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Storing arms doesn't bring security, Shamkhani tells Saudis

POLITICS TEHRAN

Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council said on Tuesday that sitting on massive stockpile of weaponry does not guarantee the security of Saudi Arabia. Ali Shamkhani's comments came four days after Saudi Arabia signed a \$110 billion arms deal with the U.S. during President Donald Trump's trip to Riyadh.

"Storing weapons has never helped establish security and result of Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq is the best example to prove it," Shamkhani said upon arrival at Moscow airport.

The top security official added Saudi Arabia is using petrodollars to

spread violence and support terrorism.

In relevant remarks, Iranian Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani told in an open session of parliament said on Tuesday that Saudi Arabia is the "center for exporting terrorism".

"If the U.S. succeeds in preventing Saudi Arabia from sending money, weapons and armed forces to other countries, then there will not be incidents such as explosion of the twin towers or murder of thousands of people in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon," he said.

Larijani said that the U.S. and Saudi Arabia's claims about fighting terrorism are among the "wonders" of time.

Elsewhere, he said that Iran opposes Saudis' attacks on Yemen and considers them "genocide".

22 killed in Manchester concert blast

British police say they have arrested a 23-year old man in connection with a suicide bomb attack in Manchester which killed 23 people, including the attacker, and wounded dozens at a concert by the United States pop singer Ariana Grande.

"With regards to last night's incident at the Manchester Arena, we can confirm we have arrested a 23-year-old man in South Manchester," Greater Manchester Police said on Twitter on Tuesday.

An improvised explosive device went off late on Monday as thousands

of - mostly young - fans streamed out of Manchester Arena in the northern English city at the end of Grande's performance, police said.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group through its social media channels, claimed responsibility for the attack, saying "one of the caliphate's soldiers placed bombs among the crowds".

The deadly explosion, which caused scenes of chaos and panic, sending screaming families and children fleeing, also wounded **->13**

Winning Iran's election is just the beginning of Rouhani's political struggles



ARTICLE

By Seyed Hossein Mousavian
Princeton University
Researcher

Iranians just overwhelmingly voted to keep President Hassan Rouhani in power after a fiercely competitive and divisive election campaign. But while the president's re-election was hailed by moderates as a rejection of isolation and populism, it is only the beginning of a much larger battle for the centrist leader, one that will require Rouhani to make good on past promises while finding a way to compromise with those whom he now needs on his side.

Iran's presidential election took place at a time when the country is witnessing its most sensitive political period since its 1979 revolution. There is unprecedented regional turmoil and a newly elected American president who, on his first overseas trip, openly advocated for overt confrontation with the Islamic republic. It is amidst such a backdrop that Rouhani's resounding victory promises to be especially significant for the country as it defines its future, and as the global community decides how to react to that future.

Rouhani beat out the other remaining candidates, some from the moderate camp and some from the principlist, or conservative, camp. His main rival, Ebrahim Raisi, took the second largest voting percentage at 38.5 percent. In Raisi was the potential for a more conservative Iran. This potential has, for now, been quelled.

The Iranian electorate has spoken in its decision between two stark alternatives: strengthening civil society and engaging with the world, or turning inward with economic populism and combative foreign policy. In decisively voting for Rouhani, Iranians have endorsed diplomacy and moderation. And they have done so in direct contrast to U.S. President Donald Trump, who has called for increasing tensions with Iran and championed isolationist foreign policy. **->2**

Israeli forces shoot Palestinian man over 'stabbing attack'

Israeli forces have shot and wounded a Palestinian man in the occupied territories over an alleged stabbing attack against a police officer.

The incident took place on Tuesday, the GazaNow Palestinian media outlet reported, without specifying its location. It tweeted a picture of the man lying on the ground while blood was streaming from underneath his body.

Palestinian media cited Israeli forces as claiming that the man had stabbed and injured the police member in the city of Netan-

ya in the Israeli-occupied territories.

Israeli police spokeswoman Luba al-Samri identified the Palestinian man as a 44-year-old resident of the occupied West Bank district of Tulkarem.

In a similar incident on Monday, Israeli military forces opened fire and killed a Palestinian teenage boy in the southern part of the occupied West Bank over a similar claim.

Over the past few years, the territories have been witnessing what is widely referred to as the Third Intifada or Palestinian Uprising

against Israeli occupation.

The tensions broke out in August 2015 when Tel Aviv introduced restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshippers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Israeli forces have been confronting the Palestinian protesters with unrelenting aggression, killing more than 300 of them since October that year, when the clashes intensified.

(Source: Press TV)

Trump treading water over climate change deal, says deputy UN chief

The UN's deputy secretary general has accused President Donald Trump of "treading water" over a decision on the future of the Paris climate change agreement, on which the fate of millions of people depend.

Amina Mohammed told the Guardian she was hopeful the U.S. would not renege on the deal signed last year, but that Trump appeared to be avoiding a public declaration after taking such a hard line during his campaign for the White House.

Trump has previously described climate change as a hoax orchestrated by China. During his battle for the presidency against Hillary Clinton he vowed to "cancel" the historic agreement, which commits countries to ensuring that the average global temperature does not rise 2C above pre-industrial levels.

Mohammed said: "[The US] coming out of the agreement does put the track for the

ambition of attaining the target in jeopardy and we have to claw that back and make sure that doesn't happen."

Under the Paris agreement's "members determined contributions" (MDCs), former president Barack Obama pledged to cut U.S. carbon dioxide emissions by 26% by 2025, bringing it down to 28%.

Mohammed, a former environment minister in the Nigerian government, said the White House, while generally skeptical of the detailed terms of the agreement, appeared divided over what steps to take.

"I think he is treading water until he has to say something, probably at the G7 meeting. Maybe he will find a reason why he is not ready then either. What we have seen is there is an understanding in his administration that withdrawing from the agreement is not the best and they would

probably be better served to stay in."

Obama hailed last year's Paris agreement as a historic "turning point" in the fight against climate change, should countries fully commit to cutting emissions.

However, Trump has already started stripping away many of the pollution rules imposed by Obama's administration, such as the signature clean power plan, vehicle emissions standards, clean water regulations and curbs on toxic discharge from power plants.

She said: "The world has recognized that climate change is very real, the science shows emissions are having a detrimental effect and will be catastrophic unless we try to reduce them below two degrees and certainly 1.5. And so, the U.S. being one of top emitters it is essential to have them in the agreement."

(Source: The Guardian)



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Rice planting at paddy fields in northern Iran

Female farmers work on paddy fields planting rice after the fields are ploughed in the northern city of Rasht.

Planting season begins in mid-spring when the weather gets warm in the region. Rice seeds are first planted close together in one flooded paddy and grows into seedlings that will be transplanted into paddy fields.

Heathrow-bound Virgin flight evacuated over terror bomb threat

A Britain-bound flight has been evacuated over a "bomb threat" before taking off from an airport in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

All passengers on board the Dubai-London Virgin Atlantic flight were pulled off after security officials said the plane needed to undergo further security checks, the airline confirmed on Tuesday.

A passenger told MailOnline that all of the flight crew rushed to the cockpit before coming back and asking people to disembark.

The incident came less than a day after a deadly bombing attack at the United States singer Ariana Grande's concert in the British city of Manchester, where at least 22 people were killed and 59 other were injured.

"Following the events in Manchester, Virgin had received a bomb threat so as a precaution they have asked everyone to leave the plane," a passenger said.

The plane was due to leave Dubai at around 11am local time and land in London's Heathrow Airport about six hours later.

"This is purely as a precautionary measure as the safety of our customers and crew is our number one priority and we're planning to have everyone on their way as quickly as possible," said a Virgin Atlantic spokesman.

The threat was later on deemed as "non-credible," said the spokesman, adding that the flight would depart Dubai in a short time.

The Manchester attack led to disruptions in public transportation, sending train stations into lockdown after it appeared that the bomber had used the service to get to the arena.

The explosion rocked the place when concertgoers were beginning to leave the arena, which has the capacity to hold 21,000 people, after Grande's closing set, shortly after 10:35 pm (2135 GMT) at the arena. Several children were also among the dead.

(Source: Press TV)

ELECTION COUNTDOWN



Diplomat lauds U.S.-based Iranians' high turnout in election

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iranian Ambassador Gholamali Khoshrou has expressed thanks to U.S.-based Iranian nationals for unprecedentedly taking to ballot boxes on May 19 to elect the country's 12th resident since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

"The presence was nothing but their deep-seated love for the country and participation in deciding its fate," Khoshrou was quoted as saying.

Compared to previous presidential elections, the number of U.S.-based Iranians participating in the recent election showed five-fold jump, according to ISNA.

Incumbent President Hassan Rouhani won the election with nearly 24 million votes.



Iran adamant to eliminate penury by 2021

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The presidential chief of staff Mohammad Nahavandian said there will be no Iranian living in "absolute poverty" by 2021, when President Hassan Rouhani ends his second term as president.

"We are resolute to fight destitution and deprivation fundamentally in order to obliterate absolute poverty by 2021," Nahavandian told a national entrepreneurship festival on Tuesday.

While there is no formal statistics on poverty in Iran, the subject was a running theme of live presidential debates before the Friday election, which President Rouhani won overwhelmingly.



Uranium supply to Iran 'impossible' in Trump era: Kazakh official

POLITICS **TEHRAN** - The Iran policy of the new U.S. administration has made it impossible for Kazakhstan to supply uranium to Iran, Kazakhstan's Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Erzhan Ashikbaev said on Tuesday. "Unfortunately, as a result of the new stance of the U.S. administration, it is now pointless to submit a proposal to the procurement channel in order to fulfil the contract", Ashikbaev told a parliamentary body, according to NEWEUROPE on Tuesday.

Kazakhstan's national company Kazatomprom and the nuclear energy organization of Iran have a contract for supply of 950 tons of uranium ore.



Iran's senior official heads to Russia for security meeting

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran's Supreme National Security Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani left Tehran for Moscow on Tuesday to participate in the International Meeting of High Representatives for Security Issues. In addition to addressing the meeting, Shamkhani is scheduled to sit down with a number of security and military officials, including Russian ones.

Senior security officials from more than 70 countries are participating in the meeting.

Military and security cooperation between Tehran and Moscow have increased over the past years, particularly on the Syrian crisis.



Iran missile program not up for negotiation

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Iran's government spokesman said on Tuesday that the country's missile program is not up for negotiation with any foreign power.

"Iran's missile program is a part of the Islamic Republic's unchangeable policies," Mohammad Bagher Nobakht told reporters.

"In the six (five-year) development plan and the current fiscal year (which started on March 21) a strong emphasis has been laid on upgrading defense capabilities," he added.

On Saturday, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said he hoped newly-elected President Hassan Rouhani will end Tehran's ballistic missile program during his second term.



Iran condemns raid on Bahrain's Sheikh Isa Qassim residence

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Tehran on Tuesday expressed dismay over Bahraini forces' raid on the residence of Sheikh Isa Qassim, the spiritual leader of the country's Shia majority in the small capital, saying it further "complicates" the situation in the country.

Cracking down on the protestors and pursuing an ethnic and religious approach to the Bahraini people do not help the country to settle the crisis and derail peaceful demonstrations, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

The raid comes two days after Sheikh Qassim was given a one-year suspended jail sentence for alleged corruption.

Party chief: Only Iran striving for Afghan peace

INTERVIEW

By Mohammad Homaeifar

TEHRAN — Secretary General of Afghanistan's National Welfare Party Mohammad Hassan Jafari says Iran is the only country that wants peace and stability in Afghanistan.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Jafari described Iran's role in fighting terrorism in Afghanistan as positive, saying, "Iranians are our brothers" who have given shelters to millions of Afghan refugees and treat them as equal citizens.

"We appreciate the help and support that the Islamic Republic offers to our country," he said, adding that unlike Iran, Saudi Arabia always intervenes in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.

The Saudis have created and funded terrorist groups such as Taliban and still continue to fund and support the terrorists, he pointed out.

On comments by former Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar who had accused Iran of interfering in Afghanistan, Jafari said the comments were Hekmatyar's personal opinion.

"His comments does not represent what the Afghan people think and feel about Iran," he said. "We do not see any intervention by the Islamic Republic in Afghanistan."

The Afghan party leader further said that the Afghan people do not seek war, terror, destruction and violence, noting that the Afghans are tired of wars and wish for stability, peace and security for their country.

"Afghan people want to live peacefully," he stressed several times during the interview.

There are some groups and certain foreign countries that intervene in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, he said. "They have created various problems for the country"

According to Jafari, some foreign countries have launched their proxy wars in Afghanistan in order to take advantage of the chaos and deplete the war-torn country of its "natural resources".

The Western powers are seeking to loot the country's uranium reserves which as he said is worth "trillions of

dollars", he stated.

"I think the Afghan people and the country's genuine movements, which have been created to serve the people's will, want peace and stability for Afghanistan," he said, pointing to Afghanistan's National Welfare Party among other factions.

The party, he said, was established based on the realities of the country and includes Sunnis, Shias and other groups and ethnicities. "The party does not recognize ethnic and political boundaries," he explained.

While it is a Shia-majority party, its objective is "to meet the need of all Afghan people," Jafari remarked.

Elsewhere in his remarks, the party chief said some Western countries are responsible for the chaos in Afghanistan. Also, he added, some "Muslim countries, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan and Turkey, share responsibility for creating takfiri groups such as Daesh and Taliban."

The Saudis "give dollars to Salafis and Wahhabis and urge them to wage wars in Afghanistan to destabilize the country," Jafari said, emphasizing that Taliban and other terrorist groups were created by countries such as Saudi Arabia and some Western powers, including the United States.

"It is not Taliban that is fighting against us, but foreign countries," he said, adding that if some countries including Saudi Arabia do not fund Taliban for a month, it will be annihilated.

He noted that if Afghanistan becomes safe, all of its neighbors would benefit, underlining that Iran, Russia and China can play a pivotal role in fighting the terrorist groups in order to establish security in Afghanistan.

Pointing to Western countries' military presence in Afghanistan, Jafari said the terrorist groups wage wars in the country on the pretext of such presence.

"Afghanistan does not need any foreign military presence at all. The remaining foreign forces that are still in Afghanistan are only in their barracks and do not do a thing. It is the Afghan people who have to pay for their presence," he said, adding that the main victims of the



MOHAMMAD HASSAN JAFARI

terrorists are citizens, including women and children, and not the American troops.

On whether the party supports the Afghan government, he said Afghanistan's National Welfare Party has never tried to undermine national unity. "However," he added, "if we support the government, it's only because we want the interests of our people to be met."

"Although we have supported the government, not one of our members is serving under this government," he said, criticizing the government for its lack of will for uniting the country.

He went on to say that the members of the party do not approve of the government but agree that there's no alternative.

"We do have two choices: one being this government and the other being the terrorist groups. So we're choosing the lesser of two evils," he added.

Reelected Rouhani meets Supreme Leader

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Hassan Rouhani, who was reelected president in the May 19 presidential election, met on Tuesday with Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Prior to the meeting, Rouhani also visited the mausoleum of Imam Khomeini to renew his allegiance to the causes of the Islamic Revolution.

Rouhani won a landslide victory in the polls, garnering 23,549,616 votes out of a total of 41,22,131.

The turnout was unprecedented in the history of the Islamic Revolution. According to the Interior Ministry, about 70 of the electorate participated in the elections. The polls were held simultaneously with municipal elections.

"Imam Khomeini (RA) taught us that the revolution is protected by the people. We could not protect the system and revolution if it were not for the elections, ballot boxes and the people's presence at ballot boxes," he said in the mausoleum.

He added, "If we are proud of the elections and the people's participation, it is because of the path Imam Khomeini

(RA) showed us. He always insisted on the people's participation in determining their future."

Rouhani also said that he will fulfil all the promises he made to people in his campaigns.

"We are hopeful about the country's future. We will win if we follow the path of jihad and endeavor," he pointed out.

Rouhani, Macron discuss relations



Iran and great powers including France.

The deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), took effect in January 2016.

Rouhani said that Iran and France should use the post-JCPOA opportunities and remove obstacles to banking ties and expand economic interaction.

He also said that Iran abides by its



obligations under the JCPOA and called on the European Union to play more active role in implementing the deal.

Elsewhere, Rouhani said that Iran is ready to cooperate with other countries especially France to fight terrorism.

Macron pointed to Iran's "remarkable" role in countering terrorism and said all should make efforts in line with fighting

terrorism and restoring peace to the Middle East region.

He also said that the JCPOA is an "important" agreement and all the signatories should abide by it. He called for expansion of relations between Iran and France.

According to Reuters, French Foreign Ministry said on Monday that France wants to develop its political dialogue with Iran in the hope that it will lead to constructive efforts to solve regional crises.

Foreign Minister "Jean-Yves Le Drian will work towards developing political dialogue that should be part of a constructive approach with regard solving regional crises," the ministry said.

Iran condemns Manchester terror attack

Mirjaveh in Sistan and Baluchestan province, southeastern Iran.

"All countries victimized by such extremist and terrorist, takfiri thoughts require to get united to confront such acts seriously, purposefully and sincerely."

A suicide bombing at a crowded pop

concert in Manchester Arena in England left at least 22 people dead and more 59 injured.

The horror unfolded at about 10.30pm on Monday at the end of a concert by the American singer Ariana Grande, whose music is popular with children and teenagers.

The attack, which took place in the foyer,

Iran says terrorism is not limited to one specific geography, and originates from one ideology.

Winning Iran's election is just the beginning of Rouhani's political struggles

I → But over the course of his first term, Rouhani gradually faced a more polarized public. And support from the supreme leader subsided as well as the eventual nuclear deal failed to produce expected dividends. This endorsement must be regained if Rouhani's policy preferences are to sustainably implemented.

Khamenei's endorsement must be regained if Rouhani's policy preferences are to be implemented.

In fact, Rouhani's failure to produce on the nuclear deal proved to be a dark cloud over his other achievements ? the biggest challenge to his re-election bid was the state of the country's economy nearly two years after those negotiations. Iranians are disappointed with the slow results of the landmark agreement made with the U.S. and other world powers. Rouhani's signature foreign policy achievement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA, for many Iranians seems to have been oversold, largely due to the short span between the deal's implementation and this election and U.S.-induced obstacles to proper sanctions relief.

Opponents of Rouhani capitalized on the president's difficulty in delivering the fruits of the nuclear deal. They

largely mocked his foreign policy strategy of diplomatic engagement with global powers, including direct high-level talks with the United States, labeling it as weak and lambasting him for catering to Western powers. Raisi, the judge who became Rouhani's biggest rival in the election, accused Rouhani of pursuing "begging diplomacy." And leading up to the vote, senior Iranian cleric Kazem Seddiqi was known to have accused the politically moderate camp of "being cowardly" when working with foreign, particularly Western, leaders.

Rouhani's landslide victory represents a public rebuke to these criticisms, but the president will nonetheless have to continue striking a balance between pragmatic foreign policy and preservation of Iran's rights and dignity. It is a nuance Rouhani didn't shy away from in his victory speech, when he said that he wanted to engage with the world on the "basis of mutual respect and [Iran's] national interests" but would not settle for "threats and humiliation."

One of the key ways this balance will be tested is in the way he chooses to approach Iran's regional rival Saudi Arabia. The president's willingness to mend

tension with the kingdom under certain circumstances is a controversial view that ensued much debate during the campaign and similarly earned him the scorn of his principlist rival. Raisi reportedly claimed, during a presidential debate, that Saudi Arabia acts only in line with American strategic preferences, and characterized the Saudi government as a "cancerous tumor" in the region that seeks to sow division in the Islamic world. His comments stood out because they marked the first time in Iranian politics the "cancerous tumor" label, usually reserved for Israel, had been applied to Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, Rouhani has denounced a 2016 attack on the Saudi embassy in Tehran and exercised inclusive and conciliatory rhetoric in domestic issues, especially in relation to Iranian minorities. And it seemed to work in his favor this election. For the first time, Iran's Sunni minority coalesced around one candidate, with Iran's Sunni spiritual leader Molavi Abdul Hamid endorsing Rouhani. This should be interpreted as a positive message by Saudi Arabia and other Sunni Arab states and inform their policies towards Iran.

U.S., Palestinian presidents meet in Bethlehem

Expectations low for Trump's Bethlehem visit

The United States President Donald Trump and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas have met in the West Bank city of Beit Lahm (Bethlehem).

The meeting was held on Tuesday, the final day of Trump's Middle East tour, and following his talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in al-Quds (Jerusalem) a day earlier.

"I am committed to trying to achieve a peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians, and I intend to do everything I can to help them achieve that goal," Trump said after holding talks with the Palestinian president.

Abbas emphasized that the Palestinians preferred resolving the conflict with Israeli through the so-called two-state solution, and that they want East al-Quds (Jerusalem) as the capital of a future Palestinian state.

