as a lawmaker helps improve the committee's functioning as an inter-sectional body that coordinates other committees' tasks.



Iranian parents detained at JFK

**POLITICS** A recent Stony Brook University desk grad broke down in tears at JFK's Terminal 1 on Saturday, begging authorities to let her see her parents.

Sahar's Iranian parents flew into JFK to visit her this weekend, but were taken into custody — and would be forced to return to Iran following President Donald Trump's recent executive order, Patch reported.

"They won't allow me to see them," she said. "I haven't seen them in years. I just want to see them, just for one minute. Just behind a window — anything."

# Trump visa ban is racism: Parliament speaker

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iranian desk Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani said on Sunday the order by President Donald Trump in suspending visa for seven Muslim countries including Iran proves "spirit of racism" in the United States.

The move proves that the "violent spirit of racism" in the U.S. has been hidden behind claims of democracy and pretention of human rights, Larijani said in an open session of parliament.

Trump Friday signed an executive order suspending the State Department's Refugee Assistance Program and visa entry from Iran, Iraq, Syria and four other countries, saying they are "detrimental to the interests of the United States."

The order broadly follows the president's campaign pledge to suspend immigration from several Muslim-majority countries until "extreme vetting" can be put in the place to prevent terrorists from entering the country.

The revised guidelines replace his campaign proposal to institute a reli-



gious test for immigration. The countries are those that have been designated as countries of concern by Congress and the Obama Administration, and also in-

clude Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Libya, a White House official said.

Larijani said, "A country which has the power to establish security would not take such decisions. Mentioning Iran in this respect under the pretext of 'concern' about terrorist actions is more like a joke," he said.

The parliament speaker went on to say that Iran has been a pioneer in the campaign against terrorism and is determined in its will to fight violence.

Drawing a comparison between Iran and other countries Larijani called Iran an independent and safe country which supports "peaceful co-existence" between different sects and races based on Islamic values.

Taraneh Alidoosti, the star of Iran's Oscar-nominated drama "The Salesman", announced that she would not attend the Oscars ceremony on February 26 even if it turned out the proposed ban did not affect her ability to get a visa.

Larijani praised the actress' position in this regard.

## Rouhani orders probe into Plasco collapse, appoints task force

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — President Hassan desk Rouhani on Sunday commissioned a 10-member task force with probing into the collapse of the Plasco building, an iconic high-rise in downtown Tehran.

Housing garment manufacturers and other businesses, the 15-story building caught fire on Jan. 19 and collapsed afterward, leaving at least 16 firefighters dead and some other citizens wounded.

Built in the 1960s, the building was one of Tehran's oldest high-rises and a feature of the city's skyline.

The investigation is expected to look into what caused the building's blaze as well as its collapse, field management of the incident, coordination between responsible bodies and crisis management, preventive tips to learn from, and structural and managerial reforms.

Ever since the incident, the inquisitive public opinion has been theorizing about possible main causes, fearing

of future experiences.

Particularly, they have been seeking answers to the following: failure to bring the blaze under control, the trapping of firefighters, equipment preparation, media coverage, public reaction management, etc.

The government has also taken steps to identify similar buildings in Tehran, estimated to reach 3,000m, by one account, While causing nationwide mourning, so far no official has resigned.

## Iran, France to further expand ties

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — French desk Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault will visit Tehran on Monday for an official visit, further pushing ahead with economic relations between the two countries.

Heading a high-ranking economic and political delegation, Ayrault will attend

a session of Iran-France joint economic commission.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said Saturday that the foreign ministers of Iran and France will chair the joint economic meeting on Tuesday.

"Documents might be signed at the end of the meeting," he added.

The spokesman further said that Ayrault will also hold meetings with President Rouhani, Parliament speaker Ali Larijani, and a number of other top officials.

He added that representatives from 60 French companies and some officials will be accompanying the French foreign minister.

On Friday, French foreign ministry said Ayrault will reaffirm Europe's commitment to Iran's landmark nuclear agreement.

Ayrault would "underline the importance that all sides which backed the deal strictly respect their commitments," French Foreign Ministry spokesman Romain Nadal said.

## Citizen Rights Charter more than words: Rouhani aide

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Elham desk Aminzadeh, special assistant to President Rouhani on citizens' rights, has said that the Citizen Rights Charter is not a slogan, suggesting it helps light the path towards a bright future.

In an interview with AFP, Aminzadeh expressed hope that the charter will one day be made into law by parliament and extended to all branches of government.

However, she said the charter has no power over the judiciary or parliament and only covers the civil service and other parts of the executive.

"I cannot put an article in this charter for the judiciary or legislature," she said.The Citizen Rights Charter, unveiled last month by the Rouhani administration, enshrines freedom of speech, protest, fair trials and privacy. Rouhani has said that he regards the achievement as one of his oldest dreams.

His critics say since he faces a reelection battle in the upcoming months, the launch of the charter has been timed to influence voters. Aminzadeh, however, denied such claims, saying the charter had been a key campaign promise in 2013.

"It's not a slogan... It is not just for the Rouhani government, it is for the next 100 years," she said.

Elsewhere in her remarks, Aminzadeh defended the human rights situation in Iran, saying, "In comparing to other countries, I think (the human rights situation in Iran) is good, but it can be better."

"I don't know why of the many different human rights violations around the world, the foreign media is not keen on discussing them," she said.

She also accused Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International of having "double standards" against Iran and ignoring rights abuses in countries like Bahrain and Yemen.

## Iran takes reciprocal measure in response to Trump's visa ban

**I→** While the international community needs dialogue and cooperation to address the roots of violence and extremism in a comprehensive and inclusive manner, and at a time when the United Nations General Assembly approved by consensus the proposal of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran for a World Against Violence and Extremism (WAVE), the imprudent decision of the U.S. Government to apply collective discrimination against citizens of Muslim countries will only serve to provide a fertile ground for more terrorist recruitment by deepening the ruptures and fault-lines which have been exploited by extremist demagogues to swell their ranks with disenfranchised and marginalized youth, and further promote their campaign of hatred, violence and extremism. Moreover, with this decision, the reports of U.S. intelligence and security organs and past statements of current U.S. officials which emphasized on the role of the United States and its regional allies in fomenting and expanding extremist groups, including Daesh (ISIL), appear to have been conveniently forgotten.

The decision of the Government of the United States to target the people of Iran and clearly insult all sections of this great nation has put on clear display the baselessness of the U.S. claims of friendship with the Iranian people while only having issues with the Government of Iran. It also shows the rancor and enmity of some in the U.S. government and influential circles both

within the United States and abroad towards all Iranians around the world: The Iranian nation who, benefiting from an ancient and rich civilization and religious beliefs founded on humanitarian values, has always promoted the message of constructive engagement, not only resisted domination but also the temptations to dominate others, and fought extremism and violence; a resilient nation which has stood firm in the face of extremist terrorists and which was among the first victims of organized terrorism; a great people which has had no presence in any extremist terrorist operation, but instead in all societies in which it has traveled or resided as scientists, students, entrepreneurs, tourists or immigrants, has been known as one of the most law abiding, cultured, educated and successful communities, thus representing its Iranian and Islamic culture and civilization in the most dignified and peace-loving manner.

To ensure respect for the dignity of all members of the great Iranian nation at home and abroad, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran will engage in a careful assessment of the short and medium-term impact of the decision of the U.S. Government on Iranian nationals, and will take proportionate legal, consular and political action and while respecting the American people and differentiating between them and the hostile policies of the U.S. Government – will take reciprocal measures in order to safeguard the rights of its citizens until the time of

the removal of the insulting restrictions of the Government of the United States against Iranian nationals.

In order to monitor the implementation of this decision and adopt appropriate measures commensurate with national interest in specific cases, a mechanism is established in the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the participation of relevant organizations.

Meanwhile, all diplomatic and consular missions of the Islamic Republic of Iran have been instructed to prioritize the provision of consular facilities to all Iranian nationals who due to the illegal step of the Government of the United States have been prevented from returning to their places of residence, work and education.

The decision of the Government of the United States incorporates certain requests that are illegal, illogical and contrary to international law. Considering the absence of relations between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States, those requests are not applicable to and cannot be accommodated by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Any abuse by the United States of this situation to prolong the discriminatory measures and cause any further inconvenience for Iranian nationals is not only illegal but against common sense.

The Islamic Republic of Iran will carefully examine and legally pursue any negligence or violation of the international obligations of the United States under bilateral agreements and multilateral arrangements and reserves the right to respond as deemed necessary.



# Trump's sweeping Muslim ban sparks protests at U.S. airports

## U.S. judge blocks deportations under Trump's Muslim ban

BY: staff & agencies

The United States President Donald Trump's sweeping ban on people from seven Muslim-majority countries has sparked confusion and anger at major U.S. airports.

Protests erupted on Saturday at airports in Dallas, Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, New York and elsewhere after border agents began detaining refugees and immigrants who arrived in the country a day after Trump issued an executive order reshaping the U.S. refugee and immigration policy.

Meanwhile, a federal judge has blocked part of President Trump's executive order on immigration, ruling that travelers who have already landed in the U.S. with valid visas should not be sent back to their home countries.

Lawyers, had filed a legal case in response to the order that includes a 90-day entry ban on citizens of seven Muslim-majority nations, namely, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Somali and Sudan.

U.S. District Judge Ann Donnelly's ruling late on Saturday concerns dozens of people who were detained at U.S. airports following Trump's actions.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), which had filed a class action lawsuit against the ban, hailed the temporary stay of execution as a victory.

"This ruling preserves the status quo and ensures that people who have been granted permission to be in this country are not illegally removed off U.S. soil," Lee Gelernt, deputy director of the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project, said.

ACLU said it would help 100 to 200 people with valid visas or refugee status, who found themselves detained in transit or at US airports after Trump signed the order late on Friday.

The legal case was raised after two Iraqis were held by law enforcement officials at John F Kennedy International Airport (JFK) while trying to legally enter the U.S. soil.

### More than 100 detained

Meantime, at least 12 travelers have been detained at JFK, prompting mass protests at the airport.

Less than 24 hours into the ban, Homeland Security said that at least 109 travelers had been denied entry into the U.S. in total.

Homeland Security said on Sunday it would "comply with judicial orders", referring to Donnelly's ruling, but that Trump's order remains in place.

A group of state attorneys general, meanwhile, are discussing whether to file their own court challenge against the order, officials in three states told the Reuters news agency.

Officials in the offices of attorneys general in Pennsylvania, Washington and Hawaii said they were evaluating what specific claims could be filed, and in which court.

Trump signed the executive order on Friday that effectively denies entry to people from seven Muslim-majority countries, including those with green cards, who otherwise have permanent residence in the U.S.

Signing the order at the Pentagon, Trump claimed the move would help protect Americans from "terrorist" attacks.

In the case of war-torn Syria, Trump qualified the order's scope by saying he would priorities Syrian Christians entering as refugees.

### Christian leaders denounce Trump's plan to favor Christian immigrants

The development follows as a broad array of Christian clergy members has strongly denounced Trump's order as discriminatory, misguided and inhumane. Outrage has also come from some of the evangelical, Roman Catholic and mainstream Protestant leaders who represent the churches most active in trying to aid persecuted Christians.

By giving preference to Christians over Muslims, religious leaders have said the executive order pits one faith against another. By barring any refugees from entering the United States for nearly four months, it leaves people to suffer longer in camps, and prevents families from reuniting.

Among the claims Trump made at his campaign



rallies was that the Obama administration had denied refugee status to Christians, and had given preference to Muslims.

### NY taxi drivers strike following Trump's immigration ban

Elsewhere, New York taxi drivers had their own response to Trump's immigration ban: A strike.

As protests continue to break out across major U.S. airports on Saturday night following President Trump's immigration ban, taxi drivers at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport have gone on strike.

In postings to social networks on Saturday the New York Taxi Workers Alliance announced that from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m. ET there would be no pickups at JFK as a protest to the immigration ban that some are taking as a ban on Muslims.

### Trudeau: Canadians welcome you

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau weighed in on Saturday on Trump's orders with a decidedly different approach.

"To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength #WelcomeToCanada," he tweeted, along with a photograph of him greeting a Syrian child at a Toronto airport.

A spokeswoman for Trudeau told The Associated Press, he is "looking forward to discussing the successes of Canada's immigration and refugee policy" when he meets with Trump at the White House - a meeting that is expected in the near term.

"I think we keep fighting," Sarah Owing, with the American Immigration Lawyers Association's, told Al Jazeera. "We're not going to rest until we make sure that the constitutional rights of lawful permanent residents are respected, and that those that seek asylum on our shores are entitled and given all the rights to seek that form of relief."

### Merkel: Trump immigration ban 'not justified'

Meantime, German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday slammed the restrictions on immigration imposed by Trump, saying it was "not justified" to target people based on their background or religion.

"The chancellor regrets the entry ban imposed by the U.S. government against refugees and nationals from certain countries," her spokesman Steffen Seibert said in a statement.

"She is convinced that even in the necessarily resolute battle against terrorism it is not justified to place people from a certain origin or belief under general suspicion."

### Scotland welcomes refugees banned by Trump

Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has also extended Scotland's welcome to any refugees who are barred from entering the United States by Trump's ex-

ecutive order on immigration.

Sturgeon responded to Trump's directive banning refugees and halting immigration from several Islamic countries by retweeting a message from Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

"Welcome to Scotland too," Sturgeon tweeted alongside Trudeau's tweet which welcomed refugees to Canada.

"To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength #WelcomeToCanada," Trudeau's tweet read.

### 'This is not who we are'

Elsewhere, the U.S. Democrats as well as many Republicans have also denounced Trump's ban on Muslim nations.

Trump's former Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton, expressed her support for people protesting against the ban.

"I stand with the people gathered across the country tonight defending our values & our Constitution. This is not who we are," Clinton tweeted.

Republican Congressman Justin Amash also blasted the order, arguing that the measure violated the US Constitution of and was too extreme.

### Iraq MPs demand ban on American visitors, expats

Also, the Iraq parliament's foreign affairs committee told the Baghdad government that Iraq should "reciprocate" the United States' discriminatory travel ban on Iraqis and citizens from six other Muslim-majority countries.

The committee issued the call on Sunday following a meeting in the capital to discuss U.S. President Trump's ban.

"We ask the Iraqi government to reciprocate to the decision taken by the U.S. administration," said the committee in a statement read to Reuters by one its members, Hassan Shwerid. "Iraq is in the frontline of the war of terrorism ... and it is unfair that the Iraqis are treated in this way."

Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (Al-Hashd Al-Sha'abi) also called for a ban, and for Americans already in the country to be expelled.

### Yemen censure U.S. president's travel ban

Also on Sunday, Yemen's Ansarullah (Houthi) movement also lashed out at Trump's decision and called for the ban to be reversed.

The Sana'a-based movement is running the Saudi war-torn country's affairs amid the absence of a government.

"All attempts to classify Yemen and its citizens as a probable source for terrorism and extremism are illegal and illegitimate," said the movement in a statement, according to Yemen's Saba Net news agency.

## Syrian military recaptures Wadi Barada valley from rebels

Syrian government forces have recaptured all towns and villages in the Wadi Barada valley near Damascus, the Syrian military said on Sunday, in another blow to rebels who have fought for years to unseat democratically elected Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

"Units of our armed forces, together with ... allied forces have achieved their mission in returning security and stability" to the area, the military said in a statement read out by a spokesman on Syrian state television.

The military's offensive, launched last month, aimed partly to seize control of a major spring and water pumping station which supplies most of the capital's water. Fighting and damage to the site caused acute water shortages in Damascus this month.

State TV broadcast footage of Syrian soldiers standing in the water pumping station in the village of Ain Fijeh.

The recapture of Wadi Barada signals the fall of another rebel-held area in western Syria, and comes weeks after insurgents were driven from areas they controlled in Aleppo, their last major urban stronghold.

Military support from President Bashar Assad's foreign allies, have been instrumental in helping turn the nearly six-year civil war in his favor.

On Saturday the army took over the spring in Ain Fijeh as part of an agreement reached with rebels, who had held the area since 2012, pro-Damascus media outlets and the so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said.

Under the agreement, dozens of rebel fighters were expected to be bussed out of the area on Sunday with their families and head for Idlib province, an insurgent stronghold.

Similar previous deals in western Syria have seen rebels evacuate areas they had held for years and depart with their families for Idlib. The opposition says this amounts to forced population transfers.

The deals have usually been struck in places where government forces and their allies have either besieged rebel-held areas or have gained the upper hand militarily.

(Source: Reuters)

## 2nd Texas mosque destroyed by fire in Jan.

A mosque in the U.S. state of Texas has been set on fire and destroyed after being burglarized a week earlier, becoming the second mosque to burn down in the southern state so far this month.

The Islamic Center of Victoria, which was also targeted with hate crime years ago, collapsed in an early on Saturday morning blaze that has been described as a suspected arson in the local press.



