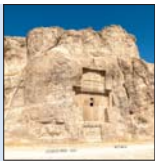




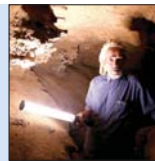
Iran tops OPEC nations in Q1 oil revenue increase **4**



Fars province's foreign tourist arrivals rise 42% y/y **10**



Iran advance to AFC U-20 Futsal Championship final **15**



"Darkened Water" named best film at Australia SCINEMA festival **16**

# Terror still looms though ISIS vanishing: Iran



See page 2

## Iran signs \$630m deal to produce strategic oil equipment

By Mahnaz Abdi

**TEHRAN** — By signing a contract worth \$630 million with an Iranian-Spanish consortium on Wednesday, Iran joined the world's manufacturers of special pipes, which are of strategic importance in the oil and gas industry. The contract was signed in Tehran by the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) and the consortium, which includes Spain's TUBACEX and Iran's Mobarakeh Steel Company. The project aims to produce pipes made of corrosion resistant alloy (CRA) for a network of 600 kilometers over three years. Corrosion resistant alloys (CRAs) are commonly used in the oil and gas

industry to protect metal assets in the exploration and production, refineries, and processing plants from corrosion.

**'Iran to become 1st CRA pipes manufacturer in region'**

The CRA pipes contract was signed by Antón Azlor, the deputy managing director of TUBACEX, Ramin Qalambar Dezfouli, NIOC's director for manufacturing and supplying logistics, and Mohammad Jan-Nesari, the managing director of Mobarakeh Steel Company in the presence of Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh and NIOC Managing Director Ali Kardor.

Spanish Ambassador to Tehran Eduardo López Busquets was also present in the signing ceremony. **→ 4**

## Ex-UN chief urges Trump to reach out to Iran

POLITICS

**TEHRAN** — Former U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday to reach out and talk to Iran, arguing that Tehran is "part of the solution" to the conflicts in the Middle East. "It is important to reach out and talk to Iran... Iran is part of the solution and we cannot get away from that fact," Anan said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday. Anan added if he had the chance he would tell Trump his antagonistic policy toward Iran, including labeling it the enemy and a purveyor of terrorism, isn't going to do anything to bring

peace to the Middle East.

During his Middle East tour, Trump signed military deals worth nearly \$110 billion with Saudi Arabia and urged Arab leaders to join hands to "isolate Iran" for its financial and military support for "terrorists and militias," to quote his words.

"What is required is steps which diffuse tensions and divisions, and not steps which deepen divisions," Anan said. "And we need to be very careful of what action we take, what we say, because words can soothe, they can calm but they can also provoke and they can also excite." **→ 2**

## 7 perils of Trump's attempt to isolate Iran



**ARTICLE**  
By Seyed Hossein Mousaviani  
Princeton University  
Researcher

**U**S President Donald Trump's landmark speech in Saudi Arabia May 21 signals a reversal of policy from the Barack Obama administration and will ratchet up tensions with Iran. A day after a record-breaking 42 million Iranians signaled their desire to engage the world by re-electing President Hassan Rouhani, Trump appeared in an autocratic monarchy to call on "nations of conscience" to "isolate" Iran.

The Trump administration's main accusation is that Tehran is destabilizing the region. However, this simply does not square with the reality on the ground. Iran is backing the same governments in Iraq and Afghanistan that the United States supports. Meanwhile, Kabul and Baghdad blame Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, respectively, for supporting terrorism in their countries. Former US Vice President Joe Biden acknowledged the role of American allies in fomenting instability, stating in 2014, "They poured hundreds of millions of dollars and tens of thousands of tons of weapons into anyone who would fight against [Syrian President Bashar al-] Assad, except that the people who were being supplied were [Jabhat] al-Nusra, and al-Qaeda, and the extremist elements of jihadis coming from other parts of the world."

Furthermore, Iran's military spending is less than Saudi Arabia's, Israel's and other Persian Gulf Arab countries', while its population is greater than all of them combined. To claim Iran has militaristic aims over the region is thus baseless. The historic July 2015 nuclear deal closed all pathways to a nuclear weapon for Iran, whereas Israel remains the only obstacle to a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East.

Given Trump's apparent strategy, there are at least seven perils the United States could and should avoid.

(see full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## S. Korean diplomat to showcase Persian calligraphy works by Javad Bakhtiari

A R T

**TEHRAN** — South Korean Ambassador Kim Seung-ho will organize an exhibition of Persian calligraphy works by Iranian artist Javad Bakhtiari at his official residence in Tehran on Friday.

The exhibit will open at 4 p.m. and will run for five hours.

Bakhtiari is a graduate from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran, and has held several exhibits in Tehran and many other countries such as Germany, France, Britain, Turkey, Austria, Italy and Turkey.

He has also published many books including



A calligraphy work by Javad Bakhtiari

"Word of Love" and "Secret of Glance".

This is the second time the Korean diplomat has dedicated his home to an exhibition of works by an Iranian artist.

Earlier in April, paintings by Masih Mirhosseini were showcased in an exhibition at the house.

During the opening ceremony of the showcase, Seung-ho said that he opened his residence to the public in order to promote friendship between Iran and his country.

He added that he also wants to become familiar with Iranian culture by organizing such an event.

## Euro zone stability risk contained but rising

Financial stability risks in the euro zone are contained but remain significant and have even increased in some areas over the past six months, the European Central Bank said in a regular stability review on Wednesday.

Concerns over debt sustainability have risen, while the clean up of the banking sector is slow and the risk of a sudden repricing in bond markets remains significant, potentially leading to major capital losses, the ECB said.

The warning comes as the euro zone is enjoying its best economic run in a decade,

raising expectations that the ECB could soon start to unwind its massive stimulus measures.

"Risks to euro area sovereign debt sustainability have increased over the past six months," the ECB said. "In recent weeks, however, euro area spreads narrowed and sovereign stress conditions improved somewhat following the result of the presidential election in France."

The ECB added that risks stemming from a further rapid repricing in global fixed income markets are mostly related to spillovers from the United States

but a prolonged period of elevated political uncertainty or higher-than-expected euro area inflationary pressures could also act as triggers.

"Repricing risks in fixed income markets remain significant," the ECB said. "There are... risks that euro area bond yields could increase abruptly without a simultaneous improvement in growth prospects."

The ECB singled out an upward revision of expectations for U.S. interest rate hikes as a key risk and warned that a repricing of euro zone bond markets could

lead to substantial capital losses for investors.

Resolving bad loans on banks' balance sheets is a top concern but progress has been slow so far, the ECB said.

Meanwhile bank profitability is low and market valuations suggest no relief in sight even though market pressures have abated recently.

The ECB said Brexit -- Britain's forthcoming exit from the European Union -- is not one of its main stability concerns for the time being.

(Source: Reuters)

## Trump's Anti-Iranian Gambit



**PERSPECTIVE**  
Mahmood Monshipouri  
University of California  
professor

**P**resident Trump's recent trip to Saudi Arabia and Israel was marked by ratcheting up his anti-Iranian rhetoric and a huge arms sale (\$110 billion) to Saudi Arabia. This massive infusion of military hardware and technology into the region raises many questions—not the least of which is what do the Saudis plan to do once having acquired such military might?

Historically, the Saudis have never contributed any substantial number of ground troops to regional wars and civil wars. In recent years, they have relied on the air power, but even then, they have had limited success or effectiveness, as is evident in the case of their military involvement in Yemen. The steady and brutal punishment of Houthi in Yemen has yet to yield a desirable outcome for them. Air power alone has never determined the outcome of a war on the ground.

Since the Saudis cannot maintain considerable leverage in shaping things to come in Yemen, Syria, and Iraq—not to mention defeating and dismantling ISIS, which has fortified a reliance on the propagation of an austere version of Islam called Wahhabism and/or Salafism—they will most likely prefer to drag the United States into a regional conflict with Iran—an eventuality that would entail devastating consequences for the entire region and beyond. The transactional nature of arms sale to the Saudis notwithstanding, the peril lies in a slow drift into a military confrontation with Iran. It may seem more complicated than the ever-present and simplistic cliché that U.S. allies should not pass the test of democratic governance if they help Washington in its fight against terrorism.

If the Trump administration plans to isolate Tehran and provoke a military confrontation with Iran by encouraging the Saudis to shoot the first bullet, President Trump will be disappointed, to say the least. This strategy will prove to be foolish beyond compare, in large part because American's European allies—as well as Russia and China—have decided to abide by the **→ 13**



ISNA/ Amin Nazari

## Wartime sign now a symbol of resistance

A sign in Khorramshahr, southern Iran, reads "welcome to Khorramshahr, 36-million population."

The sign dates back to the 1980s when Iraq invaded Iran and captured Khorramshahr for 578 days.

A small city, Khorramshahr was liberated May 24, 1982, when millions of Iranians took to streets to victoriously celebrate the liberation.

At that time, Iran's population was nearly 36 millions.



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



‘Building nuclear radiation center a giant scientific step’

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The building of a nuclear radiation center in Qazvin comes as a giant step in Iran's nuclear science development, according to a senior advisor to the head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran.

The center is being built by Iranian technicians, Alireza Zare'an told ISNA on Wednesday.

He said the rodotron center has been completed in seven months and has created 50 jobs directly and 300 more indirectly.



Turkey hopes Rouhani's 2nd term would bring peace to region

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Turkey enjoys good ties with President Hassan Rouhani's government, the Turkish ambassador to Iran said on Tuesday.

"We have very good relations with Dr. Rouhani's government, so we are happy to see that he got reelected," Riza Hakan Tekin told Trend.

"What we hope is that doctor Rouhani's second term will bring more peace, prosperity and atmosphere of co-operation to our region... Our region is going through a very difficult period."



Iran-China ties at highest level: deputy FM

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian deputy foreign minister for Asia and Pacific affairs has said that Tehran and Beijing at present enjoy the highest level of cooperation.

Ebrahim Rahimpour made the remarks on Wednesday during a meeting with the Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, IRNA reported.

Rahimpour arrived in the Chinese capital on Wednesday morning to attend a bilateral consultation meeting.



Iranian, Russian, Afghan security chiefs to meet soon

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran, Russia and Afghanistan have agreed to hold a trilateral summit headed by their respective secretaries of national security in Kabul in the near future, the head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council announced on Wednesday.

Ali Shamkhani made the announcement in a meeting with Mohammad Hanif Atmar, the national security adviser to Afghan President Ghani, on the sidelines of the International Meeting of High Representatives for Security Issues held in Moscow, according to Mehr.



Oversight body to address vote rigging claims

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The Guardian Council is going to address pleas made about vote rigging in the May 19 elections, the body's spokesman announced on Wednesday.

In a post on his Telegram, Abbasali Kadkhodaei said the members of the council decided to allocate a session to discuss the issue after the council received "numerous" pleas and reports of illegal activities from the campaign headquarters of two presidential candidates, namely Ebrahim Raisi and Mostafa Mirsalim.

He said the body's investigation into the allegations will be discussed in the council's next meeting.



Nateq Nouri: I resigned to act more freely

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Nateq Nouri said on Wednesday that he resigned as the chief of the inspection bureau of the Supreme Leader's office in order to enter political activities "more freely".

He said he resigned his post in order to prevent the formation of the idea that his support for Hassan Rouhani in the recent presidential election was representative of such support from Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's office, Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

# Khorramshahr liberation ‘pivotal moment’ in Iran-Iraq war: Navy commander

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Navy Commander Habibollah Sayyari said on Wednesday that the liberation of the strategic port city of Khorramshahr from the occupation of Iraqi forces during Iraq's war against Iran was a "pivotal moment".

The rear admiral made the remarks as Iran celebrated the 35th anniversary of the liberation of Khorramshahr on Wednesday.

"The operation ended 19 months of Iraqi occupation of Khorramshahr and was a severe blow to the enemy's military might," Sayyari said, while addressing the parliament.

He stressed that the operation made the enemy understand that they cannot threaten Iranian borders.

The liberation of Khorramshahr is perceived as a turning point in the long-lasting war between the two countries which was imposed by Iraq. It is celebrated in Iran on its anniversary, 24



May.

Khorramshahr was captured by Iraqi forces on October 26, 1980, a month after former Iraqi President Saddam

Hussein invaded Iran.

The city was recaptured by Iranian forces on May 24, 1982, as part of the operation codenamed Beit ol-Moqaddas,

which gave Iran the momentum.

Sayyari said the operation had many important political and military achievements. "For instance it slashed the enemy's desire for aggression."

"The operation caught the enemy completely off-guard," the navy chief remarked.

Also on Wednesday, President Rouhani aired remarks on the anniversary of the event, saying it is an important day for the country.

"Iranian people emerged victorious against a massive international conspiracy," Rouhani said.

Referring to the late Imam Khomeini who said "Khorramshahr was liberated by God", Rouhani said: "This is what we deeply believe in."

He also said that during the imposed war, Saddam was propped up against Iran by all big world powers which gave him arms, however the Iranian nation managed to create a great miracle.

## Trump making good on nuclear deal ‘so far’: top Iranian diplomat

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A top Iranian diplomat said on Wednesday that U.S. President Donald Trump has "so far" honored his side of the international nuclear accord, one which he harshly berated as a presidential candidate.

"So far, Trump has shown commitment to the nuclear deal," ISNA quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi as saying after a parliamentary briefing on the deal.

"Other non-nuclear sanctions need to be suspended at the right time," the top

nuclear negotiator added, noting, "As a matter of fact, it was Trump's first test"

Iran and six world powers, including the U.S., agreed in July 2015 to remove nuclear-related sanctions against Tehran in reward for it rolling back its nuclear program.

During his presidential trail, Trump threatened to pull out of the accord, at one point branding it a "disastrous deal", contrary to his predecessor Barack Obama who had hailed it a signature foreign policy achievement.

Just two days before the May 19

elections in Iran, however, Trump extended the sanctions relief called for under the deal even as he imposed narrow penalties on two Iranian and Chinese figures for supporting Iran's ballistic missile program.

"The United States continues to waive sanctions as required to continue implementing U.S. sanctions-lifting commitments in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action," the State Department said in a statement, referring to the deal by its formal name.

Earlier in April, U.S. Secretary of

State Rex Tillerson, in a letter to U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Paul Ryan, remarked that Iran had remained compliant with the deal yet he had urged launching an inter-agency review of whether the lifting of sanctions against Iran was in the United States' national security interests.

It would not be clear, however, if the review will influence Trump's next decision in nearly two months from now, when he is to waive a different set of sanctions for a six-month period, according to Araghchi.

## Ex-UN chief urges Trump to reach out to Iran

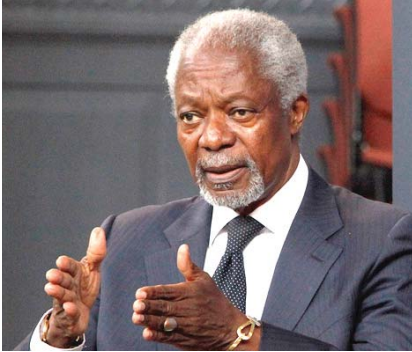
Middle East without Tehran's help.

Rouhani also said the U.S. administration lacked knowledge about the Middle East.

"The problem is that the Americans do not know our region and those who advise U.S. officials are misleading them."

In making the comments, Rouhani was referring to Saudi dollars funneling into the business-minded Trump administration to induce skewed perceptions about Iran's sway in the region.

"Who can say regional stability can be restored without Iran? Who can say



the region will experience total stability without Iran?" Rouhani said in the press conference.

Richard Dalton, a former British ambassador in the Middle East, linked the anti-Iranian tone of the Trump administration to economic considerations.

"Doubling down on Saudi Arabia has a lot to do with trade and investment considerations. The supporting allies, anti-terrorism and anti-Iranian rhetoric provides a cover for that," Reuters quoted Dalton as saying.

## Security not ‘buyable’, Iran says

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi has said that security is not something to "buy", noting security can be achieved only through reliance on one's own people.