"Our problem is with the occupation and settlements and the failure of Israel to recognize the state of Palestine ...The problem is not between us and Judaism, it is between us and occupation," he said.

Back in February, a White House official announced a significant shift in the U.S. foreign policy regarding the Palestinian issue, suggesting that it would no longer insist on the two-state bid, under which a Palestinian state would be formed.

Abbas also stressed that "the key to peace" in the Middle East was the independence and freedom of the Palestinian people.

He further called on Israel to comply with "just and human demands" of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners who are on the 37th day of an open-ended hunger strike, dubbed the Freedom and Dignity Strike.

Since April 17, more than 1,600 Palestinian inmates have been refusing food to denounce harsh conditions in Israeli jails.

Earlier, Abbas expressed hope that the talks would be "useful and fruitful" and would "bring results" on a potential resolution of the decades-long conflict between Palestinians and Israelis.

There is speculation that the Palestinian president would give major concessions to the Israeli side in potential attempts to secure a deal. An official close to the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) said recently that during Trump's visit, Abbas would propose exchanging 6.5 percent of



Palestinian territory with Israel, more than triple the amount put forward in a previous land-swap initiative.

In a joint press conference with Netanyahu on Monday, Trump welcomed what he called the Israeli premier's "commitment to pursuing peace," saying, "He's working very hard at it – it's not easy. I've heard it's one of the toughest deals of all. But I have a feeling that we're going to get there eventually. I hope."

This is while Netanyahu is known for having seriously dimmed the prospect of a deal with Palestinians by, among other things, catering to the demands of the far-right extremists in his ruling coalition. One manifestation of such catering has been the expansion under Netanyahu of settlement construction in occupied territories, which the Palestinians want as part of a future state.

That policy has raised concerns the world over and is specifically blamed for a failure to reach a deal already.

On his arrival in the occupied territories, Trump said there was "a rare opportunity" to bring peace to the Middle East and indicated that a deal with the Palestinians was integral to a new regional alignment.

But while Trump has boasted of his purported deal-making capabilities, it was not clear what he specifically planned to do to broker a deal between the Palestinians and the Israelis, especially given the tight grip of the Israeli far-right on Netanyahu and the vast expansion of settlements in recent years.

■ Western Wall drama

Meantime, during his trip to the occupied lands, Trump visited the disputed Western Wall, a site of worship in Judaism, in al-Quds' Old City.

Netanyahu had sought to accompany Trump but reportedly faced rejection by U.S. officials because they said the wall was located in territory not recognized by the U.S. as Israeli.

"This is in the West Bank. It is a private visit by the president, and it's not your business," Israel's Channel 2 quoted a U.S. representative in al-Quds as having said last week.

A White House spokesperson later tried to downplay the remarks, saying they "do not reflect the U.S. position, and certainly not the president's position." U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley went even further to claim that the Western Wall

belonged to Israel.

The Tel Aviv regime occupied the Old City along with the rest of East al-Quds (Jerusalem) during the 1967 war, a move not recognized by Washington.

Despite the contradicting remarks by the U.S. officials, however, Netanyahu ultimately did not accompany Trump in the visit.

■ Protests

On Monday, Palestinians held protests against Trump's trip. Israeli forces clashed with the demonstrators at the Qalandiya checkpoint near the West Bank city of Ramallah. The protesters were carrying placards bearing pictures of Trump and reading "U.S. policy is shameful to humanity."

A similar rally was held in the city of Rafah in the Israeli-besieged Gaza Strip, where the Palestinians burnt U.S. and Israeli flags as well as an effigy of the U.S. president.

More than 500 Israeli and American protesters also held demonstrations outside the U.S. embassy in Tel Aviv and the U.S. consulate in al-Quds on Monday to denounce Trump's visit.

They were holding signs reading, "Impeach Trump" and "Trump go home."

Human Rights Watch slams destabilizing violence in Bahrain

The Human Rights Watch has condemned the brutal violence by the Bahraini regime forces against protesters in a northwestern village as a crackdown on freedom of expression.

"Yet again the architects of bloody destabilizing violence in Bahrain appear to be the Al Khalifah government, and the timing of this operation - two days after [Bahraini] King Hamad's [bin Isa Al Khalifah] convivial meeting with [U.S.] President [Donald] Trump - can hardly be a coincidence," the group said in a statement on Tuesday.

Earlier in the day, Bahraini regime forces stormed into the residence of Sheikh Isa Qassim, the spiritual leader of the country's Shia majority in the village of Dirza, arresting everyone inside the house. It is not yet clear whether Sheikh Qassim himself is

among the detainees.

There have been reports of security forces firing birdshot at protesters and tear gas into the house of the prominent cleric.

Sources have confirmed at least two fatalities. Seven others are said to be in critical condition.

Diraz is the native village of Sheikh Isa Qassim. It has been the scene of protests since last June, when the authorities stripped the cleric of his citizenship over accusations that he used his position to serve foreign interests and promote "sectarianism" and "violence." He has denied the allegations.

The raid on Tuesday followed Qassim's sentencing this week to one year in jail, suspended for three years, on charges of corruption.

Qassim's supporters have staged regu-

lar sit-ins since authorities revoked the cleric's citizenship in June 2016.

Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy, a Britain-based NGO (non-governmental organization), said at least one "peaceful protester" was killed in the clashes.

Eyewitnesses told the AFP news agency that multiple civilians were wounded when police opened fire at demonstrators throwing stones and Molotov cocktails at security forces.

Following the brutal operations, Bahraini clerics called for mass nationwide protests.

■ 'Bahraini regime responsible for any harm to Sheikh Qassim'

Meanwhile, the head of scholar's assembly of Lebanon, Sheikh Ahmed Alzain, condemned the Bahraini forces' acts of vio-

lence in Diraz and said the Manama regime and King Hamad are responsible for any possible harm to Sheikh Qassim.

He added that the rulings against Sheikh Qassim and other leaders of Bahraini opposition have no value.

The cleric emphasized that the dangerous operations in Diraz were an outcome of a recent so-called Arab-Islamic American Summit in the Saudi capital Riyadh.

Alzain said the survival of the House of Khalifah regime depends on the Bahraini people's will and not the backing of foreign forces.

He warned that the peaceful protests of the Bahraini people would take another form if their religious leaders are exposed to danger.

(Source: agencies)

UNSC condemns North Korea missile test, vows to tighten sanctions

The United Nations Security Council says it will increase pressure on all countries to tighten anti-Pyongyang sanctions over North Korea's missile tests.

The UNSC released a unanimously-backed statement on Monday, strongly condemning the North's latest missile test, while calling on the UN's sanction committee to increase its efforts towards implementing sanctions on the country.

The council members have agreed to "take further significant measures including sanctions" to compel North Korea to alter its actions and end its "highly destabilizing behavior."

The United States-drafted statement was issued ahead of a closed-door council meeting set for Tuesday on the request of United States, Japan, and South Korea.

On Sunday, the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) announced that the country's leader Kim Jong-un had overseen the Sunday test-launch of a Pukguksong (Polaris)-2 ground-to-ground missile and "approved the deployment of this weapon sys-

tem for action."

The U.S. Pacific Command announced that it had tracked the projectile before it fell into the sea. The South's Joint Chiefs of Staff also announced that the missile had traveled about 500 kilometers eastwards before landing in the sea.

Last week, the UNSC demanded that North Korea halt its nuclear and ballistic missile tests in a statement, in which it condemned the test, and stressed that the North should show "sincere commitment to denuclearization through concrete action and stressed the importance of working to reduce tensions."

Meanwhile, the UN has called on North Korea to halt its missile and nuclear tests. "These actions threaten regional and international security...We call on the DPRK to stop further testing and allow space to explore the resumption of meaningful dialogue," said UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric on Monday.

"What is clear is that the DPRK is openly defying Security Council resolutions with its accelerated ballistic missile testing activities," he added.

(Source: Press TV)

4 civilians dead as blasts hit Syria's Homs, Damascus

Two explosions have rocked the Syrian cities of Homs and Damascus, leaving at least four civilians dead.

Syrian state television reported that a car bomb had exploded in Homs' al-Zahraa neighborhood on Tuesday morning.

Three people were killed in the attack, said Homs Governor Talal al-Barazi, adding that the blast came in revenge for the recent army gains against terrorists in the area.

On Sunday, the Syrian government regained full control of Homs with the evacuation of the last batch of militants and their families from the city's al-Waer district.

Also on Tuesday, Syrian authorities destroyed a vehicle rigged with explosives near al-Mustaqbal crossroad on the road to the Damascus International Airport.

A source at Damascus Police Command told Syria's SANA news agency that a civilian was killed and another injured as they were passing by the car.

Two terrorists also died in the explosion, the source added.

■ German court puts on trial Syrian militant leader for war crimes

Meantime, a court in Germany has put on trial a former Syrian militant leader, who stands accused of allegedly leading a rebel group responsible for torture and killings of civilians supporting the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

Court prosecutors in the western German city of Duesseldorf said on Monday that the 42-year-old man, identified as Ibrahim Al F, had joined armed groups fighting the Syrian government in 2012 and commanded a 150-strong militia linked to the so-called Free Syrian Army, which looted homes and mistreated civilians in the northern Syrian city of Aleppo.

The victims included Assad's supporters, suspected spies as well as Kurds.

German media reported that the accused, also known as the "father of the wolf," had "personally tortured" two civilians who were later released for a ransom.

Prosecutors said that in a separate case, at least one other victim was tortured to death, another "died in unclear circumstances" and a third one fled.

The Syrian man, who remained silent all throughout the court, had been recognized by one of his victims in the western German city of Muenster.

Reports said the defendant had been arrested in April 2016 and could face life imprisonment if found guilty of war crimes. The trial is set to run until at least September.

Syria has been fighting different foreign-sponsored militant and terrorist groups since March 2011. United Nations Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura estimated last August that more than 400,000 people had been killed in the crisis until then.

(Source: Press TV)

US Homeland Security on alert in wake of Manchester attack

The United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has stepped up security measures around the country following a deadly attack at a pop concert in Britain.

The agency said on Monday night that it was closely monitoring the situation and had contacted foreign counterparts to learn more about the terrorist attack at the end of a concert by U.S. singer Ariana Grande in Manchester.



At least 22 people, including children, were killed in the attack and 59 more were injured, British police confirmed.

The DHS said it was going to take extra security measures in music arenas and other large gatherings as a precaution.

"At this time we have no information to indicate a specific threat involving music venues in the United States," said DHS spokesman David Lapan. "However, the public may experience increased security around public places and events as officials take additional precautions."

Lapan also warned American citizens around the concert arena in Manchester to practice extra vigilance and contact the U.S. embassy in London to get help.

"We stand ready to assist our friends and allies in the UK in all ways necessary as they investigate and recover from this incident," Lapan said.

The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group reportedly issued a warning against the U.S., threatening American citizens with similar attacks. It was not clear whether the attacker was in contact with the Takfiri militants.

■ Trump's reaction

Meantime, White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer said in tweet that President Donald Trump, who is out on a visit to Israel, was constantly getting updates on the incident.

Trump addressed the terror attack during a press conference with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the West Bank city of Beit Lahm (Bethlehem), calling the people behind it "evil losers."

"I won't call them monsters because they would like that term... they would think that is a great name," he said. "I would call them from now on losers, because that is what they are."

The American head of state, who began his first foreign trip with a stop in Saudi Arabia, said he had spent all of his time trying to get regional countries to stand up their fight against terror.

"The terrorists and extremists and those who give them aid and comfort must be driven out from our society forever," he added.

Ironically, the U.S. and the House of Saud regime, along with a number of their regional allies, stand accused of providing weapons and funding various militant groups wreaking havoc in countries like Syria and Iraq.

(Source: Press TV)

Period Extension and Addendum notice to Supply and Manufacturing of 630 Metro Cars for Tehran Metro Lines



Ministry Of Interior
Iran Municipalities and
Rural Organization (IMRO)

Following to Public Announcement for Metro Cars Suppliers Qualification Assessment of Tehran Metro Lines (First Call dated 30 April 2017 and Second Call dated 6 May 2017) regarding to Supply and manufacturing of 630 Metro Cars, this is to inform the following Extension and Addendum:

1- Documents submission deadline has been extended up to 1 July 2017. Therefore all dates and times which have been mentioned in Announcement are extended respectively.

2- Referring to Article الف of Executive Regulation No.H-33560T/84136 dated 16/7/1385 this is to inform all participant companies that "The Short Listed Consortiums" which are going to be approved at Qualification Assessment (RFQ) will also be nominated as candidate receivers of RFP for the 630 metro cars of Tehran Metro Lines and for remaining 1370 metro cars for 9 Mega Cities of I.R. of Iran during the next 2 years from short list date. Therefore companies which do not take part in the current Qualification Assessment (RFQ) will NOT be able to take part in tenders regarding 2000 car project for next two years.

Iran Municipalities and Rural Organization

NEWS IN BRIEF



Inflation rate down 0.2% in a month

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The Statistical Center of Iran **d e s k** announced that the inflation rate fell 0.2 percent in the country in Ordibehesht, the second month of the current Iranian calendar year (April 21-May 21), from its previous month, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

The center also said the point-to-point inflation rate rose 0.2 percent to stand at 9.6 percent in Ordibehesht from 9.4 percent in its preceding month.

The Statistical Center has put the country's inflation rate at 9.8 percent in the past Iranian calendar year 1395 (ended on March 20), showing 4.5 percent drop from its preceding year.



Iranian oil minister heading to Vienna for OPEC meeting

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan **d e s k** Namdar Zanganeh will leave Tehran for Vienna today to attend the 172st meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) which is due to be held on Thursday, Shana reported.

OPEC members will meet on May 25 to discuss whether to extend output cuts agreed in December last year between OPEC and 11 non-member countries, including Russia.

Many oil market analysts believe that OPEC is going to extend the cuts for another nine months.



Iran's AMB expo kicks off in Tehran, hosting 20 countries

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The second edition of Iran's **d e s k** international metal working exhibition (AMBiran 2017) kicked off on Tuesday in Tehran.

Being held in collaboration with Germany's Messe Stuttgart, the four-day event is hosting over 200 exhibitors from 20 different countries.

AMB exhibition is considered to be a platform for promoting Iranian industries and will be an opportunity for facilitation of joint investments and knowledge transfer into the country.



Tehran, Muscat to expand banking co-op

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Iran and Oman central banks **d e s k** have reached agreements on expansion of mutual banking cooperation, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Among others, the two sides agreed to connect their banking payment networks through their switch systems.

It was also decided that Iran's Saderat and Mellî banks to open branches in Oman to facilitate collaboration.

The agreements were discussed during Central Bank of Iran (CBI) Governor Valiollah Seif's travel to the Arab country on Monday.

Greece fails to secure fresh bailout funds

Greece has failed to secure a deal to unlock the next instalment of its multi-billion-dollar bailout after talks with eurozone finance ministers broke down.

Eurogroup head Jeroen Dijsselbloem said there was still a gap "between what could be done and what some of us had expected should be done".

Nonetheless, he said they were "very close" to an agreement.

Informal talks are expected to continue ahead of the group's 15 June meeting.

The Brussels-based meeting was aimed at deciding whether Greece had done enough to receive a €7.5bn (£6.4bn; \$8.3bn) loan plus debt relief.

The cash is vital for Greece to avoid defaulting on a debt repayment due in July.

To secure the funds, the country has had to enact a series of economic reforms.

The International Monetary Fund and Germany are reported to have disagreed over how to help ease the country's debts once its rescue programme ends next year.

The IMF's participation in Greece's latest bailout hinges on resolving this issue.

"The feeling was.... more work was needed to be able to have that kind of clarity that the financial markets understood and the Greek people understood (of) what to expect at the end of the programme period in terms of debt relief," Greek Finance Minister Euclid Tsakalotos said.

However, he also said he was optimistic that a definitive deal could be brokered by the time of the next formal meeting in June.

Figures released earlier this month showed that Greece had fallen back into recession for the first time since 2012.

The country's gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 0.1% in the first three months of the year after shrinking by 1.2% in the final quarter of 2016, the Eurostat figures showed.

(Source: BBC)

NITC inks 70 leasing deals in post-sanctions era

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — The National Iranian Tanker Company has signed 70 deals since the removal of sanctions in January 2016 for leasing out tankers to large foreign companies.

The deals have been mainly made with European and Asian companies, Shana reported on Tuesday, quoting NITC Managing Director Sirous Kianersi as saying.

He said the implementation of the nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), has had a key influence on the activity of NITC as

the company's tankers have been moving comfortably in the international waters since the nuclear deal took effect.

Removing problems related to insurance and ranking were some other fruits of JCPOA, he said, adding, "NITC is currently shipping the oil produced by some Italian and Spanish companies and is negotiating with Polish refiners in this regard as well."

Kianersi touched on renovating the company's fleet benefiting from domestic capabilities, saying that no plans are underway for increasing the number of tankers.

Iran sells crude oil at \$45.21 per barrel in a week

ENERGY **TEHRAN** — Iran **d e s k** sold its light crude oil at \$45.21 per barrel in the week ended on May 12, with 21 cents decrease from its previous week, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Iran sold its heavy crude oil at \$47.49 per barrel in the

mentioned week, down 63 cents from its preceding week.

The country's heavy oil price was reported \$51.17 on average since the beginning of 2017 until May 12.

Meanwhile, with 56 cents drop from its preceding week, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

Kandla port to soon be linked with Iran's Chabahar: Modi



The Chabahar port will allow India access to landlocked Afghanistan and energy-rich Central Asia through JNPT and KPT-run ports on India's west coast. India has also built a road link connecting Delar



NITC, which operates the largest tanker fleet in the Middle East and has the world's largest fleet of super tankers, transports Iranian crude and also

acts as an independent entity in contracts with foreign concerns for crude oil transportation based on prevailing international freight rates.

duced.

OPEC and other producers will meet on May 25 to decide whether to extend the output cuts they agreed to last November. Saudi Arabia and Russia have said they expect an extension to the end of 2017 or possibly beyond.

dia's largest major ports (run by the central government) and the second largest among all the commercial ports in the country. Last year, it handled close to 106 million tons of cargo.

Kandla port will soon be linked to Chabahar port. "The linking will mean Kandla will cement its feet like Angad did," the prime minister said referring to an episode from Ramayana where the character put his feet down in King Ravana's court and nobody could move it however hard they tried.

The prime minister said if India wants to make a place for itself in global trade, it should have the best of arrangements in the port sector. The combination of infrastructure and efficiency is vital for the port sector to thrive, he said, adding that the Kandla Port has emerged as one of the finest in Asia and its rapid growth has surprised many economists.

(Source: Livemint)

Exports, consumers and construction drive German growth surge

The German economy picked up steam in the first quarter helped by strong exports, booming construction and higher household and state spending, bumishing Chancellor Angela Merkel's economic credentials as she gears up for national elections.

Europe's biggest economy grew 0.6 percent quarter on quarter, up from 0.4 percent in the final three months of last year, the Federal Statistics Office said on Tuesday, confirming a preliminary reading.

The final figures, continuing a run of solid economic data, show a broad-based upswing - good news for Merkel as she prepares to seek a fourth term in office on Sept. 24.

A poll published on Tuesday showed her conservative CDU/CSU bloc - which has been widening its lead over its Social Democrat rivals - and the pro-business Free Democrats winning enough seats to form a parliamentary majority together.

"The economic upswing has become more broad-based," VP Bank economist Thomas Gitzel said. "Hopes are growing that this will become a self-reinforcing boom."

The Statistics Office said exports rose 1.3 percent and imports edged up 0.4 percent, meaning net trade added 0.4

percentage points to gross domestic product (GDP) growth.

Investment in construction jumped 2.3 percent, the strongest increase in three years. A growing population, increased job security and record-low interest rates are fuelling a property boom in Europe's biggest economy.

Investment in machinery and equipment rose 1.2 percent, in a sign that companies are looking to expand despite political risks clouding the growth outlook.

German consumers are meanwhile benefiting from record-high employment, rising real wages and low borrowing costs, with rising household spending adding 0.2 percentage points to growth.

State spending rose 0.4 percent, German authorities are spending billions of euros on accommodating and integrating more than one million refugees who have arrived since the start of 2015, many from war zones such as Syria and Iraq.

A change in inventories subtracted 0.4 percentage points from the overall GDP growth rate, the data showed.

"Even in its ninth year, the recovery is still going strongly. In fact, the recovery has broadened across all sectors," said ING economist Carsten Brzeski, adding that there were no



signs that momentum might be lost any time soon.

While Germany's vibrant domestic economy was reflected in strong construction activity and continued strength in private consumption, private investments finally started to pick up too, he noted.

Even though the German government was trying to counter international criticism of a lack of investment, the discussion on how to further strengthen investments, particularly private sector investments, would clearly continue, he added.