On January 7, a mosque under construction near Lake Travis in the city of Austin was burned to the ground, prompting the Texas office of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) to issue a statement, saying that it would monitor the investigation into the Victoria blaze as has done so with the Austin fire.

"Because of growing anti-Muslim bigotry in our nation, and because of the recent spike in hate incidents targeting Islamic institutions and individuals, we urge investigators to keep the possibility of a bias motive for this fire in mind," CAIR Houston Executive Director Mustafaa Carroll said.

The Victoria mosque fire was first spotted by a convenience store clerk who saw smoke and flames billowing from the Islamic Center at around 2 am and contacted the local fire department.

"It's sad to stand there and watch it collapse down, and the fire was so huge," said the center's president, Shahid Hashmi. "It looks completely destroyed."

While Victoria Fire Marshal Tom Legler has asked for help from the Texas Fire Marshal's Office and federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in discovering the cause of the fire, Hashmi said authorities have told him it was too early to speculate.

"We don't have any lead or information as to what started the fire and what happened. So I'm sure it's going to be a few days, they told us, before they can come up with any answers for us."

According to Hashmi, someone had broken into the center on January 21 and stole some electronic stuff, including laptops.

No injuries were reported as the result of the fire at the mosque, which was built in 2000. It took firefighters nearly four hours to extinguish the blaze.

Meanwhile, local Victoria Advocate newspaper reported that in July 2013, a man admitted to painting "H8," a computer shorthand for "hate," on the walls of the mosque.

(Source: Press TV)

## Britain and Turkey sign defense deal, push for more trade

British Prime Minister Theresa May has signed a \$125m defense equipment deal with Turkey as the two countries promised to ramp up trade partnerships.

May, who arrived in Turkey on Saturday after a trip to the United States, visited both countries for the first time as prime minister, promoting trade agreements to strengthen her hand in Britain's negotiations to leave the European Union, or Brexit.

After three hours of talks, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the two leaders had discussed steps towards defense industry cooperation.

He also told reporters he hoped to increase annual trade with Britain to \$20bn - up from \$15.6bn now.

May said the two countries had agreed to form a joint working group for post-Brexit trade.

They would step up an aviation security program, signing a defense deal



worth more than \$125m to develop Turkish fighter jets.

May hailed the deal, which involves BAE Systems and TAI (Turkish Aerospace

Industries) working together to develop the TF-X Turkish fighter program, saying it showed "that Britain is a great, global, trading nation and that we are open for

business". May said she was "proud" Britain had stood with Turkey's democratically elected government when a failed coup attempt happened last year.

"I'm proud that the UK stood with you on 15 July last year in defense of democracy and now it is important that Turkey sustains that democracy by maintaining the rule of law and upholding its international human rights obligations as the government has undertaken to do," she told reporters.

May's government is keen to start laying the groundwork for bilateral trade agreements for when Britain leaves the EU

Britain was the second-largest destination for Turkish exports in 2015, buying \$10.6bn in goods, according to IMF (International Monetary Fund) trade data. Only Germany imports more from Turkey.

(Source: agencies)



## Tehran, Tbilisi to cooperate on transit, regional ties

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran and Georgia signed an **desk** MOU on expansion of transit and regional ties during the 7th meeting of Iran-Georgia joint committee to cooperate on international transportation of passengers and goods in Tbilisi, IRIB news reported on Sunday.

The joint committee meeting was participated by the Iranian Deputy Transport Minister Davoud Keshavarzian and the Georgian Deputy Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development David Khutsishvili, Mohammad Javad Atrchian, the director of transit department at Iran's Roads Maintenance Organization said.

Underscoring the vitality of easing and boosting bilateral transportation bonds, the two sides discussed further cooperation on transit corridors in the region, insurance coverage of Iranian trucks commuting to Georgia's land as well as difficulties that challenge Georgian trucks in Iran.

## Bilateral trade hit by Indian banks' reluctance to transact with Iran

India's trade with Iran is yet to be fully normalized even a year after the lifting of international sanctions on Tehran.

Indian exporters are complaining of difficulties faced by them due to some Indian nationalized banks refusing to deal with Iran-related transactions, according to the apex body for exporters in the country, the Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO).

This is despite the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), in a notification in May 2016, specifying that payment or remittance or reimbursement can be made from or to Iran in any freely convertible currency for imports from Iran and exports to that country.

Both the nations had agreed in 2012 that 45% of India's oil import payments to Iran would be paid in rupees and deposited in UCO Bank as that bank hardly had an exposure to U.S. or European Union.

In turn, Iran was to utilize that amount to pay for its imports from India. It is learnt that the balance in the rupee account may not be sufficient to cover three months of India's exports to Iran.

### India-Iran trade

India's trade with Iran in FY'16 was \$9 billion, of which \$6.3 billion were imports from Iran (of which \$4.5 billion was the oil import bill), while India's exports were worth only \$2.7 billion.

Of the \$5.4 billion worth imports from Iran in April-October FY'17, oil imports were \$4.5 billion. India's exports to Iran during April-October FY'17 were \$1.4 billion. The trade between these two countries were worth \$16.2 billion in 2011-12 (India's exports of \$2.4 billion and imports from Iran worth \$13.8 billion).

(Source: The Hindu)

# Sanctions lift opens door to €10b of energy projects in Iran



### Inauguration of 5,314 energy projects during Ten-Day Dawn

According to the official some 5,314 energy-related projects worth €2.587 billion are scheduled to be launched or put into operation during the Ten-Day Dawn, of which 4,860 projects will be in electricity sector.

He also mentioned the electricity exports to Iraq saying, "We have been negotiating with Iraq for the resumption of electricity exports to the country but so far there has been no agreement and the exports are still halted."

### 100MW capacity of renewable energy to go online by March 20

Elsewhere in his remarks Chitchian noted that 100 megawatts (MW) capacity of renewable energy will be added to the country's electricity capacity by the end of current Iranian calendar year of which 48MW will go online during the Ten-Day dawn.



He went on saying that some 164MW capacity of Small-scale power plants will also be inaugurated in the mentioned time span.

The country has it on the agenda to add over 700MW capacity of renewable power plants to the country's energy sector in the next fiscal year (starting from March 21).

Touching upon the guaranteed purchase of electricity generated through renewable energy, the minister said that to support the producers and private sector investors, the government has offered various programs including guaranteed power purchasing, holding tenders, and welcoming private sector investors in a variety of areas.

Further in his remarks the official assured investors and producers about financial support and noted that the Energy Ministry has no problem regarding the payments and finance related to the renewable contractors.

He also said that there will be no change in the power purchase prices at least not until the end of Iranian calendar year of 1396 (March 2018).

## Iran seeking to enhance exports to Czech Republic, Denmark



### ECONOMY TEHRAN

**desk** Czech Republic and Denmark has been positive in favor of the two European countries during the past years, and an Iranian trade delegation left Tehran on Sunday morning for a six-day visit to the named countries to improve level of Iran's exports to each of them in future, IRNA reported.

The delegation, headed by Tehran Chamber of Com-

merce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (TCCIMA) Chairman Masoud Khansari, is comprised of representatives from 30 Iranian companies active in various fields including industrial and mineral equipment, heavy industries, medical instruments, renewable energies, environment, and etc.

During the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2016- December 20, 2017), Iran exported above \$2.68 million commodities to Czech and

imported more than \$25.11 million of goods from that country. Accordingly, Iran's balance of trade with Czech equals to about minus \$23 million which is not in favor of the Islamic country.

During the said period, Iran exported above \$6.63 million of goods to Denmark, while level of imports stood at more than \$141.77 million. i.e. negative trade balance for Iran.

## Oman-Iran commercial relations need improvement, says OCCI chairman

Commercial relations between the sultanate and Iran need to be improved and there is a common desire to enhance economic activities, said Said bin Saleh al Kiyumi, chairman, Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI). He was talking during a Business-to-Business gathering held between Omani and Iranian companies.

Over 100 businessmen and investors from Oman visited Iran in 2014 but

Iran's commercial relationships with other countries are stronger, he said at the event held at OCCI premises. It was part of the Iran Country Solo Exhibition held in the sultanate.

Kiyumi affirmed the importance in strengthening commercial relationships between the two countries and removing hurdles which cripple their development. Kiyumi also said that Oman has the necessary political stability and security as

well as the laws that enable Iran to invest in Oman. He mentioned that Oman will open a ferry line from Sohar to Chabahar in Iran, which will be a link for commercial exchange between the two countries. Eng Shafie, chairman, Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture, affirmed that relationship between Oman and Iran is important.

He added that the authorities hope to overcome obstacles in commercial ex-

change, banking and insurance sectors.

Gholamreza Dehghan, member of board and commercial deputy of Shahab Tousheh Company in Iran said, "The exhibition will promote good communication between Oman and Iran to develop commercial relations. It will strengthen cooperation and communication that can lead to an increase in trading activities between Oman and Iran."

(Source: Muscat Daily)



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# U.S. senators should learn to love OPEC

By Julian Lee

OPEC's oil-market management and in particular its repeated attempts to raise prices have done more than any other single factor to boost U.S. oil production and set America on the road to some sort of energy independence, whatever that might be. Far from vilifying OPEC, U.S. senators should be erecting statues to the 13 men who are helping to "make America great again." In a written question for the record, Senator Ed Markey asked secretary of state nominee Rex Tillerson whether he agreed "that the United States should unequivocally reject any efforts by OPEC to collaborate to manipulate oil markets and take all measures within our power to reduce OPEC's ability to artificially limit production or increase prices."

Tillerson's response: Yes. While it is very important for the United States to engage with other oil producing nations, I do not believe that we should collaborate with OPEC to manipulate oil markets. He said nothing about taking measures against OPEC. Some may see that as a reflection of Tillerson's long oil industry career, but I think it runs deeper.

The U.S. shale industry wouldn't have taken off as it did, creating all those jobs along the way, if OPEC hadn't cut oil supplies after the 2008 price crash and then managed things to keep costs above



\$100 a barrel. Entrepreneurship, ingenuity and mineral rights all played their part in the shale boom, but the take-up of technology wouldn't have been anywhere near as fast or extensive if somebody else hadn't given up their own market share. Besides, it's much easier to make mistakes and learn what works and what doesn't in a \$100 oil world than in a \$50 one. If you're not convinced, then take a look at what happened when OPEC stopped manipulating oil markets. In June 2014, the group decided to roll over its official output target of 30 million barrels a day for another six months. Be-

fore it next met in November, actual production had risen by about 1 million barrels and oil had dropped by 30 percent, pushing WTI down to \$73.69. And that was before Saudi Arabia persuaded other members to abandon restraint. Once the restrictions were lifted and volumes rose further, prices collapsed, sending WTI to a 13-year low of \$26.21 a barrel.

Was that in America's interest? Well it certainly cut gasoline prices, which was a bonus for drivers, and it put money back in consumers' pockets. But it had a delayed negative effect on U.S. GDP growth, which fell from around 3 percent

as oil prices started to weaken to close to 1.5 percent amid \$50 oil. Oh, and it decimated the U.S. oil patch, with a loss of about 14 percent of the workforce. Now, if like Ed Markey, you're an "environmental hero", that might seem like a good thing. But I'm not so sure.

Yes, high prices increase the rewards for exploitation of the black stuff and make it profitable to produce oil that might otherwise stay in the ground. But they also make it much easier for frontier renewable-energy technologies to break in. Just as \$100 oil supported the birth of U.S. shale oil, it's done the same for wind and solar power, too. That's one of the reasons there was so little outcry from European governments over rising oil prices in the early 2000s -- they made it much easier to pursue green-energy policies. The short-term benefits to oil of high prices, underwritten by OPEC output cuts, may ultimately serve to hasten its demise. Tillerson's response should warm the hearts of oil fans and detractors alike. No, the U.S. won't join OPEC's market management. It's quite happy to let others bear the burden of supporting prices. But it won't condemn the practice either. OPEC's market machinations will boost the U.S. oil sector in the immediate future, but hasten crude's demise as the world's primary fuel source longer term.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Coal-dependent Philippines needs to shift to renewable energy

The Philippines must immediately shift from coal to renewable energy because coal mining and coal-fired power plant operations all over the country have "harmful impacts," according to National Secretariat for Social Action (NASSA)/ Caritas Philippines Executive Secretary Fr. Edwin Gariguez.

He made the call during the "Catholics

& Coal" conference in Chicago, Illinois, a forum hosted by the Center for World Catholicism and Intercultural Theology (CWCI) of De Paul University. The event drew on Catholic Social Teaching to connect the American Church's experience with the issue to the situation facing the Church in the global South.

During his presentation, Gariguez

said the Philippines was becoming more heavily dependent on coal, contributing 44.5-percent to the power generation mix based on the 2015 data of the Department of Energy.

He added that "this is in total contradiction to the global consensus in the Paris climate conference, and an outright inconsistency with the country's commit-

ment in its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) to cut 70-percent of its carbon emission by 2030.

"The issue of coal mining and the operation of coal fired power plants all over our country is causing an alarming concern because of their harmful impacts," the priest stressed.

(Source: interaksyon.com)

## Iran, Poland ink MOU on petchem co-op

**ECONOMY** TEHRAN — Petrochemical Special Economic Zone Organization of Iran and Pulawy Company of Poland signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on cooperation in petrochemical sector, Shana reported.

The MOU, signed in Iranian southwestern Khuzestan province on January 26, covers cooperation on investment making and also transfer of technology.

Pulawy that specializes in the production of mineral fertilizers and chemical products for various sectors and industries is a part of Grupa Azoty, one of the largest chemical companies in Europe and in the world.

## Gazprom's non-CIS gas export reaches 636.4 mcm

Russia's energy giant Gazprom renewed its record on gas supply to Non-CIS countries, which has reached 636.4 million cubic meters per day, Gazprom's press service said on Saturday.

"This week has already become a record-breaking for Gazprom. For the fourth consecutive day the company renews its absolute maximums of daily supplies to non-CIS states. The new highest result recorded on January 27 was 636.4 million cubic meters," the statement said.

The statement specified that in the period from January 1 to January 27 the export of natural gas was increased to Hungary by 11.2 percent, Serbia by 5.1 percent and Bulgaria by 15.9 percent.

(Source: Sputnik)

## Belarus' gas debt to Russia stands at about \$550m

Russia estimates Belarusian gas debt to be approximately \$550 million, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich said Saturday.

"In our opinion, [Belarusian gas debt to Russia] stands at about \$550 million. That's according to our estimates," Dvorkovich said.

Earlier in the day, Dvorkovich said that the talks on the gas dispute resolution were ongoing with Russia demanding that Minsk pay its debt according to the initial formula.

Russia and Belarus have been in talks over the price of Russian gas deliveries to Belarus for months. In November 2016, Russia said Belarus owed it \$281 million for gas, with Minsk refusing to recognize the debt. Belarus had initially bargained for \$73 per 1,000 cubic meters of gas instead of \$132, which it considered unfair.

(Source: Sputnik)



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## Dear Allies: The free ride is over

Mattis shouldn't follow the path of his predecessor.

By Harvey M. Sapolsky

It may be hard, but it is not impossible for a confirmed and now old civilian like me to give advice to General James Mattis.

Mattis has been a U.S. Marine for more than four decades and has just assumed the post as secretary of defense in the Trump administration. After all, he required a waiver in order to qualify for the job, and I would have been eligible without one.



To begin with, I would remind Secretary Mattis why we want a civilian to be in charge of the Defense Department. There are plenty of generals (and admirals) in the department who can give military advice to the president and manage the force. What is needed is a civilian who will worry about more than just the organizational health and military capabilities of the armed services. That person must also prioritize the financial and human resources the services need to perform their duties. We want resources invested in defense kept to a minimum because we have other public and private uses for them. Taxpayers, the families of service personnel, and all citizens concerned about individual liberty need representation in defense decisions. The military component of those decisions is already there in abundance.

Second, I would remind Secretary Mattis why we have the U.S. Marine Corps—the organization to which he devoted his adult life and which duplicates every one of the contributions made by the Army, Navy and Air Force. It is not just because the U.S. Marines performed heroically in both World Wars and in recent conflicts. It is also because Americans believe in institutional overlap and competition. Four air forces are better than one for innovation and combat performance, and so are several armies and a couple of navies. Resist the call for centralization and joint projects. We need more eyes on every problem.

### ■ Giant projects

Centralization gives you giant projects like the Joint Strike Fighter and no alternatives when you need them.

Third, don't waste your time on acquisition reform. There is never going to be a flawless acquisition system that works on the cutting edge of technology and meets all cost and scheduling promises. We need the advantage that the most advanced weapons give our forces, and that requires taking risks and accepting failures. Don't fall for the frauds of management fads or the siren call of creating a Silicon Valley-like organization within the department. Instead, feed the complex network of defense laboratories, nonprofits and contractors that have kept us ahead

for decades. The only stimulus they need is the inherent rivalry of the services as weapon buyers, and as protectors of their own technological futures as the preferred warriors of the nation.