"Security should be achieved from within the society and through reliance on people. Definitely, security cannot be established by buying weapons and giving wealth of a nation to another country," he told ISNA in an interview published on Wednesday.

The remarks by the Foreign Ministry official came after Donald Trump took a trip to Saudi Arabia on Saturday and signed a huge arms deal with the Saudis.

The official said certain countries' failure to establish democracy and rely on people will face serious crises.

He added, "Stability and security are inseparable and the governments which rely on people's vote and confidence have the mission to fight terrorism and violence."

Qassemi said that Trump's trip to Saudi Arabia was targeted at spreading Iranophobia, strengthening Isra-



el-Saudi Arabia relationship, selling arms and emptying the pockets of some regional countries, especially Saudi Arabia.

He also said, "Following its rational policies, the Islamic Republic of Iran will not be caught in trap set up by regional and extra-regional extremists."

"Iran will continue to follow the policy of interaction and cooperation with its neighbors and this policy will not be changed under the influence of inappropriate and interference-seeking remarks by U.S. officials."

## Clampdown in Bahrain result of Trump's cozy relationship with Riyadh: Zarif

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has said that the crackdown on Bahraini protestors is the result of Donald Trump's cozy relationship with the despots in Riyadh.

"First concrete result of POTUS cozying up to despots in Riyadh: Deadly attack on peaceful protestors by emboldened Bahraini regime. Google it," Zarif tweeted on Tuesday.

Bahraini police raided Diraz, the hometown of opposition cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim, on Tuesday killing at least five demonstrators and injuring others wounded. Police also arrested 286 people in the crackdown.

Also on Tuesday Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi strongly condemned the attack on protesters and the raid on the residence of the prominent pro-democracy cleric.

He described the attack as a "miscalculation" by the Bahraini regime.

"Intensifying suppression and adopting religious and sectarian approaches against the Bahraini



people will not help settle crisis in the country and will divert peaceful process of the protests," the Foreign Ministry official warned.

He said the cleric enjoys a "remarkable status" among the Muslims and the Bahraini regime should be careful about the consequences of such behaviors.

He also advised the Manama government to adopt a "political strategy" toward the issue and try to resolve the crisis through "national dialogue".

## Terror still looms though ISIS vanishing: Iran

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Terrorism continues to threaten the world although ISIS is losing territory, a senior Iranian security official said on Wednesday.

"Although the most powerful terrorist group, Daesh, has been vanishing over the past two years and has lost most of the territory it once seized in Iraq and Syria, the threat of terrorism has not been reduced in the world," Ali Shamkhani told the International Meeting of

High Representatives for Security Issues in Russia.

The summit started on Tuesday and would last until Thursday, with issues of global information security and fight against international organized crime high on the agenda.

Shamkhani, secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said any attempt to obliterate terrorism will demand its fertile grounds to be "eliminated" and "extremist thought" rectified.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan congratulated his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani over his recent election victory, according to a presidential source.

The two leaders, who spoke over the phone, also

vowed to improve bilateral ties, said the source, who asked not to be named due to restrictions on talking to the media.

Rouhani, 69, won a landslide victory in Friday's

presidential election, according to official results.

He bagged 57 percent (23.5 million) of the 41.2 million votes cast against 15.7 million for his conservative rival Ebrahim Raisi. (Source: Anadolu)



# Britain's security alert level raised to 'critical'

Britain's threat level has been raised from "severe" to "critical", Prime Minister Theresa May has announced, saying another attack "may be imminent" following a deadly suicide bombing in Manchester.

May made the announcement in a televised address late on Tuesday, warning her government cannot ignore the possibility that there is "a wider group of individuals linked to this attack".

May chaired a meeting of the government's Cobra emergency response committee at her Downing Street office on Wednesday morning.

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 the United States artist Ariana Grande's performance.

On Tuesday, police said Salman Abedi, 22, had carried out the suicide bombing that killed 22 people, including himself.

About 5,000 British soldiers will patrol the streets and boost security at key sites, and military personnel will be deployed at public events such as concerts and sports events.

"Military officers will take over guarding duties at some of our key fixed locations," said Mark Rowley from the Metropolitan Police. "It's an extraordinary stance but it's very well practiced. It's all about protecting the public."

Earlier on Tuesday, Ian Hopkins of the Greater Manchester Police confirmed the identity of the attacker but gave no further details. He also said police had raided two residential areas in Manchester, and carried out a controlled explosion at one as part of the investigation.

At one of the scenes where police raided an apartment, heavily armed men were guarding what one resident described as a "very, very quiet" area. Plain-clothed officers wearing gloves removed bags from the apartment.

The area in south Manchester, home to a number of tidy-looking buildings, is less than a kilometer from the supermarket where police reportedly arrested a 23-year-old man in connection with the attack.

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

## ■ Chaos and panic

The explosion, which caused scenes of chaos and panic and sent screaming families and children fleeing, also wounded at least 59 concert-goers, many of whom are in critical condition.

Earlier in the day, May denounced the "callous terrorist attack" that she labelled as "among the worst terrorism we have experienced in the United Kingdom".

Queen Elizabeth described the bomb-



ing as an "act of barbarity".

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

Martin Reardon, a security analyst and former FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) agent, said that as ISIL loses ground in the Middle East, fighters are likely to stage more attacks in Europe. The bombing also came in the lead-up to a June 8 general election in Britain.

Earlier on Tuesday, British politicians said they were suspending election campaigning until further notice.

Later on Tuesday, thousands attended a vigil in Manchester's Albert Square to honor the victims.

Manchester, Britain's third biggest city, was hit in 1996 by a massive car bomb planted at a shopping center by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) that wounded more than 200 people.

## ■ Manchester bomber had 'proven' links to ISIL

The Manchester suicide bomber who killed 22 people at a concert venue packed with children had recently returned from Libya, a British minister said, and her French counterpart said he had links with the ISIL terrorist outfit and had probably visited Syria too.

Interior minister Amber Rudd said Salman Abedi had likely not acted alone, and troops were being deployed to key sites across Britain to help prevent further attacks after the official threat level was raised to "critical".

Police made three new arrests in South

Manchester on Wednesday in connection with the concert bombing. They provided no details on the individuals arrested.

Rudd said up to 3,800 soldiers could be deployed on Britain's streets, taking on guard duties at places like Buckingham Palace and Downing Street to free up police to focus on patrols and investigation. An initial deployment of 984 had been ordered, initially in London, then elsewhere.

Rudd also scolded U.S. officials for leaking details about the investigation into the Manchester attack before British authorities were prepared to go public.

British-born Abedi, 22, blew himself up on Monday night at the Manchester Arena indoor venue at the end of a concert by U.S. pop singer Ariana Grande, attended by thousands of children and teenagers.

His 22 victims included an eight-year-old girl, several teenage girls, a 28-year-old man and a Polish couple who had come to collect their daughters.

The bombing also left 64 people wounded, of whom 20 were receiving critical care for highly traumatic injuries to major organs and to limbs, a health official said.

"It seems likely, possible, that he (Abedi) wasn't doing this on his own," Rudd said on BBC radio. She said Abedi had been known to security services before the bombing.

Asked about reports that Abedi had recently returned from Libya, Rudd said she believed that had now been confirmed.

French Interior Minister Gerard Collomb said British investigators had told French authorities Abedi had probably travelled to Syria as well.

Asked if he believed Abedi had the support of a network, Collomb said: "That is not known yet, but perhaps. In any case, (he had) links with Daesh (ISIL) that are proven."

Abedi was born in Manchester in 1994 to parents of Libyan origin, according to U.S. sources citing British contacts.

As Collomb was speaking in France, Rudd was asked by the BBC about the fact that information about Abedi, including his name, had come out from the United States and whether she would look again at how information was shared with other countries.

"Yes, quite frankly. I mean the British police have been very clear that they want to control the flow of information in order to protect operational integrity, the element of surprise, so it is irritating if it gets released from other sources and I have been very clear with our friends that should not happen again."

Asked whether the U.S. leaks had compromised the investigation, she said: "I wouldn't go that far but I can say that they are perfectly clear about the situation and that it shouldn't happen again."

France, which has repeatedly been hit by devastating militant attacks since 2015, extended emergency powers after the Manchester bombing.

Attacks in cities including Paris, Nice, Brussels, St Petersburg, Berlin and London have shocked Europeans already anxious over security challenges from mass immigration and pockets of domestic Islamic radicalism.

(Source: agencies)

## Dozens hunger-striking Palestinian prisoners moved to hospital

At least 60 Palestinians, who have gone on hunger strike in Israeli jails in protest at the Tel Aviv regime's administrative detention policy and harsh prison conditions, have been moved to hospital after a significant deterioration in their health conditions.

Palestinian Prisoners' Society lawyers, who visited some of the hunger strikers in Ohalei Kedar prison, said many of them were in serious condition and had to be hospitalized after refusing to eat for 38 days.

They added that some of the hunger strikers were not able to change their clothes, including underwear, since May 16, which further worsens their health condition.

Hanan al-Khatib, an attorney with the Detainees' Affairs Commission, also said Israeli authorities had imposed a black-out in Hadarim prison.

Since April 17, more than 1,600 Palestinian prisoners have joined the protest action, dubbed the Freedom and Dignity Strike.

The strikers are demanding basic rights, such as an end to the policies of administrative detention, solitary confinement and deliberate medical negligence.

The much criticized administrative detention is a policy under which Palestinian inmates are kept in Israeli detention facilities without trial or charge.

Back in 2012, a similar hunger strike, involving some 2,000 Palestinian inmates, ended after an agreement was reached with Israeli authorities to terminate the policy of internment without trial or charge.

The Palestinian inmates regularly hold hunger strikes in protest against the administrative detention policy and their harsh prison conditions.

Nearly 700 prisoners are currently held in administrative detention. Some of the inmates have been held in prison under the policy for up to 11 years.

(Source: Press TV)

## Donald Trump meets Pope Francis at the Vatican

Pope Francis has welcomed the United States President Donald Trump at the Vatican, in a meeting that comes against a backdrop of disagreements on a range of issues, including immigration, climate change and refugee policy.

Trump met Pope Francis in a short private audience at the Vatican on Wednesday. He arrived for the meeting along with his wife Melania, daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner.

The two men's worldviews collided head-on early last year, when Francis was sharply critical of Trump's election campaign pledge to build an impenetrable wall on the Mexican border and his declaration that the United States should turn away Muslim immigrants and refugees.

"A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian," Francis said at the time. The pontiff has been a vocal advocate for immigrants and aiding refugees, particularly those fleeing the violence in Syria, deeming it both a "moral imperative" and "Christian duty" to help.

Trump hit back by calling Francis's comments "disgraceful" for doubting his faith.

Trump's visit to the Vatican has been met with a number of protests. Climate change activists projected the words "Planet Earth First" on the massive dome of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Tuesday night as Trump arrived in Rome.

Protests are also expected on Wednesday in Rome and later in the week when Trump travels to Brussels for a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) meeting and Sicily for a G7 gathering.

The visit to the Vatican is part of Trump's first foreign trip as the U.S. president, and comes after stops in Saudi Arabia, Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

(Source: agencies)

## Kenya: Police officers killed in al-Shabab bomb attack

At least three Kenyan police officers have been killed when their vehicle hit a landmine near the country's eastern border with Somalia, according to a senior official.

The officers were part of a three-vehicle early morning patrol heading to the border town of Liboi when their truck hit an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), North Eastern regional commissioner Mohamud Ali Saleh told the Reuters news agency.

Somalia's al-Shabab armed group claimed responsibility for the attack.

"We destroyed the police car. Some died and others were injured," Abdiyas Abu Musab, al-Shabab's military spokesperson told Reuters news agency.

The Kenyan Red Cross said on Twitter eight officers had been wounded.

Al-Shabab, which is fighting to overthrow the internationally recognized Somali government, has launched a series of deadly incursions in neighboring Kenya, which has contributed troops to the Somalia-based African Union peacekeeping force.

The latest attack came just a day after Joseph Bionnet, inspector general of police, warned that some members of the armed group had sneaked into Kenya and were planning attacks.

"The militants have found it difficult to carry out attacks as they used to because all the entry points along the border have been closed. They have now resorted to planting IEDs at selected roads just to target our security officers," Saleh said.

Repeated attacks in Kenya by al-Shabab have killed hundreds of people in the past few years and hurt the country's vital tourism industry.

(Source: agencies)

## Mindanao: Churchgoers 'taken hostage' amid Marawi siege

A priest and several churchgoers have been taken hostage by gunmen in Marawi city, on the island of Mindanao in southern Philippines, as thousands of residents fled ongoing unrest that prompted President Rodrigo Duterte to declare martial law in the region.

The violence erupted on Tuesday after the army raided the hideout of Isnilon Hapilon, a commander of the Abu Sayyaf group, which has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group. Abu Sayyaf fighters called for reinforcements from an allied group, the Maute, and dozens of gunmen managed to enter Marawi, home to about 200,000 people.

Clashes between security forces and about 100 fighters ensued, leaving at least three members of the security forces dead. The attackers reportedly burned a Catholic church, the city jail, and two schools, as well as occupied the main streets and two bridges leading to the city, located some 816km south of the capital, Manila.



Archbishop Socrates Villegas, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, said fighters had forced their way into the Marawi Cathedral and seized a priest, 10 worshippers and three church workers.

"They have threatened to kill the hostages if the government forces unleashed against them are not recalled," Villegas said in a statement.

"[The priest] was not a combatant. He was not bearing arms. He was a threat to none. His capture and that of his companions violates every norm of civilized conflict," he added.

The husband of a woman being held hostage said he was worried about his

wife, a secretary at the cathedral, because she does not have her medicines for a heart problem.

The man said when he last called his wife, someone else answered her phone, telling him to ask the military not to go near the area.

Officials were not available for comment on the report of hostage-taking.

## ■ I'll be harsh

The emergency declaration of the military rule took immediate effect and will last for 60 days, according to presidential spokesman Ernesto Abella, who made the announcement on Tuesday from Russia, where Duterte was on a scheduled four-day official visit.

## At least 20 refugees drown due to overloaded vessel

At least 20 refugees, including young children, have died after their vessel capsized off Libya's coast, the Italian coastguard says.

About 200 people fell off the overloaded vessel that was just 20 nautical miles (37km) from Libya when the accident occurred.

The crew of the Phoenix aid boat, chartered by the Malta-based NGO Migrant Offshore Aid Station (MOAS), had begun the rescue and were distributing lifejackets

when many of those on deck fell into the water, perhaps knocked off balance by a wave.

With the help of an Italian coastguard ship and several commercial ships, rescuers raced to drag as many people as possible from the water, while a helicopter and military aircraft dropped lifeboats.

The incident was one of 15 rescue operations underway on Wednesday off Libya.

On Tuesday, the coastguard coordinat-

ed the relief of about 1,500 refugees, while their Libyan counterparts intercepted 237 others.

The sea channel between Italy and Libya is the world's busiest and most dangerous sea migration route.

The number of refugees arriving in Italy has soared this year by more than 30 percent in comparison with the same period last year, with 46,000 people arriving so far.

With most departures coming in the

warm summer months, the trend points to around 250,000 people arriving over the course of 2017.

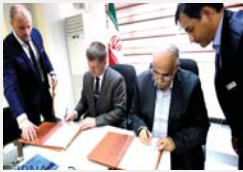
But of every 39 refugees who survive the perilous journey across the Mediterranean, one dies, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

More than 5,000 migrants died crossing the Mediterranean last year, according to the IOM.

(Source: agencies)



NEWS IN BRIEF



Iran, Belarus sign co-op agreement on customs data exchange

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iran and Belarus signed a d e s k cooperation agreement on exchanging customs information in Tehran on Wednesday, IRNA reported.

The agreement seeks electronic exchange of customs documents between the two countries and providing Iranian and Belarusian tradesmen with customs services on the way to ease and accelerate bilateral trade.