(Source: Reuters)

UK budget deficit widens more than expected as VAT revenues stall



The ONS said value-added tax revenues grew by only 0.2 percent in annual terms in April, the slowest year-on-year increase since August last year, when Britain's economy was still reeling from the shock of the Brexit referendum.

Income tax revenues rose by just over 1 percent.

However, corporation tax revenues rose by 7 percent in April compared with the same month last year.

The two main political parties contesting the June 8 national election have adopted contrasting stances on how to run the public finances.

Prime Minister Theresa May said last week her Conservative Party would aim to eliminate the deficit by the mid-2020s.

Previously, her Chancellor Philip Hammond had said he wanted to get rid of the shortfall as soon as possible after the 2021/22 financial year. Britain's official budget watchdog has said that would probably take until 2025/26.

By contrast, the opposition Labour Party wants to eliminate the government's deficit only in day-to-day spending within five years and would exclude investment in infrastructure from its cost-cutting.

Sam Hill, an economist with RBC Capital Markets, has said Labour's plans suggested the overall deficit could rise to about 4 percent of gross domestic product by 2021/22 compared with the Conservatives' aim of cutting it to 0.7 percent of GDP by then.

The Office for Budget Responsibility, Britain's office fiscal watchdog, has estimated it is due to rise to 2.9 percent in the current year before resuming its fall.

Looking further ahead, whoever wins the June 8 election faces the challenge of how to pay for the rising costs of Britain's ageing population.

May last week said she wanted to reduce one growing strain on the public finances by shifting a greater share of the cost of caring for elderly people from taxpayers to homeowners. On Monday, she softened the plan by saying she would make sure there was a limit on the amount people would have to spend.

May has chosen not to repeat the promises made by her predecessor David Cameron not to raise income tax or national insurance contributions.

(Source: Reuters)

Iraq paves way for OPEC deal with support for 9-month extension to cuts

Iraq backed a proposal from Saudi Arabia and Russia to extend output cuts for nine months, removing one of the last remaining obstacles to an agreement at the OPEC meeting in Vienna this week.

OPEC's second-largest producer, which only reluctantly agreed last year to cut output, had previously favored prolonging the historic deal by just six months. Saudi Minister of Energy and Industry Khalid Al-Falih secured the backing after talks in Baghdad with his Iraqi counterpart Jabbar Al-Lu'ibi. Non-OPEC nations Oman and Mexico also confirmed their support for a nine-month extension.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and 11 non-members agreed last year to cut output by as much as 1.8 million barrels a day. The supply reductions were initially intended to last six months from January, but the slower-than-expected decline in surplus fuel inventories prompted the group to consider an extension. Data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration indicate that maintaining the curbs into the first quarter of 2018 would bring stockpiles back in line with the five-year average -- OPEC's stated goal.

Ecuador, an OPEC member whose incoming president will be sworn in on May 24, will support the production cuts to be discussed in Vienna the next day, the country's oil ministry said in an email Monday, without specifying a time frame.

Iraq has the worst record of compliance with its pledged cuts, pumping about 80,000 more barrels of oil a day than permitted during the first quarter. If that deal gets extended to 2018, the nation will



have even less incentive to comply because capacity at key southern fields is expanding and three years of fighting terrorists has left it drowning in debt.

Additional countries may join the supply cuts, but the overall agreement won't be substantially changed, Al-Falih said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Oil prices fall as White House proposes U.S. oil reserve sales

Oil prices fell on Tuesday after U.S. President Donald Trump proposed the sale of half the country's strategic oil reserves, even as producer club OPEC and its allies cut output to tighten the market.

Brent crude futures were trading down 43 cents, or 0.8 percent, at \$53.44 per barrel at 0643 GMT.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) futures were at \$50.71, down 42 cents, or 0.8 percent.

The White House budget plan would sell off half of the nation's emer-

gency oil stockpile from 2018 to 2027 to raise \$16.5 billion from October 2018, documents released on Monday showed. It also suggested opening up more production in Alaska.

The budget, which will be delivered to Congress on Tuesday, is meant as a proposal and may not take effect in its current form. But it reveals the administration's policy hopes, which include ramping up American energy output.

The plan was released just a day after Trump left OPEC's de-facto leader Saudi Arabia following his first over-

seas state-visit.

A release of U.S. strategic reserves would jolt oil markets, where the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other producers, including Russia, have pledged to cut output by 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) in order to tighten the market.

OPEC, led by Saudi Arabia, and other participating producers will meet on May 25 and are expected to extend the period of the cut from just the first half of this year to all of 2017

and the first quarter of 2018.

Oystein Berentsen, managing director for oil trading company Strong Petroleum in Singapore said the White House proposal was a surprise, but added that over a 10-year period the sales would only average around 95,000 bpd.

"It's not huge, but it won't help Saudi efforts," he said.

The bigger effect, if implemented, would be more long-term as it is planned to last a decade.

(Source: Reuters)

U.S. plan to sell oil reserves undermines OPEC supply management efforts

U.S. President Donald Trump's proposal to sell half of the United States' strategic oil reserve surprised energy markets on Tuesday since it counters OPEC's efforts to control supply in order to boost prices.

The White House requested in its budget released late on Monday gradually selling off the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) starting in October 2018 to raise \$16.5 billion. The U.S. SPR holds 688 million barrels, making it the world's largest reserve, and a release of half over 10 years averages about 95,000 barrels per day (bpd), or 1 percent of current U.S. output.

The plan came out just a day after Trump left Saudi Arabia, the leader of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), as part of his first overseas trip.

The U.S. has more leeway to release the SPR crude as its own production has surged 49 percent over the past five years. But the move undermines OPEC's efforts to tighten global oil markets by cutting their output this year and likely into 2018.

"It will complicate the OPEC efforts to stabilize the market," said Anas Alhajji, an independent oil analyst and economist in the Reuters Global Markets Forum following the announcement.

The announcement pulled down front-month crude futures prices.

However, the budget is not fixed since Congress has the final say and has rejected many White House proposals in the past.

(Source: Reuters)

Heading to OPEC, UAE says backs output cut extension

The United Arab Emirates supports extending oil output cuts for another term, Energy Minister Suhail bin Mohammed al-Mazroui said on Tuesday, saying ahead of an OPEC meeting he was optimistic about meetings held between Saudi Arabia and Russia.

"We are optimistic about the statements and the meetings held between the Saudi-Russian sides," he wrote. He said the previous extension had helped to balance the market and maintain average prices.

The UAE supports "the extension of the agreement for another term," he said.

(Source: Reuters)



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The violence of Erdogan's bodyguards in Washington DC is Turkey's new normal

By Ahmet A Sabanc

On 17 May, a slice of Erdogan's Turkey found its way to Washington DC. That day, a group of Kurdish Americans gathered outside the Turkish ambassador's residence to protest against the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan. There, they were beaten, threatened and attacked by the Turkish leader's bodyguards. A total of 11 people were injured. Instead of the attackers, two protesters were arrested.

This is what the world saw that day, and this is the story that videos of the incident tell. But, according to Turkish pro-government media, which includes all mainstream newspapers and TV channels in Turkey, the world got the story wrong.



In their version, terrorist sympathizers and Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK) supporters had started to create trouble. Erdogan's bodyguards decided to intervene, they say, because U.S. police were not able to adequately handle that situation.

■ Unapologetic propaganda

Everyone who is fed up with the Turkish media's unapologetic propaganda was expecting this distortion of facts. And all the media outlets used similar phrasing to make sure everyone put out the same story.

In Turkey, when police or Erdogan supporters beat or attack protesters, whenever dissidents or activists are exposed to state violence, or whenever they arrest someone just for raising their voice in opposition, we see and hear the same story.

Let's take Yusuf Yerkel, for example. He was one of the advisers of then Prime Minister Erdogan when the 2014 Soma mine disaster, which killed 301 miners, happened. When Erdogan visited Soma with him, protesters, many of whom were family members of the miners, gathered to meet them. Police decided to attack the protesters and held Erdal Kocabiyik, a protesting miner, on the ground. That's when Yerkel was caught on camera kicking him.

Earlier in the day, Kocabiyik had kicked one of the cars owned by the government. Kocabiyik first was fined 500 Turkish liras for "vandalizing government property" and then received a 10-month jail sentence. All Yerkel received was seven days off work with a medical report, because he hurt his leg. In 2016, a court even ruled in Yerkel's favor, saying that the famous photograph that captured what he did should be taken down for defamation reasons. That is censorship.

Erdogan's party, the AKP, has built a strong narrative to make sure that things will never change. Since 2002, they have taken every step to make their ideology and themselves synonymous with the state. Because of this, all opposition against them can be presented as an attack on the Turkish state.

Criticizing the government or any AKP politician is viewed by them as a crime against the state itself. Demanding change is understood as demanding the destruction of the state. This became crystal clear around the Gezi Park protests. And since then, they've only become more aggressive and brutal.

That's the way autocratic narratives work. All a leader has to do is make sure that anyone opposing them is seen as a threat and a terrorist. That signals to thugs that attacking so-called "terrorists" is a good thing and won't be punished.

That's exactly what's been happening in Turkey

for a long time. Anyone criticizing Erdogan, the AKP or their politics is labeled a terrorist or foreign spy and becomes a target. People around Erdogan – his supporters, the police, and the media – just wait for a chance to teach them a lesson.

■ Potential terrorists

Today in Turkey, there are hotlines for citizens to inform officials about potential terrorists. Recently they have also decided to bring back neighborhood watchmen to keep people "safe". The government denies that it jails people for the crime of reporting. Rather, Erdogan insists that all detained journalists in Turkey are terrorists, criminals and child molesters.

Since the 15 July 2016 coup attempt, the government has removed thousands of people's jobs, legal rights, passports and more by means of statutory decrees as a part of the ongoing state of emergency, turning them into legal zombies.

And if you go on a hunger strike just to get your rights back, as Nuriye Gülmen and Semih Özakça did, not a single government official will care about you, police will attack your supporters and one day they'll raid your house at night to arrest you – as happened to Gülmen and Özakça on Sunday. Even though you were protesting at the same spot for weeks, every single day.

What happened in Washington DC was business as usual in Erdogan's Turkey. It was a glimpse into a place where being critical of the government renders you subhuman, deserving of everything that comes your way: kicks, choking and death threats. What the world saw was just a small scene from Turkey's new normal.

(Source: The Guardian)

What America's new arms deal with Saudi Arabia says about the Trump administration

By Alex Ward

President Trump has just announced the sale of a whopping \$110 billion to Saudi Arabia which includes "tanks and helicopters for border security, ships for coastal security, intelligence-gathering aircraft, a missile-defense radar system, and cybersecurity tools," reports ABC News. It forms part of a 10-year, \$350 billion agreement in a "strategic vision" between the two countries, reports the Washington Post.

The deal had been in the works for some time, but the White House evidently pushed hard to finalize the deal in time to announce it during the president's trip to Saudi Arabia. It was meant to send a clear message: Trump isn't going to do things the way his predecessor did.

Back in September, the Obama administration approved a more than \$115 billion arms deal with the Saudis. But as the death toll and reports of human rights violations in the Saudi-led war on Yemen began to rise dramatically, the Obama administration nixed the sale of the precision-guided munitions it had originally agreed to put in the deal to try to coerce the Saudis into curbing those atrocities.

Now those munitions are back in the Trump arms package — which speaks volumes about this administration.

In fact, the entire deal paints a vivid picture of the Trump administration — an administration that is willing to bend over backwards to make deals with important friends, that doesn't let human rights concerns get in the way of doing business, and where personal relationships with those closest to the president can prove highly lucrative.

■ A personal hand in closing the deal

Jared Kushner had a personal hand in closing the deal.

Jared Kushner, the president's senior adviser and son-in-law, seems to have played a pivotal role in the deal, swooping in to personally help push the Saudis to finish the deal in time for Trump's Saudi trip.

As the New York Times reports, most of the agreement was already in place when Kushner got involved. But during a final meeting, a U.S. official brought up the possibility of adding a "sophisticated radar system designed to shoot down ballistic missiles" to the Saudis' shopping list. Iran, Saudi Arabia's main adversary, has an excellent missile program, so the Saudis were naturally interested in that kind of system.

There was just one problem: the price tag. This is where Kushner comes in. Kushner evidently picked up the phone right there in the middle of the meeting and called Marillyn Hewson, the CEO of Lockheed Martin (the company that makes the system), and straight-upasked her if she could give the Saudis a discount, the Times notes. Hewson apparently said she "would look into it," according to the Times.

There are a few things to note from this vignette. First, it shows to what lengths this administration will go to make a deal when it really matters. And



Trump doesn't prioritize human rights or values in his foreign policy.

Saudi Arabia really, really matters. Trump wants (and needs) the country's help to fight ISIL and the extremist ideology driving it.

But there's another reason pleasing Saudi Arabia matters to Trump: Bloomberg reports that the kingdom is considering investing around \$40 billion in U.S. infrastructure. Trump wants to spend \$1 trillion on improving American infrastructure, and the Saudi money would certainly help achieve that goal.

Second, the more libertarian-leaning members of the Republican party who have complained that many of Trump's policy inclinations go against traditional conservative free-market principles now have yet another data point to make their case. After all, this is a clear example of the government directly interfering in the free market by trying to get a company to change its price on an item.

Even worse, one of the president's senior advisers purposefully fought to make a U.S. company less money in order to help another country out. I very much doubt that's what most Trump voters expected his "America First" policy to look like.

Finally, the fact that Kushner himself was at the center of the whole thing is especially notable. Whereas foreign military sales in the past would be negotiated through multiple U.S. government bureaucracies, countries can now apparently skip all that red tape and go right to the source as long as they forge a relationship with Kushner.

And you better believe that other countries are paying attention to that. Obama offered a big deal to the Saudis — but Trump gave the Saudis what they really wanted.

■ The deal as a victory

Trump hailed the deal as a victory, saying it "was a great day" because of "tremendous investments in the United States .??. and jobs, jobs, jobs," reports the Washington Post. He couldn't be prouder of this.

And it is a big deal — but the Obama administration approved an ever bigger, \$115 billion arms sale to the Saudis back in September that included "weapons, other military equipment, and training," according to Reuters.

And though relations between the two countries were strained during the Obama years due in large part to the administration's overtures to Iran, it was still the biggest deal ever offered in the history of the U.S.-Saudi alliance.

But it came with another price.

The Saudis, with support of the U.S. and several other regional allies, have led a two-year campaign against the Houthis, an armed group that is trying to dislodge the Saudi-backed Yemeni government. The war has been brutal and has produced a humanitarian catastrophe on a staggering scale: at least 10,000 people have been killed and over 3 million displaced since the war began in March 2015. Millions more are currently at risk of famine.

Saudi warplanes have targeted hospitals, schools, roads, bridges, farms,

livestock, and other civilian targets with zero regard for either the laws prohibiting such tactics in wartime or the horrendous suffering they're inflicting on innocent civilians.

The Obama administration increasingly tried (although not hard enough to make any noticeable difference) to use its leverage over the Saudis — in particular, U.S. military support and arms sales — to compel the Saudis to stop these sorts of flagrant human rights violations.

Trump, on the other hand, doesn't prioritize human rights or values in his foreign policy. He claims his foreign policy is solely based on the national interest. As he stated during the campaign, the United States will "finally have a coherent foreign policy based upon American interests and the shared interests of our allies" should he become president.

Trump seems more than willing to cast aside the growing evidence of the kingdom's brutal actions in Yemen in order to pass an arms deal — especially if he thinks he can get something out of it in return.

And that's precisely why Saudi Arabia — and numerous other countries who have been lectured about human rights by the Obama administration for the past eight years — are so happy to have Trump in the Oval Office now. It's much easier to commit massive human rights abuses when the people selling you weapons don't particularly care how you use them, as long as you pay up.

(Source: CNBC)

The Manchester attack was exactly what many had long feared

By Rick Noack

For Britain's security agencies, London always seemed like the likely target. For years, the capital of 8 million with hundreds of thousands of weekly tourists and dozens of transit hubs had prepared for and feared a major terror attack.

But then, on Monday night, a suicide bomber struck an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, about 200 miles to the north of the capital. With at least 22 fatalities and dozens more injured, it is the worst suspected suicide attack in Britain since the 2005 tube and bus bombings in London.

Was Manchester — and for that matter the rest of the country outside the capital — unprepared?

That is what critics inside and outside the British security apparatus have long argued. They say that too much effort has been put on protecting London, and too little on keeping safe other major cities such as Manchester with its roughly 500,000 inhabitants.

Despite recent efforts to regionalize and decentralize counter-terrorism operations, much of the country's security apparatus remains focused on London where special units are on standby 24/7 and authorities can rely on extensive video surveillance to quickly react. Prestige projects, such as an expansive security system designed to protect London's financial district, have largely not been replicated in other major cities.

Elsewhere in Britain, police unions have frequently complained about a lack of resources and about their concerns over possible attacks not being taken seriously.



■ High terror threat

Contrary to many other Western nations, most British police officers across the country do not carry firearms. The long-held tradition has recently come under mounting criticism amid a continuously high terror threat, and more officers are now being trained at using weapons. But especially in more sparsely populated areas, police unions have argued that training efforts are proceeding too slowly and that the few armed officers available would likely arrive at the scene of an attack too late.

Others say that the problems are much more deeply rooted. Britain's counter-radicalization program, Prevent, has frustrated many in cities such as Manchester in the past by focusing on what critics say amounts to a monitoring and surveillance of Muslims.

The program aims to identify young people who

might be prone to radicalization, and to provide them with counseling and social support.

"But one main problem was always that the program was initiated and led by the police," Peter Neumann, the director of London's International Center for the Study of Radicalization and Political Violence, said in an interview conducted prior to the attack. "Among many Muslims, that created the perception that they were not treated as normal citizens, but rather as security threats."

In some cities, the flaws of governmental counter-radicalization programs have been more obvious than in others and in some cases, the criticism has also come from the authorities themselves.

In 2015, the chief constable of Greater Manchester police, Sir Peter Fahy, harshly criticized plans by then-Prime Minister David Cameron and Home Secretary Theresa May which included the shutdown of mosques or a funding stop for charities accused of collaborating with possible extremists.

Voicing his opposition to the plans at the time, Fahy said: "It draws the police in[to] areas the public will be uncomfortable with if they feel that it erodes free speech or religious freedom or the right to protest. At what point do you erode the British values you are trying to protect. Such as live and let live, and freedom of speech."

In the same interview, Fahy also confirmed that his Manchester force would be hit by severe staff cuts — something police unions had warned would hinder police forces' ability to respond to attacks and other incidents in the future.

(Source: The Washington Post)

By Alison Weir

For two decades, some Israeli officials and Israel partisans have worked to embed a new, Israel-focused definition of antisemitism in institutions around the world, from international bodies and national governments to small college campuses in heartland America. This effort is now snowballing rapidly. As a result, advocacy for Palestinian rights is well on the way to being curtailed and even criminalized as "hate."

■ Applying the New Definition to U.S. Citizens

The State Department uses the new definition to monitor activities overseas. But once the State Department definition was in place, efforts began to use it to crack down on political and academic discourse and activism within the U.S.

This past December (2016) the U.S. Senate passed a law to apply the State Department's definition (i.e. the Sharansky-Stern-Rosenthal definition) of antisemitism to the Education Department, for use in investigating reports of religiously motivated campus crimes.

A companion bill for the House is supported by AIPAC, the ADL, the Jewish Federations of North America and the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

South Carolina's House of Representatives recently passed legislation under which the State Department's definition "would be used in probes of possible anti-Semitism at state colleges and universities." The state senate will consider this in 2018. If passed, it will mean that the state will now probe criticism of Israel on state campuses.

Similar bills are being considered in Virginia and Tennessee but as of now are tabled. [The Virginia bill was tabled and reportedly will not be considered in 2017. Consideration of the Tennessee bill has also been delayed, but efforts to pass it continue.]

Such efforts are also ongoing in California. In December Democrat Brad Sherman called on the California Secretary of Education to "expand its definition to include certain forms of anti-Israel behavior." Pro-Israel organizations such as the Amcha Initiative have also been pushing the state legislature for several years to officially adopt the State Department definition. So far these have been defeated but continue to be promoted.

■ U.S. Campuses

A parallel effort has been occurring on U.S. campuses. In 2003 Sharansky said that college campuses were "one of the most important battlefields" for Israel.

In 2015 University of California President Janet Napolitano (head of 10 campuses) publicly supported adopting the state department definition, after 57 rabbis sent a letter to her and the University Board of Regents promoting the definition.

Student councils or other groups at various universities have passed resolutions adopting the State Department definition, which can then be used to block campus events about Palestine.

An ongoing campaign to ensure Israel partisans become influential in student government has supported these efforts. This campaign was announced by an AIPAC leader in 2010: "We're going to make certain that pro-Israel students take over the student government," he said. "That is how AIPAC operates in our nation's capitol. This is how AIPAC must operate on our nation's campuses."