Finally, pay attention to the guidance of the person who nominated you. It is long overdue for us to expect our allies to do more and contribute to their own defense. President Donald J. Trump is right that too often we have been overly eager to take a bad deal so long as it justifies the need for additional force structure. It is the requirements of our defense, and not that of rich allies in Europe and Asia, that should support the maintenance and deployment of our forces. As the Second World War showed, it is often an advantage to be behind rather in front of our allies. Neither NATO or our other alliances should be vehicles by which allies get a free ride on the backs of U.S. taxpayers and soldiers.

It is more important for you to be a skeptic than a civilian. As a U.S. Marine, you surely helped sell the U.S. Marine position. As a combatant commander, you obviously advocated for the needs of your command. Now, you must confront the pitches, the claims of the policy partisans, the U.S. Marines, the combatant commands and the rest of the defense spectrum. The way to do that is to stir competition within the department and seek fresh perspectives from outside the department. Interservice rivalry will do it from the inside, and I bet the commander-in-chief's questions and tweets will more than do it from the outside.

(Source: The National Interest)

# How Francois Fillon's Welsh affair has played into the hands of the far right and Marine Le Pen

By Alessio Colonnelli

Claims that his wife received half a million euros will add to anti-establishment anger.

France's most spotless politician has suddenly got an image problem; whoever would have thought it. François Fillon denied any wrongdoing on national television on Thursday evening (26 January 2017), yet the allegedly illegitimate public payments to his Welsh wife Penelope could well make Marine Le Pen and the Front National appear "purer" than any other presidential candidate. There's no denying it: the chances of Le Pen getting in are on the up.

Served on a silver platter? The best leg-up ever? Or bloody lucky? You choose: Le Pen could not have hoped for a better coup de théâtre. Even if Fillon escapes unscathed from this, a shadow would be cast. Those conservative voters edging towards the far-right could well ditch the Fillon choice and go for Le Pen, while those in doubt about Le Pen may decide to stick with her. If anything, they'll see no alternatives.

The former prime minister was keen to tell the nation that his wife has been an assistant to him since 1980. "She corrected my speeches," he clarified, and plenty more all ordinary tasks relating to the job of a bog-standard politician's aide, such as representing him at events and seeing people that he couldn't meet in person."

Fillon also made very clear that he wouldn't hesitate to sue any media outlets maintaining that his wife carried out fictitious jobs.

That being said, it is also true that Penelope Fillon has always publicly maintained that she never had anything to do with her husband's career, and was busy bringing up their children far away from Paris.

Nevertheless, this is a potentially huge scandal in the making. Not so much for the actual amount involved (Fillon said it is not true that his wife received half a million euros over eight years from public funds for a parliamentary assistant's job she never did), but because we live in times where we've seen and heard it all. Many of us are truly fed up. There's no room for any understanding of any kind whatsoever. Enough is enough.

Our representative democracies all over Europe are at an all-time low. We look for new faces in the hope they'll be better than the same old career politicians. Nigel Farage owes much of his success to such understandable feelings, and so does his EU ally Beppe Grillo, Italy's leader of the anti-establishment MoVimento 5 Stelle, or Five Star Movement.

The letter 'V' in the Italian MoVimento is spelled



**With the French socialists doing as badly as never before, and Fillon's political, existential headache, Le Pen is riding on a wave.**

with a capital because it stands for vaffanculo, loosely translated as "two fingers" – a not-so-gentle reminder of what Farage's friends are about: getting rid of the old, whatever it takes. They could well win Italy's general election this year: Five Star has never been rated so highly in the polls as now, as more than 30%.

With the French socialists doing as badly as never before, and Fillon's political, existential headache, Le Pen is riding on a wave.

According to some analysts, Five Star could govern by forming a coalition with the Northern League, an anti-immigration party that rates almost as highly as its German counterpart AfD, or Alternative für Deutschland. Both are allies of Le Pen and Holland's Geert Wilders (Party for Freedom).

These nationalist outfits recently got cosy in Koblenz, Germany to celebrate their common successes. They are getting stronger by the day and keep regularly in touch, sharing ideas and campaign tips.

This is the antagonising scenario facing Fillon. He's always been very keen on proving he's an impeccable politician. He's built a lot of his reputation on this as he knows how despised mainstream politicians are – many among the public think they're all in it for themselves, and with reason. Our hopes rest with those who want to serve the public interest by giving all they can and by taking only what they're entitled – not a penny more. Is this asking too much? Today, many French people are asking themselves the same question.

(Source: ibtimes.co.uk)

## Asia's version of Aleppo is happening in Burma

By Benedict Spence

Transition from military rule to democracy remains far from assured in Burma, where the military continues to be a formidable force. Now it is carrying out a scorched-earth offensive against Rohingya Muslim militants in Rakhine state, a campaign that has forced 65,000 civilians to flee across the border to Bangladesh amid reports of mass rape, torture and the killing of innocents.

Some 90 people have died. Therein lies a challenge for Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the democracy movement who now tenuously steers the country, and for Burma's foreign partners.

We have urged Aung San Suu Kyi to be more outspoken in support of the long-suffering Rohingya minority, especially now that she has made the crossing from dissident to political leader of her country, which is also known as Myanmar. We think she should bring to bear her considerable moral standing as a Nobel laureate and do what she can — including promote unhindered investigation and reporting from the region — to end the abuses. But the ferocious assault on the Rohingya is being waged by the military, and the generals must be held



to account first and foremost. With a quarter of parliament seats reserved for the military, those generals still dominate the power structure of this Buddhist-majority country.

The latest conflict began Oct. 9 when a newly formed group of Rohingya insurgents struck in the northern part of Rakhine state at three posts near the border with Bangladesh, killing nine police officers. The group, well-

funded and organized, has been identified as Harakah al-Yaqin by the International Crisis Group, marking a turn to guerrilla tactics and violence by Rohingya militants. Since then, the Burmese military has responded harshly, including with widespread destruction of villages and atrocities against civilians. The government has denied allegations of abuse, but human rights investigators and journalists have been largely barred

from the scene.

This is a delicate moment when outside pressure might do some good.

The Obama administration celebrated Burma's progress toward democracy, lifting sanctions and making high-level visits to encourage it. We have no idea whether President Trump will care a whit for the plight of this battered people. He and his appointees have shown no enthusiasm for advancing human rights abroad, and Trump is fond of strongmen. But the United States has made a big down payment on Burma's journey toward a democratic society; further effort is called for, if a way can be found to do it without undermining Aung San Suu Kyi's shaky position. The conflict in Rakhine state should also bring a stronger response from the United Nations.

The Rohingya civilian suffering is intense, even if it is not on the radar screen in the West. Though the scale of violence so far is smaller, think of it as the Aleppo of Asia — a nascent armed insurgency; a mass of helpless, innocent people; religious fault lines; and crushing blows from a powerful military. This is a powder keg that should concern all.

(Source: The Washington Post)

## U.S. refugee ban is unhelpful

Donald Trump's first week in office has been watched closely, at home and abroad. While campaigning for the United States presidency Trump, like many politicians, promised many things that it seemed unlikely, even impossible, that he would deliver. Political watchers are now looking to see which promises will be implemented and which sidelined.

Over the weekend in Washington, Trump backed the NATO alliance, something he had previously attacked, which suggests he has moderated his stance. In such an age of political insecurity, it is important for the U.S. to maintain its international alliances.

At the same time, Trump also signed an executive order that will reduce America's international alliances and actually make the country less safe. Trump has suspended the refugee assistance program, effectively closing the West's largest country to those fleeing the world's worst war. He has blocked entry to the U.S. for citizens of seven countries, all Muslim, six Arab, plus Iran. And he has created a religious test for refugees, by prioritizing Christians.

These changes are startling and wide-ranging and appear to challenge long-held assumptions about the United States and its values. From the perspective of this region, they are profoundly unhelpful. There are citizens in every single one of those seven countries who are



pursuing peace and prosperity, who are seeking to build alliances and break down barriers. At a stroke, the U.S. has lumped them in with the most regressive elements in those societies.

But they are also an abdication of the responsibility of the U.S. As the UAE has agreed to take in Syrian refugees, so we urge other countries in the world to do their fair share. Over

Iraq, the U.S. has a special responsibility, having invaded that country. In Libya, too, as part of the coalition that unseated the Qaddafi regime, the U.S. bears responsibility. Overall, these measures appear to be a retreat from global leadership and will be deeply controversial. America's allies will be profoundly disquieted.

(Source: The National)



By Seth J. Frantzman

# Obama made “Muslim ban” possible and media won’t tell you

What are the new eligibility requirements for VWP travel?

Under the Act, travelers in the following categories are no longer eligible to travel or be admitted to the United States under the VWP:

- Nationals of VWP countries who have been present in Iraq, Syria, or countries listed under specified designation lists (currently including Iran and Sudan) at any time on or after March 1, 2011 (with limited government/military exceptions).
- Nationals of VWP countries who have been present in Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, at any time on or after March 1, 2011 (with limited government/military exceptions).

These restrictions do not apply to VWP travelers whose presence in Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, or Yemen was to perform military service in the armed forces of a program country, or in order to carry out official duties as a full-time employee of the government of a program country. We

*The Congress and Homeland Security selected these countries in 2016 and before (Screenshot of visa waiver categories, US Customs and Border Protection)*

ugees is detrimental to the interests of the United States and thus suspend any such entry until such time as I have determined that sufficient changes have been made to the USRAP to ensure that admission of Syrian refugees is consistent with the national interest.”

But, wait a sec. According to the reports “The order bars all people hailing from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen.” Critics had attacked Trump for selecting these seven countries and not selecting other states “linked to his sprawling business empire.” Bloomberg and Forbes bought into this.

But, wait a sec. I read the order and Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen are not mentioned in it.

Go back and read it again. Do a “ctrl-f” to find “Iraq”. Where is “Iraq” in the order. It’s not there. Only Syria is there. So where are the seven nations? Where is the “Muslim ban”? It turns out this was a form of fake news, or alternative facts. Trump didn’t select seven “Muslim-majority” countries. US President Barack Obama’s administration selected these seven Muslim-majority countries.

The Department of Homeland Security targeted these seven

countries over the last years as countries of concern. In February 2016 “The Department of Homeland Security today announced that it is continuing its implementation of the Visa Waiver Program Improvement and Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015 with the addition of Libya, Somalia, and Yemen as three countries of concern, limiting Visa Waiver Program travel for certain individuals who have traveled to these countries.” It noted “the three additional countries designated today join Iran, Iraq, Sudan and Syria as countries subject to restrictions for Visa Waiver Program travel for certain individuals.” It was the US policy under Obama to restrict and target people “who have been present in Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, at any time on or after March 1, 2011

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*The “ban” didn’t exclude countries linked to business interests, it targeted countries of “concern” drawn up last year by Obama’s administration and Congress*

(with limited government/military exceptions).” This was text of the US Customs and Border Protection in 2015 relating to “the Visa Waiver Program and Terrorist Travel Protection Act of 2015”. The link even includes the seven nation list in it: “Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Somalia or Yemen.” And the media knew this back in May 2016 when some civil rights groups complained about it. “These restrictions have provoked an outcry from the Iranian-American community, as well as Arab-American and civil-liberties groups, who say the restrictions on dual nationals and certain travelers are discriminatory and could be imposed against American dual nationals.”

*It was signed into law on December 18, 2015, as part of the Omnibus Appropriations Act of FY2016.*

What? So there was a Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015 two years before Trump? There was a

kind of “Muslim ban” before the Muslim ban? But almost no one critiqued it in 2015 because it was Obama’s administration overseeing it.

So for more than a year it has been US policy to discriminate against, target and even begin to ban people from the seven countries that Trump is accused of banning immigrants and visitors from. CNN even hinted at this by noting “those countries were named in a 2016 law concerning immigration visas as ‘countries of concern.’” But why didn’t CNN note that the seven countries were not named and that in fact they are only on the list because of Obama’s policy?

Because mainstream media has been purposely lying, either due to ignorance or because of unwillingness to read the document and ask questions and because they are too ready to accept “facts” without investigating. They want to blame Trump for a “Mus-

lim ban” because they were ready with that script since last year. And indeed Trump has enacted a harsh executive order cracking down on visitors from these countries (particularly Syrians), but his crack-down only includes those seven countries because of Obama’s policy. Trump’s decision to go beyond the policy and increase the Obama policy harms refugees, but it only increases an existing discriminatory policy, it doesn’t invent it. Reading media reports you would never know that. Most disingenuous, truly bordering on fake news, are the reports that claimed the seven countries were connected to Trump business interests, as if Obama’s DHS picked them because of Trump?

So why didn’t anyone of the thousands of reporters covering this read the same document and ask the same question and do the same investigation of where the seven “countries of concern” came from? A simply Google search would have revealed the history. A bit of searching around US code would have explained it.

The public should be suspicious of Trump’s policies and the media should speak truth to power and demand answers from the administration. But the media should also be truthful with the public and instead of claiming Trump singled out seven countries, it should note that the US Congress and Obama’s Department of Homeland Security had singled out these countries. It should have told us about the Terrorist Travel Prevention Act of 2015 rather than pretend this list was invented in 2017. Trump’s executive order said “countries of concern,” it didn’t make a list. That list was already made, last year and years before.



Were reports misleading on Trump “Muslim ban”?

## Al Khalifa regime bribes HR organizations into silence

INTERVIEW

By Lachin Rezaian

Bahraini political activist criticized the international community for its silence over the crimes committed by the Al Khalifa rulers of Bahrain.

Bahrain recently executed three anti-regime Shia activists Sami Mus-haima, Abbas Jamil Tahir al-Sami’ and Ali Abdulshahid al-Singace over their alleged role in a 2014 bomb attack, amid widespread public anger against the death verdicts.

The execution of three innocent young Bahrainis provoked wave of

**This shameful silence will lead to the intensification of the regime’s efforts to continue their support for the dictatorship in the region and in Bahrain.**

protests against the Al Khalifa regime. Thousands of Bahrainis by holding demonstrations in different parts of Bahrain, expressed outrage towards recent unjust and brutal executions.

International and human rights bodies and all popular organizations across the world have attested to the lack of transparency in the unfair trial proceedings of the three Bahraini

citizens.

Bahraini political activist with the Public Committee for the Unemployed Hassan Abd al-Nabi elaborated more on the outcomes of suppressing Bahraini activists which is against the human rights principles.

“Unfortunately, the international community only expresses concern in this regard without taking any measure against the regime’s crimes. Some of the countries which claim to be democratic, to defend human rights and to fight terrorism have also remained silent. This is while some of these countries have closed their eyes to the crimes and some of them even support and also sell weapons to Al-Khalifa regime in Bahrain,” he underlined.

Abd al-Nabi added that Bahraini rulers use the weapons to oppress and massacre the defenseless people of Bahrain. The attacks against the people of Bahrain have negative impacts on the people of the region in general and Bahrain in particular.

“Al-Khalifa attacks will not remain unanswered and the people of Bahrain will not be fooled by the crimes,” he said, adding “At any moment it is possible to re-create a new Arab Spring to overthrow the regimes.”

Hassan Abd al-Nabi went on to discuss the role of other countries in stopping the human rights violations in Bahrain. He said “unfortunately, so



**Al-Khalifa attacks will not remain unanswered and the people of Bahrain will not be fooled by the crimes.**

far no country has taken any steps to stop the criminal acts to reduce crimes against people. Even the countries in the region are inactive to show solidarity with the people of Bahrain.

“This shameful silence will lead to the intensification of the regime’s efforts to continue their support for the dictatorship in the region and in

Bahrain,” he noted.

Bahraini political activist called those who claim to defend human rights as traders or dealers fed in the way. “The governments pay bribes and gifts to these organizations to keep them silent and fill their political case with legal awards and titles,” he noted adding “in this regard, Prime Minister of Bahrain Prime

Minister of Bahrain recently received many awards and gifts, among them ‘Flame of Peace’ in tribute for his humanitarian role to promote global peace and boost relations between people, something completely in contrary to who he really is: “He is the greatest commander of Bahraini bloodthirsty military and security murderers and executioners.”



**International community only expresses concern without taking any measure against the regime’s crimes.**



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# Why do I sweat more than everyone else?

By Jeff Cattel

It's halfway through the first plank series in barre class, and you're sweating so much it looks like you just jumped in a pool—yet your friend is completely dry. Or maybe you're the type who can tear through a treadmill session and barely glisten. Either way, what gives?

First, let's break down the science of sweat. "Sweating is a necessary process that cools down the body," explains David M. Pariser, M.D., a dermatologist and founding member of the International Hyperhidrosis Society.