The volume of trade between the two countries during the almost past two years stood at about \$40 million, the same report confirmed.



Tehran, Yerevan in accord for boosting co-op in agriculture

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — In a meeting on Tuesday, d e s k Iranian Agriculture Minister Mahmoud Hojjati and Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Armenia Ignati Araqelyan agreed on expansion of co-operation in agriculture sector.

According to IRNA, Iranian Ambassador to Yerevan Kazem Sajadi was also present at the meeting which was held in the Armenian capital.

In the meeting, Araqelyan expressed hope that bilateral relations between Tehran and Yerevan would excel to the good past levels.



Iran nears last steps to finalize deal with Daimler

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Industry Minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh announced on Wednesday that Iran is taking the last steps to finalize its cooperation agreement with the German multinational automotive corporation, Daimler, IRANA reported.

The minister expressed content that Iranian car manufacturers have commenced their cooperation with French automakers, Peugeot and Citroen, and will soon start the job with Renault.

Regarding the signed cooperation and investment agreements with foreign carmakers on manufacturing auto parts, Iran's car output is going through an upward trend, Nematzadeh added.

Moody's downgrades China, warns of fading financial strength as debt mounts

Moody's Investors Service downgraded China's credit ratings on Wednesday for the first time in nearly 30 years, saying it expects the financial strength of the economy will erode in coming years as growth slows and debt continues to rise.

The one-notch downgrade in long-term local and foreign currency issuer ratings, to A1 from Aa3, comes as the Chinese government grapples with the challenges of rising financial risks stemming from years of credit-fueled stimulus.

"The downgrade reflects Moody's expectation that China's financial strength will erode somewhat over the coming years, with economy-wide debt continuing to rise as potential growth slows," the ratings agency said in a statement, changing its outlook for China to stable from negative.

China's Finance Ministry said the downgrade, Moody's first for the country since 1989, overestimated the risks to the economy and was based on "inappropriate methodology".

"Moody's views that China's non-financial debt will rise rapidly and the government would continue to maintain growth via stimulus measures are exaggerating difficulties facing the Chinese economy, and underestimating the Chinese government's ability to deepen supply-side structural reform and appropriately expand aggregate demand," the ministry said in a statement. (For a graphic on China's debt problem click tmsnrt.rs/2qfx3lD)

China's leaders have identified the containment of financial risks and asset bubbles as a top priority this year. All the same, authorities are moving cautiously to avoid knocking economic growth, gingerly raising short-term interest rates while tightening regulatory supervision.

At the same time, Beijing's need to deliver on official growth targets is likely to make the economy increasingly reliant on stimulus, Moody's said.

"While ongoing progress on reforms is likely to transform the economy and financial system over time, it is not likely to prevent a further material rise in economy-wide debt, and the consequent increase in contingent liabilities for the government," it said.

While the downgrade is likely to modestly increase the cost of borrowing for the Chinese government and its state-owned enterprises (SOEs), it remains comfortably within the investment grade rating range.

World stocks inched lower after the move, though Shanghai's main index recouped early losses to end marginally higher.

"After being very much at the front and center of global risk sentiment at the beginning of last year, the Chinese slowdown story has been almost forgotten, with politics throughout Europe and the U.S. taking the limelight," said David Cheetham, chief market analyst at brokerage XTB.

The yuan currency briefly dipped against the U.S. dollar in offshore trading, as did the Australian dollar, often seen as a proxy for China risk.

"It's going to be quite negative in terms of sentiment, particularly at a time when China is looking to de-risk the banking system (and) when there's going to be some potential restructuring of SOEs," said Vishnu Varathan, Asia head of economics and strategy at Mizuho Bank's Treasury division. (Source: Reuters)

Iran signs \$630m deal to produce strategic oil equipment

**ECONOMY** Addressing the signing ceremony, Kardor said that it is the eighth contract made for the domestic manufacturing of 10 groups of products, widely-used by NIOC, since two years ago following the emphasis Mr. Zanganeh has put in this due.

Contracts for seven groups have been previously signed, he added.

This contract is for manufacturing 600 kilometers of CRA pipes and the Spanish group will transfer related technology to Iran in a 50-50 joint venture, the official announced.

"We will construct an industrial complex in Isfahan City (center of Iran) at the first stage and two other ones in Kish Island (in the Persian Gulf) after that as the island is close to South Pars region (an energy hub in southwest of Iran)", he added.

Domestic manufacturing of CRA pipes will go from zero to one hundred in the country, and Iran will be the first manufacturer of this product in the region, the NIOC managing director further highlighted.

The project will create direct and indirect jobs for 750 persons, Kardor informed.

CRA contract, main one for domestic manufacturing

Addressing the same ceremony, Iran's oil minister said that this contract makes manufacturing of this product domestic in the country within a period of less than three years. "It is not just for manufacturing of 600 kilometers of pipes. It will continue and it is not just for Iran but for the whole region", Zanganeh asserted.

"About 2.5 years ago we specified 10 groups of products for domestic manufacturing; fortunately contracts have been signed for most of them and the contract for CRA is the most important one", the minister underlined.

TUBACEX's biggest tender

Antón Azlor, for his part, said: "TUBACEX is a compa-



Mobarakeh Steel Company Managing Director Mohammad Jan-Nesari (R), NIOC Director Ramin Qalambar Dezfouli (C), and TUBACEX Deputy Managing Director Antón Azlor (L) signing contract in presence of Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh (standing L) and NIOC Managing Director Ali Kardor (standing R)

ny for long-term investment, so our plan [for this contract] is not just transfer of technology; we want to be part of it and make investment in this need that Iran has."

"So, we are not here just to talk about the 600 kilometers, but we are here for what Iran needs and to conduct research on it", he added.

He also said: "We are a global company and we are in Iran as there is big potential not only in this field but in a lot of things and you have big resources."

"In this moment, we are today attending long dis-

cussions with very professionals on one that I think is the biggest tender we have had in this industry for a lot of years and is very professionally managed", the Spanish director concluded.

TUBACEX is the largest worldwide producer of seamless tubes in stainless steel and high-nickel alloys. It is a leading multinational group, with industrial facilities in Spain, Austria, the United States, Italy, India and Thailand, a global distribution network (TSS) and a worldwide sales presence.

Iran tops OPEC nations in Q1 oil revenue increase

**ENERGY** **TEHRAN** — Iran's oil revenue has increased about \$15 million per day (m/pd) in the first quarter of 2017 compared to the last quarter of 2016, Bloomberg reported citing International Energy Agency (IEA).

IEA has recently released data for changes in oil revenue from Q4 2016 to Q1 2017, according which Iran has topped OPEC nations like Saudi Arabia and Iraq in terms of positive changes in oil revenues.

According to Bloomberg, although at

first glance it seems that OPEC's cuts haven't worked, global oil inventories remain well above normal levels. "But the policy's made a difference where it really counts: juicing the coffers of finance ministries from Baghdad to Caracas."

The International Energy Agency, which advises rich countries on oil policy, said earlier this month that OPEC has a "financial motivation to extend the supply cuts." The IEA calculates the cartel earned almost \$75 million extra a day in the first

quarter of this year than in the last quarter of 2016, despite collectively cutting output to 31.9 million barrels a day from 33.3 million. Consultant IHS Markit said Russia, the largest country outside the cartel to join the cuts, also earned more.

OPEC and its allies believe they can continue earning more while pumping less. Even those countries that question whether an extension can re-balance the market and bring down elevated stockpiles don't oppose an extension. While oil

ministers have a sense of defeat in their battle against high inventories, finance ministers are happy, one OPEC delegate said.

OPEC members will meet today 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.

Trump seeks to slash \$3.6 trillion of spending in austere budget

U.S. President Donald Trump asked lawmakers on Tuesday to cut \$3.6 trillion in government spending over the next decade, taking aim at healthcare and food assistance programs for the poor in an austere budget that also boosts the military.

Republicans who control the U.S. Congress - and the federal purse strings - will decide whether to make politically sensitive cuts, and the proposal is unlikely to be approved in its current form.

Although it is not expected to survive on Capitol Hill, the proposal puts numbers on Trump's vision of a government

that radically cuts assistance to lower-income Americans.

The biggest savings would come from cuts to the Medicaid healthcare program for the poor, which are embedded in a Republican healthcare bill passed by the House of Representatives.

Trump wants lawmakers to cut at least \$610 billion from Medicaid and more than \$192 billion from food stamps over a decade. He seeks to balance the budget within 10 years.

The Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a nonpartisan policy organization, said the plan relied on gimmicks,

unrealistic cuts and "rosy assumptions" of economic growth that would reach 3 percent annually by the end of Trump's first term.

The Congressional Budget Office projects the economy to grow at an annual pace of 1.9 percent over that period.

The White House said its proposed tax cuts would help fuel higher growth and pay for themselves by generating an additional \$2 trillion in revenue over 10 years.

Lawrence Summers, a former economic adviser to Democratic President Barack Obama, said the Trump adminis-

tration was double-counting that money by saying it would help close budget deficits while also offsetting the revenue lost by cutting tax rates.

"It appears to be the most egregious accounting error in a presidential budget in the nearly 40 years I have been tracking them," Summers wrote in the Washington Post.

Mick Mulvaney, Trump's budget office director, said his office made other assumptions that were probably too conservative. "We stand by the numbers," he said.

(Source: Reuters)

'War on sugar' takes toll; Asia, Brazil struggle to make up shortfall



"There is an increasing understanding for the need to control intake of free sugars, in public policy and in culture in general," said Francesco Branca, director of nutrition for health and development at the World Health Organization.

"With obesity and diabetes very quickly spreading, they are trying to do something about it early on."

The slowing pace of growth globally is adding to worries the world sugar market is headed for a surplus in 2017/18, after two consecutive deficits.

It could also curtail ambitious plans by the European Union to sharply boost output in 2017/18 in an effort to again become a net exporter, after it ends subsidies and caps on exports in October.

India, China and Brazil

High-income countries like Norway and Canada are already seeing a decline in sugar consumption, Euro-monitor figures shows. Now the appetites of developing markets, whose rapid population growth was expected to drive future growth, also appear to be waning.

Sugar sales in India, the world's biggest consumer, are set to fall by roughly 1 million tonnes this season, the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA) estimates, due to higher domestic prices and a cash crunch that followed last year's demonetisation of high-value bank notes.

The government's decision earlier this year to abolish

a sugar subsidy for poor families also dented consumption.

ISMA expects consumption to rebound next year as production in the country normalizes and domestic prices come down, but analysts say long-term growth remains uncertain as the government mulls higher taxes and stricter labeling on sugary foods.

"If India also jumps on the bandwagon with such a levy, as the world's biggest sugar consumer, this could be felt in global growth," said Stefan Uhlenbrock, senior analyst at F.O. Licht.

Sugar demand also seems to be stagnating in China, the second biggest consuming country, as cheaper sweeteners like high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) grow in popularity.

Chinese beet and cane farmers rely on state support to offset steep production costs. Imports, meanwhile, are subject to hefty duties meant to protect the industry, with an additional tariff introduced just this week.

As a result, domestic sugar prices are around double those on the world market. This, coupled with an abundance of cheap corn, has made HFCS highly competitive.

The USDA last month highlighted the decline in Chinese sugar demand when it slashed its estimates for consumption in that country for 2015/16 and 2016/17 by roughly 10 percent and signaled more modest growth than previously expected.

"People in China are still eating ice cream and drinking soft drinks," said John Stansfield, analyst at commodity trader Group Sopex.

"It's just the fact that these products are now increasingly made from corn syrup rather than sugar."

Brazil, the world's third largest consuming nation, has also seen demand growth slow over the last three years as an enduring recession slashed the incomes of many Brazilians. Consumption was growing at roughly 2-3 percent over the previous decade.

(Source: New York Times)



# OPEC failure could lead to downgrade of entire oil sector

If the OPEC meeting in Vienna fails to shock oil prices upwards, Deutsche Bank analysts would "feel inclined to downgrade" the investment attractiveness of oil sector stocks to Neutral, according to a new note by Mark Roberts, the German bank's chief of research and strategy for alternatives.

"OPEC might agree to expand the cut, which would be taken positively by investors," Roberts said. "Energy equities have not been able to decouple from volatile oil-price movements. The market does not give credit to the fundamental improvements of the companies' cash flows."

Despite traditionally high dividends for oil sector investors, current markets require shareholders to review corporate financial records to determine if a company has the resources for payouts, according to Marco Scherer of Deutsche Asset Management.

"Many integrated oil companies are making progress on this front, but only a fraction has achieved satisfactory dividend coverage just yet," he said. "We are even more selective when it comes to U.S. E&P companies, as they are more prone to oil-price changes and changing financing conditions."

Superbly productive oilfields are a major pre-requisite for investments in the upstream U.S. oil sector, Scheder added. The consolidation of oilfield services providers has led to the emergence of several well-diversified multinational OFS companies that will be more resilient to oil price changes in the future, he noted.



As drilling activity dried up following the oil price crash of 2014, OFS companies had no choice but to slash their prices, charging much less for rigs, equipment, and services.

Now, drilling in the U.S. is coming back quickly, shift-

ing leverage back in favor of OFS companies, who are starting to hike their prices. According to S&P Global Platts, services costs are expected to rise by about 20 percent on average this year.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Shell to sell C\$4.1 billion stake in Canadian Natural: sources



Royal Dutch Shell Plc has decided to offload a roughly C\$4.1 billion (2.3 billion pounds) stake in Canadian Natural Resources Ltd (CNRL) that it acquired as part of a deal to retreat from Canada's oil sands earlier this year, people familiar with the situation told Reuters.

The energy company has been interviewing investment banks to hire a financial adviser for the share sale, four people said in the past week, declining to be named as the discussions are confidential.

The deal could be one of the biggest-ever equity sales in Canada. The largest Canadian equity deal so far was TransCanada Corp's C\$4.4 billion offering last year.

Shell and Canadian Natural declined to comment. Canadian Natural shares fell about 1 percent after the Reuters report and were trading down 2.1 percent at C\$41.12 on Tuesday afternoon.

In March, Shell agreed to sell most

of its Canadian oil sands assets for \$8.5 billion, in a major strategic pullback from the capital-intensive business. As part of the transaction, Shell acquired about 98 million Canadian Natural shares, or about 8.8 percent of CNRL's outstanding shares, which are currently valued at about C\$4.1 billion.

In a deal that saw another global player pulling back from the oil sands, ConocoPhillips in March agreed to sell some of its Canadian assets to Cenovus Energy Inc. As part of the transaction, ConocoPhillips acquired 208 million Cenovus shares, and Conoco now owns 16.9 percent of issued and outstanding Cenovus common shares.

Shell plans to use the proceeds to help pay down the debt it assumed with the acquisition of British rival BG Group, the people said. The company is weighing whether to sell its Canadian Natural stake in one block or phase it out, the people said.

(Source: Reuters)

## Iran discovers new gas field in Persian Gulf



Iran says it has discovered a new gas field close to the giant South Pars natural gas field which it jointly shares with Qatar.

Local media have quoted an unnamed official at the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) as saying that the field – named Sepand – holds 1.5 trillion cubic feet of sweet gas of which about 792 billion cubic feet is recoverable.

The official added that it was still not clear if Sepand was shared with Qatar but emphasized that it was independent from South Pars.

"One of the most important features of the new field is that it has a wide horizontal natural gas structure," Iran's Energy News website quoted the NIOC official as saying.

The official further added that the drilling of an exploration well would soon start in the field.

South Pars gas field – which is located in the Persian Gulf – hosts the bulk

of Iran's natural gas reserves. The joint field – called the North Dome field in Qatar – is the world's biggest largest gas field with estimated reserves of 51 trillion cubic meters of natural gas and some 50 billion barrels of condensate. Experts believe that the field has more recoverable reserves than all other fields combined.

Iran has so far developed 12 phases in the field – phases 1, 2&3, 4&5, 6-8, 9&10, 15&16. The remaining phases are 11, 12, 13, 14 and 22-24.