Resolutions referencing the Israel-centric definitions have now been passed by student governments at UC Santa Barbara, UCLA, East Carolina University, Indiana University, Ohio's Capital University, Ohio's Kent State, Orange County's Chapman University, San Diego State University, and other campuses around the country.

An example of these resolutions is the 2015 bill at Indiana University. The resolution denounced anti-Semitism "as defined by the United States State Department" and stated that the student government would not fund antisemitic activities or activities that "undermine the right of the Jewish people to self-determination." It also said that student government executives and Congress members would undergo diversity training on anti-Semitism.

According to the student newspaper, the bill was written by Rebekah Molasky, a fellow with the international pro-Israel organization Stand With Us. After the resolution was passed, "the bill's sponsors and outside supporters hugged and high-fived before gathering in the hallway to take a picture to commemorate the mo-

ment."

As evidenced above, such resolutions can now be used to censor student events. The UC San Diego resolution largely replicated the Indiana format, announcing that the student government will not support activities that "promote anti-Semitism" under the new definition, including "denying Israel the right to exist." Stand With Us applauded the resolution.

In 2012, an organization called the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under the Law was founded and immediately began promoting the new definition. Within a year it launched an initiative to establish student chapters at law schools throughout the U.S. to advance "the organization's mandate to combat campus anti-Semitism through legal means." The Center helped push the South Carolina legislation. It is one of numerous organizations promoting the new definition.

(Incidentally, former Supreme Court Justice Brandeis was a leader in the world Zionist movement and worked in public and covert ways to promote it.)

■ "Thought Policing"

A number of analysts have pointed out some of the many significant flaws with such legislation.

Anthony L. Fisher at Reason.com writes of Congress's December law applying the State Department definition to the Education Department: "It gives the federal government the authority to investigate ideas, thoughts, and political positions as violations of the Civil Rights Act of 1964."

Fisher continues: "By specifically using the broad language of a 2010 State Department memo attempting to define anti-Semitism, the Senate bill wades into thought policing."

Attorney Liz Jackson wrote in an opinion piece in the Los Angeles Times: "Anyone who values the constitutional right to express political dissent should worry about this development."

NY Times columnist Bret Stephens says Jewish Americans should "do all we can to assure the survival of the Jewish State."

On the other side of the debate is New York Times columnist Bret Stephens, formerly Wall Street Journal deputy editorial page editor and before that editor of an Israeli newspaper. Stephens, extremely hawkish on Israel, writes



and speaks fervently against the movement to boycott Israel (BDS) and what he says is antisemitism on US campuses and elsewhere. In a Wall Street Journal editorial, he claimed that "anti-Semitism is the disease of the Arab world."

In 2014 Stephens spoke at the Tikvah Fund, a philanthropic foundation committed to supporting the "Jewish people and the Jewish State," opining that it would be a scandal if Jewish people failed "to do all we can to assure the survival of the Jewish State."

■ U.S. and European Lawmakers Pressure Governments to Ban Criticism of Israel

During all this time, parallel efforts to promote the new definition continued in Europe.

In 2009 an organization called the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisem-



Under London Declaration on Combating Antisemitism, lawmakers of the Western world called on governments to outlaw certain forms of criticism of Israel, including calls to boycott Israel and to regulate criticism of Israel in the media.

itism (ICCA) took up the effort to spread the expanded definition. The group says it brings together parliamentarians from "around the world" to fight antisemitism and lists a steering committee of six European and U.S. legislators.

The group held a conference in London in 2009 at which it issued a "London Declaration on Combating Antisemitism," which was signed by then British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and other heads of state and legislators. This declaration called on governments to use the European Monitoring Centre's definition and to outlaw and prosecute such "antisemitism."

It was couched in "anti-racism" terms, but when we look at the declaration's recommendations combined with its definition of antisemitism, one thing becomes clear: In the declaration, numerous lawmakers of the Western world called on world governments to restrict political dissent.

Specifically, they called on governments to outlaw certain forms of criticism of Israel, in-

form media standards;"

"should take appropriate and necessary action to prevent the broadcast of antisemitic programmes on satellite television channels, and to apply pressure on the host broadcast nation to take action to prevent the transmission of antisemitic programmes" (keeping in mind here that the declaration's definition of "antisemitic" includes various criticism of Israel); "should use domestic 'hate crime', 'incitement to hatred' and other legislation ... to prosecute 'Hate on the Internet' where racist and antisemitic content is hosted, published and written" (again keeping in mind what is defined as "antisemitic");

and that "education authorities should ... protect students and staff from illegal antisemitic discourse and a hostile environment in whatever form it takes including calls for boycotts."

In 2015 the European Commission created a special position to coordinate work on combating antisemitism and appointed German national Katharina von Schnurbein to the post. Schnurbein proceeded to promote the use of the Israel-centric definition.

■ UK and Austria Adopt Definition

In December 2016, the UK announced it would formally adopt the Israel-centric definition. It was quickly followed by Austria, which adopted the definition in April 2017. The Austrian justice minister had previously announced that the new definition would be used in the training of new judges and prosecutors.

UK Prime Minister Theresa May made the announcement during a talk before 800 guests at the Conservative Friends of Israel's annual lunch.

UPI reported: "The British police are already using this definition, which can now also be used by other groups, such as municipal councils and universities. The definition is not a law, but provides a formal interpretation of an illegal act that can serve as a guideline for criminal proceedings." Shortly afterward the UK's higher education minister sent a letter informing universities that the government had adopted the IHRA definition and directing them to utilize it.

(The London council quickly followed suit with its own adoption of the definition, and other cities have now done the same. In May the Israel-Britain Alliance (IBA) began asking candidates for Parliament to sign a pledge that they would support the new definition.)

A number of groups objected to the definition, arguing that the definition "deliberately equates criticism of Israel with hatred of Jews."

Opponents said it was "vigorously promoted by pro-Israel lobbyists to local authorities, universities, Labour movement organisations and other public bodies."

They stated that after its adoption there had been "an increase in bannings and restrictions imposed on pro-Palestinian activities, especially

on campuses." Some of the cancellations cited the IHRA definition. Oxford Professor Stephen Sedley wrote in the London Review of Books that the IHRA definition gives "respectability and encouragement to forms of intolerance which are themselves contrary to law."

Professor Jonathan Rosenhead, recipient of the President's Medal of the British Operational Research Society and Chair of the British Committee for the Universities of Palestine, said there were many examples of the definition creating a "chilling effect" on institutions' willingness to permit lawful political activity, "even when the definition was not specifically cited."

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which represents all of Europe, Eurasia, the U.S., and Canada — a billion people — was also pushed to adopt the definition at its December 2016 conference.

The American Jewish Committee, which has offices in Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Rome, and Warsaw, reported that it had "met with senior European government officials to encourage OSCE adoption of the definition." However, adoption of the definition has so far been blocked by one member: Russia.

AJC leader Rabbi Andrew Baker wrote that the AJC would now work "to foster its greater use by the individual states of the OSCE and members of the European Union."

■ Inter-Parliamentary Coalition's American Representatives

Two American Congressmen are among the six-member steering committee of the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism (CCA).

One is Florida Congressman Ted Deutch. Deutch's Congressional website highlights his support for Israel as well as his work against antisemitism.

According to the site, Deutch "works closely with his colleagues in the House and Senate to... pass resolutions strongly opposing manifestations of anti-Semitism at home in South Florida, across the United States, and around the world."

Florida Congressman Ted DeutchThe website reports: "Congressman Ted Deutch is a passionate supporter of Israel whose advocacy for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship stretches back to his youth. Ted spent his summers at Zionist summer camp, worked as a student activist in high school and college, and served in leadership roles on several local and national Jewish organizations throughout his professional career. Today, Ted serves as Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's influential Middle East and North Africa Subcommittee, where he continues to champion Israel's security during a time of great volatility in the Middle East."

Deutch is also a member of the Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia, and Emerging Threats. His ICCA bio announces that he plans to use this position "to continue to publicly condemn anti-Semitism."

Deutch receives considerable funding from the pro-Israel lobby.

In March Deutch led a bipartisan letter to Trump "Urging Forceful Action on Anti-Semitism." It demanded "a comprehensive, inter-agency strategy that called for the Justice Department to investigate 'anti-Semitic crimes' and 'ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice'."

Deutch was one of two Congresspeople who introduced the December law to apply the State Department definition to education.

The other U.S. Congressman on the steering committee of the ICCA is Republican Chris Smith of New Jersey. Smith is also a senior member on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. According to the website Open Secrets, a large proportion of his campaign donations are also from pro-Israel sources.

Natan Sharansky twice testified at hearings Smith chaired. In a speech at an event honoring Smith for his work against antisemitism, Smith remembered that Sharansky had "proposed what he called a simple test to help us distinguish legitimate criticism of Israel from anti-Semitism. He called it the three Ds: Demonization, double standard, and de-legitimization."

END OF PART TWO

(Source: israelpalestineneeds.org)

Trump in Riyadh: President managed to create unified front with key arab allies

President Donald Trump's visit to Riyadh has become a "major success" for the President, who managed to create a "unified front" of the U.S. with our key friends and partners in the Arab and Islamic world, former U.S. Ambassador to Yemen Jerry Feierstein told Sputnik.

President Donald Trump's visit to Riyadh has created a unified Arab front to fight terrorism and has reassured Saudi Arabia that Washington too views Iran as a destabilizing force, Feierstein said.

"Overall, the visit was a major suc-

cess for the President," Feierstein, who also served as principal deputy assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs, said on Monday. "He achieved his basic objectives of creating a unified front of the US with our key friends and partners in the Arab and Islamic world."

Trump also got the Arab nations to focus on the need to join together against destabilizing forces in the region, Feierstein, who is now a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute, added.

"The visit was particularly productive in healing the rift between the United States and Saudi Arabia that

developed at the end of the Obama administration... The Saudis were mostly concerned with the developing US policy approach to Iran, which they feared would come at their expense," he stated.

Feierstein also said the Saudis viewed Trump's strong statement on Iran and commitment on expanded arms sales, as reassurance that the United States has returned to being a strong partner for Saudi Arabia in addressing what it considers to be its primary regional threat from Iran.

(Source: Sputnik)



Trump's visit was particularly productive in healing the rift between the United States and Saudi Arabia that developed at the end of the Obama administration.

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7 easy ways to spring clean your chakras

Replenish your energy and restore your health

By Derrick Carpenter

As the snow begins to melt from the ground and green shoots start to emerge from the soil as promises of the blooms to come, it's time to take stock of your spiritual house. You may already have plans to spring clean your home—perhaps dusting the hard-to-reach places and cleaning behind the refrigerator—but what about the clutter and grime that has settled into your energy field and chakras?

■ Balance, rebirth, and rejuvenation

March 20th marks the vernal equinox and official first day of spring, and the weeks before and after this significant date are a time of balance, rebirth, and rejuvenation. The equinox is when day and night are approximately the same length, in perfect balance and harmony with each other, which means anything you do right now to seek balance in your life will be enhanced by this energy. Working in alignment with nature's vibrations boosts your spiritual efforts, and this time of reawakening is ripe for clearing and balancing your chakras and energy field. Harness this power of renewal to purge the unnecessary from your energetic closets and vacuum up any emotional residue. It's time to spring clean your soul!

■ Unclog your pipes with energy healing

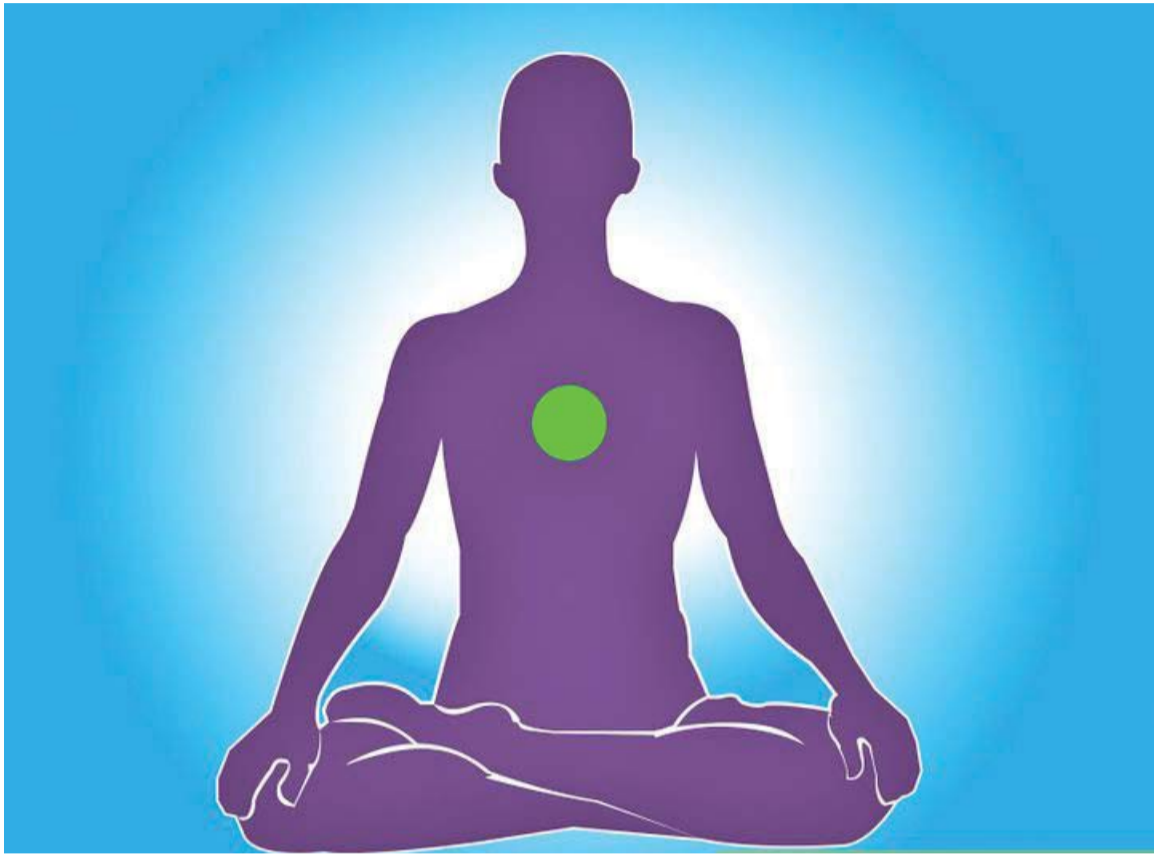
Your chakras are the invisible but vital energy centers that are designed to move energy between your personal field and the universal field, and, when spinning correctly and unencumbered, these chakras are the means by which you replenish your energy and restore your health. From energy healing you've learned that your body is made from your energetic field, which means that what goes on in your field directly affects your body. So when your chakras are blocked, your energy flow is also blocked, and that clog will eventually cause physical symptoms that can be anything from headaches to cancer.

Think of it like this: your energy flows like water through pipes. If you have a clog somewhere in the system, all that water backs up and eventually springs a leak, damaging the pipes and the wall around it. Just like that water, your energy has to go somewhere, and keeping your chakras clear and your energy flowing is the best way to keep your body from experiencing injury or illness as a result of clogged pipes.

■ It's never too late to clear out old traumas with energy healing

So how can you keep your chakras clear? Well, clogs and blockages in your chakras are caused by traumas that aren't fully released, emotional build-up that can be recent or twenty years old. And just as it's never too late to tackle the places in your house like the chimney or under the couch cushions that can go years without a thorough clean-up, it's never too late to clear out old traumas with energy healing. Every bit of work you do toward improving the flow of energy in your field and body is going to make you feel better.

There are activities that will do a general job of clearing negativity from your field, like meditation, but there are also targeted methods for balancing each of your seven main chakras. To find out which



Together, your chakras govern all areas of your life: relationships, weight loss, stress, career, self-esteem, love, spiritual progress, and everything else. When they are in balance, you are in balance, and your whole being is lighter, freer, healthier, and happier.

of your chakras is dysfunctional, you can work with a spiritual teacher or energy healer, or have a friend check your chakras with a pendulum.

■ Try these 7 techniques for balancing and recharging your chakras:

1. Your first chakra is all about grounding, so take a barefoot walk in the grass or on a beach to reconnect to Mother Earth.
2. Your second chakra governs how you experience pleasure, and a common issue for this chakra is shame. Water is cleansing and healing for this chakra, so immerse yourself in water for twenty minutes—in the ocean or a clearing bath with sea salt and baking soda.
3. The third chakra is where your will and self-esteem resides, and physical movement, especially outside in the early morning sun or in the evening before sunset, really recharges this chakra.
4. Your fourth chakra is the heart chakra, and when it's open, you can give and receive love easily and in a healthy way. Practicing love with a pet who loves unconditionally is a great way to heal your heart and become open to trusting love again.
5. The fifth chakra is about speaking your truth,

choosing to express the real you. Journaling with total honesty can clear and charge this chakra—and help process old traumas. Journaling is a major part of energy medicine and is incredibly freeing!

6. Your sixth chakra, the "third eye," is where your higher intellect and clarity of vision reside. Daily meditation—another essential part of energy healing—helps to awaken this chakra so you can increase your intuition and inner wisdom.

7. An open seventh chakra can be attained through meditation and prayer since the crown chakra is what connects you to spirit. Here you can ask your higher self for guidance.

Together, your chakras govern all areas of your life: relationships, weight loss, stress, career, self-esteem, love, spiritual progress, and everything else. When they are in balance, you are in balance, and your whole being is lighter, freer, healthier, and happier. So take advantage of the days getting longer and the blossoming of nature this spring, and rejuvenate your soul with the clearing, charging, and balancing of your chakras. If you love all things chakra, check out my free chakra wisdom video training series.

(Source: [healyourlife.com](#))

EPA data reveal ties between environment, cancer rates

It's common knowledge that individual harmful environmental exposures, such as radon, pesticides, and air pollution, may increase specific cancer risks in a city or region. However, new research reveals that the overall environmental quality of a geographic location is also associated with overall cancer incidence.

Counties in the United States with the poorest environmental quality rating had an average of 38 more cancer cases per 100,000 people than counties with the highest rating over the study period (2000 to 2010), report the authors, led by Jyotsna S. Jagai, Ph.D., MPH, from the University of Illinois, Chicago.

"Research focusing on single environmental exposures in cancer development may not address the broader environmental context in which cancers develop," observe the authors.

Their new study, which relied heavily on data from the now-embattled U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was published online May 8 in *Cancer*.

The team also showed that specific cancers may be tied to overall environmental conditions. Prostate and breast cancers demonstrated the strongest positive associations with poor environmental quality, they report.

■ Novel instrument

In the study, the researchers used a novel instrument, the Environmental Quality Index (EQI), which measures US county-level exposures in five domains: air, water, land, built environment, and socioeconomic. The EQI contains data from 2000 to 2005 and is a publicly



available data source from the EPA. Two of the study authors are employees of the federal agency.

Each EQI domain used in the study had multiple variables. For example, the water domain included measurements of the quality of recreational water, drinking water, and chemical contaminants. The land domain included measures of pesticides, contaminants, types of facilities, and radon. The built envi-

ronment included public transportation quality, roads, businesses, and housing.

The researchers linked EQI to county level, age-adjusted annual cancer incidence rates from Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results program state cancer profiles. These rates were available for 85% of all counties in the United States. The investigators evaluated the incidence rates for "all-site" (ie, overall) cancer and the top three cancers by sex.

"More than 30 cases of cancer per 100,000 persons per year...could be avoided if environmental quality were improved from the worst to the best quintile."

The EQI was determined for each county for the years 2000 to 2005. The team then assessed relationships between the EQI and the cancer incidence rates from 2006 to 2010 in order to allow for some lag time in disease development.

■ Cancer rates

Among other things, the researchers compared the cancer rates in the highest and lowest environmental quality quintiles.

In an accompanying editorial, a group of four experts write that "more than 30 cases of cancer per 100,000 persons per year...could be avoided if environmental quality were improved from the worst to the best quintile."

However, the new findings do not account for the effect of confounders (such as alcohol use and overweight) and other factors, such as competing causes of death, say the editorialists, led by Scarlett Lin Gomez, PhD, from the Cancer Prevention Institute of California in Fremont.

Study author Dr. Jagai told *Medscape Medical News* that the study design did adjust for county-level percentage of population that ever smoked.

"This is the best we can do for this type of analysis since we are considering county-level incidence and do not have individual-level information," she said.

The editorialists also highlighted that associations between environmental quality and cancer incidence were most pronounced in more urbanized counties and for the air, sociodemographic, and built environment domains.

(Source: [Medscape](#))

7 foods to avoid for constipation relief

The cause of constipation may be as close as your dinner plate. Many of the common foods in the American diet can lead to constipation. According to Gerard Isenberg, MD, associate chief of gastroenterology at University Hospitals Case Medical Center and associate professor at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, the key similarity between these foods is their lack of fiber. "It is unusual for any one specific food to cause constipation," he says. "What is important in the diet is fiber. The American Dietetic Association recommends that Americans get 20 to 35 grams of fiber a day from plant foods, including both soluble and insoluble fiber. However, most Americans get only half this amount."