When your body starts to overheat, the nervous system stimulates sweat glands to release perspiration. As the droplets evaporate off of your skin, they take some body heat into the atmosphere. (Think about how chilly your skin is when still wet from the shower—as the water dries, it cools down your body. Sweat works the same way to cool you down as it evaporates.)

What sweating doesn't do is "detox" your body, Pariser says. "More than 99 percent of sweat is water, along with trace amount of electrolytes like salt." While a small amount of toxic substances can find their way out of the body through perspiration, detoxification primarily occurs in the liver, kidneys, and lungs—not through the skin.

## ■ How much is too much?

Just about any amount of sweat is considered normal. "There's a lot of variability as to how much people sweat, and most of it is in a normal range," Pariser explains. "Just like height, there's an average when it comes sweat—and some people produce more and some produce less."

If you're constantly a little clammy, worry not. "Everyone sweats a baseline amount at all times," Pariser says. And most people sweat more noticeably when exercising, in a hot place, or in a stressful, embarrassing, or uncomfortable situation.

However, if you're sweating a ton all the time, especially in certain body areas, it may indicate a medical condition called hyperhidrosis, which affects 2 percent of the U.S. population, Pariser says. One type, known as focal hyperhidrosis, may be genetic, and the sweating occurs only on specific body parts (usually the underarms, feet, hands, or face). The second type may be a side effect caused by another disease (such as diabetes or hyperthyroidism), menopause, or certain medications. If you feel like you're suffering from excessive sweating, talk to a doctor to see if it could be hyperhidrosis.

## ■ The surprising way fitness affects sweating

But what if you've ruled out a medical condition and are still sweating up a storm? It may simply be a sign that you're in shape. (Yass!) Over the past few decades, multiple studies have suggested that trained endurance athletes sweat sooner and produce more perspiration compared to untrained people.

"The more fit you are, the more efficiently your body sweats," explains Tony Musto, Ph.D., director of fitness and an exercise physiologist at the University of Miami. This is a good thing, since sweating helps cool you down and enables you to lift, run, or cycle at a higher intensity for longer. (What you don't want is your body to reach the critical core temp of 104 degrees, when people tend to pass out from heat illness or heat stroke.)

This isn't to say sedentary folks will stay dry. There's a relationship between sweat and a person's maximum oxygen uptake (VO2 max), a measure of cardiovascular



## More than 99 percent of sweat is water, along with trace amount of electrolytes like salt.

lar fitness and aerobic endurance. Research shows that the higher the VO2 max (and therefore fitness level) of a long-distance runner, the more quickly he starts to sweat and the more sweat he produces.

Here's where it gets a little complicated: When performing the same absolute work (i.e. jogging at 5 miles per hour on a treadmill), an unfit person may reach his VO2 max more quickly than a fit person, prompting him to sweat sooner and sweat more, even if the fit person sweats more efficiently overall, Musto says. That's because the unfit person may be working at 80 percent of his VO2 max, while the fit person is only at 50 percent.

On the other hand, if both a fit and unfit individual are working at the same relative workload (i.e., 60 percent of their VO2 max), the fit person who's running at 8 miles per hour will start to sweat more quickly and produce more sweat than the unfit person running at 5 miles per hour, Musto says. This also helps explain why the trained runners sweat more than the unfit people in the study above—they're able to run faster and harder, creating more body heat and more sweat.

## ■ Other factors

To further complicate things, a few more factors impact how much you sweat.

### 1. Gender

If you've ever walked into (or past) a men's locker room, this news won't come as a shock. In one study, a group of trained men and women and a group of unfit men and women cycled on stationary bikes for one hour in a studio heated to 86 degrees. The researchers looked at how many sweat glands were active during each rider's session and riders' overall sweat rates.

The result: Fit men perspired the most, especially during the more intense exercise. The fit women produced the second-most sweat, while the sedentary women perspired the least of any group. Even though women have more sweat glands than men, they produce less sweat from each gland, the researchers explain.

### 2. Body mass

Another reason that helps explain the study's results: "Men tend to be heavier, have more muscle mass, and in turn produce more heat than women do while working out," Musto says. Further research has shown that the higher a person's body mass index (BMI), the more they sweat.

### 3. Coffee

A piping hot latte will obviously dial up your body temp, which can encourage sweating. However, if coffee's diuretic effect takes place before you work out yet you go to the bathroom prior to exercising, you may actually sweat less, Musto says. That could equal a less-than-stellar workout, so be sure to drink plenty of H2O in addition to java to stay hydrated. The American Council on Exercise recommends drinking 17 to 20 ounces of water two to three hours before exercising and seven to 10 ounces of water every 10 to 20 minutes during a workout.

### 4. Spicy foods

Eating spicy foods also triggers your body temp to go up, so your body produces sweat to help cool itself down, Musto says. If you find you sweat a ton when you eat and it's making you uncomfortable, it could be a sign of Frey's syndrome, or gustatory sweating. People with Frey's sweat excessively at the mere thought or taste of any food (even ice cream). Talk to a doctor if you're concerned this could be an issue.

### 5. Hot weather

This may be another "duh" moment, but warmer days raise your body temperature, increasing heart rate and blood flow in an effort to cool down the core, Musto says. Humid weather is a double whammy: Since there's more moisture in the air, it's harder for the sweat on your skin to evaporate, deterring the cooling process.

## ■ The takeaway

There are plenty of factors that determine how much sweat an individual produces, and just about every level of sweating can be considered "normal". Bonus: The fitter you are, the more you sweat, which enables your body to keep on running, lifting, cycling—whatever you're into—for longer. However, if you're constantly sweating like crazy, especially in one specific area, it could be a sign of a rare condition called hyperhidrosis. Check with a doc if you're concerned.

(Source: greatist.com)

**Multiple studies have suggested that trained endurance athletes sweat sooner and produce more perspiration compared to untrained people.**

## Are some painkillers safer for your heart than others?

Despite new research, the answer is unclear. Use caution when taking any pain medication on a routine basis.

People with aching joints from arthritis—which affects nearly one in four adults—often rely on drugs known as NSAIDs to ease the pain of this often-debilitating condition. These popular medications also relieve headaches, cool fevers, and dampen inflammation. But with the exception of aspirin, most NSAIDs pose a risk to the cardiovascular system, notes Harvard professor Dr. Elliott Antman, a cardiologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital.

"Taking NSAIDs routinely over a long time period can raise the risk of blood clots, increase blood pressure, and accelerate cardiovascular disease," says Dr. Antman. While the danger is greatest in people with heart disease, it's also present in people without any signs of the disease.

## ■ A study of three drugs

Researchers have scrutinized the safety of NSAIDs for more than a decade. The most recent study was a 10-year-long investigation of more than 24,000 people with arthritis, who were assigned to take ibuprofen, naproxen, or celecoxib. The results, published in The New England Journal of Medicine on Nov. 13, 2016, suggest that people who took celecoxib were no more likely than those taking ibuprofen or naproxen to have a fatal or nonfatal heart attack or stroke. Also, people in the celecoxib group were less likely to have serious gastrointestinal bleeding compared with those in the other two groups. They were also less likely than those in the ibuprofen group to have kidney problems or to be hospitalized for high blood pressure.

## ■ Limitations and uncertainty

But limitations of the study created some uncertainty about the findings, according to Dr. Antman. For one thing, 69% of the participants had stopped taking their assigned drug by the end of the study, and researchers lost track of another 27%. Another concern was the dose of celecoxib, which was limited to the FDA-approved amount for treating people with osteoarthritis, who made up most of the trial participants. Their average daily dose was 209 milligrams (mg) per day—an amount unlikely to fully ease joint pain, some arthritis experts say. However, doctors were allowed to increase the prescription-strength doses of ibuprofen and naproxen to achieve better pain control (the average daily doses were 852 mg and 2,045 mg, respectively).

The low celecoxib dose likely explains why that drug appeared to cause fewer harmful effects. And the resulting inadequate pain relief may be why more people in the celecoxib group dropped out of the trial than those in the other groups, says Dr. Antman.

## ■ The lowest dose for the shortest time

So it's still not entirely clear whether any of these three NSAIDs is safer for your heart than the others. If you're at risk for heart disease (or already have it), an NSAID for a headache or other occasional aches and pains is likely relatively safe. But if you need one several times a week, or every day, work closely with your doctor to choose the best drug for your needs—and make sure you're taking the lowest possible dose for the shortest possible time, advises Dr. Antman. He occasionally sees patients who've had a heart attack who take NSAIDs routinely, but more out of habit than necessity. "They might say, 'Oh, I started taking it after I twisted my back playing tennis about a year ago. I don't want to have that pain again, so I just kept taking it.'" That's a bad idea, he cautions.

## ■ A brief history of NSAIDs

The widely used painkillers known as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, or NSAIDs, include over-the-counter drugs such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and naproxen (Aleve, Naprosyn), as well as more than a dozen prescription-only drugs, including diclofenac (Voltaren), ketoprofen (Orudis), and nabumetone (Relafen). These NSAIDs work by blocking two enzymes, COX-1 and COX-2, which are responsible for making substances called prostaglandins that cause pain and inflammation.

However, blocking COX-1 can also lead to bleeding in the stomach and intestines. A quest to avoid that problem led to the creation of drugs that block only COX-2 enzymes. While these drugs do seem to cause less stomach trouble, a 2004 study found that one of these so-called COX-2 inhibitors, rofecoxib (Vioxx), increased the risk of heart attack and stroke, leading to its withdrawal from the market. Similar concerns about the related COX-2 drug celecoxib (Celebrex) prompted the FDA to require additional research on this medication.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

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10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

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

**1** Expanding iPhone sales in India has suddenly become a major priority for Apple. That is because sales of the handset are slipping in China. According to a new report from Counterpoint Research, Apple did not have the best selling smartphone in the country in 2016 for the first time in five years.

**2** Alcatel to introduce 5 new smartphones with a modular one at MWC 2017 according to intel shared by Hungaria's Tech2.hu.

**3** New feature for WhatsApp will allow you to track your group members in real-time. Also "Recall" allows you to have a sent message returned to you unread, as long as you make the request for the message's return before it was opened.

**4** The BlackBerry Mercury has not been officially announced but that didn't stop the phone from making a television appearance on ABC's Last Man Standing, starring Tim Allen. Rumor says this phone will have the Pixels' rear camera.

**5** Upcoming LG Watch Style may start at \$249. LG Watch Style will launch together with the LG Watch Sport, which is rumored to be a more fully-featured smartwatch that probably commands a higher price point.

**6** Microsoft's financials for Q4 2016 paint a gloomy picture for the Lumia brand. Its official report reveals that Redmond's phone revenue is down 81% from the year before.

**7** Facebook introduced a new password protection method for its users. Facebook accounts can be further safeguarded with USB security keys, which add an extra layer of insurance against malicious hacker attacks.

**8** Mark Zuckerberg challenges Trump on immigration and 'extreme vetting' order. The Facebook CEO used his own page to criticize Donald Trump's executive order that will severely limit immigrants from certain Muslim-majority countries.

**9** Wall Street has regained an appetite for Apple as investors bet that the release of a 10th-anniversary iPhone and pent up customer demand will shore up shrinking sales.

**10** If Trump bans Twitter employees from returning to the country — and we've reached out to Twitter to see if any of its employees are effected by the ban — does Jack Dorsey ban Trump from Twitter? What about Google? Facebook?

10 tips to protect your business and Customers on Data Privacy Day

Having information about clients and customers is important, but ensuring that private information remains secure might be just as vital to the health of a small business. That's according to data professionals and others who are marking this year's Data Privacy Day.

Here are some suggestions for securing your systems and keeping the information of customers and clients private:

**1** If you collect it, protect it. Follow reasonable security measures to ensure that customers' and employees' personal information is protected from inappropriate and unauthorized access.

**2** Have a strong privacy policy. Customers need to know that you are protecting their information.

**3** Know what you are protecting. Be aware of all the personal information you have, where you are storing it, how you are using it and who has access to it.

**4** Don't underestimate the threat. In one survey conducted by the Alliance, 85 percent of small business owners believe larger enterprises are more targeted than they are.

**5** Don't collect what you don't need. The more valuable information you have, the bigger a target you might be. Avoid using social security numbers or other personal information for customer identification.

**6** Keep a clean machine. Having the latest security software, web browser and operating system are the best defenses against viruses, malware and other online threats.

**7** Use multiple layers of security. Spam filters will weed out malware and phishing scams — many of which are aimed directly at businesses — keeping your email safer and easier to use.

**8** Scan all new devices. Be sure to scan all USB and other devices before they are attached to your network.

**9** Educate employees. Employees are often the handlers of customer data. They therefore need to be kept up-to-date on how to protect that information to make sure it does not accidentally land in the wrong hands.

**10** Protect against mobile device risks. Smartphones, tablets and laptops can add to employee flexibility and productivity, but they can also be repositories of sensitive information, which, if lost, can harm your customers and your business.

(Source: smallbiztrends)

How automakers are cashing in on the connected car craze

By Brendan O'Brien

The Internet of Things has created a new market in the automotive industry, which is showing no signs of slowing down. Connected cars and their associated services are expected to grow from \$13.6 to over \$42 billion by 2022.

A glimpse of our collective future can be seen in Cadillac's Book by Cadillac entrance — an on-demand, luxury lifestyle-driven vehicles by subscription. The \$1,500-a-month car subscription service allows members to swap out different models of high-end sedans and SUVs, beginning in New York in February. It's the same business model as ClassPass or Netflix, but for the GM-owned Cadillac brand, competing with the likes of Audi's luxury mobility offering, Audi on Demand.

Audi and Cadillac have taken the functionality of Zipcar and turned it into a "white glove" service that leverages pre-existing brand affinity that is typical of many luxury buyers. Ford is also on board with FordPass — the first automaker-produced app that can provide services to drivers who don't own a vehicle from that brand. The app also helps find parking, lock and unlock the car — all great services — but the magic is that it helps build brand affinity even when the customer is away from their car.

Automakers and other industry players are also forming partnerships to offer innovative connected car services. Ford is testing out a peer-to-peer car sharing service named Smart Mobility that allows Ford Motor Credit customers to rent their cars to other drivers. Toyota has partnered with Uber for leasing to drivers, and GM has partnered with Lyft to offer its drivers short-term rentals. GM also acquired a car-sharing app in Europe



to help people share their cars, even if it's not a GM vehicle.

At a high level, this category seeks to address a set of market demands that all say, in one form or another, "I want a different way to get behind the wheel." More than anything, this is a reflection of a millennial ethos that sees less value in the instantly depreciating "investment" of a traditional car purchase. This demand is especially acute among urbanites who simply don't need or want a car full time.

Adults between the ages of 21 and 34 bought just 27 percent of all new vehicles sold in America in 2010, down from the peak of 38 percent in 1985. The massive success of Zipcar is the most obvious realization of this attitude.

Whether it is ride sharing, location services, apps, telematics, Wi-Fi, or Internet radio, all these services need

flexible billing options to support subscription- and consumption-based models.

For the industry to fully capitalize on connected car services, they will have to revisit their processes to support their monetization. The industry's major technical infrastructure has relied entirely on a one-time sales revenue model for the last 110 years. Pricing was set to coincide with leisurely two-year development cycles. Today, models and development cycles are being sped up. Automakers often don't have the back-office capability to handle selling, billing, and provisioning on-demand products and services outside the dealer network and with a recurring revenue and customer lifetime value model. If they are to succeed, they need to prepare their billing and accounting systems and practices today,

not after the next launch or acquisition.

Connected services will be part of the deal, but cashing in is going to take a fundamental shift in how automakers think about selling cars, too. What is thought of as "loyalty" now — building and selling a car and hoping that it's good enough that the customer will buy another one in 5-7 years — has to evolve into building strong and lasting brand affinity.

Instead of building the car, they need to focus on the brand and its relationship to the customer. It can no longer be just point-of-sale, it has to be constantly nurtured to develop a permanence. That is going to take a direct line of sight to the customer that cannot be maintained with the current dealer-driven sales structure. Achieving brand affinity is going to be relatively easy for makers of luxury vehicles and work vehicles, where it tends to already exist, but is going to be much harder for low-to-mid-market makers of passenger vehicles where they risk being commoditized. In these cases, the consumer's affinity and relationship are far more likely to reside with the provider of the service that puts them behind the wheel (think Zipcar, Enterprise CarShare, even Uber and Lyft) rather than the manufacturer of the vehicle itself.

Automakers, their dealer networks and the wholesale model all rely upon long-standing traditions and agreements. Today's customers are used to self-service, to doing their own research and making purchases on their own terms. To these consumers, the dealership model is archaic, painful, and unnecessary. The industry needs to steel itself for massive culture change where the dealership becomes part of the relationship, instead of the entire relationship.

(Source: Venturebeat)

Game developers rally against Trump's Muslim ban

Game developers around the world are protesting U.S. President Donald Trump's order banning refugees and barring citizens from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen from entering the United States for 90 days.