Experts believe that additional development phases in South Pars and in other fields would give Iran more room for exports in the future.

Nevertheless, they say that the country's motivation for producing more gas at the current juncture would be to satisfy domestic needs and also use the gas for re-injections into ageing oil fields to boost crude production.

(Source: Press Tv)

## Renewable energy powers jobs for almost 10 million people

Renewable energy employed 9.8 million people last year, up 1.1 percent from 2015, led by solar photovoltaic at 3.09 million jobs, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency's annual report on the industry.

Growth has slowed in the past two years while solar photovoltaic and wind categories more than doubled

their number of jobs since 2012, the first year assessed, Irena said in the report.

Here are some of the highlights from the report:

Global renewables employment has climbed every year since 2012, with solar photovoltaic becoming the largest segment by total jobs in 2016.

Solar photovoltaic employed 3.09 million people, followed by liquid bio-fuels at 1.7 million. The wind industry had 1.2 million employees, a 7 percent increase from 2015.

Employment in renewables, excluding large hydro power, increased 2.8 percent last year to 8.3 million people, with China, Brazil, the U.S., India, Japan

and Germany the leading job markets. Asian countries accounted for 62 percent of total jobs in 2016 compared with 50 percent in 2013.

Renewables jobs could total 24 million in 2030, as more countries take steps to combat climate change, Irena said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## Oil prices rise as market awaits extended output cut

Oil prices rose on Wednesday, supported by growing confidence that OPEC and other big producers would agree to keep output restricted for the rest of 2017 and into the first quarter of next year.

Benchmark Brent crude oil was up 25 cents a barrel at \$54.40 by 0940 GMT (5:40 a.m. ET). U.S. light crude oil was up 20 cents at \$51.67.

Both crude benchmarks have gained more than 10 percent from their May lows below \$50 a barrel, rebounding on a consensus that the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and other producers will maintain strict limits on oil production in an attempt to drain a global oversupply.

OPEC has promised to cut supplies by 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) until June and is expected on Thursday to decide to prolong that cut to March 2018.

"With oil stocks nowhere near OPEC's self-assigned objective of the recent five-year average level, an extension of cuts seems all but a forgone conclusion," said Harry Tchilinguirian, strategist at BNP Paribas.

Sushant Gupta, research director at Wood Mac-



kenzie, told Reuters Global Markets Forum that output cuts were likely to be extended until the first quarter of 2018, and that adherence by OPEC members to the output cuts would probably remain high.

"If the cuts are rolled over until Q1 2018, we expect oil prices to be around \$57 a barrel for 2018,"

Gupta said.

BMI Research said the OPEC-led cuts would only result in a balanced market this year, but that from 2018 onward markets would return to oversupply, albeit at a lower level than 2013-2016.

"Over a five-plus-year horizon, oil price growth is in a structural slowdown, pressured by persistent supply gains," BMI Research said in a note to clients.

One reason why markets have not tightened more has been U.S. oil production, which has soared by 10 percent since mid-2016 to 9.3 million bpd.

Benefiting from a market known as contango, in which future oil prices are higher than those for immediate delivery, U.S. drillers have sold future production in order to finance expanding output.

To stop this, analysts at Goldman Sachs have suggested the oil futures price curve should be pushed into backwardation, where forward prices are below current ones.

But while backwardation might be able to reduce inventories, it is less clear how OPEC could alter the forward price curve, or if that would stop production rising.

(Source: Reuters)

## Nigeria could hit 2.2 million bpd oil output by end of June: Oando

The worst disruptions in Nigeria's oil-producing Delta region are over, and production could reach 2.2 million barrels per day (bpd) by the end of June, the chief executive of Nigeria's Oando said on Wednesday.

Oando chief Pade Durotoye told the Africa Independents Forum in London the long-closed Forcados oilfield could be back to capacity by the end of June, enabling a return to nearly full production from what is typically Africa's largest oil exporter.

"We think that the worst is behind us," Durotoye said. "Before the end of June, we will have Forcados back, which would take us comfortably back to 2.2 million bpd."

Attacks in the Niger Delta had pushed production to just over 1 million bpd at certain points last year, the lowest in decades, but attacks have abated since the start of the year.

The first Forcados cargo from the main Trans Forcados export line loaded last week, though operator Royal Dutch Shell has said force majeure remains in place.

Durotoye said "bold actions" by the government to address security in the area had helped, and that if it continued, Oando could boost output from 50,000 bpd to 150,000 bpd within 12-18 months.

Still, Durotoye said concerns over more violence was leading investors to view the region with a lot of caution.

"Capital is still going to be constrained," he said.

Durotoye also said Nigeria's long-delayed Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB), which governs everything from the operations of state oil company NNPC to fiscal terms on oil exploration projects, was moving at a more assured pace.

"We expect approval sometime in the second half of the year," Durotoye said.

Uncertainty over fiscal terms has held back upstream investment, especially in capital-intensive deepwater offshore. Durotoye said that PIB approval would "put some (investor) concerns to bed."

(Source: Reuters)

## OPEC close to agreement to extend oil-supply cuts for 9 months

OPEC and its allies were close to an agreement to extend their oil-production cuts for another nine months as they seek to prop up prices and revive their economies.

While ministers gathering in Vienna still planned to discuss other options -- a shorter deal for six months or curbs lasting for the whole of next year -- consensus was building around an agreement that runs through March 2018.

"At this moment, I think we have an agreement do nine months," Algeria's Energy Minister Nouredine Boutarfa told reporters in Vienna on Tuesday. "But tomorrow perhaps we'll have another proposition."

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. The most influential members of the deal, including Russia and Saudi Arabia and Iraq, have publicly backed supply curbs lasting until March 2018 to finally clear the glut.

"Not everybody" is on board yet for nine months, Kuwait's Oil Minister Issam Almarzoq told reporters Tuesday, before leaving his country for Vienna. Kazakhstan and Iran are among the nations not to have expressed a view in public.

A committee of six OPEC and non-OPEC nations charged with ensuring successful implementation of the cuts will meet on Wednesday morning to study the merits of a 12-month extension, in addition to the six and nine-month durations already discussed publicly, according to delegates familiar with the matter. No participant in the agreement has publicly backed another 12 months.

Representatives of Kuwait and Oman said the group isn't considering deeper cuts.

If OPEC maintains its April crude production of 31.8 million barrels a day throughout the rest of the year, the decline in oil stockpiles will accelerate, according to the International Energy Agency.

The deal "has been working and I know it will work even better for the second half," United Arab Emirates Energy Minister Suhail Al Mazrouei said on Tuesday on the sidelines of a conference in Abu Dhabi. "We need to give the market some more time."

(Source: Bloomberg)

## U.S. 'gas apocalypse' looms amid power plant construction boom

The glut of cheap natural gas from a single, gigantic, shale basin that straddles the Northeast, mid-Atlantic and Midwest has sparked a massive construction boom of power plants. Dozens have been built in the past two years alone.

There's just one problem: There isn't nearly enough electricity demand to support all the new capacity. And as wholesale electricity prices plunge, industry experts are anticipating a fire sale of scores of plants in the region. Many, in fact, have already been sold along the PJM Interconnection LLC grid, the U.S.'s largest, encompassing 13 states from Virginia to Illinois.

"Everything in fossil fuels is for sale," said Ted Brandt, chief executive officer at Marathon Capital LLC, a mergers-and-acquisitions adviser in Chicago. "People are bleeding."

Drawing from abundant, cheap and nearby natural gas in the country's most prolific shale field, the new plants are adding a gigantic amount of power generation -- more than 20 gigawatts --- to a region that arguably has more than it needs. The new gas-fired plants are also coming online at a time of market turmoil, buffeted by Obama administration efficiency policies that have helped tamp down demand and by the Trump administration's determination to keep old coal-fired plants going.

(Source: Bloomberg)



## Brazilian corruption: The public deserve a voice

The explosive allegations faced by Brazil's president Michel Temer are just the latest manifestation of a sprawling scandal. A quick political fix will not solve the problems.

"I will not resign. Oust me if you want," Michel Temer said this week. Brazilians would like to take the president at his word. After three years of political turmoil and public disgust, the "Carwash" investigation into corruption that involved some of the country's biggest companies and a frightening number of its politicians was under growing pressure; some feared it was being neutered. Then came explosive allegations that a secret tape captured Temer discussing hush-money. His ratings had fallen to single figures even before these latest claims. Now Brazil's top prosecutor has formally accused him of conspiring to silence witnesses and obstruct a corruption investigation; and he has dropped a legal bid to have the case suspended.



Temer denies wrongdoing, insisting the recording has been doctored, and says stepping down would be an admission of guilt. Other considerations are no doubt weighing on his mind – notably that he would lose legal protections. As president, impeachment would require approval by Congress to proceed, and he cannot be charged over allegations that precede his time in office. Support within his Brazilian Democratic Party and coalition is crumbling. Allies can see the attractions of letting him take the flak for weakening the Carwash inquiry, and handle a case beginning next month in the supreme electoral court, which could annul the 2014 election. But even so, Brazil could soon have its third leader in under a year.

Brazilian politics have been thoroughly discredited. The revelations that have emerged since Dilma Rousseff was forced out last year have highlighted the hypocrisy of those who brought her down. Though Rousseff was impeached on separate charges, and appeared relatively clean herself, the anger against her was fuelled by revelations about her Workers' Party. In March, the chief orchestrator of her impeachment, Eduardo Cunha, was jailed for more than 15 years in relation to a \$1.6m bribe. The tape of Temer, who was her deputy but was believed to be plotting against her in the later stages of the scandal, allegedly captures him approving cash payments to Cunha.

But many legislators have secrets of their own to hide, and some are already complaining that the investigation has been bad for Brazil's reputation and economy. There is a danger they will try to fudge their way out, perhaps by persuading the president to quit. But the problem is the scandal, not the inquiry, and Brazil will do much worse if it is suppressed. Nor should legislators choose Temer's replacement, for it was they who picked him, and polls show overwhelming demand for an election. An already disenchanted public may otherwise sink into apathy or in the longer run, turn to an authoritarian, far-right figure such as Jair Bolsonaro playing the anti-politics card. Brazil's politicians got the country into this mess: they should let the 143 million voters have a say in how to get out of it.

(Source: The Guardian)

## The UN's complicity in a Congo murder

The Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire, has endured a remarkably cruel history, with successive presidents, rebels and foreign powers endlessly pillaging its rich resources and leaving behind a trail of massacres, rapes and devastation. The military has contributed its share of atrocities, and the current president, Joseph Kabila, has compounded the chaos by refusing to step down or hold elections since his term ended last December.

So when a pair of United Nations contract investigators were kidnapped and murdered in March, it was fair to ask how they came to ride into a remote and violence-torn area on motorbike taxis with only an interpreter at their side and without much training, safety equipment or even health insurance. An article by Times reporters Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura and Somini Sengupta on Saturday details an astoundingly irresponsible approach by the United Nations to an obviously dangerous and hugely important task.

Zaida Catalán, a 36-year-old Swedish-Chilean, and Michael Sharp, a 34-year-old American, are only two of millions of people who have lost their lives to Congo's endemic strife, all victims of senseless greed in a rich and fertile land that could be among the most prosperous on the African continent. The tragedy is that Ms. Catalán and Mr. Sharp represented the organization that is meant to combat lawlessness and thus give the Congolese hope for the future. Their deaths did the opposite.

Neither of the investigators appears to have been prepared for the dangerous world they were assigned to investigate. Ms. Catalán had worked for the Swedish Green Party and as an expert on sexual violence for a European Union mission in Congo. Mr. Sharp had come to Congo in 2012 on a Mennonite humanitarian mission, and signed on with the United Nations in 2015. They were assigned to investigate a massacre in the remote Kasai region of central Congo, where the government has been trying to put down yet another tribal uprising. They had neither adequate training, nor safety equipment, nor even health insurance. Their bodies were discovered in a shallow grave, Ms. Catalán's decapitated.

Whether the United Nations really has the tools to intervene usefully in a country as chaotic as Congo is debatable. A peace-keeping force has been in Congo since 1999, but it has little to show for the billions it has cost. What is not debatable is that when the United Nations sends people into harm's way, it must ensure that they are properly trained and equipped.

(Source: The NYT)

# ISIL, al-Qaeda, Boko Haram: Why is terrorism so hard to beat?

By Gary Lafree

A January 2017 Pew survey showed that Americans rate terrorism as the top priority for the Trump administration and Congress. They put the issue ahead of the economy, education, jobs and healthcare costs.

For the past 12 years as Director of the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, I have worked with colleagues to improve understanding of terrorism by studying its causes and consequences. One of our largest and most extensive projects has involved compiling all terrorist attacks worldwide since 1970 into the Global Terrorism Database (GTD).

Based on this work, six issues stand out to me as major challenges for developing effective policy on countering terrorism.

In many recent years, the United States has experienced fewer than 25 terrorist attacks. At the same time, there are about 13,000 homicides and 360,000 robberies every year in the United States. In recent years, worldwide traffic accidents have claimed the lives of roughly 100 times more people than those killed by terrorists.

Even important groups like al-Qaeda have committed relatively few attacks. The GTD shows al-Qaeda has been responsible for only 59 attacks over its entire lifespan and only five attacks since 2008. The fact that terrorism is so rare means that we have limited ability to do statistical analysis and reach general policy conclusions.

Over half of all terrorist attacks in the GTD since 1970 included no fatalities. The GTD identifies only 17 attacks from around the world that claimed more than 300 lives. Of the more than 156,000 terrorist attacks in the GTD, the coordinated attack of 9/11, which took the lives of nearly 3,000 people, is still the deadliest attack in modern history.

Apart from 9/11 no attack on the U.S. homeland in half a century has claimed the lives of more than 200 people. The closest was the 168 victims of the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, orchestrated by Timothy McVeigh.

Because a few deadly but highly unusual attacks attract so much concern, terrorism policies tend to be based on extremely rare and unusual events rather than the thousands of more common but less spectacular ones. In my opinion, policies based on extreme outliers can have serious and perhaps unforeseen implications.

A growing number of terrorist attacks — especially in the United States and Western Europe — are being foiled as plots. This is obviously good news in terms of protecting citizens and saving lives. Another consequence is that policymakers have diminishing information on the actual seriousness of threats because the attackers are being stopped before their plans are actualized.

Terrorist organizations are extremely diverse which make generalizations even more difficult.

### ■ No organized links

When most people think of terrorist groups an image comes to mind of some well-organized and highly-publicized



## Terrorism policies tend to be based on extremely rare and unusual events rather than the thousands of more common but less spectacular ones.

entity like the Islamic State or al-Shabaab. In reality, it's hard to generalize about terrorist groups. On one extreme are individuals who have no recognized links to a terrorist organization — so-called lone wolves. On the other end of the spectrum are highly organized groups that persist over time, have a well-defined chain of command and a stable leadership. In between are loosely connected small groups as well as shadowy networks — for example, Neo Nazis or radicalists. All of these disparate entities are typically in a state of flux. Change is constant; stability rare.

Of the more than 2,300 unique terrorist organizations identified in the GTD since 1970, nearly 70 percent had a lifespan of less than a year. Terrorist organizations are a bit like business startups: Most are gone within the first year of operation. It is one thing to respond to a well-organized group, with clear leadership, a chain of command and an identifiable membership. But responses are much more complicated when there is no central organization, no identifiable leader or only an ill-defined group of individuals with varying connections and commitments undergoing constant change.

Attributing responsibility for a terrorist attack is often ambiguous or impossible.

Data from the GTD shows that

no terrorist group can be assigned responsibility in nearly 60 percent of the thousands of attacks that occurred worldwide since 1970. Attacks may be launched by loners who are working more or less independently of any specific group. In other cases, more than one group may claim the attack. Or a group may claim responsibility when in reality it had no connection to the attack, or a group may claim incorrectly that another group was accountable.