You can find constipation relief by replacing the following foods that cause constipation with high-fiber choices that work to prevent it.

■ 1. Dairy products

Cheese, ice cream, and other dairy products have a reputation of being "binding" or constipating foods. As it turns out, this reputation is well deserved. Mark Spielmann, RD, nutrition manager at La Rabida Children's Hospital in Chicago, says it's due to the high-fat and low-fiber content of many of these products. Dairy products made from milk can cause constipation in many individuals, particularly toddlers, he says. "To prevent constipation, try fruit sherbets instead."

■ 2. Red meat

Though red meat by itself isn't a specific cause of constipation, the problem is that red meat takes the place of fiber-rich options in our diet when it's consumed regularly. "Several servings of red meat per week may lead to a backed-up feeling," Dr. Spielmann says. Instead of adding more foods that cause constipation to your meal, make sure that your steak comes with plenty of fiber-rich foods, like a baked potato (eat the skin) and a large salad for constipation relief.

■ 3. Chips



Snacks such as potato chips make the list of constipating foods mainly because they almost always replace a snack or side dish that is richer in fiber. There's another issue at play here, too. "High-fat foods like potato chips cause delayed digestion, leading to a 'too-full' feeling that mirrors constipation," says Spielmann. For constipation relief, look for reduced-fat snack foods that contain whole grains to increase your fiber intake.

■ 4. Frozen dinners

These meals in a box may be convenient, but they rarely have the nutritional merits of a meal you prepare yourself, which puts them on the list of foods that can cause constipation. "Frozen dinners are almost always low in fiber and often high in fat," says Tammy Lakatos, RD, CDN, CPT, a registered dietitian and certified personal trainer in New York and one-half of the duo known as the Nutrition Twins. "Also, they are usually high in sodium, which ties up water to dilute the salt, keeping it from

The American Dietetic Association recommends that Americans get 20 to 35 grams of fiber a day from plant foods, including both soluble and insoluble fiber.

pushing waste through the body." Keep these constipating foods to a minimum.

■ 5. Cookies

Lyssie Lakatos, RD, registered dietitian and one-half of the duo known as the Nutrition Twins says that cookies as well as other sources of refined carbohydrates like pastries, cakes, and many crackers, have three strikes against them when it comes to constipation — they're low in fiber, low in fluid, and high in fat. For this reason, she says it's best to reduce your intake of these constipating foods in favor of higher-fiber dessert or snack choices, such as fresh fruit, which are great for constipation relief.

■ 6. Bananas

Interestingly, bananas can either be a cause of constipation or a source of constipation relief, depending on their ripeness. "Unripened, green bananas are constipating," says Tammy Lakatos. "But ripe bananas are very high in soluble fiber, which in some cases can help to push waste through the bowels, so bananas can also be helpful in eliminating constipation issues." For constipation relief, be sure to pick bananas that are good and ripe.

■ 7. Fried foods

Greasy, fried foods, such as french fries, doughnuts, onion rings, and even heavily breaded good foods like fish, have a tendency to slow movement through your digestive tract. These types of foods can bind you up and be a cause of constipation. "Just like potato chips, other deep-fried foods are greasy and take a long time to digest," says Spielmann. "This can slow your normal gastrointestinal movement." Choose cooking methods such as steaming and broiling instead for constipation relief.

(Source: [everydayhealth.com](#))

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

The mid-range Snapdragon 660 processor comes surprisingly close to top-end Snapdragon 835 chip in performance test. Benchmark scores of the 660 model appeared online, showing the chip is capable of surprisingly high performance that hovers near the flagship Snapdragon 835 model's territory.
- 2

Apple has made a change to Apple Music's pricing in Australia, Spain, and Switzerland. Those trying to sign up for the three-month trial on iOS or Android in those countries will be charged .99 cents in Australia, .99 € in Spain and .99 Fr. in Switzerland.
- 3

A press release by the Finnish company, confirmed that the game studio is working with Columbia Pictures once more for a long-rumored sequel of The Angry Birds Movie, in which "the flightless birds and scheming green piggies take their beef to the next level". The title of the film is not surprising, as it's named The Angry Birds Movie 2, and it's scheduled to hit theaters on September 20, 2019 – the same year that marks the original game's tenth anniversary.
- 4

Sony already announced no less than five new smartphones this year: Xperia XZ Premium, Xperia XZs, Xperia XA1, Xperia XA1 Ultra, and Xperia L1. But the company seemingly has at least three more handsets to introduce before the end of 2017, and one of them is expected to be a new Xperia Compact. According to Georgian website Review.ge, Sony plans to announce the following phones at IFA 2017 (September 1 - September 7): Xperia XZ1, Xperia XZ1 Compact, and Xperia X1.
- 5

World's first "stretchable" OLED display to be unveiled by Samsung this week. Samsung's display division will perhaps intrigue mobile fans the most, as the subsidiary is said to introduce the world's first "stretchable" OLED display at the conference. According to Korean media outlets which first reported the news, the stretchable display is "the most advanced flexible display" to date.
- 6

Nest will reportedly out a 4K Wi-Fi camera. The new Nest Wi-Fi camera will have a 4K-capable sensor, but won't actually record in that resolution. Instead, it will zoom into a 1080p section of the full frame, thus showing you more detail when zooming in than it could had it gone with a 1080p sensor.

- 7

Xiaomi Mi 6 Ceramic Edition finally goes on sale tomorrow, priced at \$435. Xiaomi's Mi 6 has been on sale in China for a while now, but we're only talking about the 'normal' model with the glass-clad back. A Ceramic Edition Mi 6 was also announced, however, and if you're interested in that you'll be pleased to find out that it's almost available.
- 8

LG announces X venture - rugged phone with QuickButton. LG has just announced the X venture - its second X line smartphone for 2017. The LG X venture is made to resist the elements thanks to IP68 water and dust protection, and 14 MIL-STD 810G certification for extreme temperatures, shock and water as well as multiple immersions up to 1.5 meters deep.
- 9

Headphone jack on OnePlus 5 is safe, a cryptic tweet by Carl Pei suggests.
- 10

Dubai hopes to have a human-free police station by 2030. The first of many robot police officers is ready.

Samsung running a BOGO deal with T-Mobile - buy one Galaxy S8 or S8+

Samsung is running a new Galaxy S8 promo in America that's an alternate take on T-Mobile's BOGO campaign from earlier in May. The way it works is as follows. You buy two Galaxy S8 phones from the Magenta carrier through Samsung.com and activate at least one. Sammy sends you a rebate card worth \$750, so the second Galaxy S8 is on the company.

On top of that, you will get Samsung's Entertainment Kit as a present. It includes a six month Netflix subscription, a 64GB microSD card, and a Clear View Standing cover to let you prop the smartphone in landscape mode and comfortably watch videos.

To qualify, you must register the activated device at Samsung's website by the time of purchase, or within 14 days of receiving the phone. T-Mobile's base model (64GB) prices for the Galaxy S8 and S8+ are \$750 (\$31.25 per month for 24 months) and \$850 (\$35.42 per month for 24 months).

(Source: t-mobile)

Google tried to block media coverage of gender discrimination case

By Sam Levin

Google has tried to restrict reporting on a high-stakes gender discrimination case brought by the US government and fought to have the case thrown out of court because of a federal attorney's comments to a reporter.

Court documents reveal that Google unsuccessfully argued that a judge should dismiss a lawsuit filed by the US Department of Labor (DoL), claiming that a government attorney may have violated ethics rules by doing an interview with the Guardian on 7 April.

The DoL has accused Google of systematically underpaying women, and the court battle centers on the company's refusal to hand over salary data the government has requested.

The motion for a dismissal – which a judge rejected, in part citing the first amendment – sheds light on Google's aggressive efforts to end the case at a time when the tech industry is facing increasing criticisms over sexist workplace cultures, gender discrimination and widespread pay disparities. Critics said it appeared that Google was attempting to limit media scrutiny with unusual tactics that raise free press concerns and seem to contradict the corporation's public claims that it is committed to transparency and accountability in its efforts to promote equal pay.

Google also attempted to restrict press access during a hearing last month. Following a private meeting with the judge about the Guardian's reporting, Google's attorney requested that the proceeding be closed to the media before continuing, but a DoL attorney objected and the judge sided with the government.

The DoL sued Google in January, alleging that the company had violated



federal laws when it declined to provide salary history and contact information of employees as part of an audit. Google is a federal contractor, which means it must comply with equal opportunity laws and allow the DoL to inspect records.

Google – one of three Silicon Valley firms to face DoL lawsuits related to discrimination claims – has argued that the data request was overly broad and violates its workers' privacy.

At a federal hearing last month in San Francisco, DoL's lawyers for the first time publicly alleged that the agency's initial investigation has "found systemic compensation disparities against women pretty much across the entire workforce".

The department said it uncovered the pay inequities in a 2015 snapshot of wages, but that investigators needed

historical compensation data to evaluate possible causes as well as the opportunity to confidentially interview employees.

Google has repeatedly claimed that it has eliminated its gender pay gap globally with innovative compensation models.

During the hearing, Google released a statement to the Guardian saying it "vehemently" disagreed with the "unfounded" allegations and raised questions about the DoL's data and methodology: "Every year, we do a comprehensive and robust analysis of pay across genders and we have found no gender pay gap."

Asked for a response to Google's denial, Janet Herold, regional solicitor for the DoL, told the Guardian by phone: "The investigation is not complete,

but at this point the department has received compelling evidence of very significant discrimination against women in the most common positions at Google headquarters."

After Herold's quotes were published, Google's attorneys abruptly interrupted testimony and called for a private meeting with the judge. The judge then canceled the rest of the hearing, allowing Google to file a new motion under seal to dismiss the case based on Herold's remarks.

In that motion, filed a week after the hearing and recently unsealed, Google argued that Herold's press statements made it clear that the DoL had already reached a conclusion about pay disparities, which should render the lawsuit seeking data moot.

Google also questioned whether Herold's comments to the Guardian were unethical, urging the judge not to "condone" her conduct, citing a California trial publicity rule that says attorneys engaged in ongoing litigation should not make a public statement outside of court that would have a "substantial likelihood of materially prejudicing" the proceeding.

Judge Steven Berlin – who will make the final ruling on whether Google has to release records – refused to dismiss the complaint. Herold made no ethical violations, and her comments to the press would not affect the outcome of the suit, he said.

The judge, however, also wrote that the DoL's comments to the Guardian "raise concerns", arguing that "public statements such as those here could create obstacles to conciliation" and that "Herold could readily have declined to comment on a pending matter".

(Source: Guardian)

Vertu launches tacky, expensive, helicopter-delivered Cobra Limited Edition phone

Warning – here be snakes! Opulent, red, ruby snakes. If it weren't for the impeccable craftsmanship that went into creating the cobra mosaic out of 439 rubies and 2 emeralds (for the eyes), the new Vertu Signature Cobra Limited Edition would have looked about as tasteful as any other phone by the notorious luxury brand – that is, not much.

Vertu phones are "look at how rich I am" phones, not pieces of near-perfection like the Galaxies and iPhones

we enjoy today. Still, ruby snakes on a phone is badass any time of the year and we'd gladly have one of these just for kicks, if it weren't for the fact that there are only 8 units made, and each costs about \$360k.

The phone also gets delivered via helicopter, which sounds concerning. We hope the airborne couriers don't just fly by your condo and casually toss the package down from several kilometers high. If that's the case, we

hope there's a tiny parachute attached to it, like those ammo and power-up boxes from the Worms games.

Alas, specs for the new Vertu aren't reported in English, and our Chinese is a bit rusty. Rest assured, though, the phone won't let you play Guns of Boom, or even Pokemon GO for that matter. Look at it, it's about as close to running Android as the average earth rock!

(Source: phonearena)

Verizon tests prototype 5G tech with Ericsson



Ever since Verizon started offering unlimited LTE data on its network again, it seems like a fire has been ignited under the company.

Aside from spending massive amounts of money on new wireless spectrum, Verizon has also been testing its 5G technology for both mobile and stationary use.

Verizon has teamed up with Sweden-based company Ericsson to develop a new 5G infrastructure for the masses. A 5G antenna was mounted to a race car and the throughputs were constantly monitored to around 5+ Gbps speeds with the lower speeds

of around 1+ Gbps. Peak download speeds were 6Gbps

They even went as far as (do not try this at home) blacking out the car's windows and handing the driver a pair of VR glasses that would receive feed from a camera that was mounted onto the roof of the car. Okay, we get it, the speeds are super-fast.

While these speeds are real and achievable today, these likely won't be realistic once the commercial 5G rolls out. For now, the test is conceptual, and shows that Verizon has been on its 5G game.

(Source: gsmarena)

Nike's new Apple Watch bands are made to go along their new running shoes



In case you felt a shortage of Apple Watch bands, there's no need to worry now. Nike just announced four brand-new straps that will go on sale June 1.

Costing \$50 each (not too unreasonable of a tag considering general Apple Watch band pricing), they are made to go along with the brand's new Air VaporMax Flyknit "Day to Night" shoe collection.

Apparently, their iridescent colors have been "inspired by a shade of the sky, from dawn to dusk." And if you ever lost sleep over being unable to match your wrist strap to your sneakers, now you can gleefully do so. According to

Nike, you will be "making a statement" by doing that. How delightfully unpretentious!

The bands are made of the same material that Apple uses for the Sport bands and are also perforated for better ventilation and provoke less sweating. The bands will be available on Apple.com, in Apple retail locations, authorized resellers, and specialty department stores from June 1 onwards. Same goes for the \$190 running shoes, although these won't be sold at Apple stores because Cupertino won't be getting into the shoe selling business just yet.

(Source: nike)

Apple to Android users: "Life is easier on iPhone"

Apple recently updated some parts of its official website, which now includes a section dedicated to Android users who may want to switch to iOS.

On its new Switch web page - accessible via the source link below - Apple is trying to attract Android users by mentioning that "Life is easier on iPhone. And that starts as soon as you turn it on."

By scrolling down the page, you'll discover several reasons why Apple thinks that switching to an iPhone is a good idea - starting with the fact that transferring your data (after downloading the dedicated Move to iOS app from Google Play) is easy as a breeze. To be fair, it's also quite easy to make the switch the other way around, and transfer data from an iPhone to an Android phone, so we can't really say Apple has a huge advantage here.



What Apple can - and does - brag about is the fact that iPhones are very fast (thanks to their custom-designed chipsets), they feature great cameras, offer enhanced privacy and security, and, overall, iOS is

intuitive and simple to use.

Apple doesn't say you should switch to a particular iPhone. At the bottom of its Switch page, the company is presenting all iPhone models currently available to buy: iPhone 7 Plus, iPhone 7, iPhone 6s Plus, iPhone 6s, and iPhone SE. Also included is some information on how you can get up to \$260 in credit towards purchasing an iPhone if you're trading in your old handset.

To mark the release of the new Switch web page, Apple uploaded a series of short videos that underline the easiness of ditching your Android handset for an iPhone.

So, uhm, is anyone here planning to switch to an iPhone anytime soon?

(Source: MacRumors)

Smoke from wildfires can have lasting climate impact

The wildfire that has raged across more than 150,000 acres of the Okefenokee Swamp in Georgia and Florida has sent smoke billowing into the sky as far as the eye can see. Now, new research published by the Georgia Institute of Technology shows how that smoke could impact the atmosphere and climate much more than previously thought.

Researchers have found that carbon particles released into the air from burning trees and other organic matter are much more likely than previously thought to travel to the upper levels of the atmosphere, where they can interfere with rays from the sun - sometimes cooling the air and at other times warming it.

"Most of the brown carbon released into the air stays in the lower atmosphere, but a fraction of it does get up into the upper atmosphere, where it has a disproportionately large effect on the planetary radiation balance - much stronger than if it was all at the surface," said Rodney Weber, a professor in Georgia Tech's School of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences.

The study, which was published May 22 in the journal *Nature Geoscience*, was sponsored by the NASA Radiation Sciences Program and the NASA Tropospheric Composition Program.

Air samples analyzed

The researchers analyzed air samples collected in 2012 and 2013 by NASA aircraft



from the upper troposphere - about seven miles above the Earth's surface - at locations across the United States. They found

surprising levels of brown carbon in the samples but much less black carbon.

While black carbon can be seen in the

The researchers found that brown carbon appears much more likely than black carbon to travel through the air to the higher levels of the atmosphere where it can have a greater impact on climate.

dark smoke plumes rising above burning fossil or biomass fuels at high temperature, brown carbon is produced from the incomplete combustion that occurs when grasses, wood or other biological matter smolders, as is typical for wildfires. As particulate matter in the atmosphere, both can interfere with solar radiation by absorbing and scattering the sun's rays.

The climate is more sensitive to those particulates as their altitude increases. The researchers found that brown carbon appears much more likely than black carbon to travel through the air to the higher levels of the atmosphere where it can have a greater impact on climate.

"People have always assumed that when you emit this brown carbon, over time it goes away," said Athanasios Nenes, a professor and Georgia Power Scholar in the School of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences and the School of Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering.

After the brown carbon is carried by smoke plumes into the lower atmosphere, it mixes with clouds. Then it hitchhikes a ride on the deep convection forces that exist in clouds to travel to the upper atmosphere.

Although the researchers couldn't explain how, they also found that during the journey through the clouds, the brown carbon became more concentrated relative to black carbon.

(Source: *EurekAlert*)

Scientists discover over 50 new intelligence genes

Scientists have discovered over 50 new genes relating to intelligence — a finding that gives us a far better insight into the "genetic architecture of intelligence" and how this relates to IQ.

While the exact percentage is widely debated, scientists generally agree that a large proportion of intelligence is inherited—and therefore based on genetic factors. But intelligence is not a straightforward trait influenced by just a few genes.

A team of scientists has now uncovered over 50 genes relating to intelligence using a sample of almost 80,000 people. Their large-scale meta-analysis took into account several different measures of intelligence, coupled with the participants' genetic data.

Two types of genetic analysis revealed different genes linked to intelligence. The first, known as a genome-wide association study, revealed 22 genes, 11 of which were completely new. In the other approach, genome-wide gene association analysis, the team found a further 29 new intelligence genes.

Most of these genes were found in brain tissue: "Pathway analysis indicates the involvement of genes regulating cell development," the scientists wrote in the journal *Nature Genetics*.

Corresponding author Danielle Posthuma, from Vrije

Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands, tells *Newsweek* she was not expecting to find as many genes as they did: "I've run a lot of genome studies and a lot of the time you don't find a lot of genes, even though the traits you are investigating are highly heritable. And it's only if you have a really large sample size that you start to find things."

Genetic influence

While the number of genes identified was "happily surprising," Postuma says there are hundreds more they need to find before they have a complete picture of the genetic influence of intelligence. Following the study, the team used the findings to try to predict intelligence in another, independent sample. The "prediction estimate was only good for five percent of the variants in that sample. That's a huge increase — double what we could do before — but still it's only five percent."

She says these genes cannot be used to genetically engineer more intelligent animals—adding that attempting to do this could have unknown consequences.

"For these 52 genes we won't be able to increase intelligence," she says. "The heritability of IQ is 80 percent, so it's still a long road before we find all the genes. "For any trait that's only influenced by one or two genes, it's



easy because then you just repair that gene — if it's a disorder, for example.

But for intelligence there are so many small traits and they don't only influence IQ, but also other effects, so if you start messing around with them you might end up with an intelligent animal, but there might be all sorts of other problems. It's something I would never want to do or something anyone should try to do."

(Source: *Newsweek*)

The Global Seed Vault may have already met its match in global warming

The Global Seed Vault is sometimes called the doomsday vault, as it is meant to store the Earth's genetic bounty in the event of a natural or human-made disaster that wipes out vital crops needed to sustain human and animal populations.

With a capacity to store 4.5 million crop varieties and 2.5 billion seeds, it's billed as the world's largest collection of crop diversity.

While the designers of the vault seem to have taken the possibilities of nuclear wars and global pandemics into account, they may have given too little thought to one other serious threat: global warming.

The vault was purposefully constructed far away from major population centers, and was built 400 feet into an

icy mountainside in Spitsbergen, Norway. The seed collection, currently numbering between 800,000 and 900,000 samples, is kept at a chilly temperature of minus-18 degrees Celsius, or about 0 degrees Fahrenheit.

The frozen soil

The frozen soil surrounding the vault, known as permafrost, however, may turn out to be the vault's undoing as air and sea temperatures rise due to human-caused global warming. According to a report on Friday in *The Guardian*, a series of highly unusual wintertime heat waves during the 2016-17 winter resulted in enough thawing of the permafrost that water rushed into the vault's entrance.