Leaders such as Google cofounder Sergey Brin are protesting at American airports, where the bans are being enforced. And game developers are joining in the fray as well. And, in an emergency stay issued on Saturday night, a federal judge blocked part of Trump's executive order, ordering that refugees and others trapped at airports across the U.S. should not be set back to their home countries.

The Game Developers Conference tweeted from its official Twitter account: "GDC is a global community — we're horrified by the #MuslimBan. Of course we'll refund affected attendees, and keep fighting for inclusivity."

Rami Ismael, cofounder of Vlambeer and a Muslim resident of the Netherlands, tweeted: "For the next 24 hours, all @Vlambeer revenue will be donated to @ACLU for their opposition to the #MuslimBan."

Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, whose company makes the Xbox game console, wrote a blog post about the ban.

"As an immigrant and as a CEO, I've both experienced and seen the positive impact that immigration has on our company, for the country, and for the world. We will continue to advocate on this important topic,"



Nadella said.

Paul Murphy, CEO of Dots, the maker of the popular Dots games, tweeted: " @dots is taking a stand. We are showing this to all of our players. 3-4 million people will see this soon #MuslimBan."

Kristian Segerstrale, CEO of Super Evil Megacorp, sent an email to all employees and posted on Medium about his views on the ban.

"Whatever your political affiliation or beliefs, discrimination or persecution of individuals on the basis of religion, ethnicity, national origin or anything

else for that matter is simply not OK anywhere, ever," Segerstrale wrote.

Margaret Wallace, CEO of Playmatics, said in an email to GamesBeat, "The more Trump tries to stifle liberty and democracy, the stronger we become. We are a nation of immigrants. Steve Jobs' biological father was a Syrian immigrant. My grandfather was an immigrant. Trump sells a lie of a past America that never was. He preys on fear. We in the tech community must be strong and show leadership in our industry and well as citizens united in defense of democracy."

Joseph Staten, one of the co-creators of Halo, tweeted: " Today, even more than usual, I'm proud to be a contributor to the @ACLU. And I'm proud to work for a company willing to take a stand."

Jamil Moledina, a game leader for Google Play and Daydream at Google, tweeted: "It's painful to see the impact of this executive order, my hope is that the real America stands up and rejects Trump."

On Facebook, Moledina expanded his comment: It's painful to see the impact of this executive order on everyone affected by it. This isn't the America I admired from abroad, and made my home. And I have to believe that's true of most Americans born with citizenship. My hope is that the real America stands up and rejects Trump and his thinking.

(Source: Venturebeat)

Cisco, Bosch, and Foxconn are building blockchain tech for the Internet of Things

Blockchain and Internet of Things are currently being seen as technologies that'll become ubiquitous in the near future. But, there are also individuals who're working towards the amalgamation of the two to build secure smart home solutions. They're now looking to expand the scope of this tech beyond its financial confines and into Internet of Things (IoT).

Thus, a collective of Fortune 500 companies and industry-leading blockchain startups are coming together to address the potential of these technologies. These partners include technology leaders like BNY Mellon, Bosch, networking hardware giant Cisco, security giant Gemalto, and hardware maker Foxconn. The startups in the initiative include Ambisafe, BitSE, Chronicled, ConsenSys, Skuchain, among others.

These two parties have already conducted a meeting and decided to collaborate on the development of a shared blockchain protocol for the Internet of Things. This initiative was brought to the front lines after several IT firms successfully deployed



blockchain-registered tamper-proof hardware for several use cases.

The most prominent of these has, however, been in the finance sector to conduct immensely secure cross-border transactions. And IoT hardware devices have recently been taking a hit due to their insecure nature. Mirai botnet has wreaked havoc over these devices by hacking them, replicating them to create bots, and then adding it to their arsenal of other devices. This should be the main issue this consortium is looking to sort with this blockchain implementation.

(Source: thetechportal)

Alleged hacker held in Prague at center of 'intense' US-Russia tug of war

An alleged computer hacker being held in the Czech Republic is at the centre of an international legal tussle between the United States and Russia amid lingering disquiet over Moscow's alleged interference in the recent US presidential election.

Yevgeniy Nikulin, 29, faces extradition requests from both countries after being detained by Czech police on an Interpol arrest warrant issued by US authorities.

Nikulin, a Russian citizen, was arrested in a restaurant in Prague on 5 October shortly after arriving in the city during a holiday with his girlfriend.

A federal court in Oakland, California, followed up with an indictment charging him with offences relating to the hacking of computer networks belonging to LinkedIn, Dropbox and Formspring and formally requesting his extradition to the US.

He faces a maximum 30 years in prison and up to \$1m in fines if convicted on charges including computer intrusion, aggravated identity theft, conspiracy, damaging computers and trafficking in illegal access devices.

There is no acknowledged link



between Nikulin's alleged offences and the hacking of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign, but his arrest came just three days before the Obama administration formally accused Russia of stealing emails from the Democratic National Committee and disclosing them through WikiLeaks.

Meanwhile, Russia has responded to the American extradition request against Nikulin by tabling one of its own, demanding that he be returned to face allegations dating back to 2009 that he hacked another person's bank account and stole 111,000 roubles (£1,465).

(Source: Guardian)



# Ocean acidification can also promote shell formation, scientists find

More carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the air also acidifies the oceans. It seemed to be the logical conclusion that shellfish and corals will suffer, because chalk formation becomes more difficult in more acidic seawater. But now a group of Dutch and Japanese scientists discovered to their own surprise that some tiny unicellular shellfish make better shells in an acidic environment. This is a completely new insight.

Researchers from the NIOZ (Royal Dutch Institute for Sea Research) and JAMSTEC (Japanese Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology) found in their experiments that so-called foraminifera might even make their shells better in more acidic water.

These single-celled foraminifera shellfish occur in huge numbers in the oceans. The results of the study are published in the leading scientific journal *Nature Communications*.

## ■ Acidic conditions

Since 1750 the acidity of the ocean has increased by 30%. According to the prevailing theory and related experiments with calcareous algae and shellfish, limestone (calcium carbonate) dissolves more easily in acidic water.

The formation of lime by shellfish and corals is more difficult because less carbonate is available under acidic conditions. The carbonate-ion relates directly to dissolved carbon



**Since 1750 the acidity of the ocean has increased by 30%. According to the prevailing theory and related experiments with calcareous algae and shellfish, limestone (calcium carbonate) dissolves more easily in acidic water.**

dioxide via two chemical equilibrium reactions.

The classical theory is based on purely chemical processes by which the rate at which lime is created is determined en-

tirely by the acidity of the water. NIOZ researcher and shared first author Lennart de Nooijer: "In our experiments the foraminifera were regulating the acidity at the micro level. In the places where shell

formation occurs, the acidity was substantially lower than in the surrounding seawater.

Foraminifera expel large amounts of hydrogen ions through their cell wall. This leads to acidification of their immediate micro-environment causing the equilibrium between carbon dioxide and carbonate to change in favor of carbon dioxide.

## ■ Carbon dioxide concentration

The organism take up the increased concentration of carbon dioxide quickly through its cell wall. On the inner side of the cell wall, a low acidity prevails due to the massive excretion of protons. Under these conditions the ingested carbon dioxide is again converted to carbonate, which reacts with calcium to form lime. Such an active biochemical regulation mechanism has never been found before."

The surface layer of the ocean is in equilibrium with the atmosphere. Therefore, more carbon dioxide in the air also leads to more dissolved carbon dioxide in the ocean's surface. "This finding may have important implications for the relationship between carbon dioxide levels in the air and the formation of calcareous structures by organisms," says co-author Professor Gert-Jan Reichart.

(Source: EurekAlert)

## New 'green' fertilizer could contribute to food revolution, scientists say

A new synthetic fertilizer could help farmers to save money, boost food production and reduce planet-warming emissions, scientists have found after trialing it on rice farms in Sri Lanka.

By slowing down the release of nutrients the fertilizer will help farmers to increase crop yields using less chemicals, the scientists from Britain and Sri Lanka said.

Chemical fertilizers such as the nitrogen-rich urea were key to the agricultural boom of the 1960s and 70s known as the "Green Revolution" but their cost remains relatively high for farmers in the developing world.

## ■ Agriculture production

Agricultural production must rise by about 60 percent to feed a growing global population, expected to reach 9 billion by 2050, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Urea, commonly used to grow rice, wheat and maize, dissolves quickly when in contact with water and part of its nutrients are washed away before crop roots can

absorb them.

As a consequence, more applications are needed, which can prove too expensive for farmers in poor regions, the scientists wrote in the scientific journal *ACS NANO*.

Moreover, unabsorbed urea particles go on to form ammonia that pollutes waterways and eventually causes the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

The new fertilizer delays the dissolution of urea by binding it with a mineral to slow down the release of nutrients 12 times, the scientists said.

## ■ Plant takes up more fertilizer

The "plant takes up more of the fertilizer and less is wasted," said Gehan Amaratunga of the University of Cambridge in Britain, co-author of the report.

"This goes a long way to reduce the environmental footprint of agriculture," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation by telephone late on Thursday.



Initial trials using the new fertilizer on rice farms in Sri Lanka showed production grew up to 20 percent using almost half the amount of fertilizer, Amaratunga said.

Amaratunga said he hoped the innovation could help usher in a new, more eco-friendly Green Revolution.

"It is a Green Revolution ... as it's more food and less environmental damage," he said.

(Source: newstrust.org)

## Fifty years ago, Apollo 1 astronauts lost their lives in our journey to the stars

Project Apollo was first proposed by the Eisenhower administration in early 1960, even before Alan Shepard became the first American to fly in space in May 1961.

It was conceived to develop more advanced spaceflight technologies, including a spacecraft that could hold three people instead of one, and it had an obvious end-game target: the moon.

"Apollo riding his chariot across the sun was appropriate to the grand scale of the proposed program," NASA manager Abe Silverstein, who named the program, explained in 1960.

## ■ Technological advances

The plan required so many technological advances — building new rockets, building new spacecraft (including control modules and landing modules), designing new spacesuits, developing new control systems and writing new code



— that it was easy to consider the whole program outrageously overambitious.

Then in May 1961, just 20 days after Shepherd's first flight, President Kennedy called on NASA to put a person on the moon before the decade was out.

NASA quickly realized that it needed an interim project to develop new spaceflight technologies and strategies before work on Apollo could begin in earnest,

and Project Gemini was born. That program, which ran from 1961 to 1966, launched ten crews of two into low Earth orbit.

Many of the core spaceflight operations for Apollo were developed in Project Gemini, including sending astronauts on extra-vehicular activity (EVA), or spacewalks, and docking two spacecraft together. The Gemini capsule, which Apollo 1 astronaut Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom

helped design, was known as the "pilot's spacecraft" for the enhanced control of the craft given to the astronauts.

## ■ The first mission

Finally it was time for Apollo. The first mission would include two veterans of Project Gemini, Gus Grissom (who also flew in Project Mercury) and Edward H. White II, as well as Roger Chaffee of Astronaut Group 3.

The spacecraft they would be flying in, the first version of the Command/Service Module Block I, had been launched in test flights on Saturn IB rockets, the same launch vehicle that the crew would ride into low Earth orbit for up to 14 days.

Apollo 1 was to perform a verification test on the more complicated spacecraft for three — the first test in the mission to the moon. The launch date was set for February 21, 1967.

(Source: Popular Mechanics)

## Banker Expounds on Highest Debt of 31 Entities to Sarmayeh Bank

A senior official at Sarmayeh Bank elaborated on the details of largest debtors of a bank and said: "A number of 31 people have been prosecuted judicially with a debt rate ranging from 200 to 1,200 billion toman at large."

Speaking in a press briefing, Chief Executive of Sarmayeh Bank Mohammad-Reza Khani announced the above statement and showed reaction to the recent remarks of the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance (MEAF), claiming that notorious debtor named Babak Zanjani has a negligible debt to the bank."

The banker put the debt rate of the largest debtor of the bank at 1,200 billion toman.

Committee to Collect Outstanding Claims is the



most important Committee which was set up as of the current Iranian month of Mehr (Sept. 22), he said, add-

ing: "We largest banking debtors were arrested, they referred to the bank in order to pay their debts but we could not agree with most of them due to the shortage of their liquidity."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he pointed to Sarmayeh Bank as one of the largest debtors in banking network of the country, adding: "With the coordination made in this regard, most of the bank's debt has been settled."

He further noted that overdue receivables, Non-Performing Loans (NPL) and bad loans are of different types of banking loans and put the total NPLs of the bank at 7,800 billion toman, 2,000 billion toman of which is considered as delay penalty.

## Giant 'hot jupiters' may grow even larger with age

Giant planets that orbit near their stars can grow even bigger as they age, a new study finds.

This finding could shed light on how planets interact with their stars, researchers say.

In the past two decades, astronomers have confirmed the existence of more than 3,400 worlds outside Earth's solar system. These discoveries have revealed that some of these exoplanets, such as "hot Jupiters" — gas giants that orbit their stars closer than Mercury does the sun — are very different from those seen in Earth's Solar System.

Previous research has found a growing number of exoplanets that are larger than expected based on theoretical models of planetary formation and evolution. It might be that these planets aren't born extra-large, but instead are puffing up over time like hot-air balloons because of heat radiating from their stars.

The "size of a gas giant planet is primarily set by the heat in the deep interior of the planet, and since these planets are not generating (new) heat internally, you would expect them to cool and contract over time," said study lead author Joel Hartman, an astronomer at Princeton University. The "only way they can be getting bigger over time is if some of the radiative energy from the star is somehow making its way deep into the planet and heating it."

To help solve this mystery, scientists examined two newfound hot jupiters named HAT-P-65b and HAT-P-66b. They were discovered using the Hungarian-made Automated Telescope Network (HATNet) in Arizona and Hawaii. These exoplanets are about 2,745 and 3,025 light-years from Earth, respectively.

(Source: space.com)

## Cute hamsters turn into cannibals because 'habitat is collapsing'

Hamsters in northern France are suffering deficiencies in their diet to such an extent they are eating their own pups.

Scientists are blaming monoculture in agriculture which is causing hamsters to exist purely on industrially grown maize or corn instead of a variety of crops. As a result their corn diet is deficient in important vitamins like B3 or niacin.

"There's clearly an imbalance," said Gerard Baumgart, President of the Research Centre for Environmental Protection in Alsace. "Our hamster habitat is collapsing."

About four-fifths of the pups born of mothers had a varied diet. Only 5%, however, of the baby hamsters whose mothers ate corn made it that far.

The scientists reported: "Females stored their pups with their hoards of maize before eating them. Pups were still alive at that time."

Scientists noticed other signs of abnormal behavior from the hamsters including "climbing and pounding their feeders". The females also had swollen and dark tongues and blood so thick it was difficult to draw for samples.

But when the researchers gave them vitamin B3 in their corn diets the symptoms disappeared and they retracted from eating their babies.

"Knowing that these species already face many threats, and that most of them are in danger of extinction, it is urgent to restore a diverse range of plants in agriculture schemes," researchers urged.

(Source: IBT)

## Eating your five-a-day could help prevent Alzheimer's, study suggests

Eating your five-a-day could help prevent Alzheimer's, a new study suggests, after scientists found people who were deficient in vitamin A were more likely to develop the disease.

Scientists monitored more than 300 elderly people in China and discovered that those with higher levels of the vitamin were 60 percent less likely to have developed dementia.

Researchers found that 75 percent of those with either mild or significant vitamin A deficiency had cognitive impairment, compared to 47 per cent of those with normal vitamin A levels.

Vitamin A is naturally found in fruits and vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, peaches and avocados as well as fish and liver.

A second part of the research found that mice with low levels of vitamin A from birth developed more amyloid, the sticky substance which builds up in the brains of Alzheimer's patients and prevents brain cells from communicating.

"Our study clearly shows that marginal deficiency of vitamin A, even as early as in pregnancy, has a detrimental effect on brain development and has long-lasting effect that may facilitate Alzheimer's disease in later life," said Dr. Weihong Song, a professor of psychiatry and Canada Research Chair in Alzheimer's disease at the University of British Columbia.

The researchers found that mice with a mild vitamin A deficiency performed worse on tests of learning and memory in adulthood.

Even when the mice deprived of vitamin A in the womb were given a normal diet as pups, they performed worse than mice who received a normal amount of the nutrient in the womb but were deprived after birth. It suggests that the damage had already been done in the womb.

(Source: The Telegraph)

## Nouri Petrochemical Co. Wins Silver Statue in 2nd National Energy Management Award

Nouri Petrochemical Company won silver statue at 2nd National Energy Management Award in the field of Energy Performance Index (EPI), the Public Relations Dept. of the company reported.

It should be noted that the 2nd National Energy Management Award was held on Monday Jan. 9 with introducing top companies and firms in the field of energy consumption management field.

However, Nouri Petrochemical Company was awarded with a silver statue in the sector of energy intensive industries.