Analysts may simply never have enough information to reach a conclusion or to distinguish between competing accounts. Following a terrorist attack, governments are under enormous pressure to identify the guilty party and offer a swift response. But how can officials punish wrongdoers and deter others from engaging in terrorist attacks when they never know for sure who the culprit is?

### ■ Terrorism still in its infancy

Finally, while researchers are making great progress in developing a framework for the scientific study of terrorism, the study of counterterrorism is still in its infancy. While it is difficult to get an accurate grasp of terrorist threats, it is even harder to evaluate the strategies used by governments to counter terrorism. Governments are extremely secretive about their counter terrorism

policies and strategies. And certainly there is nothing close to a worldwide database on counterterrorism strategies and their effectiveness.

The terrorist threat in the United States is episodic, sporadic and inconsistent. Too often policies react to fear rather than real threat estimates. For example, there is no empirical evidence to support President Trump's recent decision to ban citizens of six majority-Muslim countries from travel to the U.S. in the name of preventing terrorist infiltration.

Trump's executive order of March 2017 would halt travel from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. But no one from these countries has been involved in a fatal terrorist attack in the United States since 9/11.

What's more, these policies are hard to undo. For example, the USA Patriot Act, passed in the chaotic aftermath of 9/11, was designed to "deter and punish terrorist acts," but was quickly expanded by law enforcement officials to prosecute drug offenses and other non-terrorist crimes. Such an expansion raises concerns about privacy and the power of the federal government.

Successful policy requires collecting the best information possible, honestly accessing it and avoiding over reaction.

(Source: Newsweek)

## Get ready for the 'impeachment election'

President Richard Nixon was heading for a big reelection victory in November that would confound his critics. He had just returned from a path breaking visit to China and had big, transformative ideas for foreign policy. Yet he felt hounded by his enemies and a media elite that opposed him at every turn.

And there was that pesky FBI investigation into a "third-rate burglary" at the Watergate office building, about which the media were asking meddlesome questions. Nixon wrote in his diary after a later, revelatory Post scoop about Watergate that this was "the last burp of the Eastern Establishment," recalls Evan Thomas in a recent book. Nixon was trying to do the people's business, but he felt angry, isolated and embattled.

Then Nixon did something very stupid. On June 23, 1972, he instructed his chief of staff to contact the CIA and have its deputy director, Vernon Walters, tell the FBI to back off on its investigation: "They should call the FBI in and say that we wish for the country, don't go any further into this case, period." The tape recording of this conversation became known as "the smoking gun."

President Trump, it's said, doesn't read presidential biographies. That's a shame. For he appears to be making the same mistakes that destroyed Nixon's presidency. That's the thrust of The Post's big story Monday night reporting that Trump asked U.S. intelligence chiefs to challenge the FBI's investigation of possible links between his campaign and Russia.

"History does not repeat, but it does instruct," writes Timothy Snyder in his new book, "On Tyranny." Some people, apparently including Trump, just don't learn.

### ■ Unlikely foreign policy

Give Trump credit for the unlikely foreign policy success he's had: His trip to Saudi Arabia embraced a Muslim monarchy that is trying to break with its intolerant past. He persuaded the Saudis and other Persian Gulf states to ban financing of terrorists, even by private citizens. That's a win for good policy. Earlier, he cajoled China into playing a stronger role in dealing with North Korea. Yes, these are "flip-flops" — reversing his earlier, inflammatory anti-Muslim and anti-Beijing rhetoric — but so what? They're smart moves.

Yet no foreign or domestic success will stop the slow unfolding of the investigation that is now underway. That's the importance of last week's appointment of the impeccable Robert S. Mueller III as special counsel to investigate the Russia matter. The process can't be derailed now. If the president or his associates are guilty of wrongdoing, Mueller will find out. If they're innocent, he'll discover that, too. From what we know about the former FBI director, he won't tolerate leaks about his investigation.

For all Mueller's probity, this investigation has an inescapable political destination. Mueller must refer any evidence of wrongdoing by Trump himself to the House of Representatives as evidence of possible "high crimes and misdemeanors" that might warrant impeachment. Would this GOP-dominated House begin

impeachment proceedings, even on strong evidence of obstruction? Right now, you'd have to guess no.

The real collision point ahead is the 2018 midterm election. This will be the "impeachment election," and it may be as bitterly contested as any in decades. Trump seems unlikely to take Nixon's course of resigning before the House votes on impeachment. He'll fight all the way — a combative president trying to save his mandate from what he has described as a "witch hunt." This appeal would resonate with a populist base that already feels disenfranchised by jurists and journalists.

As Mueller proceeds with his investigation, the world of Washington needs to be level-headed. The politics of polarization is only beginning. Trump's war on the media and its sources will get nastier. How do citizens hold Trump accountable without the process seeming like vengeful payback from media and political elites? Graham Allison, director of Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, notes that elite opinion may already regard Trump as "unfit for office," but he cautions: "When I contrast this with what many fellow citizens believe about elites, yikes."

Under our Constitution, the House and Senate are prosecutor and jury, respectively, for serious presidential misconduct. But this legal process probably won't be triggered without a poisonously divisive election. If recent history teaches anything, it's unfortunately this harsh fact: In the battle for America's soul, Trump could win.

(Source: The Washington Post)



# International campaign is criminalizing criticism of Israel as ‘antisemitism’

By Alison Weir

For two decades, some Israeli officials and Israel partisans have worked to embed a new, Israel-focused definition of anti-semitism 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.”

## ■ Spreading the New Definition Under Cover of “Anti-Racism” Movement

UK universities have seen repression of pro-Palestinian activism on an epic scale. In 2007 the UK's National Union of Students (NUS) adopted the new antisemitism definition at its national conference, when pro-Israel students introduced a motion entitled “AntiRacism: Challenging Racism on Campus and in Our Communities.” Some student unions at various UK universities then did the same.

This was a particularly ironic name for a pro-Israel motion, given that many people around the world consider Israel's founding ideology, political Zionism, racist. In fact, in 1975 the UN General Assembly specifically passed a resolution that “Zionism is a form of racism.”

(The resolution was revoked in 1991, but not because the world body had changed its mind. In that year President Bush was pushing for the Madrid Peace Conference, which he hoped would end the “Arab-Israeli” conflict. When Israel said it would only participate in the conference if the UN revoked the resolution, the U.S. pressured member states to do just this.)

Through the years numerous entities have affirmed that Zionism is a type of racism, including conferences in South Africa and a recent UN commission which reported that Israel was practicing apartheid. (This report was then removed by the UN Director General, after Israeli and U.S. pressure.)

The UK student actions exemplify a trend that has pervaded this movement since the beginning: Efforts to shut down pro-Palestinian activism, curtail free speech and police thought both online and off are repeatedly packaged as “anti-racism” and sometimes “anti-fascism.”

## ■ Campaign for New Definition Overcomes Hiccups

Taken together, these steps towards re-defining “antisemitism” to include criticism of Israel, and then ban it, are effectively (and increasingly rapidly) producing significant results in terms of actual regulation and even law enforcement. Nevertheless, there apparently has been some resistance to the change.

In 2013, the successor organization to the European Monitoring Centre (called the European Fundamental Rights Agency) quietly dropped the working definition from its website. Without any public announcement, the definition was simply no longer on its site. When questioned about this, the agency's director simply said that the organization had “no mandate to develop its own definitions.”

Proponents of the definition were outraged. Shimon Samuels of the Simon Wiesenthal Center complained that the agency's “disowning of its own definition is astounding” and that “those who fight antisemitism have lost an important weapon.” (The Wiesenthal Center is a global organization that declares it “stands with Israel” with offices in Los Angeles, New York, Toronto, Miami, Chicago, Paris, Buenos Aires, and Jerusalem.)

However, the fact that the Monitoring Centre had never officially adopted the definition, and that its successor organization now had apparently discarded it, seems to have been ignored by those who had adopted it.

The U.S. State Department continues to use the discarded version. The only difference is that the PDF that gave its Monitoring Centre origins has been removed from State's website.

The following year, the World Jewish Congress, which represents Jewish umbrella bodies in 100 countries, called on “all countries to adopt a binding definition of anti-Semitic crimes based on the Working Definition of Anti-Semitism developed by the former European Union Monitoring Commission (EUMC) and used in a number of states’ law enforcement agencies.”

## ■ IHRA Picks Up the Ball

Other groups stepped into the vacuum and kept the definition alive. In 2016 The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) adopted the definition.

The IHRA consists of 31 Member Countries, ten Observer Countries, and



## Efforts to shut down pro-Palestinian activism, curtail free speech and police thought both online and off are repeatedly packaged as “anti-racism” and sometimes “anti-fascism.”

seven international partner organizations. Its chair announced that the IHRA's goal was to inspire “other international fora” to also adopt “a legally binding working definition.” It's working: Britain and Austria almost immediately followed suit.

The U.S. Brandeis Center applauded the move, saying that “because the IHRA has adopted it, the definition has now officially been given the international status that it was previously lacking.”

The Brandeis Center reported that this was the “culmination of a process initiated by Mark Weitzman, Director of Government Affairs at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, two years ago, with help from others including Ira Forman and Nicholas Dean of the U.S. Department of State.”

Forman was the State Department Special Anti-Semitism Envoy under Obama, reportedly led Obama's reelection campaign in the Jewish community, had worked for Bill Clinton, and had served as Political Director and Legislative Liaison for AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobbying organization. Nicholas Dean had been the State Department Special Envoy for the Holocaust.

The New York Jewish Week reported that Forman and Dean “played a pivotal role in diplomatic efforts that led to the recent adoption by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance of a Working Definition of Anti-Semitism.”

“This is the first-ever formal international definition of anti-Semitism, and a potentially crucial tool for forcing governments and international agencies to confront and take action against it,” the article continued.

## ■ Pressure On State Department to Continue Extra Monitoring

Among much budget slashing proposed by President Donald Trump were cuts to the State Department that would have ended funding for the antisemitism monitoring office and special envoy (though State Department monitoring of antisemitism would continue even after the cuts).

Various organizations are lobbying to keep the office and envoy, including the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), a U.S. organization whose mission is to “stop the defamation of the Jewish people” but which in effect seems to serve as an American extension of the most right-wing elements of Israel's government. It has a long and infamous history of attacking critics of Israeli policy as “anti-semites” and also uses an Israel-centric definition of antisemitism.

The ADL and allies pointed to a rash of bomb threats against Jewish institutions to strengthen their argument that this exceptional office must be funded. A letter with over a hundred signatories was sent to Trump demanding that he keep the dedicated State Department position, a bipartisan letter in support of retaining that special monitor was circulated in Congress, and over 100 Holocaust memorial groups and scholars urged Trump to keep the office.

As this political fight has raged, the ADL, which has a budget of over \$56 million, sent out press releases to national and local media around the country reporting that antisemitic incidents have soared. The release was repeated almost verbatim in numerous national media and in individual states (as a random example, a Massachusetts headline declared: “Report: Anti-Semitism on the rise in Massachusetts.”)

However, it is impossible to know how many of the antisemitic incidents report-

ed by the ADL were actually related to criticism of Israel, because the ADL didn't release the data on which these results were based.

In addition, the ADL's reported spike includes a spate of threats called in to Jewish organizations, schools and community centers that, thankfully, were hoaxes. The vast majority of threats (reportedly to over 2,000 institutions) apparently were perpetrated by an 18-year-old Jewish Israeli who reportedly suffers from medical and mental problems. (This alleged perpetrator is also accused of trying to extort a US Senator, threatening the children of a US official, and a range of other crimes.)

Another individual, an American in the U.S., apparently perpetrated eight hoax bomb threats in a bizarre campaign to get his former girlfriend in trouble.

A Jewish News Service article says the threats by the Israeli teen made up a significant percentage of the ADL's spike and reported: “The Anti-Defamation League's (ADL) decision to count an Israeli teenager's alleged recent bomb hoaxes as ‘anti-Semitic incidents’ is prompting criticism from some Jewish community officials.”

An ADL official admitted that the audit is an approximation, saying “the science on it is currently being written.” A regional ADL director said that “this is not a poll or



a scientific study,” but rather “an effort to get a sense of ‘what's going on in people's hearts.’”

Regarding hard data, the report said that anti-Semitic assaults across the nation had “decreased by about 36 percent.”

The ADL blames various groups for antisemitism, pointing the finger at people of color with claims that Hispanic Americans and African Americans are “the most anti-Semitic cohorts,” at “white supremacists” and at Trump's election — but not at the Israeli teen responsible for 2,000+ hoax threats that terrorized Jewish institutions, nor at its own distorted, Israel-connected definition.

Claims of increased antisemitism are cited repeatedly in calls for the U.S. government to maintain funding for the special State Department monitoring.

Former Ambassador to the UN Samantha Power and two Democratic congressional representatives, Reps. Nita Lowey of New York and Deutch of Florida, are among those demanding that Trump appoint a new antisemitism monitor and maintain this office at full strength, even while he cuts other federal spending.

Power tweeted: “Anti-semitism is surging in world. Entire Trump admin needs to focus on it & envoy position must be kept.”

Lowey demanded: “The president must show he takes the rise of anti-Semitism seriously by immediately appointing a special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism and fully staffing the Special Envoy's office.”

In a May 2017 speech, World Jewish Congress leader Ronald Lauder said, “Be-

ing anti-Israel is being anti-Semitic.” He announced that the congress “is creating a new communications department, or what you might call Hasborah” to counter this new “antisemitism.”

## ■ Dissenting Views

Many Jewish writers and activists dispute Lauder's contention and oppose the campaign to conflate antisemitism with criticism of Israel. An article in Israel's Ha'aretz newspaper points out that “were anti-Zionism a cover for the abuse of individual Jews, individual Jews would not join anti-Zionist groups. Yet many do. Jewish students are well represented in anti-Zionist groups like Students for Justice in Palestine.”

Rabbi Ahron Cohen of Naturei Kartaie (“Guardians of the Faith”) writes that “Judaism and Zionism are incompatible and mutually exclusive.” Cohen states that antisemitism is “an illogical bigotry. Anti-Zionism, however, is a perfectly logical opposition, based on very sound reasoning, to a particular idea and aim.”

Cohen argues: “According to the Torah and Jewish faith, the present Palestinian Arab claim to rule in Palestine is right and just. The Zionist claim is wrong and criminal. Our attitude to Israel is that the whole concept is flawed and illegitimate. So anti-Zionism is certainly not anti-Semitism.”

## ■ Antisemitism?

Recently Israel's Ha'aretz newspaper published a column entitled, “An Israeli Soldier Shot a Palestinian in Front of Her Kids. Where's Her Compensation?”

The article, by Israeli journalist Gideon Levy, begins: “For three months, Dia Mansur was certain his mother was dead. He was 15 years old when he saw her collapse in the living room of their home, felled by a bullet fired by an Israel Defense Forces soldier that sliced into her face, tearing it apart. He saw his mother lying on the floor, blood oozing from her mouth...”

Levy, citing a report by an Israeli human rights organization, writes that from September 2000 to through February 2017, “Israel killed 4,868 noncombatant Palestinian civilians, more than one-third of them (1,793) were children and adolescents below the age of 18.”

He continued: “Thousands of others, who were also not involved in fighting, have been wounded and permanently incapacitated.”

A few weeks before that report, Ha'aretz published an article that described Israel's month-long imprisonment of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy, one of over 200 Palestinian children taken by Israeli forces in a little over three months. The boy, accused of throwing stones against Israeli soldiers, would have been released from incarceration earlier, except that his impoverished family didn't have enough money to pay the fine.

In the article, Israeli journalist Amira Haas reported that the boy's father said that his son “wasn't how he used to be before he was arrested.” “He used to joke,” the father said, “and he stopped doing that. He talked a lot, and now he is silent.”

Haas wrote that UNICEF had issued a report four years ago that Israel was “extensively and systematically abusing detained Palestinian children and youth.” Today, she reported, “The stories of physical violence, threats, painful plastic handcuffs and naked body searches remain almost identical.”