Once inside, the water froze into ice as temperatures cooled again, before any water could penetrate the vault

itself. However, the incident may have been enough to demonstrate that rapid Arctic climate change — the region is warming at twice the rate of any other area on Earth — could upend key assumptions used to build the vault, which opened with much fanfare just seven years ago.

The seed bank was supposed to operate on autopilot, but right now, workers are watching it around the clock, Aschim told the UK newspaper. "We must see what we can do to minimize all the risks and make sure the seed bank can take care of itself."

The melting of permafrost is not just putting the seed vault at risk. It is also threatening to increase the rate at which greenhouse gases are pouring into the atmosphere, since as the frozen soil melts, bacteria with-

in it break down organic matter and emit methane, carbon dioxide and other planet-warming gases. In addition, permafrost melt is destabilizing buildings, roadways and other infrastructure in the Arctic, from Alaska to Siberia and beyond.

The past year was the warmest on record in the Arctic, and sea ice, which normally surrounds the Svalbard Archipelago, remained north of the area through much of January, which is unusually late, according to the National Snow and Ice Data Center in Boulder, Colorado.

A series of warm air pulses from the North Atlantic swept across Svalbard, including the location of the seed vault, pushing air temperatures well above the freezing point.

(Source: *Mashable*)

Official Expounds on Salient Triple Advantages of Capital Increase at Bank Maskan

Significant 50,000 billion rials worth of capital increase at Bank Maskan since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year in 1396 (started March 21, 2017) was the three positive developments for financing system of housing, market activists of real estates and also for depositors of the bank, Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

For his part, Manager of Bank Maskan Marketing and Communications Affairs Department Masoud Izadi said that capital of the bank increased since the beginning of the current Iranian calendar year in 1396 (started March 21, 2017) from 40,000 billion rials to more than 85,000 billion rials.

The aforementioned capital increase has been realized in the wake of implementation of a note from



2016 Budget Act (Note 35) entitled "increasing capital of Bank Maskan out of governmental share".

Elsewhere in his remarks, he reiterated: "Adequacy ratio of capital is considered as a key criterion for measuring financial health of banks, so that the more adequacy of capital is found high, the more favorable condition will be provided for the operating bank for attracting financial resources and deposit."

With due observance to the said issue, depositors are facing powerful guarantee with low risk at the bank as compared to the other banks, the issue of which is considered as salient advantage of the bank, he maintained.

In the end, Manager of Bank Maskan Marketing and Communications Affairs Department Masoud Izadi said: "Under such circumstances, strengthening of Bank Maskan's capital adequacy ratio has caused the bank to attract considerable domestic and foreign resources."

Electronic Payment of Toll for Outgoing Flights Becomes Possible

Electronic payment of toll (special of passengers exiting the country) was put into operation in four new cities of the country, Public Relations Dept. of Bank Melli Iran reported.

Moreover launching this electronic system in Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKIA), the e-payment system of toll for outgoing flights has been launched in Shiraz, Isfahan, Mashhad

and Tabriz airports.

It should be noted that e-payment of toll for the outgoing flights became operational as of Dec. 2016 which can play an important and constructive role in fa-

cilitating and accelerating current affairs of dear fellow countrymen.

For more information, please do not hesitate to get in touch with Dadehvarzi Modern Services Company at Tel: 021-42739200.

MIT's 'living cell' shirt reacts to sweat to help cool you down

In the future, your clothes will be lined with living cells. Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology developed Biologic, a biohybrid technology behind workout clothes that ventilate when a wearer sweats thanks to a lining of microbes.

"We found that microbial cells are sensitive to moisture change in the environment," Wen Wang, a biotech researcher who led the study, told *Digital Trends*. "At dry condition, the cell shrinks to a smaller size, while at humid condition, it swells to a bigger size."

Wang and his team used bioprinting to coat small flaps of latex with *E. coli* cells, creating a sandwich with microbes on the top and bottom, as they described in a recent paper published in the journal *Science Advances*. When exposed to heat or moisture, the cells shrink and cause the latex to bend. So when a wearer warms up and starts sweating, the flaps curl and create little vents, allowing air to flow and the fabric to breathe better.

To test their durability, the flaps were run through 100 dry/wet conditions with no significant degradation in their ability to bend, according to the researchers. Commercial workout clothes will need to last more than a few months, so more trials will be needed to ensure its ability to stand up to strenuous exercise.

Although the team's main prototype is a workout suit, Wang said they've explored a number of applications for this technology.

"Since the shape transformation is instant, reversible and repeatable, we believe that there should be many moisture-related applications, especially in our home and around our body," he said.

(Source: *Digital Trends*)

Ultrathin loudspeaker-mic also generates energy from motion

Researchers at Michigan State University have developed a sheet-like device — known as a ferroelectret nanogenerator, or FENG — that acts as a loudspeaker and microphone and can generate energy from human motion, such as swiping a finger across a screen.

"It's a device that you can roll up and put in your pocket and then get somewhere and unroll and put it on a screen or a window or any platform and use it as a both a microphone and loudspeaker," said Nelson Sepulveda, an associate professor of electrical and computer engineering at Michigan State University, and the primary investigator of the new study published online May 16 in the journal *Nature Communications*.

Last December, Sepulveda and his team detailed the main component of this device, the FENG, in the journal *Nano Energy*. At that time, the researchers showed off the thin film's ability to generate power from motion. It had the added benefit of being able to exponentially increase its voltage every time it was folded, the scientists said.

This latest research builds on that capability. The device now works as a microphone, picking up vibrations in the air (in other words, sound waves) and converting them into electric energy. It also turns electrical signals, from a computer file, for example, into vibrations that people can hear as sound.

In a couple of different demonstrations, the scientists showed how it could work. They embedded the FENG into the university's Spartan flag and then played the school's fight song through it. They also showed it could work as part of a voice-recognition system to authenticate access to a computer.

The "fidelity and the quality of the sound recognition is high enough to recognize the pitches and the frequency components of an individual's voice," Sepulveda told *Live Science*.

(Source: *Live Science*)

Attractive scientists viewed as less competent by public

Attractive science presenters like Brian Cox or Alice Roberts are perceived as less competent than ordinary-looking scientists, a new study shows.

While scientists who combine brains and beauty were found to be more interesting, the public believes they are less academically able, and so may distrust their opinions or findings.

Lead researcher Dr. Will Skylark, from Cambridge University's Department of Psychology, said: "Given the importance of science to issues that could have a major impact on society, such as climate change, food sustainability and vaccinations, scientists are increasingly required to engage with the public.

"We know from studies showing that political success can be predicted from facial appearance, that people can be influenced by how someone looks rather than, necessarily, what they say. We wanted to see if this was true for scientists."

In the first of a series of trials, 3,100 volunteers were shown photos of more than 300 British and American scientists and asked to rate them for intelligence and attractiveness.

Other groups of participants then indicated how keen they would be to know more about what each scientist did, and whether they thought the academics were likely to be carrying out accurate and important research.

People were more interested in learning about the work of scientists who were seen as physically attractive and who appeared "competent and moral".

But when it came to judging scientific ability, having an attractive face counted against the researchers.

The study, published in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, also found that people were more likely to pair the titles of science news stories with photos of interesting looking scientists.

(Source: *The Telegraph*)

WORD OF WISDOM

He who helpeth his fellow-creature in the hour of need, and he who helpeth the oppressed, him will God help in the Day of Travail

Prophet Muhammad (S)

Iranian traditional medicine prioritizes health maintenance over treatment



ARTICLE

By Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari, MD, PhD

Overlooking Iranian traditional medicine, the most ancient medicine in the world, both nationwide and worldwide is what has deprived the country not only from introducing its primeval medical advances but its rich culture to the world.

Studies and researches reveal that some of the earliest records of history of ancient Iranian medicine can be found in 8,000 to 6,500 B.C. while it is remarkable that Hippocrates, a Greek physician who is considered as one of the outstanding figures in the history of medicine belongs to about 500 B.C.

Nonetheless globally medicine reached its peak by the rise of Islam in Iran concurrent with the lives of great polymaths such as Muhammad ibn Zachariah al-Razi, Avicenna, and Esmail Jorjani (9th to 12th c.).

According to a definition given in one of the first Iranian Islamic medical textbooks called Hidayat al-Muta'allem in Fi al-Tibb [literally meaning 'A Guide to Medical Learners' containing articles about the elements, temperaments, humors, hygiene, anatomy, physiology, pathology, signs and symptoms of diseases and treatment of many diseases] written in Persian by Abu Bakr Rabee Ibn Ahmad Al-Akhawyni Bokhari in 10th century, medicine is a craft of scientifically and practically maintaining human beings' health and restoring it once it deteriorates.

Therefore, firstly it is important to recognize and ensure one's health and then in case of a disease nurse them back to full health, which is the most comprehensive definition of medicine provided today that underscores the primary mission of medical practices.

Consistently Iranian traditional medicine strength comes from prioritizing health maintenance over treating diseases.

Six core principles

As it is religiously obligatory to know the rudimentary rules and regulations set by Islam it is also mandatory for all human beings to familiarize themselves with basics regarding healthcare to avoid illnesses as much as possible and manage to treat mild illnesses to prevent refractory and chronic disease.

What we are trying achieve is to give the readers a general view on the Iranian-Islamic traditional medicine to help them choose the kind of lifestyle that suits them best in accordance with their temperaments by cutting down on things which are unhealthy and consuming what is beneficial to their health.

Food and drinks, climatic conditions and environment, physical activities and rest Iranian traditional medicine, psychiatric conditions including that of sadness, happiness, depression, and stress, sleep and wakefulness, absorbing key nutrients and ridding body from waste materials (sweat, urine, or feces) are the six fundamental and guiding principles behind the Iranian traditional medicine lifestyle and issues one must take into account while trying to maintain their health.

The first step to ensure optimum health is recognizing one's temperament (physical and mental characteristics from Iranian traditional medicine point of view) to get useful information to find the best route to a healthy life. These articles are pretty helpful to achieve and sustain physical and mental balance.

Have an idea?
Be in touch!
lifestyle.tehrantimes@gmail.com

Medicine is a craft of scientifically and practically maintaining human beings' health and restoring it once it deteriorates.

Studies and researches reveal that some of the earliest records of history of ancient Iranian medicine can be found in 8,000 to 6,500 B.C.

Don't neglect the power of flowers: academic

By Setareh Behroozi

TEHRAN — Keeping flowers and plants in home has psychological benefits, Pejman Azadi, president of the Iranian Society for Ornamental Plants said in an exclusive interview with the Tehran Times. "Indoor flowers and plants are not luxury goods but essential items for today's life," Azadi, who holds a PhD in plant biotechnology from Chiba University of Japan, added.

The psychological state and healthy state of the society is intertwined with plants used in houses, he stressed.

"Consumption of cut flowers in Iran is about 11 euro per capita. But it is 130 to 140 euro in European countries and 84 euro in Japan," he noted.

Unfortunately, daily or weekly buying of flowers or plants is not routine in Iran.

"Artificial flowers are welcomed in Iran but the point is that they are only beautiful and they have no effect on mental and physical health," he regretted.

Inside is more polluted than outside!

Most of the time officials ask children, elderly people and those with weak lungs to stay at home during air pollution days in metropolises but the fact is that inside the houses are more polluted, Azadi said.



According to academic statistics, the air in homes are five to seven times more polluted than open space, he said.

"The adhesive which is used for wallpapers and floor covering as well as wooden appliances contains toxic chemicals, which can be a significant source of indoor air pollution."

Such toxic chemicals contributes to asthma and allergy and even different

kinds of cancer, he added.

By bringing nature into our homes, the indoor plants are able to remove gases and toxins like Benzene and Formaldehyde from the air by absorbing them through their leaves and root systems, he said.

Invite Mother Nature to your home!

According to academic studies,

by bringing plants into your living environment, you can enjoy more oxygen so you feel refreshed, he said.

Azadi said that each 10 square meters area in indoor spaces need a plant in about 15 centimeter pot so that you can enjoy fresh air.

"Unfortunately most of people are not aware of the magic of plants and flowers in their life and neglect them," he added.

He said that the Iranian Society for Ornamental Plants tries to inform people of the issue through publishing books and also sending electronic emails on the importance of indoor plants.

Plants in children's rooms!

Don't hesitate to put some plants and flower pots in your children's rooms, he said.

"Gardening and taking care of plants is a great way to teach kids about responsibility. Kids learn that they have to take care of them in order for them to become healthy plants," he said.

Besides it is useful and helps them get rid of harmful airborne toxins in their rooms, Azadi said.

Indoor plants and flowers are essential for modern life. Let's bring flower pots to every home and remind each other of the benefits of greeneries we have neglected for a long time, he concluded.

Can't think of creative ideas easily? Try these tricks!

Have breaks and you may find your muse

I know, I know. I just told you that artificial intelligence is after your job and now I'm telling you to relax. But it's not as counter-intuitive as it sounds. When you spend hours upon hours trying to churn out creativity and the next brilliant idea, you can create your own burn out. When you feel stuck and like nothing is coming to that artsy brain of yours, get up and go for a walk.

If you allow yourself a change of scenery, your perception changes (not just literally, but figuratively as well). If you see something new, you may find yourself getting inspired.

Surround yourself with creative people but

avoid vicious competition

This tip comes with a disclaimer: do not allow this to become a competitive group. Accept each others' creativity and embrace it! Do not try to be better or more creative than the other! Regardless of your medium, having a group of like-minded people can do wonders for your right-brain.

Play with toys at work to stop yourself from feeling bored

I have so many odd toys and figurines on my desk that I am often the go-to for a coworker's child after school. The kids usually think I keep the toys for them, but actually they're for me! Having legos or any kind of building block-type toys on your desk is great for

your imagination. Turn off that auto-pilot!

Disrupt all your patterns and habits

This may be the most challenging tip, but it's also one of the most effective. When you live in the same place for a while, and you work in the same place for a while, you develop habits.

If you always put your coffee in your cup and then your cream, try it reversed. If you check your emails on your phone before getting to work, check them on your computer once you arrive at your desk. These are small shifts that can rock the rest of your day in other subtle ways, jarring the creativity within you and forcing it to surface.

(Source: lifehack.org)

Colorful Iran: "Chamcheh Gelin" rain-seeking ritual



LIFESTYLE TEHRAN — The rain-seeking ritual "Chamcheh Gelin", which literally means 'spatula bride', is performed traditionally in villages in the central Markazi province as well as in northwestern areas of the country.

According to the ritual, children dress a wooden spatula in female costume and go door to door in villages singing a song in praise of rain.

Knocking the doors, each family pour water on spatula bride and provide children with some grain. They cook afterwards Aash (Persian stew) with the collected grain for the poor. In this way, they wish for rain and fertility.

Various tribes and ethnic groups who live in different parts of Iran are just like colors, which make a great painting. Iran is home to about 20 ethnic groups who live in different regions of the country.

How to make home-made cleansers?



mix-it-yourself cleaners use environmentally friendly ingredients — like baking soda and vinegar — and are quite inexpensive. If you've run out of your favorite cleaning solution, don't run to the store; try one of these standbys instead.

All-purpose cleaner and deodorizer

Great for: Kitchen counters, appliances, and inside the refrigerator

Ingredients
• 4 tablespoons baking soda
• 1 quart warm water

How to use: Pour solution on a clean sponge and wipe.

Heavy-duty scrub

Great for: Rust stains on porcelain or enamel sinks and tubs

Ingredients
• Half a lemon
• 1/2 cup borax (a laundry booster; find it in the detergent aisle)

How to use: Dip the lemon into the borax and scrub surface; rinse. (Not safe for marble or granite.)

(Source: goodhousekeeping.com)



LEFT TO SAY

TO: The owner of window box

SUBJECT: Thank you!

Dear fellow citizen,
Thank you for sharing colors and fresh mood with passersby in the street. It is very kind of you!

Colorful flowers against the grey sky of the city is a blessing and you don't withhold your good choices from other citizens.

It is an easy way to have a better feeling about the place we live in and just share it with others. So, don't hesitate to perform it. It would be great for all of us!

Be good,
A fellow citizen



#IRANIANLIFESTYLE



Instagram/ Hamid Pourghasem

A beautiful house with orange trees in northern Iranian city, Langarud

Flynn 'lied to investigators' about Russia trip, says top House Dem

Former United States National Security Adviser Michael Flynn appears to have lied to security clearance investigators by telling them he was paid by "U.S. companies" when he traveled to Russia in December 2015, according to a letter released Monday by the ranking Democrat on the House Oversight Committee.

"The Oversight Committee has in our possession documents that appear to indicate that General Flynn lied to the investigators who interviewed him in 2016 as part of his security clearance renewal," said Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland in a letter to committee chairman Jason Chaffetz (R-Utah).

"Specifically, the Committee has obtained a Report of Investigation dated March 14, 2016, showing that General Flynn told security clearance investigators that he was paid by 'U.S. companies' when he traveled to Moscow in December 2015 to dine at a gala with Russian President Vladimir Putin. The actual source of the funds for General Flynn's trip was not a U.S. company, but the Russian media propaganda arm, RT."

Separately, a U.S. official with direct knowledge told NBC News that during the same 2016 renewal process Flynn left blank a line on his security clearance form asking him to disclose any business relationships or transactions with foreign entities.

"It was a lie of omission," the official said.

The revelations appear to confirm that Flynn did not properly disclose his receipt of payment from a foreign adversary of



the United States when he was being re-examined for his security clearance between January and April 2016. Flynn is also under investigation by the Defense Department over whether he should have sought permission for the RT fee, since retired generals are usually prohibited from accepting foreign payments under the Emoluments Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Flynn was also asked as part of the security clearance process to disclose any contacts with foreign officials.

He stated that he had only "insubstantial contacts" with foreign officials, the letter

said, adding, "It is difficult to understand how General Flynn could have believed his dinner with Vladimir Putin was an 'insubstantial contact,'" referring to the RT dinner, at which Flynn sat next to Putin.

Questioned about whether Flynn was properly vetted for the job of national security adviser, the Trump administration has repeatedly pointed to the extension of Flynn's security clearance during the Obama administration.

Multiple sources have told NBC News that Flynn never passed the separate, more stringent vetting that is normally done for somebody with access to the

nation's deepest secrets when he was tapped as national security adviser.

Flynn's attorney did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Flynn, who was fired by the Obama administration in 2014 as director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, was paid nearly \$34,000 for speaking at the Moscow dinner, documents show. He was paid under a \$45,000 contract between his speakers bureau and RT, a Russian state media arm. He received nearly \$34,000, not including accommodations and travel, records show.

(Source: NBC NEWS)

U.S. secretary criticized for praising lack of anti-Trump demos in Saudi

The United States Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross has come under fire for boasting about lack of protests against President Donald Trump and his team during their recent visit to Saudi Arabia.

"There was not a single hint of a protester anywhere there during the whole time we were there," Ross told CNBC on Monday. "Not one guy with a bad placard."

Ross accompanied Trump as he headed to Saudi Arabia in the first leg of his maiden overseas trip on Saturday.

The high-profile visit coincided with the Riyadh regime's heavy-handed crackdown in Amawiyah, a besieged town in the kingdom's Shia-populated Eastern Province.

The city has been under heavy shelling attacks by government forces since May 10, when new clashes erupted following the demolition of the historic al-Mosara neighborhood for a planned development project.

Ross, however, said he saw no signs of unrest

during the visit and the country was in "a genuinely good mood."

Human Rights Watch outraged

Ross' comments drew a wave of protests from human rights advocacy groups, who had already censured Trump for signing major deals with Saudis notwithstanding their poor rights record.

Adam Coogee, a Middle East researcher at Human Rights Watch said in a statement that the lack of protests was no surprise for "anyone who follows the situation in Saudi Arabia."

A 2016 report by the U.S. State Department about "human rights practices" in Saudi Arabia also confirmed Coogee's point.

The report noted that the Saudi "government categorically forbids participation in political protests or unauthorized public assemblies."

"The most important human rights problems reported included citizens' lack of the ability and legal means to choose their government; restrictions on universal rights, such as freedom of expression, including on the internet, and the freedoms of assembly, association, movement, and religion; and pervasive gender discrimination and lack of equal rights that affected most aspects of women's lives," the report stated.

Anti-Trump protests in Europe

Meanwhile, Women's March Rome has announced protests against Trump on Tuesday, a day before he visits Rome and Vatican City.

A "Trump not welcome" protest is also expected to draw thousands of people in Brussels on Wednesday, as Trump enters the city to meet NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) officials.

(Source: Press TV)

Winning Iran's election is just the beginning of Rouhani's political struggles

➔ But over the course of his first term, Rouhani gradually faced a more polarized public. And support from the supreme leader subsided as well as the eventual nuclear deal failed to produce expected dividends. This endorsement must be regained if Rouhani's policy preferences are to be sustainably implemented.