Evaluation of applicants for receiving "National Energy Management Award" was held with the aim of studying situation of energy consumption of companies to the energy consumption criteria, evaluation of capabilities and results obtained in the field of improvement of energy performance and also examin-

ing situation and performance of energy management system, etc.

According to the scientific model designed, scores of companies in energy intensive industries and processes are determined based on technical score (according to the energy performance in the reported fiscal year), performance enhancement score (in terms of trend of performance enhancement of energy as compared to

the previous year) as well as energy management system score (in terms of situation of this system).

With regard to the measures taken during the past three years in the field of observing criteria in the field of consumption of energy and also deployment of energy management system based on ISO standard as well as implementation of various projects in the field of optimal conservation of energy.



## White tigers attraction

➔1 White tigers aren't albino because they have some forms of pigments that cause their fur color. All white tigers come from a color variation of Bengal tigers. White tigers are not considered as a specific subspecies. If two Bengal tiger with recessive gene that controls fur color are bred together, white tiger appears. Some sources said, the white tigers' origin was recorded in India from 1556 to 1605 AD. Some notes also confirmed that one single white tiger is the origin of entire captive white tiger population and the process of inbred continued ever since.

### ■ Captive breeding



Tigers cost a lot to feed, so standard zoos give the animals contraceptives as a way of controlling the numbers of young born. It would be relatively easy to breed captive tigers but there is not enough suitable habitat and also adequate enclosure for captive-bred stock. In the case of the white tiger, one recessive allele has to come from each parent to allow for expression of the white striped color morph as Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) said.

While this has happened rarely in the wild populations of various species occasionally e.g. white deer, lion, ferret; such traits only rarely get expressed, and, when expressed, it is very likely that they confer a disadvantage resulting in reduced fitness for a given individual under most circumstances. Indeed, the very rarity of the traits in natural populations is itself strong evidence that they have deleterious consequences.

### ■ Severe inbred control

Now at Tehran Zoo, a female white tiger exists whose name is Queen. As mentioned before, a wide variety of heritable defects and abnormalities have been found associated with recessive alleles and for this reason suitable contraceptives used for Queen in order to prevent fertility.

Severe inbreeding such as inbreeding between brother and sister or father and daughter to produce mutation of a white fur resulted to number of defects and abnormalities in some places around the world. Deformities in white tigers consist of cross-eyes, weak immune system, short snout, and jutting teeth. Some born with neurological issues, cleft palates, bulging eyes and finally other facial deformities. Only one in every 10,000 wild tigers are born with leucism – a lack of pigment in the coat which creates the distinctive white and black coats, and blue eyes that are the main visual characters of white tigers.

In fact all white tigers seen today are a result of breeding programs at zoos around the world but the breeding programs are also under severe controls especially in standard zoos such as Tehran Zoo. Even healthy white tigers are unable to release into the wild again not just because there is not enough suitable habitat left, because their white fur also make it impossible to live wild without being noticed.

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Small Talk

A: Morning.  
B: Hi there, Mr. Anderson! How are you on this fine morning?  
A: Fine, thank you.  
B: **It sure is** cold this morning, isn't it? I **barely even** got out of bed!  
A: Yeah. It's pretty cold, alright.  
B: Did you **catch** the news this morning? I heard that there was a fire on Byron Street.  
A: No, I didn't hear about that.  
B: **Did you happen to** watch the football game last night? The Patriots scored in the last minute!  
A: No, I don't like football.  
B: Oh... **By the way**, I saw you with your daughter at the office Christmas party. She is really beautiful!  
A: She's my wife! Oh, here's my floor! Nice talking to you. Goodbye.  
B: Sir, this is the fifty-sixth floor! We are on the seventieth!  
A: That's okay, **I'll take the stairs!**

### ■ Key vocabulary

**it sure is:** affirmation or confirmation of something

**barely even:** hardly, could almost not

**catch:** hear, listen to

**did you happen to:** by chance or casualty someone did something

**by the way:** phrase used to interject another topic in a conversation

**take the stairs:** go up the stairs, use the stairs

### ■ Supplementary vocabulary

**small talk:** short, friendly conversation about things that are not important

**chat:** talk (informal)

**network:** talk with people to form business connections

**awkward:** difficult to deal with

**uncomfortable:** a feeling of being embarrassed or uneasy  
(Source: [irlanguage.com](http://irlanguage.com))





# Iran to mark World's Wetland Day in duststorm-stricken Khuzestan

ENVIRONMENT

desk

TEHRAN — Iran will mark World's Wetland Day, February 2, in the proximity of Hour-al-Azim and Shadegan wetlands, southwestern province of Khuzestan battered by ferocious sandstorms year-round.

World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on February 2. This day marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands also known as Ramsar Convention on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.

The Standing Committee of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands approved wetlands for disaster risk reduction as the theme for World Wetlands Day in 2017.

Iran is also celebrating this day in southwestern province of Khuzestan

next to the Hour-al-Azim and Shadegan wetlands in attendance of members of parliament, ambassadors and environmental officials, Farhad Dabiri, the deputy director of Iran's Department of Environment said on Saturday.

With regard to the significant role wetlands are playing in fighting sand and dust storms [and the fact that Khuzestan is struggling with choking dust particles almost all the year round] the ceremony will be held in Khuzestan, Dabiri highlighted. There will be another brief ceremony in Ramsar as well.

■ Locals' role in wetland conservation

Locals residing near wetlands depend on them to earn a living and the wetlands also need people to survive, Dabiri said, adding, in case the locals respect the give-and-take relation with the wetlands they would

be able to live sustainably with the nature.

What Department of Environment is trying to achieve is to reinforce this direct relation between the locals and the wetlands, he added.

■ Wetlands in Iran

"There are some 280 wetlands in Iran known to us 94 of which are pretty important," Dabiri said, 24 of them are listed as Ramsar Sites meaning that they are designated international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

He went on to say that six of the wetlands are also registered in the Montreux Record.

Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other

human interference. It is maintained as part of the Ramsar List.

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has also underscored the importance of wetlands as great environmental treasures, he pointed.

Due to prolonged periods of drought, climate change, depleting of ground water sources, mismanagement, old farming irrigation systems, and in general a combination of unsustainable development along with inefficient use of the environmental resources many natural resources are now either fading or starting to die down and are gradually and in some cases severely affecting our lives.

And that's why recently environmental laws are gaining priorities in every aspects of development in the hope of reversing some of the harms human being inflicted upon the nature.

Shadegan International Wetlands, Khuzestan Province, are a series of Ramsar wetlands. The ponds and surrounding marshes are fed by the Karun River and are connected to the Persian Gulf. (Photo by Mehdi Pedarmkhoo / Tehran Times)

# Second baby dolphin killed by selfie-taking swimmers in Argentina

A dolphin has reportedly died in Argentina after beachgoers surrounded the animal and pulled it from the water for photos.

It's the second dolphin to be killed by selfie-crazed swimmers in a year in the South American country.

Footage of the second dolphin was reportedly filmed in the beach town of San Bernardo this week, showing a group holding the dolphin in shallow, muddy water.

News service La Capital reported the dolphin

later died.

In 2016 a similar event occurred in Santa Teresita when a baby dolphin was taken from the water and its lifeless body was mobbed for selfies.

Advocacy group World Animal Protection said wild animals weren't photo props.

"It is so disappointing to see this happen again," the statement said.

"Yet another baby dolphin senselessly killed while

cruelly being treated as a photo prop. Sadly it shows some people's focus is on obtaining an animal selfie rather than thinking of the animal's welfare.

"If you can pet it, ride it or take a selfie with it, then the animal is likely to be suffering. Wild animals belong in the wild, and we urge beachgoers who come across a marine animal that's been beached or washed ashore to immediately notify local authorities for help."

(Source: [Huffington Post](http://Huffington Post))

IN FOCUS

IRNA/ Faraj Samadi



## Over 40,000 clunker taxis scrapped in 10 months

ENVIRONMENT

desk

TEHRAN — The number of clunker models since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2016) has gone up to 40,000 nationwide, Environment chief Masoumeh Ebtekar said on Saturday.

Ebtekar made the remarks in Tehran in a ceremony to celebrate the scrapping of the 40,000th taxi with Industry Minister Mohammad Reza Ne'matzadeh and Vice President Mohammad Shariatmadari in attendance.

Ebtekar also highlighted that since the beginning of the current administration (August 2013) some 915,000 old cars have been replaced by new ones.

Minister Ne'matzadeh also noted that some 15,000 electric motorcycles are manufactured in Iran over the current year and called for incentive programs to encourage people to buy these zero emission products.

It takes five years to succeed in manufacturing and marketing electric motorcycle in the country,

he suggested.

Shariatmadari, for his part, explained that scrapping of 17,000 buses and 65,000 trucks and heavy vehicles are atop agenda.

It is also planned to add some 400 wagons to Tehran subway fleet, he added.

Earlier this month, Ne'matzadeh announced that the number of replaced taxis will grow to 60,000 by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2017).





# Trump wants ISIL defeat plan in 30 days

The United States President Donald Trump has signed yet another executive order directing the military's Joint Chiefs of Staff to devise a plan within 30 days to destroy the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

Trump signed the military directive along with two other executive orders, including one imposing restrictions on highly lucrative lobbying for foreign governments by administration officials.

In remarks following the order to military commanders, Trump said, "I think it's going to be very successful. That's big stuff."

The move was apparently aimed to signal that the new U.S. president was serious about delivering on his campaign pledge to tackle "global terrorism" more aggressively than his Democratic predecessor, former President Barack Obama, whom he has accused of establishing the notorious terrorist group that has taken over large swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria and engaged in exporting their oil reserves.

This is while both Trump and his defense secretary, retired Marine General James Mattis, have expressed a desire to expedite an end to the battle against ISIL. U.S. military advisers and air power have reportedly been engaged in helping Iraqi forces in recapturing the city of Mosul. In Syria, the U.S. is struggling to recruit enough local militants to facilitate its own plan to recapture ISIL stronghold



of Raqqa, in continued efforts to undermine the authority of the Syrian government.

Even before Saturday's order, U.S. military authorities had been at work developing a series of potential actions for Mattis and Trump's entire national security team to consider, according to The Washington Post, which added that the plans include possible deployment of additional advisers to Iraq and Syria.

Changes to the existing campaign are expected to be modest adjustments to the existing strategy rather than any

radical departure. How far the new measures go "would depend upon the political risk that the president is willing to take when we do certain things that could exacerbate things with Russia or Turkey."

The proposals will seek to make sure that commanders in the field "have the wherewithal and the leeway to do what they have to do to successfully prosecute the campaign," the report added, citing a U.S. defense official speaking on condition of anonymity.

Deployment of more combat power, however, may come with serious drawbacks, including risking additional American lives and adding to the already significant cost of military operations overseas.

The daily further added that Trump also signed an executive order restructuring the National Security Council "and streamlining procedures in a way that the White House believes would be more adaptive to modern threats."

It also quoted Trump as saying that the change would bring "a lot of efficiency and, I think, a lot of additional safety," adding: "People have talked about doing this for a long time."

However, it was not immediately clear on Saturday what impact Trump's executive order halting entry of migrants and legal U.S. residents from Iraq and other Muslim-majority nations would have on Washington's partnership with the Iraqi government in the battle against ISIL. Iraqi lawmakers have urged the country's Foreign Ministry to explain how the measure will affect Iraq.

ISIL terrorists, who were initially trained by the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) in Jordan in 2012 to destabilize the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, now control large parts of Syria and Iraq. They have been engaged in crimes against humanity in the areas under their control.

(Source: agencies)

## Report: U.S. commandoes attack Yemen's Bayda, kill 57

The United States forces have carried out a series of ground and air raids against a village in the Yemeni province of Bayda, killing a total of 57 people, among them civilians.

U.S. paratroopers parachuted in Bayda's Qifah district and raided the Yakla village there, with some 30 aircraft such as Apache helicopters and drones taking part in the operations.

There was no comment from Washington on the raids.

The operation was the first in Yemen attributed to the U.S. since President Donald Trump took office on January 20.

The U.S. has stepped up its use of drone strikes in recent years and is the only force known to be operating drones over Yemen. The House of Saud regime media said

16 civilians, among them women and children, lost their lives in the U.S. assault.

Reports said the rest of those killed were militants with the al-Qaeda terrorist group, including three of its ringleaders.

"The operation began at dawn when a drone bombed the home of [al-Qaeda ringleader] Abdulraoof al-Dhahab and then helicopters flew up and unloaded paratroopers at his house and killed everyone inside," an unnamed local told AFP.

The Lebanese al-Mayadeen television channel reported that a U.S. soldier was also killed during clashes with militants.

Two years ago, U.S. troopers conducted a similar operation in Yemen's Hadhramaut (Hadhramout) Province to allegedly save an American reporter who was

held captive by al-Qaeda. However, the operation was unsuccessful and left the correspondent dead.

Separately on Sunday, Saudi regime fighter jets mistakenly bombed positions held by Riyadh's own mercenaries in Bayda Province.

Arabic-language al-Masirah television network quoted an informed military source as saying that the Saudi regime warplanes had also targeted homes in Bayda's al-Quraishyah and Sharyah neighborhoods.

Similar Saudi air raids were also carried out in the districts Harad and Nasim in Hajjah Province as well as the Sirwah neighborhood of Ma'rib Province.

The Saudi regime fighter jets further

targeted al-Amri district of Ta'izz Province with cluster bombs.

Elsewhere, in Shabwah Province, a large number of Saudi mercenaries were killed and injured in the Yemeni army's rocket attacks.

Additionally, 50 Saudi mercenaries, among them foreign nationals, were killed and injured in clashes with the Yemeni army forces in the port city of Mokha and Dhubbah district, both situated in Ta'izz Province.

Three rocket attacks also hit downtown Zanzibar in Abyan Province.

The Riyadh regime has been incessantly pounding Yemen since March 2015 in a bid to reinstall the country's ex-government and crush the Ansarullah (Houthi) movement.

(Source: agencies)

## Turkey detains pro-Kurdish party spokesman amid post-coup purge

Turkish police have arrested the spokesman of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP/Halkların Demokratik Partisi) as part of the government's crackdown on the pro-Kurdish opposition party launched following last year's failed military coup.



An unidentified Turkish security source said Ayhan Bilgen, who also serves as the MP for the city of Kars, was taken into custody at Ankara Esenboga Airport on Sunday and would be taken to southeastern Diyarbakir Province, Turkey's Anadolu news agency reported.

Bilgen was detained for his failure to give testimony in an alleged terror probe underway by Diyarbakir prosecutor's office, the source added.

Huda Kaya and Meral Danis Bestas, two other HDP lawmakers, were arrested on Saturday as part of the same investigation and released under judicial supervision.

The crackdown on opposition is part of measures taken under a state of emergency declared following the abortive military putsch on July 15, 2016, blamed on the movement led by the United States-based opposition cleric, Fethullah Gulen.

In November 2016, 13 HDP lawmakers were detained on charges of links to Kurdish militants. They have all denied having any ties with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, also known as the PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê).

Currently, 10 of those arrested, including HDP co-leaders Selahattin Demirtas and Figen Yuksekdag still remain in custody awaiting trial. Earlier this month, Diyarbakir prosecutors demanded a jail term of between 43 and 142 years for Demirtas and a prison sentence of between 30 and 83 years for the Yuksekdag.

Turkey has banned the PKK as a terrorist organization. The militant group has been calling for an autonomous Kurdish region since 1984.

A shaky ceasefire between Ankara and the PKK that had stood since 2013 was declared null and void by the militants in 2015 in the wake of a Turkish aerial campaign against the group.

(Source: Press TV)

## Zarif: Trump's move 'a great gift to extremists' Terrorist threat from Iran nationals 'sounds more like a joke', Larijani says

➡ On Saturday a U.S. federal judge ruled that authorities could not deport citizens of the seven countries who had already arrived in the U.S. with valid visas, or who were on transit. The ruling was made after the American Civil Liberties Union brought a challenge on behalf of two Iraqis detained at John F. Kennedy airport in New York on Friday night, hours after Trump issued his executive order.

The Washington-based non-profit organization National Iranian American Council issued a statement in reaction to the ban: "Donald Trump is making good on the most shameful and discriminatory promises he made on the campaign trail... He called for a Muslim ban and is now taking the first steps to implement one. This will not stand. The American people are better than this."

The organization called the reported executive order a "fundamental challenge to what America represents," and said "Donald Trump appears intent on throwing that America away and taking us down a slippery slope towards a dark future."

Green card holders overseas seeking to return to U.S. will have to apply for a waiver to travel back, reported CNN, quoting sources familiar with the matter. It said the applications will be dealt with "expeditiously" and on a case-by-case basis.

With over a million Iranian diaspora the ban will be "very difficult for Iranian community living in the U.S. and difficult for people that live in Iran", AFP quoted travel specialist Mike Amiri said. He added the ban hampers family visits and unifications.