Sadly, every week there are similar stories.

To the multi-billion dollar network of lobbies advocating for conflating criticism of Israel with antisemitism, those who work to get such information to the American people — whose government gives Israel \$10 million per day — are antisemitic.

Many others of all faiths and ethnicities have a different view.

Sixteen years ago I wrote: “Equating the wrongdoing of Israel with Jewishness is the deepest and most insidious form of anti-Semitism of all.”

It is ironic that it is the Israel lobby that is today doing this equating, and that it has worked to invert the very meaning of antisemitism itself. Rather than denoting only abhorrent behavior, as it once did, today the term is often officially applied to what many consider courageous actions against oppression.

More troubling, still, these lobbying groups are working to outlaw conduct that numerous people (including many Israelis and Jewish Americans) consider morally obligatory.

It seems imperative for Americans who wish for justice and peace in the Middle East, and who oppose Orwellian distortions of language and law, to speak out against this campaign — while we can.

(Source: israelpalestineneews.org)

## Trump in Saudi Arabia: U.S. economic and ‘security’ policies supersede human dignity ‘values’

By Dr Bouthaina Shaaban

“...where are the American values when they deal with countries that do not respect freedom or human dignity and treat their people like slaves.”

“In one of his TV interviews, the Israeli prime minister said addressing Europeans: “Look at the Arabs and learn from them.” He was referring to the “Arabs” who seek relations with his entity, as if they represent all Arabs. In the same interview he added: “I always thought that resolving the issue with the Palestinians is the gateway to enter the Arab World, today I think the opposite is true, a relationship with the Arabs will help us resolve our ‘differences’ with the Palestinians.”

There is no doubt that such arguments were not possible before the “Arab Spring” set the stage through the destruction of Iraq, Libya, and Yemen, and the war on Syria. Therefore, all that has happened, was intended to liquidate the Arab-Israeli conflict and take over Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, and to eradicate Arab rights, especially the right of return for Palestinians.



Netanyahu also said that he will fight “ISIS” and “Islamic Jihadism” alongside the Arabs. This is another indication that ISIS was created to alter the equation of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and in order for “Israel” to become a party in this war, supporting the Persian Gulf States in a made-up war on terror, which was especially created for this purpose, to reinforce the presence of the “Zionist Entity” in the region and its relations with Arab countries.

When the interviewer asked what Netanyahu was trying to accomplish, Netanyahu answered:

“I want to be remembered as the protector of Israel, and as someone who left Israel a stronger and with a better status in the region.”

In this regard, at a time when we condemn terrorism, and its creators, financiers, and sponsors, it is not wrong to learn from one's enemies, because despite all their differences they don't lose sight of the main aim, which is to serve their entity that was planted in the heart of our nation, while the world stands idly by.

But when we look at those concerned with the Palestinian cause, we find many parties with different methods who do not unite for their sacred cause.

This is the first challenge that faces all Arab nationalists who believe deeply in an Arab Palestine, and in the fact that their nation can move beyond this shameful reality if it works according to a unified methodology based on dialogue and on a strategic vision, which will strengthen this nation's position in the international system.

The second challenge is also very important. It was described in the notes that U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson gave to the staff of the U.S. State Department when he met them on 3 May 2017.

His introduction and the vision he gave for U.S. foreign policy is noteworthy because it revealed what we had thought to be the real American policies in the world. Talking about the state of the world and the U.S. position, Tillerson began to talk about American values:

“Freedom, human dignity, etc.,” adding that these are “our values, not our policies.”

He called for a distinction between values and policies and that policies change and values do not change and added:

“But if you set a condition for our efforts in national security to adopt our values, we may not be able to achieve our national security goals or our security interests. If we set conditions that others must adopt our values, he said, these values that we have reached through our long history, this creates real difficulties in the way of pursuing our national security and economic interests...it is therefore very important that we all understand the difference between politics and values, and therefore we have to understand in every country in the world what is our national security interests and what are our interests, and then when we can promote our values must do it. So we must examine how to achieve our national security and economic interests on the one hand, and our values are fixed elsewhere.”

This explanation and clarification comes before the visit of U.S. President Trump to the Persian Gulf States and his meeting with Persian Gulf leaders and possibly with officials from Jordan and Morocco, and this explanation and clarification is a preemptive action for U.S. and possibly Israeli deals with the Persian Gulf countries, so that no one asks where are the American values when they deal with countries that do not respect freedom or human dignity and treat their people like slaves.

The preemptive answer is that U.S. national security interests and the economic interests of America come first, while values remain only in writing, media and rhetoric. There is no doubt that Trump's visit to the Persian Gulf will culminate in arms deals worth billions of dollars used to bomb Yemen and destabilize Syria, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and Egypt.

What we see as a challenge by the Zionist Entity and by the United States, “Israel” sees as an opportunity to open up to the Persian Gulf and normalize relations with it and to tell the world that the Arab-Israeli conflict is over. This challenge will remain until the Arabs develop their vision for the next stage and develop their methods in the light of the dangerous developments on the regional and international arenas, until reality is understood as it is.

There are serious shifts occurring, and we have to be active and be aware of the prospects, and to devote our energies to have the results be in favor of Arabs who believe in their Arabism and their rights, no matter how arduous the oppression and injustice against them.”

(Source: 21stcenturiwire.com)



# Trump trip shows U.S. hypocrisy on human rights

By Jonathan Tasini

President Donald Trump's trip through the Middle East should puncture a myth Americans have been fed for generations: that this country's foreign policy lives up to its high-minded rhetoric on the advancement of human rights.

Donald Trump took a lot of heat several weeks ago for his warm words for Philippines authoritarian leader Rodrigo Duterte, who has been widely criticized for alleged human rights abuses in his war on drugs. But in his cozying up to Duterte, President Trump has simply followed a long tradition.

For decades, Democrats and Republicans alike have chosen allies principally based on the strategic and economic priorities of the United States, no matter how much blood flowed from such choices.

The global human toll that has been run up as a cost of advancing U.S. interests is not a recent development. American foreign policy may have been wrapped in the language of human rights, but its actions have often fostered anything but.

## ■ Bombings in Cambodia and Vietnam

Henry Kissinger, an adviser to politicians from Richard Nixon to Donald Trump to Hillary Clinton, had no concern

for human rights as he orchestrated illegal bombings of Cambodia and Vietnam, causing the deaths and displacement of millions of people; the 1973 overthrow of the democratically elected president of Chile, Salvador Allende, which ushered in a murderous dictatorship; and the support for the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975, whose military occupation of over a quarter of a century caused roughly 100,000 deaths.

In the 1980s, the U.S. strongly supported Napoleon Jose Duarte, the head of a military junta in El Salvador. For many years, Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos ran a brutal regime in the Philippines but were close U.S. allies, receiving billions of dollars in aid in return for the stationing of thousands of American soldiers at a network of U.S. military bases.

As his presidency wound down, Barack Obama signed a 10-year, \$40-billion military aid package with Israel. Meanwhile, Israel's ongoing treatment of Palestinians imposes what Jimmy Carter has called apartheid. Human Rights Watch recently concluded that Israel continues to «enforce severe and discriminatory restrictions on Palestinians» human rights» and that «Israeli security forces used lethal force ... including in circumstances that suggest excessive

force and at times extrajudicial executions.»

## ■ Saudi's arbitrary arrests

Which brings us to President Trump's current itinerary. Saudi Arabia, a long time U.S. ally, has been the beneficiary of billions of dollars in U.S. weapons over many decades, including, according to news reports, a new \$110-billion arms deal expected to be unveiled by President Trump. Yet, according to a recent Human Rights Watch report, Saudi Arabia, «continued their arbitrary arrests, trials, and convictions of peaceful dissidents.

Dozens of human rights defenders and activists continued to serve long prison sentences for criticizing authorities or advocating political and rights reforms.» A Saudi-led coalition has also conducted a bombing campaign in Yemen that has targeted civilian areas, killing scores of innocent people.

In Saudi Arabia, women are second-class citizens, the report continues; they cannot drive and must have a male guardian's permission to marry, travel, or even exit prison. Without a male relative's help or consent, they may face difficulty accessing health care, renting an apartment or filing legal claims.

Even our enemies were once our friends. Who can forget the iconic picture of then-Reagan administration envoy

Donald Rumsfeld smiling broadly as he shook the hand of Saddam Hussein in the 1980s at the height of the Iran-Iraq war, despite the toll of Hussein's homicidal grip on his country? Human rights took a back seat to the far more cynical principle: the enemy of my enemy is my friend. In this case, Iraq fit the U.S. strategic interest of confronting Iran.

## ■ U.S. commits war crimes

And let's not forget that to shield its officials from international judgment, the U.S. is one of the few countries to refuse to be a party to the International Criminal Court in The Hague, the permanent, independent court charged with investigating and prosecuting individuals who commit war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

Why is it so important to spotlight this history? Because of relentless propaganda over the years flogging the alleged human rights mission of U.S. foreign policy, many Americans often seem irked that millions of people worldwide decry American intervention, viewing the protests as ungrateful. And because as much as we might disagree with President Trump's cozying up to strong men, his approach to foreign policy may be, in some ways, simply a blunter version of business as usual.

(Source: CNN)

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# Low-dose aspirin linked to lower breast cancer risk, study says

By Jen Christensen

More potential good news for people who regularly take a low-dose aspirin: Women who took one had a lower risk of breast cancer, according to a study published in the journal *Breast Cancer Research* on Monday.

The study used data from more than 57,000 women who were part of the California Teachers Study.

In the 23% of women who reported using low-dose aspirin regularly, researchers saw a 20% reduction in the risk of developing HR-positive/HER2 negative breast cancer, some of the most common forms of the disease.

The risk was inversely associated with taking a low-dose aspirin three or more times a week, compared with those women who had no regular low-dose aspirin use.

Women who took other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen did not see as much of a difference, nor did those taking a regular high-dose aspirin. Previous studies have showed mixed results in breast cancer impact among women who took a regular high-dose aspirin.

Aspirin is already known for its potential to reduce other kinds of cancers and cancer deaths, particularly in people at risk of colorectal cancer.

US Preventive Services Task Force guidelines recommend that certain people take low-dose aspirin regularly to reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and colorectal cancer. But not everyone can take it; for example, it's not recommended for people with bleeding diseases such as Crohn's or ulcers, as it can increase bleeding.

The new study did not look at why there might be an association between lower cancer risk and aspirin, but author Leslie Bernstein, a professor in the Division of Cancer Etiology in the Department of Population Sciences at the Beckman Research Institute of the City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center, said one reason may be because aspirin can lower inflammation.

"Simply things like obesity or inflammatory conditions are a risk factor for breast cancer, so this may be one reason it could help," Bernstein said.

She also says research has showed that aspirin works as an aromatase inhibitor. Breast cancer is often treated with medication that is a stronger form of aromatase inhibitor; it stops the production of



**Aspirin works as an aromatase inhibitor and breast cancer is often treated with medication that is a stronger form of aromatase inhibitor; it stops the production of estrogen, which can stimulate the growth of hormone-receptor-positive breast cancer cells.**

estrogen, which can stimulate the growth of hormone-receptor-positive breast cancer cells.

When Bernstein read about the potential inhibitor impact of aspirin, she wondered whether there would be a connection to lowering breast cancer risk. Her colleague Christina Clarke started looking through the data and saw the association noted in this study.

"Of course, more research, including clinical trials, is needed to see if this is the case," Bernstein said.

Nancy Cook, a professor in the Department of Epidemiology at Harvard University who also researches aspirin's impact on cancer, published a study in 2013 that found a reduction in colorectal cancer after 10 years of low-dose aspirin use but found no association with reduction in breast cancer.

In that study, "it is possible that the lack of effect

is due to the alternate day low dose we used, but data from other randomized trials generally do not support an effect on breast cancer," she said in an emailed statement, so the current study's result is different.

She also cautioned that before adding a low-dose daily aspirin to your morning routine, remember that the current study is merely observational.

"That means it cannot determine cause and effect," Cook said. "The meta-analyses that the authors cite are also mainly based on observational data. On the other hand, large observational studies sometimes are able to detect effects in some groups or for more rare outcomes that trials are not empowered to see, so these studies are still valuable."

(Source: CNN)

## What is exercise-induced asthma?

Exercise-induced asthma, or exercise-induced bronchoconstriction, causes bronchoconstriction and asthma symptoms such as wheezing, shortness of breath, coughing, and chest tightness that develop during exercise. It affects seven to 20 percent of the general population.

While you have probably heard of exercise-induced asthma before, your asthma care provider probably refers to it as EIB. Asthma doctors prefer the term EIB over exercise-induced asthma because exercise is not a risk factor for asthma, but rather a trigger.

### Symptoms

Symptoms of exercise-induced asthma may occur shortly after a brief period of exercise or 10 to 15 minutes into a longer period of exercise. The most common symptoms of exercise-induced asthma include:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness
- Coughing

Symptoms typically resolve with rest in no more than 30 to 60 minutes. Cold weather increases the frequency and severity of symptoms.

### Diagnosis

For known asthma patients who experience typical symptoms during or after exercise, a physician will often make a presumptive diagnosis of exercise-induced asthma by discussing symptoms with the patient. Many times a doctor will not seek further diagnostic testing unless the patient's exercise-induced asthma symptoms persist or the exercise-induced asthma symptoms are not prevented with some of the measures outlined below.

If you do not have an asthma diagnosis, but develop shortness of breath, chest tightness, and coughing during or after exercise, further investigation is necessary in order to make sure the symptoms are not due to another condition, such as heart disease.

In many cases, a form of exercise testing with pre- and post-exercise spirometry is used to confirm an exercise-induced asthma diagnosis. Generally, you will exercise on a treadmill or stationary bicycle until you reach 85 percent of your expected maximum heart rate. You are considered having exercise-induced asthma if your FEV1 (forced expiratory volume) falls more than 10 percent with exercise.

Other causes of the shortness of breath, chest tightness, and coughing that mimic exercise-induced asthma also need to be considered. This is especially important if you show no other asthma symptoms and do not benefit from some of the preventive measures outlined below. Other diagnoses your doctor may consider include:

- Vocal cord dysfunction
- Heart failure
- Coronary heart disease
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease

(Source: verywell.com)



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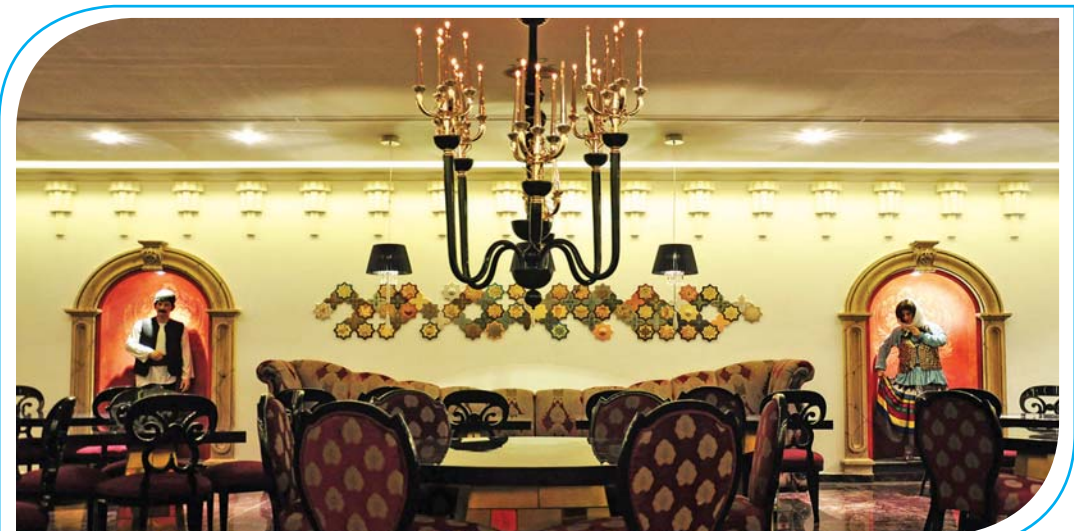


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## Iranian goldsmiths show off skills at Florence Jewelry Week

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Several Iranian goldsmiths are promoting their delicate expertise at the Florence Jewelry Week, which opened on May 24 in the very heart of the Italian city, the “Oltrarno” district near Santo Spirito Square.