Khamenei's endorsement must be regained if Rouhani's policy preferences are to be implemented.

In fact, Rouhani's failure to produce on the nuclear deal proved to be a dark cloud over his other achievements ? the biggest challenge to his re-election bid was the state of the country's economy nearly two years after those negotiations. Iranians are disappointed with the slow results of the landmark agreement made with the U.S. and other world powers. Rouhani's signature foreign policy achievement, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA, for many Iranians seems to have been oversold, largely due to the short span between the deal's implementation and this election and U.S.-induced obstacles to proper sanctions relief.

Opponents of Rouhani capitalized on the president's difficulty in delivering the fruits of the nuclear deal. They largely mocked his foreign policy strategy of diplomatic engagement with global powers, including direct high-level talks with the United States, labeling it as weak and lambasting him for catering to Western powers. Raisi, the judge who became Rouhani's biggest rival in the election, accused Rouhani of pursuing "begging diplomacy." And leading up to the vote, senior Iranian cleric Kazem Seddiqi was known to have accused the politically moderate camp of "being cowardly" when working with foreign, particularly Western, leaders.

Rouhani's landslide victory represents a public rebuke to these criticisms, but the president will nonetheless have to continue striking a balance between pragmatic foreign policy and preservation of Iran's rights and dignity. It is a

nuance Rouhani didn't shy away from in his victory speech, when he said that he wanted to engage with the world on the "basis of mutual respect and [Iran's] national interests" but would not settle for "threats and humiliation."

One of the key ways this balance will be tested is in the way he chooses to approach Iran's regional rival Saudi Arabia. The president's willingness to mend tension with the kingdom under certain circumstances is a controversial view that ensued much debate during the campaign and similarly earned him the scorn of his principled rival. Raisi reportedly claimed, during a presidential debate, that Saudi Arabia acts only in line with American strategic preferences, and characterized the Saudi government as a "cancerous tumor" in the region that seeks to sow division in the Islamic world. His comments stood out because they marked the first time in Iranian politics the "cancerous tumor" label, usually reserved for Israel, had been applied to Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, Rouhani has denounced a 2016 attack on the Saudi embassy in Tehran and exercised inclusive and conciliatory rhetoric in domestic issues, especially in relation to Iranian minorities. And it seemed to work in his favor this election. For the first time, Iran's Sunni minority coalesced around one candidate, with Iran's Sunni spiritual leader Molavi Abdul Hamid endorsing Rouhani. This should be interpreted as a positive message by Saudi Arabia and other Sunni Arab states and inform their policies towards Iran.

A challenging path forward: Trump and Saudi

Trump's dangerous embrace of Saudi Arabia's vision for the Middle East could have disastrous effects on Iran and the region.

Iran's president may have been re-elected, but he'll need to win the supreme leader's support and get foreign powers to engage with Tehran to be successful.

What happens next remains to be seen, but if the Arab Islamic American Summit in Saudi Arabia with Donald Trump is any indication, Rouhani has many foreign policy challenges ahead. In fact, while Iranians went to the polls, those very Sunni Arab states who could have looked to Rouhani's openness for diplomacy in a positive light, reacted with clenched fists. And so did Donald Trump.

Hours after Rouhani declared victory in Iran, Trump signed an over \$100 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia, further militarizing the region. The deal, according to U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, was designed to help Saudi Arabia counter "malign Iranian influence." In a similar vein, the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia have indicated that they are taking steps to form an unprecedented anti-Iranian so-called "Arab NATO." This anti-Iran collaboration was reinforced during the U.S. president's stay in Saudi Arabia, where Trump declared in his keynote address that, "all nations of conscience must work together to isolate" Iran.

Trump's apparent eagerness to increase Iran-Saudi tensions, contrary to former U.S. President Barack Obama's belief that the two countries should "share" the region, will exacerbate regional instability and encourage Saudi Arabia to remain intransigent in response to Rouhani's overtures. His call in Saudi Arabia for "all nations of conscience" to "isolate" Iran not only will surely fail and put the U.S. and Iran even deeper on the path to confrontation, but will also prove to be a lose-lose strategy for Washington, Tehran, Riyadh and the other regional nations.

Trump's apparent eagerness to increase Iran-Saudi tensions will encourage Saudi to remain intransigent in response to Rouhani's overtures.

Further, the U.S. president's decision to fight the nuclear deal will only disenfranchise the very Iranian people both he and King Salman of Saudi Arabia claimed to have great respect for. A JCPOA-violating sanctions bill is circulating in the U.S. Senate with significant Democratic support. The Trump administration, despite its recent renewal of JCPOA sanctions waivers, is still fundamentally critical of the deal, raising serious doubts about its sustainability. In the midst of all of this, Iran's neighborhood is ridden with conflict, with no end in sight to the wars in Yemen, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

But there is hope. What stands out most about the Iranian election is its uniqueness in the region. Iran's first experiment with democratic elections occurred over 100 years ago, but the energy and competitive atmosphere during this campaign was unparalleled. It bore far more resemblance to elections in the West than those of America's regional allies, who are decades behind Iran in terms of democratic practice and mostly run along familial or tribal lines. People still chose the embattled Rouhani, even in spite of all the setbacks his domestic and foreign policies presented.

Now that he has an election mandate, perhaps Rouhani's biggest fight beyond regaining support from the supreme leader and the public will be reacting to President Trump. Trump stands at a fork in the road as well. He can either accept the resounding call of the Iranian people for peaceful engagement, or he can return to the pre-Obama U.S. policy of unrelenting hostility towards Iran. If he chooses the former, he will find a receptive voice in Tehran. But if he chooses the latter, as his speech in Saudi seemed to indicate, the Iranian people and Rouhani will have to be united in resisting aggressive U.S. policies, as they did during Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's invasion of Iran during the 1980s.

It looks like Trump and Rouhani both have a long road ahead of them.

Ten Afghan soldiers killed in Kandahar army base attack

At least 10 Afghan soldiers have been killed in an attack on an army base in the southern province of Kandahar, according to defense officials.

The assault at Camp Achakzai in Shawali Kowt late on Monday came just a day after 20 Afghan policemen were killed when Taliban fighters stormed their outposts in the neighboring province of Zabul.

No group has so far claimed responsibility for the Kandahar attack. "Ten brave army soldiers were martyred and nine others wounded. The wounded soldiers were taken to hospital and they are in stable condition," the ministry said in a statement.

Dawlat Waziri, defense ministry spokesman, told the Reuters news agency that at least 12 attackers had been killed by government troops after several hours of fighting.

The attack marks another setback for NATO-backed Afghan forces. It comes just a month after the Taliban killed at least 135 soldiers in the northern province of Balkh in the deadliest attack on an Afghan military base since 2001.

During the Zabul attack early on Sunday, local officials made desperate calls to Afghan television stations to seek attention because they were unable to contact senior authorities for help, highlighting the disarray in security ranks.

Taliban fighters launched their annual "spring offensive" in late April, heralding a surge in fighting as the United States tries to craft a new Afghan strategy and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) considers sending more troops to break the stalemate against the resurgent militants.

U.S. Defence Secretary Jim Mattis last month warned of "another tough year" for security forces in Afghanistan.

The White House is considering sending thousands more troops to break the deadlock.

(Source: agencies)

Fresh protests rock Venezuela after man set on fire

Thousands of doctors have rallied in Venezuela's capital, Caracas, against President Nicolas Maduro amid the unrest which has claimed over 50 lives in the country over the past weeks.

The Venezuelan Medical Federation staged a protest in Caracas on Monday, with nearly 20,000 of its sympathizers marching on the headquarters of the Health Ministry.

Police reportedly fired tear gas to disperse the protest.

The outskirts of Caracas also saw clashes between police and a group of protesters, who had blocked streets with barricades.

Earlier in the day, a youth lay in hospital after being set on fire by an angry crowd.

Commenting on the incident, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro said opposition protesters set a government supporter on fire and stabbed him during a recent rally.

The protesters set fire to a government office and a police car in Barinas town.

Venezuela's Vice President Tareck El Aissami said in Caracas that a drug storage facility in Barinas State was "totally destroyed."

He said the right called for a march for health "but gave orders to attack everything related to care facilities."

(Source: agencies)

22 killed in Manchester concert blast

➔ at least 59 concert-goers, many of whom are in critical condition.

Al Jazeera's Nadim Baba, reporting from Manchester, said that at least 12 of the 59 victims brought to hospitals were children.

At least one of the fatalities was an eight-year-old child, our correspondent also reported, describing the "severe security threat" the country faces.

The news of the arrest came minutes after British Prime Minister Theresa May said police knew the identity of the suspected suicide bomber - but could not yet announce the attacker's name.

Speaking after an emergency meeting of the country's top security committee, May condemned what she called a "callous terrorist attack", calling it "among the worst terrorism we have experienced in the United Kingdom".

She also repeated an earlier police statement which said that the attacker had carried out the attack alone. Yet, it was not yet clear if others had helped in the preparation.

The attack has been described as the deadliest on Britain since four men killed 52 people in suicide bombings on London's transport system in July 2005.

Ian Hopkins, chief constable for Great Manchester, said the explosion was caused by one man "carrying an improvised explosive device, which he detonated", Hopkins told reporters on Tuesday morning.

The attack came ahead of a June 8 general election in Britain. Earlier on Tuesday, British politicians said they were suspending election campaigning until further notice following the events in Manchester.

Police responded to reports of an explosion shortly after 10:35pm (21:35 GMT) at the arena, which has the capacity to hold 21,000 people, where Grande had been performing to an audience that included many children.

Police cars, bomb-disposal units and 60 ambulances raced to the scene. A video posted on Twitter showed fans screaming and running out of the venue.

Greater Manchester Police tweeted asking people to stay away. "The incident took place outside the venue in a public space," police said. "Our thoughts and prayers go out to the victims."

The local ambulance service said on Twitter it had taken 59 casualties from the incident and treated "a number of walking wounded on scene".

A "precautionary controlled explosion" was carried out near the venue on a package that was believed to be a suspect device, but turned out to be "abandoned clothing, not a suspicious item".

Manchester Arena, which opened in 1995, is the largest indoor arena in Europe, according to its website.

(Source: agencies)

Agassi could bring something special to Djokovic, says Leconte

Novak Djokovic could be on the verge of “something special” after teaming up with Andre Agassi for the French Open, former Roland Garros runner-up Henri Leconte said on Tuesday.

Serbian Djokovic, the defending French Open champion, announced on Sunday that he would have eight-times grand slam champion Agassi in his corner in Paris after parting ways with his coaching team earlier this month.

“It’s brand new and good for tennis,” Leconte, the last Frenchman to reach the final in 1988, told Reuters.

“I really hope it works because if it does, it could be something special for Novak.”

Twelve-times grand slam winner Djokovic ended a three-year partnership with

Boris Becker late last year when he lost his world number one status to Andy Murray.

He has struggled to rediscover his best form since winning last year’s French Open to complete a career grand slam and this season has seen a run of surprise losses.

Leconte says American Agassi, who came back from a career slump to win the 1999 French Open, could help the 30-year-old find the spark that appears to have been missing.

“I really believe that he can help Novak find his way back to the top,” Leconte, who will work as a pundit for Eurosport during the French Open, said.

“Andre has the strength of personality to give Novak advice. He had the experience of coming back after injury problems and other setbacks to come back from 150 in the world to number one.

“It’s not about coaching. I think the likes of Novak, Roger (Federer) and Rafa (Nadal) just need something new. A brand new direction. I really hope Novak has enough strength and power to produce what he produced last year”

(Source: Reuters)

Egyptian becomes first amputee to swim across Red Sea Gulf

An Egyptian adventurer has become the first amputee to swim from Egypt to Jordan, crossing a 20-kilometre (12.4 miles) stretch of the Red Sea’s Gulf of Aqaba last month in under nine hours.

Omar Hegazy, a 26-year-old banker, lost his left leg two years ago in a motorcycle accident he said left him with an identity crisis.

But Hegazy regained his strength through training and was able to take up sports he had enjoyed before his accident, including rock-climbing and snorkelling.

“I used to lead a very active lifestyle... I didn’t know what I was anymore or how I was going to live,” he said.

“I like exploring, adventuring and doing things for the first time.”

Hegazy raised funds for the swim through local sponsors and audiences tracked his progress across the coral-rich gulf through a Twitter hashtag he created to raise awareness about people enduring mental and physical disabilities.

“I see life in near-death experiences and I want to (bring people along for the ride),” he said.

(Source: Reuters)

Ajax vs. Manchester United: Europa League Final

Jose Mourinho has the chance to etch his name into Manchester United folklore on Wednesday in Stockholm, as the Red Devils face Dutch giants Ajax in the UEFA Europa League final.

While managers like Matt Busby and Alex Ferguson led United to a remarkable amount of success during their time in the Old Trafford hotseat, they never got their hands on this illustrious prize. Mourinho would be the first manager in the club’s history to lift this trophy.



However, standing between the Premier League side and the silverware is a brilliant Ajax outfit. The youthful Eredivisie team have enthralled on their way to this showpiece, playing fearless and effective football.

For Manchester United, there has been plenty of talk about how crucial qualification for next season’s UEFA Champions League would be, something Europa League success would guarantee. But supporters making their way to Stockholm won’t be thinking about that.

The Red Devils faithful will want to see their side lift a second trophy to cap off the 2016-17 season, having already won the League Cup.

The Europa League campaign has been a memorable one for United, too, and in the semi-final, Rashford emerged as the team’s talisman with goals in both games against Celta.

(Source: Bleacher Report)

Man United players have their cars checked by security

MANCHESTER UNITED players had their cars checked by security outside their training ground this morning, before Wayne Rooney leads team in a minute’s silence.

Vehicles belonging to Jose Mourinho, Rooney, Paul Pogba, Anthony Martial and even the team bus were given a thorough searching after at least 22 people died and 59 were injured in last night’s atrocity.

The players were en route to Carrington’s Aon Training Complex ahead of the Europa League final against Ajax in Stockholm on Wednesday.

Security were quick to stop all the luxury vehicles from entering the area, with Mourinho’s Jaguar and Rooney’s Audi just two to be looked at.

The same happened to both Phil Jones and Henrikh Mkhitaryan, as well as the team bus as the squad prepare to fly into Sweden –currently on red alert after the terror attack.

Once players were allowed into training, they underwent a minute’s silence as a mark of respect – with players looking incredibly sombre.

Old Trafford’s flags flew at half-mast on Tuesday morning in the wake of the horrific terror attack at the Manchester Arena.

United have also asked Uefa for permission to don black armbands for the Europa League final against Ajax in Stockholm on Wednesday night.

The Premier League side recently wore armbands for the victims of fans who died in Calabar, Nigeria after an electric cable fell on supporters in a bar.

Jose Mourinho’s stars are being protected around the clock by gun cops as they prepare to take on Ajax.

But the mood among travelling fans was sombre in the wake of an attack which injured dozens and cast a shadow over the city.

A heavy police presence has dominated Stockholm since Monday, with police helicopters circling the skies and armoured cars patrolling the streets.

Uefa themselves have released a statement ahead



of the game on the back of Monday night’s horrendous event.

The statement read: “There is currently no specific intelligence which might suggest that any of the Uefa Europa League final activities in Stockholm may be target of attacks.

“Uefa has been closely working with local authorities and the Swedish FA for many months and the terrorist risk has been taken into account since the very beginning of the project.

‘Shocked’ Guardiola’s family unhurt after Manchester attack



The wife and two children of Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola attended the Ariana Grande concert at Manchester Arena at which 22 people lost their lives in a sickening suicide bombing.

Cristina Serra, Guardiola’s wife, and their two daughters, Valentina and Maria, were among the thousands who had flocked to the city’s popular music venue to watch the American singer on Monday night.

It is unclear if they were still at the Manchester Arena when the explosion occurred shortly after 10.30pm in the venue’s foyer but it is understood that all three are safe and unhurt. Reports first emerged in Spain and are understood to be accurate. City have declined to comment.

Guardiola was due to fly to Abu Dhabi today for his end of season review with Khaldoon al-Mubarak, the City chairman, and the club’s hierarchy but it remains to be seen whether the manager will now cancel or delay his planned visit in order

to stay with his family.

The Etihad Stadium is currently being used as an emergency help centre and City had earlier released a statement in which they expressed their profound condolences for all those affected by the tragedy.

“The thoughts and prayers of our ownership, Board and everyone at Manchester City are with the people of Manchester and all those affected following the horrifying events of last

“We have offered our full support throughout the night and this morning to the leaders of the City of Manchester itself and to the Emergency Services who are doing so much to support our city in these most challenging of circumstances.

“The Etihad Stadium is being used as a support centre following the tragic events and Greater Manchester Police have advised that anyone needing assistance relating to the attack can access that help at the Etihad Stadium via Gate 11.

(Source: Telegraph)

Kvitova set for Wimbledon after stabbing



Twice champion Petra Kvitova is set to play at Wimbledon this summer, less than seven months after she was stabbed by an intruder in her home, a member of her support team told Reuters on Tuesday.

The Czech, who required four hours of surgery to her left, playing, hand after the December attack at home in her home city of Prostějov, has made a faster than expected recovery and could even be ready to play in the French Open, which begins in Paris on Sunday.

“She is on track for Wimbledon,” Katie Spellman, Kvitova’s publicity manager, told Reuters. “She will make a last minute decision this week about Roland Garros.”

Kvitova, who won Wimbledon in 2011 and 2014, will be included on the official entry list for this year’s Championships, which will be released on Wednesday.

“The AELTC is always pleased to welcome former champions back to Wimbledon, and would be delighted if Petra Kvitova is able to compete in The Championships this year,” Wimbledon said in a

statement to Reuters.

“We wish her well with her ongoing preparations to return to competition.”

ATTACKED AT HOME
Kvitova was attacked at around 8.30am on December 20 by a man who gained access to her apartment block by posing as a utilities man, before holding a knife to her throat.

In pulling the knife away, Kvitova sustained injuries to tendons in all four fingers and the thumb on her left hand. She said she was “shaken, but fortunate to be alive”.

Doctors had said at the time the “best-case scenario” was that Kvitova could be playing tennis again within six months.

Throughout her recovery, the 27-year-old has amazed everyone in her team with her positivity and belief that she would be back on Tour, and sooner rather than later.

Last month, Kvitova said she had left her name on the entry list for the French Open, in part to ensure she had a positive mind-set as she continued her recovery.

(Source: Reuters)

Nicky Hayden: Ex-MotoGP champion dies after collision

Former MotoGP champion Nicky Hayden has died aged 35, five days after being involved in a crash while cycling.

The American suffered “serious cerebral damage” after colliding with a car on the Rimini coastline in Italy on Wednesday, 17 May.

The 2006 MotoGP championship winner had been in the intensive care unit of Cesena’s Maurizio Bufalini Hospital.

“We would like everyone to remember Nicky at his happiest - riding a motorcycle,” his brother Tommy said.

A hospital statement issued on Thursday said Hayden had suffered “a serious polytrauma”, which is a medical term to describe the condition of a person who has multiple traumatic injuries.

Hayden, who was nicknamed the Kentucky Kid, had competed for Red Bull Honda in the World Superbike Championship in Italy on 14 May.

Older brother Tommy, who was also a motorcycle racer, said the family had many “great and happy memories” of Hayden.



“He dreamed as a kid of being a pro-rider and not only achieved that but also managed to reach the pinnacle of his chosen sport,” he said.

“We are all so proud of that. We will all miss him terribly.”

Sister Kathleen added: “Today I not only lost my big brother, but I lost a best friend.”

Red Bull Honda World Superbike said that the racing world had said goodbye to “one of its dearest sons.”

“The ‘Kentucky Kid’ will be sorely missed by all that ever had the pleasure of meeting him or the privilege to see him race a motorcycle around a track, be it dirt or asphalt,” a statement read.

■ Hayden’s title triumph

The Kentucky-born racer first competed in MotoGP in 2003 and finished third in the standings two years later. He ended Valentino Rossi’s five-year winning streak in 2006 following a dramatic final race in Valencia.

Hayden had been eight points adrift of Rossi heading into the decider, but saw the Italian slide out on lap five and eventually finish in 13th place. Hayden’s third-place finish allowed him to take the title by five points.

He remains the last American to win the premier class of motorcycle road racing.

(Source: BBC)

Iran weightlifting seeks more seats in global stage

By Masoud Hossein

Weightlifting in Iran has a 100-year history. Mohammad Jafar Salmasi, who died in 2000, was an Iranian weightlifter who won Iran's first Olympic medal at the 1948 Olympic Games in London.

Iran started the sport with minimum amount of equipment but now is one of the most decorated countries in the world.

The Iranian weightlifters have won nearly 100 Asian, worlds and Olympics medals so far, but the country has fallen short in terms of having international seats.

Iran's first chair in International Olympic Committee (IOC) dates back to 66 years ago.