In 2015, according to the Department of Homeland Security, a total of 35,266 nonimmigrant visas were granted to Iranians to enter the United States, compared with 21,381 for Iraq; 16,010 for Syria; 5,549 for Yemen; 4,792 for Sudan; 2,879 for Libya and 359 for Somalia.

Farhad Besharati, also a travel agent was quoted as saying that the suspension of visas will hurt Iran-U.S. business ties as 90 percent of the business comes from travelling to and from Iran.

Hassan Shwerid, a member of Iraqi Parliament's foreign affairs committee in a statement read to Reuters asked the Iraqi government "to reciprocate to the decision taken by the U.S. administration". He added, "Iraq is in the frontline of the war on terrorism" and it is "unfair that Iraqis are treated in this way."

Yemen's Houthi Ansarullah movement also lashed out at Trump's decision. "All attempts to classify Yemen and its citizens as a probable source for terrorism and extremism are illegal and illegitimate," reported Yemen's Saba Net new agency.

Analysts believe that the travel ban goes to show the cruelty of the Trump's policy on refugees from war-torn areas – especially cruel to those whose family members have been separated and are awaiting reunification in the U.S.

## Trump's inaugural speech: Populist prattle with Islamophobic innuendos

➡ Trump's choice for secretary of education, billionaire Betsy DeVos, a strong advocate for privatizing public education, will likely continue this trend towards quality education for the elite and the dregs for the rest.

"For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry," declared Trump in an obvious reference to offshoring of jobs from the U.S. to other so-called low-wage countries. In truth, very little factual data is available on the actual number of U.S. jobs that have been "offshored." Basically, the departure of manufacturing jobs from the American heartland has heavily impacted workers without high school diplomas, but only moderately affected workers with college degrees.

In the 1960s, one out of every three American jobs was in manufacturing, but by 2013, only one out of every ten jobs was in that sector. The manufacturing jobs supported a broad middle class and the loss of these jobs has been a contributing factor to the ever-increasing wage inequality. This, of course, has led to the creation of a significant pool of disaffected, low-skilled and predominantly poorly educated white Americans, who now form Trump's hard core base of electoral support.

Looking at the facts, it is not at all clear that the offshoring of low-skilled jobs has had an overall negative impact outside the class of workers previously mentioned. Some studies have suggested that there has actually been a beneficial effect on the overall economy in the shift from low-skilled to more highly-skilled jobs. In any case, there has been tremendous pressure on corporations to offshore low-skilled work to countries with low-wage economies, such as China.

Trump himself has not been immune to these pressures to maximize his profits. When he wanted to license a brand of garments under the Trump brand name, the new U.S. president did not express any reservations on where the products would be produced. As a result, Trump suits, shirts, perfume, eyeglass frames, cufflinks and other items are manufactured in low-wage countries including China, Honduras and Bangladesh.

Obviously, by condoning offshoring, Trump is in direct contradiction with his populist campaign prattle as well as his inaugural diatribe. Likewise, Trump's pick for secretary of commerce, Wilbur Ross, reportedly offshored 2,700 U.S. manufacturing jobs since the year 2004. These actions by the new occupant of the oval office seem sufficient justification to call him a hypocrite; at a minimum his threats of "consequences" against U.S. corporations must have an exceedingly hollow ring in corporate boardrooms across America.

Trump reportedly saved 1,100 jobs with air conditioner and furnace manufacturer Carrier from export

to Mexico. But focusing narrowly on Indianapolis in the U.S. state of Indiana obscures the broader picture of corporate offshoring, which appears to be proceeding despite threats from above. Rexnord, CTS Corporation and Manitowoc Foodservice, all located near Indianapolis, intend to continue with their plans to close factories and offshore jobs. In neighboring Illinois, Caterpillar is proceeding with its plans to close a plant in Peoria, exporting 230 jobs to Mexico. Incidentally, saving roughly half of the jobs in Carrier's Indianapolis facility will cost the taxpayers of Indiana \$7 million a year in tax incentives for over the next 10 years.

Populist rhetoric aside, there is little the fledgling president can do to entice corporations away from continuing to offshore jobs. While Trump can threaten government contractors like Lockheed Martin, Boeing, General Dynamics and Raytheon, he is not likely to change a U.S. tax code that allows multinationals to defer tax payments indefinitely on all profits earned from foreign sources, provided the money stays outside the United States. The only incentive proposed by him is a one-time 10 percent tax on repatriated corporate earnings.

However, corporate heads have indicated that should such a tax holiday be enacted by Trump, the money returned would probably be used for stock repurchase or be distributed to shareholders as dividends. Most likely, such a corporate windfall would only benefit well-heeled shareholders and not be used to resuscitate, as Trump put it in his inaugural harangue, the "rusted-out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our nation."

The amount of corporate profits held offshore by Fortune 500 companies is an astonishing \$2.4 trillion, which translates to almost \$700 billion in unpaid taxes for these U.S. multinationals. One of the worst offenders is pharmaceutical giant Pfizer, which as of December 2015 had almost \$200 billion held offshore. General Electric is holding another \$104 billion offshore. Other companies taking advantage of this tax loophole include Apple, Microsoft, Google, Chevron, Medtronic, IBM, Oracle and Cisco Systems. It is in the realm of fantasy to think that Trump would be able to pressure these corporate giants into doing his bidding at the expense of their bottom lines "to benefit American workers and American families."

At least Trump was truthful when he said that the wealth of the American middle class has been "redistributed across the entire world." He was not forthcoming, however, in that it was the U.S. multinationals themselves who were primarily responsible for the redistribution of the wealth. His solution to this inequity is protectionism.

"Protection will lead to great prosperity and strength."

But will "border taxes" and withdrawing from international trade agreements really help jumpstart the sputtering U.S. economy? German Economy Minister Sigmar Gabriel thinks not. By pulling out of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), for example, Trump has provided the remaining 11 members of the consortium with additional economic opportunities. Confirming this view, Gabriel confided, "For Europe, I see opportunities if Trump distances himself not just from China, but all of Asia." Likewise, China has noted the void created by the U.S. exit and is pushing its own free trade pact, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

Trump declared his intention to "unite the civilized world against Radical Islamic Terrorism, which we will eradicate completely from the face of the Earth." This ill-defined goal, which hints of Samuel Huntington's Islamophobic essay on the Clash of Civilizations, is echoed on the White House web site, where it is stated, "Defeating ISIS and other radical Islamic terror groups will be our highest priority."

Apparently, the reality-TV producer turned commander-in-chief is convinced that his goals are attainable, because, "When America is united, America is totally unstoppable." Furthermore, he pontificated that the U.S. is "protected by God." Yet a casual observance of the widespread protests erupting across the land since his election should be enough to convince anyone that, rather than uniting the country, he has driven a wedge of xenophobia through its heartland with his inflammatory, racially-slanted rhetoric and Islamophobic innuendos.

While this populist prattle may play well with some among the white electorate, Muslims are rightly concerned over what this neo-fascist chief executive has in store for them, especially after announcing his intention to ban immigrants from seven Muslim-majority nations: Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen. The anti-Islamic thrust of the proposed ban is clear enough, since exceptions would be made for Christians and other religious minorities. Undoubtedly a coincidence, but the U.S. has bombed every nation on the list except Iran.

To justify the ban on Muslim immigration from the seven countries, Trump's order refers to the 9/11 terror attacks, citing "the nineteen foreign nationals who went on to murder nearly 3,000 Americans." Strange, how fifteen of the hijackers were from Saudi Arabia and the remainder were from the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Lebanon, yet none of these countries are mentioned on Trump's list.



## Stoke's Bojan Krkic joins Mainz on loan, targets Premier League return

Stoke City forward Bojan Krkic has joined Mainz on loan for the rest of the season.

The 26-year-old Barcelona product joined Stoke for £3 million in the summer of 2014 and made an instant impact in the Potteries.

Bojan scored 15 goals in 59 Stoke appearances, but has fallen out of favour under Mark Hughes this season and made only five Premier League starts.

"It is an honour for me that Mainz 05 gives me the opportunity to prove myself in another European top league," Bojan told the Bundesliga club's official website.



"I look forward to the team as well as to fans and to help the ZeroFivers soon on the pitch."

Mainz coach Martin Schmidt added: "'In Bojan we got a player who is dangerous in front of goal and creative. I'm looking forward to the challenge of integrating him into the team over the coming months."

Bojan's departure comes after Stoke signed West Brom striker Saido Berahino for an initial £12m on a five-and-a-half-year contract.

The once-capped Spain international explained on his personal Twitter account that he does not see moving to Germany as the end of his Stoke career.

He also thanked the Potters for their co-operation in helping him return to fitness after he ruptured a cruciate knee ligament in an FA Cup tie at Rochdale in January 2015.

Bojan did not play for seven months after suffering that injury, but he returned to score seven goals in the 2015-16 season.

"For the time being, this isn't a goodbye to Stoke City," Bojan said. "It's just a 'see you soon,' but I didn't want to pass up on the opportunity to thank everyone who has been involved in ensuring that I hold great memories of my time at this club.

"Firstly, thank you to Stoke City for giving me the chance to play in, and enjoy the Premier League.

"I would particularly like to thank the club's board for standing by me during the tough times, such as when I was allowed to recover from my cruciate ligament injury back in Barcelona, alongside my family, or when the club offered me a new contract a few months on from my return to the side.

"Without doubt, some of the happiest moments of my career have come in a Stoke shirt."

(Source: ESPN)

## West Ham agree £25m fee with Marseille for Dimitri Payet

West Ham United have agreed a fee of £25m with Marseille for Dimitri Payet and the France winger has travelled to the south of France to complete the formalities of the move, which include the medical test.

Payet has pushed hard for the transfer, citing family problems as the reason why he wants to return to his former club - from which he joined West Ham in a £10.7m deal in the summer of 2015 - and he has effectively been on strike in east London since 10 January.

That was the day when he met with Slaven Bilic, the West Ham manager, to inform him that it was his wish to be allowed to re-join Marseille, who are now under the ambitious ownership of the American businessman, Frank McCourt. Payet refused to play for Bilic's team and he was banished to train with the under-23s.

Bilic has felt betrayed by the 29-year-old, who was rewarded for his brilliant form with an improved contract in February of last year, which would pay him £125,000-a-week until 2021, and the club's initial position was to hold him to the terms of it. If they dug in for the remainder of January and refused to sell, perhaps he could be reintegrated into the team in February.

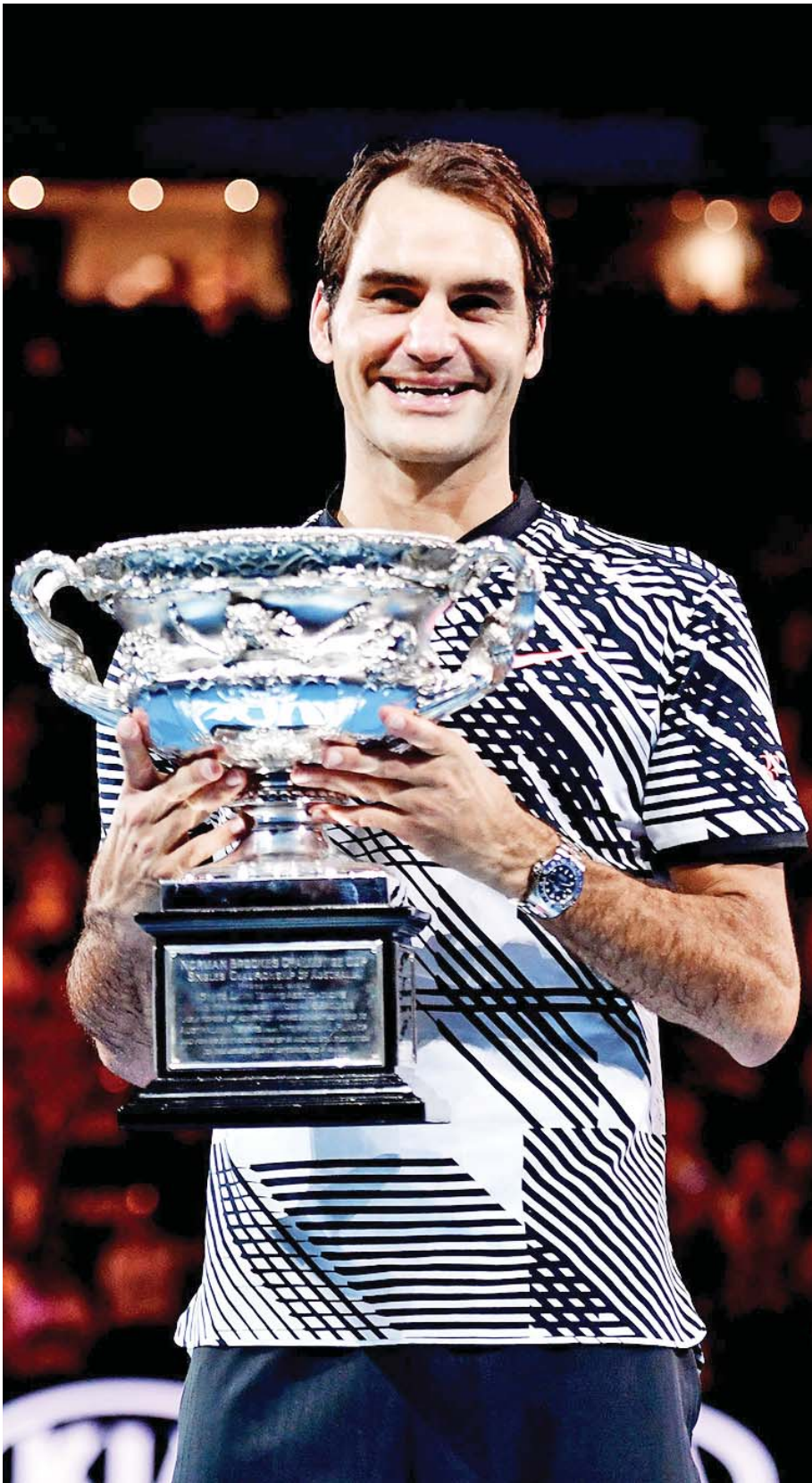
But they soon came to realise that Payet was a lost cause - partly because many of the squad's senior players did not want him back. As is so often the case in these sagas, the notion of letting the player rot in the reserves was offset by the prospect of haemorrhaging so much money on him in wages. Payet had the club over a barrel, and his advisors and Marseille knew it.

It became a question of West Ham getting what they could for him in terms of the fee and they wanted at least £30m. But with Marseille opening the bidding at £19m and edging up only gradually, the London club have been forced to compromise.

Payet has retained strong links to the coaching staff at Marseille and he will now hope to get himself back on track - on and off the field. West Ham have signed the attacking midfielder, Robert Snodgrass, from Hull City for £10.2m while they are expected to complete a deal for the Brentford striker, Scott Hogan, worth upwards of £13m, before Tuesday's transfer deadline. They have also taken the defender, José Fonte, from Southampton for £8m.

(Source: Guardian)

# Federer outlasts Nadal in Melbourne for 18th grand slam



Roger Federer came out on top after a rollercoaster ride in the 35th chapter of his rivalry with Rafa Nadal to win his fifth Australian Open 6-4 3-6 6-1 3-6 6-3 and clinch a first grand slam title in four and a half years on Sunday.

The 35-year-old capped his triumphant return from knee surgery with a record-extending 18th major title after a vintage battle with his Spanish rival, who had won all three of their previous meetings at Melbourne Park.

Lefthander Nadal, also returning from injury this year, showed sustained periods of his brutal best from the baseline but was just unable to stay with his rival in the gut-wrenching drama of the deciding set.

Federer was forced to endure a nervous wait for his victory after Nadal unsuccessfully challenged the line call on the second championship point before becoming the first man to win five or more titles at three different grand slams.

The Swiss, for many the greatest player of all time, celebrated with tears in his eyes but his first words were for his old friend and rival.

"Tennis is a tough sport, there are no draws in tennis but I would have been happy to accept one tonight and share it with Rafa," he said.

"I would have been happy to lose to be honest, the comeback was as good as it was. I hope to see you next year but if not, then it was a wonderful year here and I couldn't be happier tonight."

Nadal, the 2009 champion, was also typically gracious after losing his third Melbourne final and coming up short in his bid for a 15th grand slam title.

"It was a great match and I think Roger probably deserved it a little more than me," the 30-year-old said. "I played a great quality of tennis. That's great news for me. I believe that if I have my body in the right condition, I can have a great year."

### FIRST BREAKTHROUGH

Federer made the slower start to the contest but it was the Swiss who made the first breakthrough, converting the first break point of the match with a forehand winner to go 5-4 up.

That was enough to take the opening set but this was never going to be a straightforward win for either player and Nadal was all over his opponent's serve at the start of the second and grabbed a 2-0 lead.