A total of 30 works crafted by 14 artisans, who belong to younger generations of Iranian goldsmiths, have also been put on show at the event, CHTN reported on Wednesday.



*A prehistoric Iranian gold griffin-headed armlet dating back to the Achaemenid era (c. 550 – 330 BC).*

Anahita Anasori, Ashkan Behjou, Baharak Omidfar, Narges Asadinejad, and Niloufar Nadi amongst others artists have made every effort to create ornamental designs that incorporate modern techniques with ancient domestic ones, the report said.

Organized by the Le Arti Orafe (LAO) Jewellery School, the event will be running until May 28 and includes exhibitions by contemporary artists from various countries, lectures and presentations, workshops led by invited artists, lecturers and curators.

According to the arrangers, the exhibit emphasizes on the interactions between traditional and artistic research, manual skills and new technologies, and between the different meanings and symbolical values that jewelers can take on in different cultural and geographical environments.

## Archaeological probe finds prehistoric gravestones in southeast Iran

**HERITAGE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — A team of archaeologists has bumped into 5000-year-old gravestones during its probe into an ancient necropolis in Sistan-Baluchestan province, southeast Iran.

Sets of twin and triple tombstones exist amongst the newly excavated gravestones that are believed to date back to 3rd millennium BC, according to initial surveys conducted by experts affiliated with the Research Institute for Cultural Heritage and Tourism, IRNA reported on May 21.

Covering 430 hectares area of land, Dombkough archeological site is home to over 5,000 graves, a majority of which are linked to the Parthian era (247 BC–224 CE), says Morteza Hessari, an archeologist with the research team.

The gravestones are categorized into nine patterns based on their visual layouts and the excavations yielded several aircrafts such as fragmented vessels, he added.



### ROUND THE GLOBE

#### Los Glaciares National Park

Los Glaciares National Park is located in the Southwest of Santa Cruz Province in the Argentine part of Patagonia. Comprised of a National Park and a National Reserve it has a total surface area of 600,000 hectares.

Los Glaciares owes its name to the numerous glaciers covering roughly half of the World Heritage property. Many of these glaciers are fed by the massive South Patagonian Ice Field, the most extensive South American relict of the glaciological processes of the Quaternary Period.



In addition, there are impressive glaciers independent of the main ice field. The property therefore constitutes a massive freshwater reservoir.

The Upsala, Onelli and Perito Moreno Glaciers calve into the icy and milky waters of the huge Lake Argentino, which is partly included in the property.

The most striking sight is the famous Perito Moreno Glacier. This large glacier blocks a narrow channel formed by Lake Argentino thereby raising the water level temporarily. This in turn causes regular thunderous ruptures of the glacier tongue into the lake.

(Source: UNESCO)

# Fars province’s foreign tourist arrivals rise 42% y/y



*A view of Naqsh-e Rostam in Fars province. Located about 12 km northwest of Persepolis, the historical necropolis embraces rock-hewn royal tombs and bas-relief carvings associated with the Achaemenid and Sassanid eras.*

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Fars province attracted over 165,000 foreign tourists in the first two months of the current calendar year (March 21 – May 21), up 42 percent from a year earlier, the provincial tourism chief announced on Monday.

The average age of the sightseers is lower in comparison to that of the preceding years with a rise on the number of European travelers, ISNA reported,

quoting Fars province’s Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Department Director Mossayeb Amiri as saying.

A total of 116,257 overseas tourists visited various historical and cultural sites across the province in the same period last year, Amiri added.

Celebrated as the heartland of Persian culture for over 2000 years, Fars is home to magnificent historical sites dating back to Medes, Achaemenid, Parthian,

Sassanid and Islamic eras. Shiraz, its capital, has long been synonymous with education, nightingales, and poetry embedding splendid gardens, exquisite mosques and whispered echoes of ancient sophistication.

The government has put in a great deal of effort to revive tourism and hospitality businesses since President Hassan Rouhani assumed office in August 2013. Under the 2025 Tourism Vision Plan,

the country is expecting to increase the number of tourism arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Following a landmark nuclear deal Tehran and world powers clinched in 2015, Iran is repeatedly named as a hot travel destination by a circle of international media outlets in terms of its rich history, picturesque sceneries, traditions, cuisine and hospitable people.

## Isfahan marks monthly record for tourist visits

**TOURISM d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Isfahan province hosted 123,000 foreign tourists in Ordibehesht - the second Iranian calendar month (April 21 – May 21) - the provincial tourism chief Rasoul Zargarpour said on Tuesday.

The figure shows over 14 percent more than that of a month earlier, marking a monthly record for arrivals as the influx of visitors bolsters the economy.

Some 85 thousand foreign travelers visited Isfahan in the first calendar month Farvardin, setting a

new record for the past 40 years, Zargarpour announced earlier in April, adding that figure showed 800 percent surge in comparison to the same period last year.

Isfahan is Iran’s top tourist destination for good reason. Its profusion of tree-lined boulevards, Persian gardens and important Islamic buildings gives it a visual appeal unmatched by any other Iranian city, and the many artisans working here underpin its reputation as a living museum of traditional culture.



*A Westerner couple pose for a photo at the UNESCO-registered Imam Square in Isfahan on November 9, 2016. The Safavid-era Ali Qapu Palace in seen in the background.*

## New terror attack hits Europe. Will tourists keep coming?

Europe has been hit by another deadly terrorist attack that could prompt tourists to rethink plans to visit the region.

The attack on Monday evening at an Ariana Grande concert in the British city of Manchester killed at least 22 people, including children. It was the worst terror attack to hit the UK since the London bombings in July 2005.

Police have identified 22-year-old Salman Abedi as the suspected suicide attacker, but they’re still trying to establish if he was part of a wider network. ISIS claimed responsibility for the attack but offered no evidence of its involvement.

“This kind of incident has a big emotional impact on people, making [them] feel that the world is more dangerous and not as welcoming,” said Patrick Surry, chief

data scientist at travel firm Hopper.

Would-be tourists may be “seeing this as part of a pattern of bad stuff in Europe and thinking ‘we shouldn’t go to Europe,’” he said.

The Manchester bombing followed a high profile attack in London in March when four people died after a man rammed a car onto a busy sidewalk near the houses of parliament.

Attacks in cities such as Berlin, Brussels, Paris and Nice within the last two years have already made some people wary about traveling in Europe.

French visitor levels dropped 4% in 2016 and spending by travelers slowed. This contributed to the first decline in visitors to Western Europe in many years, at a time when global tourism is growing.

Britain’s tourism industry has held up well, however. Overseas visitor numbers to the UK rose by 18% in the first three months of 2017 to 8 million.

A weak pound has helped -- it fell sharply after the Brexit referendum in June 2016 -- making British hotels, restaurants and shops much cheaper for people exchanging dollars or euros.

Experts say the Manchester attack won’t prevent tourism in the UK from continuing to grow this year, but it may slow the rate of expansion.

In the wake of Monday’s bombing, Euromonitor downgraded its forecast for growth in visitor numbers to 4.9% from 5.1%. That means it expects roughly 100,000 fewer people to visit the UK this year than might otherwise have done so.

“In the scheme of things, it’s a very small downgrade,” said Euromonitor’s top travel analyst, Caroline Bremner. “But there’s obviously going to be an effect.”

The U.S. State Department issued a travel alert for Americans visiting Europe earlier this month, citing the continued threat of attacks, particularly in tourist hot spots.

“While local governments continue counterterrorism operations, the Department nevertheless remains concerned about the potential for future terrorist attacks,” it said.

How the British authorities respond to Monday’s attack will be critical since “travelers will be looking for reassurance that it is okay to come to the UK,” said Euromonitor’s Bremner. (Source: CNNMoney)

## S. Africa’s intl. tourism arrivals up 13%

**CAPE TOWN (Independent Online)** — South Africa recorded a 13 percent growth in international tourist arrivals despite the economic slowdown.

Tourism Minister Tokozile Xasa said the figures were achieved despite declining interest from the domestic front.

Xasa said the Department of Tourism wanted to focus on attracting an additional five million tourists in the next five years, as envisaged by President Jacob Zuma at the Tourism Indaba in Durban last week.

She said tourism played a significant role, because it contributed to

the country’s balance of trade through foreign exchange receipts, and directly sustained 700 000 jobs.

“Globally, we recorded our seventh year of sustained growth despite the economic slowdown,” Xasa said.

“In the past year, South Africa recorded 13-percent growth in international tourist arrivals.

“This sector deserves more support and recognition in our country, because it provides more opportunities and has lower barriers to entry.”

Xasa said growth in tourism would have far-reaching implications for as-

sociated industries.

She said the government had introduced the National Tourism Sector Strategy (NTSS) to achieve over 200 percent growth.

“We will also add 300 000 more jobs to bring direct employment to one million from the 2015 figure of 700 000. This will bring the indirect employment to tourism figures to about 2.26 million.”

Xasa said the department would use its R2.1 billion budget to boost the economy.

“We will deploy this modest budget to pursue the following strategic areas for

tourism growth.

“Marketing takes the largest component of this budget, at 53 percent, or R1.1 billion.

“The remaining R1 billion is largely distributed among Tourism Incentives, Expanded Public Works Programme, Destination Development and Enterprise Development.”

She said that, with South African Tourism’s budget at 53 percent, it was the department’s strategic intent to drive government imperatives through its entity, which include contribution to job creation and radical economic transformation.

## Cool cruises around Iceland

With a similar itinerary, Variety Cruises has the Journeys in the Land of Ice & Fire: Akureyri to Reykjavik throughout the summer. The eight-day sailings are on a 34-passenger boat with overnight stops



*Husavik is in northern Iceland.*

in Isafjordur and Husavik. From \$2,650 a person.

Iceland ProCruises is offering several 10-day Iceland circumnavigation trips this summer. The cruises have the expect-

ed stops, like Reykjavik, but also include more atypical ones, such as the town of Stykkisholmur, near Breidafjordur Bay, known for its bird life and Snaefellsjokull glacier, which sits atop a 700,000-year-old dormant volcano. From \$2,595 a person.

Travelers looking for a longer getaway have the option of the 12-day MSC Northern Europe Cruise, which has port stops in Akureyri and Isafjordur and also spends two days in Reykjavik. Options for shore excursions, available at an additional cost, include kayaking through fjords and hikes to waterfalls. From \$1,869 a person.

Luxury-seekers may consider Group IST’s Iceland Adventure trip, on a yacht with rich woodwork, brass finishes and antique décor. A highlight is a visit to Lake Myvatn to see fields of lava and bubbling mud pools. From \$4,769, including land tours. (Source: The New York Times)



# Where did the Milky Way's antimatter come from?

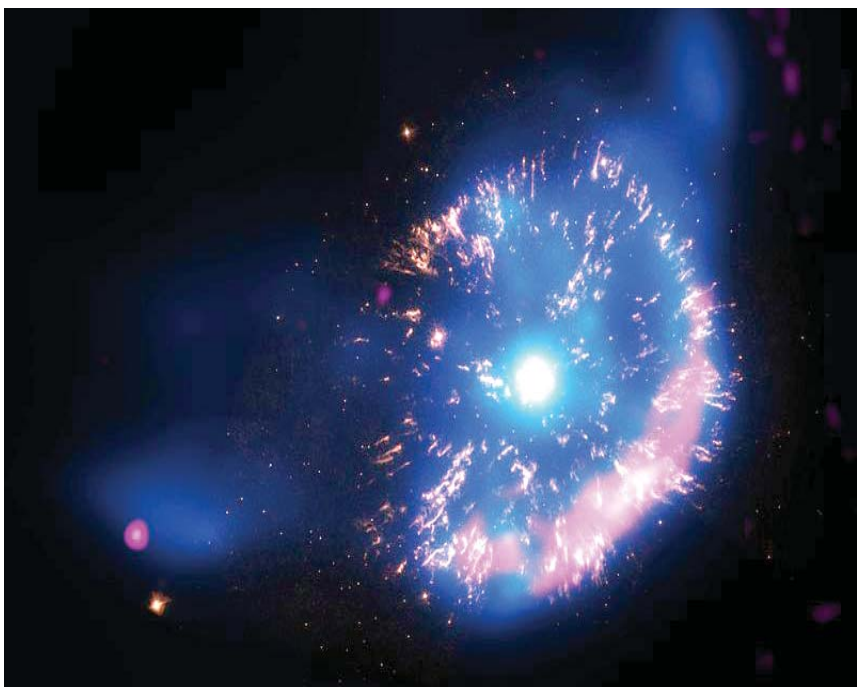
The inner regions of our home galaxy, the Milky Way, have been known to strongly emit gamma-rays since over 40 years ago, which in turn suggested the presence of a large amount of antimatter in those regions. However, it is only now that we may be close to knowing where all that antimatter came from, and the answer could be supernovae.

Antimatter is a material composed of antiparticles of regular matter (such as a positron for an electron and an antiproton for a proton, which can together form a molecule of antihydrogen), and when the two opposites come into contact, they completely destroy each other, a high-energy burst of gamma rays being the only remnant. This is what led scientists to consider the existence of antimatter in the regions near galaxy's center.

A new study, led by astrophysicists from the Australian National University (ANU), published online Monday in the journal Nature Astronomy, says the source of all that antimatter is not the annihilation of dark matter or the supermassive black hole sitting at the center of the galaxy, but instead a "series of weak supernova explosions over millions of years, each created by the convergence of two white dwarfs which are ultra-compact remnants of stars no larger than two suns."

## ■ Cores of stars

White dwarfs are essentially the com-



**White dwarfs are essentially the compact cores of stars that have run out of fuel and shed their outer layers.**

pact cores of stars that have run out of fuel and shed their outer layers. Even the sun, after it is done ballooning into a

red giant, will eventually collapse into a white dwarf.

Explaining the phenomenon, Roland

Crocker from ANU said in a statement that the antimatter was created when two white dwarfs first formed a binary system and then collided with each other. As a result of the collision, the smaller of the two stars would lose mass to the larger star. The former ends its existence as a helium white dwarf and the latter ends life as a carbon-oxygen white dwarf. The larger star then rips apart its smaller companion and gets covered in a dense shell of helium. That leads quickly to a thermonuclear supernova explosion, which is the source of antimatter.

The "binary system is granted one final moment of extreme drama: as the white dwarfs orbit each other, the system loses energy to gravitational waves causing them to spiral closer and closer to each other," Crocker said in the statement. "Our research provides new insight into a part of the Milky Way where we find some of the oldest stars in our galaxy," he added.

The stars he refers to, which are also the precursors of the supernovae mentioned in the study, are about three to six billion years old.

The study, titled "Diffuse Galactic antimatter from faint thermonuclear supernovae in old stellar populations," had contributions from a dozen other researchers from various countries.

(Source: IBT)

## How the biggest animal on Earth got so big

Whales are the largest animals on the planet, but they haven't always been giants. Fossil records show that ancient whales were much smaller than the currently living behemoths.

So when did whales get so big, and how?

A new study suggests it might be due to changes in climate that affected the food that some whales eat: krill and small fish. Instead of being spread throughout the ocean, lots of krill started being packed into a small area. Bigger whales were simply more efficient at eating the dense pockets of krill, and they beat out their smaller cousins.

These whales use filters to feed on the tiny krill. Known as baleens, they include the largest whale on Earth — the blue whale. The baleen filter looks like bristles of a comb and is made up of keratin — the same stuff in our fingernails. To eat, the whale opens its mouth and takes in a huge gulp of water. Then it spits the water back out, and food like krill are caught in the baleen filter. It's a highly efficient way to eat, allowing whales to pack on the pounds.