Hossein Sadeghi was appointed as the first president of Iran Weightlifting Federation in 1946 and after five years he became a member of cultural committee of the international federation. Sadeghi took charge of the position from 1951 to 1956.

In 1954, Abdolmajid Bakhtiar won a seat as IOC governing board member. Two years later, Bakhtiar was elected as one of the IOC vice-presidents in Melbourne congress. He stayed in his role until 1960.

Four years later in 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo, Bakhtiar was elected as the International Weightlifting Federation first vice-president. He maintained the important role for four years.

About 50 years after that, Iran has not played a key role in the world stage.

Dr. Asghar ShahabiA, has been Iran's only member of the IWF Medical Committee from 1988 to 2012, when he passed away after a lengthy and serious illness.

The International Weightlifting Federation will organize its Electoral Congress in Bangkok, Thailand, on 29th and 30th May 2017.

A total of 119 candidates have been proposed by 72 countries for the available 37 positions that are open to election by the IWF Congress.

Head of Iran Weightlifting Federation Ali Moradi is standing for the Presidential, first vice-president, vice-president, Secretary General and an Executive Board



Member seats.

Moradi has an uphill task ahead since he will have to vie with Tamas Ajan from Hungary, who has held the IWF president position since 2000. Previously, Ajan served as General Secretary of the IWF since 1976.

Moradi is determined to end Iran's 50-year drought in global stage.

The Persian Gulf country has three other candidates for the Medical Committee (Davoud Bagheri), Technical Committee (Alireza Ghoreyshi) and Research Committee (Mohsen Beiranvand).

Iran wants more seats in the world stage as one of the powerhouse countries in weightlifting.

Without a doubt, the Iran federation's efforts to win the elections are appreciable.

It doesn't matter if the Iranian candidates will not win any seat in the elections. The Iranian weightlifting federation believes that is a starting point for it to earn the international seats in the future.

The federation, now, needs more international seats than Olympics and world medals. This is the main goal at the moment.

Iran will defeat Thailand in AFC U-20 Futsal semis: Ali Sanei

S P O R T S TEHRAN — Iran coach Ali Sanei says **d e s k** that there is no different for them to play Thailand in front of their fans in the AFC U-20 Futsal Championship semi-final.

The Persian have been scheduled to meet Thailand on Wednesday in semi-final encounter in Bangkok Arena.

Sanei maintains full confidence in his team after the

impressive performance against Lebanon.

"The team did really well, and despite conceding two goals, we know that we can win if we just maintain our performance," said the veteran player.

"Tomorrow (Wednesday) when we face Thailand in front of their home supporters, it is no different for us. We will continue doing what we have done so far, and I'm sure we will win," Savei added.



Iran third in Islamic Solidarity Games

S P O R T S Iran came third in the **d e s k** fourth Islamic Solidarity Games, winning 39 gold, 26 silver and 33 bronze medals and 98 in total in the 11-day long battle.

Iran had a strong finish to the Games, lifting eight of the last 11 golds, six of

those coming in wushu.

They were simply unstoppable in the wushu sanda events, underlining their supremacy by winning all of their bouts and storming to six of seven gold medals available.

Iran also won both gold medals in the

table tennis, the final gold medals of the games to be decided.

Azerbaijan took the lead in medal standings at the Games with 75 gold, 50 silver and 37 bronze medals.

Turkey ranked second with 71 gold medals, 67 silver and 57 bronze medals.

Hosts Azerbaijan, like Saudi Arabia (2005) and Indonesia (2013) before them, were worthy champions, but Turkey can look forward with genuine optimism.

The next Solidarity Games will be held in Istanbul in 2021.

ACL 2017 Rd of 16 - 1st Leg: Iran's Esteghlal beat Al Ain of UAE

Iran's Esteghlal will take a narrow one-goal advantage into the second leg of their 2017 AFC Champions League Round of 16 meeting with Al Ain of the United Arab Emirates next week after Alireza Mansourian's side won a feisty clash between the pair 1-0 on Monday.

Rezaei netted from the penalty spot two minutes into injury time after Al Ain midfielder Lee Myung-joo had handled the ball at the end of a game that saw both teams reduced to ten men in the final 15 minutes.

Saeed Juma was given his marching orders 13 minutes from time for a scything challenge on Seyed Mohsen Karimi that saw Chinese referee Fu Ming give

the midfielder a straight red card, while eight minutes later Farshid Esmaili was sent off for retaliating against Al Ain striker Caio following an off-the-ball tussle between the two.

Esmaili had the better of the few opportunities to fall to either team in open play during a tense game at the Azadi Stadium, with the striker finding the hands of Khalid Eisa with efforts in the second and 65th minutes before Rezaei's spot kick earned the Iranians a slim advantage ahead of the return in Al Ain next week.

(Source: AFC)



Tottenham continue demolition job on White Hart Lane

Tottenham's historic White Hart Lane continues to be pulled apart as they step up their move to a new 61,559-capacity stadium next door.

The Premier League club's Twitter account has shared more incredible pictures of the ongoing building work around the old ground.

A bird's-eye shot shows the grass has been removed from the pitch with heavy machinery covering the once plush turf, while a bulldozer can be seen tearing apart the West Stand in another picture.

Spurs played the final game at their old ground earlier this month when they beat Manchester United 2-1 before an emotional closing ceremony.

Victor Wanyama and Harry Kane struck either side of half-time before Wayne Rooney forced home a consolation in the second half.

Mauricio Pochettino's side hung on for a win before claiming two big victories in their final games of the

season - 6-1 at Leicester and 7-1 at Hull - to secure a second-place finish behind Chelsea in the league.

They will have to make do without home comforts next season, after winning 17 of 19 fixtures at White Hart Lane, as they prepare for a temporary move to Wembley.

The displacement across London is expected to only last a season before they move into their newly refurbished home in time for the start of the 2018-19 campaign.

Last Monday the stadium was formally handed over to contractors Mace and DSM for the dismantling from the inside out.

This process is expected to continue until September, clearing the way for the £800million new arena to rise into the north London sky.

Their new home will boast a 17,000-seater 'Kop' style home stand and a retractable pitch so that Spurs can also host NFL American football matches.

(Source: Daily Mail)

Rio Olympic planning assailed for 'White Elephant' venues

A federal prosecutor looking into last year's Rio de Janeiro Olympics says that many of the venues "are white elephants" that were built with "no planning."

The scathing report offered Monday at a public hearing confirms what The Associated Press reported several months after the games ended. Many of the venues are empty, boarded up, and have no tenants or income with the maintenance costs dumped on the federal government.

"There was no planning," federal prosecutor Leandro Mitidieri told the public hearing on the Olympics. "There was no planning when they put out the bid to host the Games. No planning."

"They are white elephants today," Mitidieri added. "What we are trying to look at here is to how to turn this into something usable."

Rio de Janeiro spend about \$12 billion to organize the games, which were plagued by cost-cutting, poor attendance, and reports of bribes and

corruption linked to the building of some Olympic-related facilities.

The Olympic Park in suburban Barra da Tijuca, which was the largest cluster of venues, is an expanse of empty arenas with clutter still remaining from the games. The second largest cluster, in the northern area of Deodoro, is closed despite plans to open it as a public park with swimming facilities for the mostly poor who live in the area.

Patricia Amorim, the undersecretary for sports in the city of Rio, said highly publicized plans were on hold to dismantle one arena and turn the remains into four schools. The arena was the venue for handball.

"It will be dismantled," she said. "We are just waiting to know whether we will actually have resources to build these schools on other sites, or whether we will dismantle it and wait for the resources to come. Our schools need to be reformed and that's our priority, not new schools."

(Source: AP)

Ex-Barcelona president Sandro Rosell arrested

Former Barcelona president Sandro Rosell has been arrested on Tuesday as part of a money laundering investigation, police have confirmed to a number of Spanish publications.

The detentions are part of a money laundering investigation related to buying television rights for past matches of Brazil's national team.

Three other people have been detained, but their identities were not immediately released by authorities.

Police raided offices, homes, and businesses in Barcelona and other locations in Spain as part of "Operation Rimet," in reference to former FIFA president Jules Rimet.

Authorities said the operation used information from the FBI following the U.S. case against high-level FIFA officials in 2015.

In another high-profile case, Rosell resigned from his role as Barcelona president at the start of 2014 after it was alleged he misappropriated funds from the €57 million signing of Neymar from Brazilian club Santos.

Club member Jordi Cases claimed that the amount paid was more than the fee reported at the time and the case is ongoing.

Along with Neymar, Josep Maria Bartomeu, Barcelona, Santos and the company run by Neymar's parents, Rosell is due to stand trial on fraud and corruption charges after Cases' claims led to a complaint from Brazilian investment company DIS.

(Source: Soccerbet)



'Griezmann keen if UTD make CL'

Guillem Balague believes Antoine Griezmann would join Manchester United this summer if they qualified for the Champions League.

Jose Mourinho's side face the biggest game of their season on Wednesday night in the Europa League final against Ajax, with a win giving them automatic qualification to the group stage of next season's Champions League.

On Monday, Griezmann has marked his chances of joining Manchester United this summer as six out of 10, but his chances of staying at Atletico as seven out of 10, and says his future will be decided in the next two weeks.

United are interested in signing the Atletico Madrid forward, according to Griezmann's adviser, and Sky Sports' Spanish football expert Balague says a win on Wednesday would open the door for the Frenchman.

Balague told Sky Sports: "I've got the impression if United are in the Champions League, he will join them. Manchester United are willing to pay the 100m euros (£87m) for his buyout clause."

"He perhaps sees Manchester United, in the medium term at least, as a candidate to win the Premier League and the Champions League, because of the money that will be invested into the side."

"He obviously wasn't innocent when he said what he said to French television programme Quotidien. We've seen the images, and he quite clearly meant to do this. When he was asked out of 10 what the chances of going to Manchester United are, he said six."

"That number is not higher than six because he is waiting to see whether Manchester United make the Champions League."

(Source: Sky Sports)



Tianjin Quanjian distance themselves Costa move

Chinese club Tianjin Quanjian have distanced themselves from a £75million move for Diego Costa, saying there has been no contact with the Chelsea hitman since the turn of the year.

The big-spending CSL side have stated that they will be looking at a "rational transfer plan" this summer in a bid to become more sustainable.

The Chinese club recently announced that they had reached a 'verbal agreement' for their No.1 transfer target, with owner Shu Yuhui saying "buying a world-class centre forward is a no-brainer."

Chelsea striker Costa, who scored 20 goals for the champions in the Premier League this season, has been heavily linked with a move away from Stamford Bridge this summer, having refused to commit to the club.

Mirror Sport understands he was offered a contract worth £650,000-a-week AFTER tax to move to the Far East, having been frustrated at a January move falling through.

Antonio Conte had even become resigned to losing his main striker in the summer.

However, in a sudden about turn, Quanjian have surprisingly declared that there has been no contact with the forward with Costa nor his representatives since the turn of the year.

In a brief statement published on Tuesday, the CSL club said: "For the past six months, our club have not involved in any form of communication and negotiation with Diego Costa nor his representatives."

(Source: Mirror)

Culture minister calls for prompt action on new copyright bill

CULTURE TEHRAN — Iranian **d e s k** Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Reza Salehi-Amiri has urged the Iranian parliament to act promptly to approve the new copyright bill that was submitted last May.

“We have encountered plagiarism and difficulties in the cultural field,” said Salehi-Amiri during the 7th National Conference on Copyright, which was held at the National Library and Archives of Iran on Tuesday.

“The approval of the copyright bill would make those people active in cultural field feel safer,” he added.

Salehi-Amiri noted that Iran would make a major breakthrough in the export of cultural productions.

Articles 245 to 248 in Iran’s criminal law passed in 1931 contains allusions to copyright. However, Iran’s first copyright law was passed in 1969.

Earlier last May, the new copyright bill was submitted to the parliament.

Salehi-Amiri also said that cultural diplomacy should be taken into consideration in Iran’s relationship with the world.

“The language of the modern world is the language of moderation and dialogue,” he added.



Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Reza Salehi-Amiri speaks during the 7th National Conference on Copyright at the National Library and Archives of Iran on May 23, 2017.

Kyrgyz photographer Erkin Boljurov wins top prize at Tehran contest

TEHRAN — Kyrgyz photographer Erkin Boljurov has won the first prize at an Iranian international photo contest on cultural heritage.

The competition was organized by the Tehran Intangible Cultural Heritage Center on the theme of “Intangible Cultural Heritage in Context”.

The winners of the contest were announced during a ceremony in Tehran on Monday.

The second and third prizes went to Maziar Asadi and Jamshid Farajvand-Farda from Iran.

Ibrahim Mahmood from Pakistan, Jacob Keymetlian from Armenia, and Abdorrahman Mojarad, Saber Qazi and Javad Asgaroqli, all from Iran, won honorable mentions.



In 2006, Iran joined the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and on April 28, 2010, the agreement regarding the establishment of the Tehran Intangible Cultural Heritage Center was signed by Iran and UNESCO.

The Center was officially inaugurated in November 2012.

Iranian theater troupe Bohemi to perform in Spain, Serbia

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian **d e s k** theater troupe Bohemi led by director Fariborz Karimi will perform at festivals in Spain and Serbia.

The troupe will first stage the American playwright Tennessee Williams’ “I Can’t Imagine Tomorrow” at the ACT Festival, which will be held in the northern Spanish city of Bilbao from June 7 to 10.

Ehsan Bohluli and Shakiba Fadaei are the members of the cast for the play that is about One and Two who are depending on each other for survival.

Bohemi will then perform “Medea” at the 42nd edition of Festival of Monodrama and Mime, which will run in Belgrade, Serbia from June 29 to July 2.



The play is a loose adaptation of “Medea”, an ancient Greek tragedy written by Euripides. It is based upon the myth of Jason and Medea that was first produced in 431 BC.

Ava Darvishi will play the role of Medea in the monolog.

Citizens get free access to information in Iran

CULTURE TEHRAN — The Information **d e s k** Technology Organization of Iran (ITO) has recently designed a website that provides citizens with free access to information in Iran.

The website will officially be launched by the ministers of Culture and Islamic Guidance and the Communications and Information Technology in the near future, Deputy Culture Minister for Press Affairs Hossein Entezami said on Tuesday.

“Any individual user can register on this website available at www.foia.iran.gov.ir and ask questions



about any public or private sectors and receive a reply in less than 10 days,” Entezami, who is also the

“Alien: Covenant” slides past “Guardians 2” to win weekend with \$36 million

LOS ANGELES (Variety.com) — As this weekend approached, the question lingered if “Alien: Covenant” would be able to unseat “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” from the top spot at the domestic box office.

Now, we have an answer. As of Sunday morning, “Covenant” from 20th Century Fox and Scott Free Productions, looks to be the winner with a three-day estimate of \$36 million (27.6 million pounds) from 3,761 locations. That’s just above Disney’s “Guardians” sequel which is raking in an additional \$35.3 million from 4,347 spots. The super sequel is seeing only a 46% drop from last weekend, and its total domestic earnings now exceed \$300 million.

While “Alien” may have won, the film’s price tag in the \$100 million range and marketing costs detract from the victory. The sixth installment in the Alien franchise (not counting the two Alien vs. Predator films) was directed by Ridley Scott and stars Michael Fassbender, Katherine Waterston, Billy Crudup, and Danny McBride. It holds a 73% on Rotten Tomatoes, which is in line with 2012’s “Prometheus.”

Although it came in already having made \$42 million overseas and \$36 million was enough to land in the top slot, “Alien” grossed less during its first weekend in the U.S. than “Prometheus” did in 2012 (\$51 million). Its final domestic earnings also came in below earlier projections, which pegged the horror flick at least \$40 million.

Fox’s president of domestic distribution Chris Aronson chalked the lower totals compared with “Prometheus” to the “normal course of business.” He added that “Alien: Covenant” gives fans of the franchise since the 1979 original the chance to share with the younger generation (60% of the opening weekend audience was in the 18-34 demo). “Teenagers

likely haven’t seen ‘Alien,’” he said, “This movie creates a generational bond.”

While the “Alien” franchise is still able to generate decent interest, the same cannot be said for Fox’s other release this weekend, “Diary of a Wimpy Kid: The Long Haul.”

The fourth live-action movie based on Jeff Kinney’s middle school-centric book series opened to \$7.2 million from 3,157 locations. David Bowers, who directed movies two and three, returned to the helm nearly five years after the last iteration, and anointed a new titular wimp in Jason Drucker.

The only other major release of the weekend was “Everything, Everything,” from Warner Bros. and MGM. The sick-lit adaptation will earn \$12 million by the end of the weekend from 2,801 locations. That’s enough to land in the



Director Ridley Scott poses for photographers at the World Premiere of ‘Alien: Covenant’ in London, Britain May 4, 2017.

(Reuters/Neil Hall)

Los Angeles art dealer gets jail for bilking clients out of \$1 million

Los Angeles (Reuters) — A former Los Angeles art dealer who prosecutors say embezzled more than \$1 million from clients including former Walt Disney Co President Michael Ovitz was sentenced on Monday to six months in jail.

Perry Rubenstein, 63, was also ordered to pay \$1.1 million in restitution to Ovitz and a second victim, Michael Salke,

according to a spokesman for the Los Angeles County District Attorney’s Office.

Rubenstein pleaded guilty in March to two counts of grand theft by embezzlement in connection with the sale of art by Takashi Murakami and Richard Prince.

Prosecutors say that in 2012 Rubenstein sold a Murakami art on behalf of Salke but

failed to turn over all of the proceeds to him.

The following year, Rubenstein sold two Prince paintings for Ovitz but never turned over the money to his client, according to prosecutors.

An attorney for Rubenstein could not immediately be reached for comment on Monday.

The Los Angeles Times reported that Rubenstein was a high-profile art dealer in Manhattan before moving to the West Coast, where celebrities such as rocker Neil Young and artist Shepard Fairey attended the opening of his new gallery.

Ovitz, 70, helped found Creative Artists Agency in 1975 and served as president of the Walt Disney in the late 1990s.

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Tehran square named after Iranian director Farajollah Salahshur

A R T TEHRAN — A square located in Tehran’s **d e s k** District 5 was named after Farajollah Salahshur, the director of the acclaimed TV series “Prophet Joseph (AS)”, on Tuesday.

The decision to name the square after Salahshur was made by the conservative members of the Tehran City Council a few weeks before they leave the council for the new members, who were elected from the reformist wing last Friday.

Salahshur died of lung cancer at the age of 63 in February 2016.



Tehran theater to host “The Miser”

A R T TEHRAN — Director Maryam Kazemi **d e s k** will stage French playwright Jean Baptiste Poquelin Moliere’s “The Miser” at the Tehran Theater Complex in late June.

The 1668 play is a comedy about a stingy man, Harpagon. Although he is over sixty and has two young children, he is arranging a marriage between himself and an attractive young woman, Marianne, who is in love with his son, Cleante.

Hossein Mohebahari, Jamshid Jahanzadeh and Afshin Zarei are the main members of the cast for the play, which will be on stage for two months.



Art exhibit to raise funds for people with cancer

A R T TEHRAN — The Behnam Daheshpur **d e s k** Charity Organization plans to hold an exhibition of paintings to raise funds for people suffering from cancer.

Works by Forugh Khoshnevis, Parvaneh Razaqi, Mahta Moeini, Shahla Homayuni and several other artists have been selected for the showcase, which will open at the gallery of the organization this week on Friday.

The showcase will be running until May 31 at the gallery located at 13 Marmari Alley, off Masjedi Alley, Jabarian St. in the Farmanieh neighborhood.

Boston art heist solved? Nope, just fraud attempt, prosecutors say

BOSTON (Reuters) — A West Virginia man was arrested on Monday and charged with fraudulently claiming he could sell some of the \$500 million in artwork stolen from a Boston museum a quarter century ago, even though he had no access to the long-sought masterpieces.

Todd Andrew Desper, 47, of Beckley, West Virginia, was accused of running a scheme in which he offered to sell Rembrandt’s “Storm on the Sea of Galilee,” and Vermeer’s “The Concert,” two of the 13 artworks stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in March 1990 in the largest art heist in U.S. history.

That theft remains one of the highest-profile unsolved crimes in Boston history, and Desper’s attempt to woo buyers in cities including Venice and London led some collectors to tip off the museum’s director about the offer to sell the pair of paintings for \$5 million, federal prosecutors said.

Desper, who used the alias “Mordokwan,” was charged with wire fraud and attempted wire fraud, and could face up to 20 years in prison if convicted.

An attorney for Desper did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The Gardner heist was carried out by two men dressed in police uniforms who apparently overpowered a night security guard who had buzzed them in.

Due to a quirk in Gardner’s will, the empty frames that held the paintings remain on the walls of the museum she built to house the collection she amassed with her husband.

The art must be displayed the way it was during her lifetime, preventing curators from hanging new works, and leaving a constant reminder of the theft.