Federer had two break points in the next game but Nadal fought them off and then broke again as his rival struggled for accuracy under the Spaniard's onslaught.

Four big forehands gave the Swiss a break back but Nadal held firm to serve out the set and Federer needed three aces to save three break points at the start of the third.

The momentum had swung, though, and Federer stepped up a gear and rattled off the next two games with Nadal left scrambling to fend off a second break in a marathon fourth game.

He was unable to repeat the feat in the sixth game and Federer, his crosscourt backhand causing Nadal all sorts of problems, secured a two sets to one lead with a drop volley.

The pendulum had not finished swinging yet, however, and Nadal broke for 3-1 in the fourth and held under huge pressure in the next game with a brilliant crosscourt forehand winner at full stretch.

Nadal again closed out the set and Federer took a medical timeout before the start of the decider, returning to court only to give up his first service game.

Federer was not prepared to give up easily on a first grand slam title since Wimbledon in 2012, though, and upped his aggression to put the set back on serve at 3-3 when Nadal sent a rasping forehand wide.

He needed another five break points on Nadal's next service game before the Spaniard finally cracked as Federer sealed the title with a forehand winner that Hawk-Eye confirmed hit the line.

"In the fifth set, I didn't win one serve easily. Even if I played great in the break points, I was suffering a lot," said Nadal.

"He probably remained a little bit more free on points on my serve. That's what I needed in that moment, and I didn't have."

With Federer's contemporary Serena Williams having won the women's title for the seventh time on Saturday, the 2017 Australian Open is destined be remembered as the retro slam. Federer gave a reminder that no one is immune to the ravages of time, however. "Now it's time to celebrate in a massive way," he said. "(But) at 35 years old, I don't like to say it, but I'm so old and so the body hurts, it aches."

(Source: Reuters)

## Mo Farrah, banned from the USA: 'Donald Trump seems to have made me an alien'

British athlete Mo Farrah has described Donald Trump's ban on people from certain Muslim countries from entering the USA as a policy of "hate and isolation" after learning that he is one of the thousands of people affected by the contentious executive order.

On Saturday the US President signed an order banning people from seven countries with predominantly Muslim populations from entering the country for at least 90 days.

It has left thousands in a state of legal limbo, with people who were already in transit detained in US airports overnight amid nationwide protests.

The countries blacklisted are Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

The executive order also extends to those with dual citizenships and, as a result, some British people are currently banned from entering the US. One of these is Conservative Party MP Nadhim Zahawi, who was born in Iraq, and British gold medal winner Mo Farrah, who was born in Somalia before moving to Britain aged eight.

Farrah, who was knighted earlier this year after becoming the most successful track athlete in Britain's Olympic history, released a statement that condemned the



US President in strong and moving terms. It said:

"On 1st January this year, Her Majesty The Queen made me a Knight of the Realm. On 27th January, President Donald Trump seems to have made me an alien.

"I am a British citizen who has lived in America for the past six years — working hard, contributing to society,

paying my taxes and bringing up our four children in the place they now call home. Now, me and many others like me are being told that we may not be welcome. It's deeply troubling that I will have to tell my children that Daddy might not be able to come home — to explain why the President has introduced a policy that comes from a place of ignorance and prejudice."

"I was welcomed into Britain from Somalia at eight years old and given the chance to succeed and realise my dreams. I have been proud to represent my country, win medals for the British people and receive the greatest honour of a knighthood. My story is an example of what can happen when you follow policies of compassion and understanding, not hate and isolation."

An online petition has since been launched calling on Donald Trump's planned state visit to the UK to be cancelled. If a petition receives 100,000 signatures or more then it must, by law, be considered for parliamentary debate. This petition — titled Prevent Donald Trump from making a State Visit to the United Kingdom — has nearly 150,000 at the time of writing.

(Source: Businessinsider)



♥ @waynerooney Looking forward to getting these boots back on for the FA Cup

♥ @juventus This was @sami\_khedira's reaction to @paulodybala's filthy dummy. What was yours?

♥ @\_r19 Mountains with my Dear Mum



# Iran's Khaksar takes gold at Karate1 Premier League

**SPORTS** Taravat Khaksar claimed a gold medal in the Karate1 Premier League – Paris 2017 on Sunday.

The Iranian athlete defeated Amy Connell from Scotland 2-0 in the final match of the Female Kumite -55kg.

She defeated Ukraine's Anzhelika Terluyga, Sara Yamada and Mamiko Gomyo from Japan, Montenegrin Ana Draskovic, Armande Michel from France and Spaniard Cristina Ferrer Garcia in the competition.

Earlier in the day, Iranian Zabiollah Poorshab defeated Georgia's Gogita Arkania 5-1 in the Male Kumite -84 Kg and finished in third place.

Poorshab started the campaign with a 5-0 win over Abdulaziz Alhakami from Saudi Arabia. He crashed German Mehmet Bolat Akif 7-0 and then beat Kazakhstan's Igor Chikhmarev 1-0 and French representatives Jessie da Costa and Ibrahim Mbaye Elhadi.

Poorshab also lost to Japanese Ryutaro Araga 5-2.

This year's Karate1 Premier League series, which started in Paris on Friday (January 27), is "crucial" to the sport's plans to develop itself before its Olympic debut at the Tokyo 2020 Games.

The Paris event has attracted a record entry of 1,096 entrants from 77 nations – many of whom are highly motivated to secure world ranking points that will assist them in Olympic qualification.



## Iran beats Maldives at AVC Qualification Tournament

**SPORTS** Iran defeated the Maldives at the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Women's World Championship Qualification Tournament Asian Central Zone on Sunday.

Iran beat the Maldives in straight sets (25-4, 25-12, 25-15). Majda Cicic's girls on Saturday had defeated Nepal (25-12, 25-12, 25-11) at Youth Centre Indoor

Stadium.

Iran qualified for the next round due to take place later next year.

India was initially chosen as the host country for the tournament. However, due to internal problems with the Volleyball Federation of India, the AVC decided to shift the competition venue from India to Maldives.



## Afghanistan captain Shayesteh joins Iran's Paykan

Iranian football club Paykan completed the signing of Afghanistan national team captain Faysal Shayesteh on Sunday.

Shayesteh is the first Afghan player who joins an Iranian professional football team.

The 25-year-old midfielder has joined Paykan on an 18-month contract for an

undisclosed fee.

Shayesteh started professional football career in Germany and started to play for the Afghanistan national football team in 2014.

He joined Bulgaria's Etar Veliko Tarnovo in 2013 and after one year he moved

to Thai club Songkhla United.

Shayesteh has made 24 appearances for Afghanistan and scored 17 goals.

Afghan keeper Owais Azizi was on the verge of joining Iranian football club Naft Tehran in early January.

(Source: Tasnim)



## Barcelona want goal-line technology after 'ghost goal' at Real Betis

Barcelona have called for goal-line technology to be used in La Liga after they were denied a clear goal in their 1-1 draw with Real Betis on Sunday.

After Betis had taken a second-half lead through Alex Alegria, Barca thought they had equalised when Aissa Mandi attempted to clear a Jordi Alba shot off the line.

Referee Hernandez Hernandez did not award the goal, although replays soon showed that the ball had gone a long way over the line.

Barca boss Luis Enrique refused to condemn the officials for not giving the goal, though, instead calling for technology to be brought in to offer them a helping hand moving forward.

"I have seen the photo [of the chance] and I will say what I have always said: that referees need help," Luis Enrique said after the match.

"Whether that's with video technology or anything else available to them -- and I say it for decisions which favour us and which go against us."

Barca did eventually equalise through Luis Suarez in the final minute of the game, but if Alba's goal had been awarded they would have had 15 minutes to search for a winner.

Goal-line technology is already used in every other major European league and Aleix Vidal, who delivered the cross which led to the chance, says its introduction in Spain would mean situations like this would be easily avoided.

"You can see that the ball does go over the line," he told reporters. "It's a



really big mistake, but the fault doesn't lie with the referees. If goal-line technology was used, this wouldn't happen. "It was clear, the Betis defender's body was completely inside [the net]."

Luis Suarez added that "the ball was clearly a metre over the line," while Neymar was less tactful in his response to the controversy, posting an image of the incident on Instagram, along with the caption "HAHAHAHAHAHAHAH."

Betis coach Victor Sanchez did not comment specifically on the decision, but did add his voice to the growing calls for referees to be given more help.

"A referee's job is really difficult," he said. "It's tough and as we're all human, we can't get everything right."

"I'm in favour of help, of course. Everything which can be incorporated to the game and can help, while not affecting the flow of matches, of course should [be introduced]. Everything is evolving and football has to be open to [evolving] as well."

(Source: ESPN)

## Serena to play fewer tournaments to aid grand slam quest

Serena Williams plans to play fewer tournaments in the future to aid her quest to win more grand slam titles, according to her coach Patrick Mouratoglou.

The 35-year-old American won her 23rd grand slam title on Saturday at the Australian Open, breaking the open-era record she held jointly with Germany's Steffi Graf.

Serena will now manage her schedule as she chases down the all-time leader Margaret Court, the Australian whose record of 24 grand slam titles straddled the amateur and professional eras. "Mentally she has to stay fresh and mentally excited when the grand slams start, because they are the goal," Mouratoglou told a group of reporters after Serena's 6-4, 6-4 victory over her sister Venus Williams gave her a seventh Australian Open title. "So we have a lighter schedule – not lighter than last year, which would be difficult (when she played just eight events and did not play after September) – but lighter than the year before (11 events)."

At one stage in 2016, Serena held the world number one ranking based only on seven events over a 52-week period.

Germany's Angelique Kerber overtook her when she won the U.S. Open last September but Serena will return to top spot when the rankings are updated on Monday.

Serena has traditionally played fewer tournaments than most top players, but since she usually reaches the final, she is able to pick and choose.

From the start of 2012 to the end of 2016, Serena won 288 matches, second



only to Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska, who won 289.

But while Radwanska lost 107 matches in that period, Serena lost just 29.

Mouratoglou said Indian Wells, in March, would be Serena's next stop but didn't expect to see her at too many events before the next grand slam, the French Open, which begins on May 29.

"We've already done the schedule for the whole year," Mouratoglou said. "It doesn't mean that the schedule is not going to change, it's meant to adapt to situations. But generally speaking it's already set for the whole season."

Mouratoglou said numbers alone were not the main factor behind Serena's continuing hunger, even in her 20th year on tour. "She was not motivated by 22, she was motivated to win grand slams," he said.

"That's her motivation. This won't change until she maybe one day wakes up and is not motivated to win grand slams, but for now she is. That's enough. The record is not the thing that makes her play."

(Source: Reuters)

## The Week in Quotes

"The result is the least important thing today. Today, we should be thankful to the Colombian people, to the Brazilian people, to Chapecoense. This match was about humanity more than competition."

Brazil head coach Tite speaks after a friendly with Colombia that raised more than £300,000 for families of the Chapecoense players and staff who were killed in a November plane crash

"They go to sleep in late autumn in a special hibernation den and they don't wake up until the spring. Their metabolism slows down, their daily patterns change and they just fall asleep! And when they wake again, it's front page news in the local papers!"

Bayern Munich head coach Carlo Ancelotti on learning about bears while living in Canada, in conversation with ESPNFC

"That will make other teams be like, 'OK, we have to go more into Africa to search for other players to come over. I've made history; I've broken the yolk so it's really cool!"

Sydney FC striker Francisca Ordega speaks with SBS about being the first African player in the W-League

"I always have good times when I'm with Grizou. He's my brother, we're always together. When you're feeling good away from the pitch it's easier for you on the pitch, and that's what's happening with the France team."

France and Manchester United midfielder Paul Pogba tells French TV that Antoine Griezmann is like a brother to him

"Ronaldo and Messi always contend, inch by inch, the title of best in the world, but in two years I would put Neymar at that level. In fact, he is possibly already starting to dethrone one of the two, because he is one of the best players I worked with."

Former Brazil head coach Luiz Felipe Scolari praises Neymar, speaking with EFE

"When I look back, I didn't enjoy any of the big games. I didn't enjoy any of the finals. You enjoy lifting the trophy and the celebrations. But it was always the next game. I had a fear of losing, a fear of what might happen if I had a bad game. Would I get dropped? Will Liverpool and Manchester United be better than us next year? I don't remember a lot of stuff in my career."

Former Chelsea midfielder Frank Lampard speaks with Jamie Carragher in the Daily Mail

"[Denis] Suarez could be Iniesta's long-term replacement, why not? Players have to evolve. He has to improve, but Iniesta is Harry Potter, he makes magic, and it is difficult to find another. But Denis is on the right path and I hope he can be Iniesta's heir."

Barcelona head coach Luis Enrique reveals in a post-game news conference (after Barça's 5-2 win over Real Sociedad) that he hopes Denis Suarez can replace Andres Iniesta in midfield

"Everything I can do to help him on his way to be the best manager he can be, I am ready for this and I'd like to do it. Now he is at the academy it is good for us and for him it is perfect. Being a manager is a job you have to learn and when a person like Steven Gerrard and the player he was is ready to make the steps, that is wonderful news for football. Combining his playing experience with all the things he will learn from now on will be a bright future. It is brilliant."

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp speaks about Steven Gerrard's new role as academy coach in a pre-match press conference ahead of the EFL Cup semi-final second leg against Southampton

"Bayern is one of the best teams in the world -- on a par with Real Madrid and Barcelona. A move for me would not mean a step up. We can win every trophy. Furthermore, I'm very happy in Munich."

Bayern Munich forward Robert Lewandowski reiterates his desire to stay with the Bavarians, speaking with Sport Bild

"I want to be a legend at this club. Like Thierry Henry. I mean, obviously not exactly like him. I have my own personality, my own character. I want to be different to anyone that's gone before. But since I got here, I've always had that in mind. I wanted to become an Arsenal legend."

Arsenal and Egypt midfielder Mohamed Elneny tells Sportsmail about his ambitions with the north London club

"It's an amazing feeling. It's like you're playing football underwater and you score the goal and it's like you come up for air and you can hear the crowd, the atmosphere for that four or five seconds."

Manchester United forward Wayne Rooney reflects with BBC Sport about what it's like to score a goal in the Premier League, after becoming the club's all-time leading goalscorer

"When Wayne Rooney joined the club I could never imagine anybody could beat Sir Bobby's record. So his achievement is outstanding. It's amazing. He's 200-odd games short of Bobby's playing record and that makes it even more amazing. I don't think anyone can [overtake Rooney]."

Former Manchester United manager Sir Alex Ferguson speaks with MUTV about Rooney's goals record

"I think he'll go down as Chelsea's greatest player. He's certainly the most talented all-round footballer I've played with and he's already a hero with the fans. I hope he stays there for the rest of his career. My first game in France with Lille, [then-coach] Rudi Garcia was saying to me, 'we've got this good kid, Eden Hazard'. He said 'I want you to play with him'. And then he scored two of the best goals you'll see within 20 minutes and I thought, 'I don't know if I'm good enough to play with him'."

Former Chelsea midfielder Joe Cole tells CFC Fan TV he thinks Eden Hazard will have a place in the club's history

"I want to play in Europe, especially in England. I want to continue doing that for a few years yet. Look at my friend Ibrahimovic. He's 35 and he's going to play for maybe three more years? He's got the same mentality as me. He's a big player, a champion who loves football. It's football first. Anything after that is a bonus."

Manchester City midfielder Yaya Toure expresses his admiration for Manchester United's Zlatan Ibrahimovic

"Per Mertesacker, where do I start with him? He's very serious and he's a leader on the pitch and off it. You always want to listen to him and I think he'll be an unbelievable manager. Genuinely, out of all the players I've worked with he'd be the best manager."

Arsenal forward Theo Walcott tells the club's official YouTube channel that captain Per Mertesacker is manager material.

(Source: FIFA)

## Alexandre Pato set to join Chinese club Tianjin Quanjian from Villarreal

Brazilian striker Alexandre Pato is set to join Chinese Super League side Tianjin Quanjian just six months after signing for Villarreal.

The former AC Milan and Chelsea striker reportedly underwent a medical in Rome on Saturday and was pictured in a Tianjin shirt in Spanish sports daily Marca.

He is likely to be unveiled by the Chinese club this week after club officials return to work following the Lunar New Year holiday.

Tianjin, who won China's second division last season, have been looking for a top-line striker and have been



linked with big money moves for Chelsea's Diego Costa and Monaco's Radamel Falcao as coach Fabio Cannavaro seeks to make an impact in the top flight.

Pato is expected to pen a three-year contract with the club, where he will join Belgian midfielder Axel Witsel, who signed earlier in the transfer window from Zenit St Petersburg, as one of the club's five permitted foreign players.

The 2017 Chinese Super League season will kick off on March 7, with its transfer window closing on Feb. 28.

(Source: Soccernet)



He said Polanski deserves to be given peace. "Every time he crosses the street, are we going to talk about 1970?"