But according to Stanford University researcher Jeremy Goldbogen, it can't be the only reason whales got so big. "Baleen evolved about 20 million years ago, and we didn't see the evolution of gigantism until about very recently, about 3 million to 5 million years ago."

Goldbogen's group looked back to see what was happening in the ancient oceans, and if there were any clues about what caused the massive growth spurt.

## ■ Changes in climate

They found that around the time baleens began growing larger, the ice ages started. The researchers think changes in climate led to increased runoff and more nutrients pouring into the coasts. At the same time, there was an increase in ocean upwelling, which occurs when wind pushes surface waters off-shore and causing deeper ocean waters underneath surface waters to replace it. Those deep waters are often full of nutrients and food for the whales.

The combination of the ice ages and more upwelling resulted in dense patches of food in the ocean — setting the



stage for massive whales to win out.

During upwelling, wind-displaced surface waters are replaced by cold, nutrient-rich water that "wells up" from below.

"As animals are getting bigger, they're getting much more efficient. So for every gulp, they're getting tremendous

amounts of energy" Goldbogen says.

Think about it this way: It takes a lot of energy for a giant whale to open its giant mouth. If a lot of food is packed into a small space, those whales can swallow it up in one big gulp and it's worth all the energy it takes.

(Source: npr.org)

## UT study shows snakes, thought to be solitary eaters, coordinate hunts

Snakes, although as social as birds and mammals, have long been thought to be solitary hunters and eaters. A new study from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, shows that some snakes coordinate their hunts to increase their chances of success.

Vladimir Dinets, a research assistant professor of psychology at UT, observed the Cuban boa -- the island nation's largest native terrestrial predator -- in bat caves for the study.

Many Cuban caves shelter large bat colonies, and in some of them small populations of boas regularly hunt the bats as they fly out at dusk and return at dawn. Dinets noticed that the boas hung down from the ceiling of the cave entrance and grabbed passing bats in midair. He found that if more than one boa was present, the snakes coordinated their positions in such a way that they formed a wall across the entrance. This made it difficult or impossible for the bats to pass without getting within striking distance of at least one boa.

Such group hunts were always successful, and the more



snakes were present, the less time it took each to capture a bat. But if there was only one boa, it sometimes failed to secure a meal.

These findings were recently published open-access in the journal Animal Behavior and Cognition.

## ■ Coordination among snakes

To date, only a handful of snakes have been observed to hunt in groups, and coordination among them -- or among any other group-hunting reptiles -- has never been proven, Dinets said.

Only a few of the world's 3,650 snake species have ever been observed hunting in the wild, so very little is known about snakes' diverse hunting tactics.

"It is possible that coordinated hunting is not uncommon among snakes, but it will take a lot of very patient field research to find out," Dinets said.

He added that observing the Cuban boa, although an amazing spectacle, is becoming increasingly difficult since only the most remote caves still have boas. The boas are being hunted for food and possibly pet trade.

"I suspect that if their numbers in a cave fall, they can't hunt in groups anymore and might die out even if some of them don't get caught by hunters," Dinets said. "A few of these caves are in national parks, but there's a lot of poaching everywhere."

(Source: EurekAlert)

## Scientists find 7.2-million-year-old pre-human remains in the Balkans

The common lineage of great apes and humans split several hundred thousand years earlier than hitherto assumed, according to an international research team headed by Professor Madelaine Böhme from the Senckenberg Centre for Human Evolution and Palaeoenvironment at the University of Tübingen and Professor Nikolai Spassov from the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

The researchers investigated two fossils of Graecopithecus freybergi with state-of-the-art methods and came to the conclusion that they belong to pre-humans. Their findings, published today in two papers in the journal PLOS ONE, further indicate that the split of the human lineage occurred in the Eastern Mediterranean and not - as customarily assumed - in Africa.

Present-day chimpanzees are humans' nearest living relatives. Where

the last chimp-human common ancestor lived is a central and highly debated issue in palaeoanthropology. Researchers have assumed up to now that the lineages diverged five to seven million years ago and that the first pre-humans developed in Africa. According to the 1994 theory of French palaeoanthropologist Yves Coppens, climate change in Eastern Africa could have played a crucial role. The two studies of the research team from Germany, Bulgaria, Greece, Canada, France and Australia now outline a new scenario for the beginning of human history.

The team analyzed the two known specimens of the fossil hominid Graecopithecus freybergi: a lower jaw from Greece and an upper premolar from Bulgaria. Using computer tomography, they visualized the internal structures of the fossils and demonstrated that the

roots of premolars are widely fused.

"While great apes typically have two or three separate and diverging roots, the roots of Graecopithecus converge and are partially fused - a feature that is characteristic of modern humans, early humans and several pre-humans including Ardipithecus and Australopithecus", said Böhme.

## ■ Dental root features

The lower jaw, nicknamed 'El Graeco' by the scientists, has additional dental root features, suggesting that the species Graecopithecus freybergi might belong to the pre-human lineage. "We were surprised by our results, as pre-humans were previously known only from sub-Saharan Africa," said Jochen Fuss, a Tübingen Ph.D. student who conducted this part of the study.

Furthermore, Graecopithecus is several hundred thousand years older

than the oldest potential pre-human from Africa, the six to seven million year old Sahelanthropus from Chad. The research team dated the sedimentary sequence of the Graecopithecus fossil sites in Greece and Bulgaria with physical methods and got a nearly synchronous age for both fossils - 7.24 and 7.175 million years before present. "It is at the beginning of the Messinian, an age that ends with the complete desiccation of the Mediterranean Sea," Böhme said.

Professor David Begun, a University of Toronto paleoanthropologist and co-author of this study, added, "This dating allows us to move the human-chimpanzee split into the Mediterranean area."

Environmental changes as the driving force for divergence

(Source: phys.org)

## Sherpas show how the human body can thrive in extreme environments

Mount Everest is a grueling, deadly place for many adventurers. Beyond the steep terrain, bone-chilling temperatures, and fierce weather, the air is so thin that your body can begin to shut down.

Scientists say the findings not only help explain Sherpas' mountain-climbing prowess — they may also lead to new ways of treating oxygen deficiencies, called "hypoxia," in hospital patients.

"By understanding how Sherpas are able to survive with low levels of oxygen, we can get clues to help us identify those at greatest risk in (intensive care units) and inform the development of better treatments to help in their recovery," Michael Grocott, a co-author of the study and professor at the University of Southampton in England, said in a press release.

Grocott is the chair of Xtreme Everest, a 10-year-old initiative by doctors, nurses, and scientists to study how our bodies respond to the extreme altitude on Mount Everest. Their ultimate goal is to improve outcomes for critically ill patients.

With a 29,029-foot-high peak, Everest is the world's highest mountain. Everest Base Camp is around 17,600 feet, which is plenty high enough to sicken unadjusted visitors.

At those altitudes, where oxygen is scarce, the body is forced to work overtime to make sure the brain and body receive enough oxygen to function. Often, the body will produce more red blood cells, which carry blood to our organs and thicken the blood. As a result, blood flows more slowly and blood vessels are prone to tightening, which can cause dangerous build-up of fluid in the lungs and other risks.

(Source: Mashable)

## Our brains predict events in fast-forward

What happens when you look up and see a ball headed toward you? Without even thinking about it, you flinch. That might be because our brains are constantly living our lives in fast-forward, playing out the action in our head before it happens.

Humans have to navigate, and respond to, an environment that is always changing. Our brain compensates for this by constantly making predictions about what's going to happen, says Mattias Ekman, a researcher at Radboud University Nijmegen in the Netherlands. We've known this for a while, but these predictions are usually associative. An example: if you see a hamburger, your brain might predict that there will be fries nearby. In a study published today in the journal Nature Communications, Ekman and other scientists focused instead on how the brain predicts motion. So they used brain scans to track what happened as participants observed a moving dot.

First, 29 volunteers looked at a white dot the size of a ping-pong ball. The dot went from left to right and then reversed directions. The volunteers watched the dot for about five minutes while scientists scanned their brains with ultra-fast fMRI. This way, the researchers know what pattern of brain activity was activated in the visual cortex while they watched the dot.

After these five minutes, the researchers showed only the beginning of the sequence to the volunteers. Here, the scans showed that the brain "autocompletes" the full sequence — and it does it at twice the rate of the actual event. So if a dot took two seconds to go across the screen, the brain predicted the entire sequence in one second. "You're actually already trying to predict what's going to happen," says Ekman. "These predictions are hypothetical, so in a way you're trying to generate new memories that match the future."

(Source: The Verge)

## Drones in space? ESA tests crash-proof drone in Sicilian caves

When humans first set foot on Mars, they're going to want to be sure that the equipment is up to the task. To be as prepared as possible, the European Space Agency (ESA) has been testing equipment and techniques and training astronauts in cave systems here on Earth. The group's latest tool is a crash-proof drone that could one day help Martian settlers explore lava tubes on the Red Planet by mapping out tight spots humans can't reach.



Every year, ESA holds a program it calls CAVES — a clumsy acronym that stands for "Cooperative Adventure for Valuing and Exercising human behavior and performance Skills." The aim of the course is to teach astronauts the kind of team-building and safety skills they'll need in an environment that mimics the conditions in space as closely as possible. With their tight spaces, isolation, and lack of sunlight, caves make a useful test bed.

"We now want astronauts to take part in existing scientific caving and geological expeditions — scientific exploration does not get more real than this," says Loredana Bessone, course designer for the CAVES program.

Lending a hand in this year's expedition was Flyability's Elios drone, which is designed to be basically crash-proof thanks to a protective frame around the body. It's made for conducting visual inspections of confined and hard-to-reach places — like underneath bridges, inside pipes, and around tall structures — where a normal drone runs the risk of collision. The concept won a Drones for Good award in 2015, and last year proved its worth exploring jagged crevasses in the Swiss Alps.

(Source: New Atlas)



## INOTEX hosting 40 overseas Iranian companies

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — About 40 Iranian companies, which are active abroad, are participating in the 6th International Innovation and Technology Exhibition (INOTEX) which opened on Wednesday at the Tehran Permanent International Fairgrounds.

The goal of INOTEX is in line with the government's plan for encouraging Iranian experts abroad to come back to the country, the vice president for science and technology affairs Sorena Sattari said, Tasnim reported. INOTEX is the premier regional event for professionals engaged in technology and innovation.

Over the years, INOTEX has evolved a number of unique events which reflect the constantly changing nature of innovation and technology in Iran and help to provide a full experience and comprehensive overview of it.

Cosponsored by the presidential office for science and technology, the presidential center for innovation and technology cooperation, and the national innovation fund, the exhibition runs until May 26.

## Eight-foot python star tles man and dog in Florida garage

An 8-foot (2 meters) python slithered into a Florida garage, startling an unsuspecting homeowner who was taking his dog for a walk.

Joseph Liscinsky tells the Sun Sentinel that he quickly put his 14-pound (6 kilo-grams) dog back inside his Pembroke Pines house after spotting the snake Friday morning.

Liscinsky says the python bit his fingers as he wrestled with it before wildlife officials arrived.

Pythons are not venomous, but they have a sharp bite. The snakes are an invasive species in Florida, where

they are blamed for decimating populations of native mammals.

Liscinsky says he worries pythons could use a nearby canal to travel from the wetlands in the suburbs.

He says wildlife officials planned to euthanize the snake. *(Source: Associated Press)*

## LEARN ENGLISH

### The Weekend - Vampires

A: You want to go to the movies tonight?

B: Sure! What's playing?

A: The new "Twilight" movie!

B: "Twilight"? As in the **vampire** movies? No way I am watching that. I don't understand why everyone is so excited about these films about vampires. It doesn't make sense.

A: Of course it does. It's like a modern **tale** of Romeo and Juliet. You have a couple that is in love but can't be together because they are so different. Add in the fact that **immortality** and **superhuman strength** is really attractive and there you have it! Plus the cast is **hip**, young people that make the movie even more **enticing**.

B: I don't buy into that. I think it's just a **fad**. Pretty soon this will pass and everyone will be into **werewolves** or **zombies**!

#### Key Vocabulary

**vampire**: a dead person who sucks the blood of living person

**tale**: a story

**immortal**: Alive forever

**superhuman strength**: extraordinary power

**hip**: cool, fashionable

**entice**: to lead on by exciting hope or desire

**fad**: a temporary fashion or notion

**werewolves**: a wolf with extraordinary strength

**zombie**: a dead corpse, likes to eat brain

#### Supplementary Vocabulary

**Ghoul**: spirit or ghost

**horror**: centered upon or depicting terrifying events

**nightmare**: a terrifying dream in which the dreamer experiences feelings of helplessness

**fan**: an enthusiastic devotee or follower of a celebrity, pas-time, etc

**obsess**: to think about something unceasingly or persistently *(Source: irlanguage.com)*

Have an idea?  
Be in touch!

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# Iran, Brazil agree for an uplift in health co-op

**SOCIETY d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Iranian Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi and his Brazilian counterpart Ricardo Barros signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) on Tuesday to boost cooperation in the health sector.

The agreement was signed on the sidelines of the 17th World Health Assembly in Geneva, which runs until May 31, IRNA news agency reported.

The MOU is aiming at improving cooperation in various fields of healthcare including pharmaceutical manufacturing, medical equipment and biotechnological studies.

They also insisted on expanding ties in control and prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases.

According to the MOU, two working groups will be established by the two sides to conduct studies and attend joint workshops to share knowledge and experience and discuss further cooperation.

The World Health Assembly is attended by delegates from WHO member states as well as representatives from many agencies, organizations, foundations and other groups that contribute to improving public health. The member states approve resolutions in committee before formally adopting them in the plenary session at the end of the Health Assembly.



*Iranian Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi (R) and his Brazilian counterpart Ricardo Barros (L) sign MoU to boost cooperation in the health sector on Tuesday*

## Once-drab Indonesian slum rejuvenated into “Rainbow Village”



*A view of colorful houses at the Kampung Pelangi village in Indonesia, May 20, 2017*

A slum area on Indonesia's Java Island has become an unlikely tourist attraction, as well as a social media hit, after its homes were painted vivid colors to transform the district into what is now being called "Kampung Pelangi" ("Rainbow Village").

The poor hill-side area received a month-long facelift costing 300 million rupiah (\$22,500) and paid for by the local government in a bid to rejuvenate this part of Semarang, a town 450 km (280 miles) east of the capital Jakarta.

Visitors have been flocking to the village to take photographs and pose for "selfies" next to the brightly colored homes.

"It's because of the unique look of the village. We know this area used to be a slum district but now it looks so beautiful after the colorful makeover. I used to pass this area without any interest but

now the colors change everything," said one visitor, Nihayatun Naqiyah.

The multi-colored paint job for the village is the brainchild of Slamet Widodo, a 54-year-old high-school teacher.

"In the future it will bring benefits to our community, especially economic empowerment. The project will be supported by the activity and creativity (of the people) in the village so the local community has a sense of belonging," said Widodo, who was inspired by similar projects in other parts Indonesia.

"Obviously this condition is very influential, before we were only the residents of what I can say was a quiet village but now we can call it a dynamic village, because women are empowered and are able to increase their family's income," resident Amanah Suyitno said.

*(Source: Reuters)*

## Trump's encounter with glowing orb sets alight social media



*U.S. President Donald Trump and other leaders react to a wall of computer screens coming online as they tour*

Images of U.S. President Donald Trump placing his hands on a glowing orb has set alight the internet, prompting comparisons to science fiction and fantasy villains.

The pictures were taken while Trump - on a nine-day trip to the Middle East and Europe - along with Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi visited a new Saudi center for combating extremism.

The trio placed their hands on the orb to formally open the center, and set a welcome film in motion. Social media users were swift to let their imaginations run wild.

"Oh my god. Trump has obtained the Bajoran Orb of Time," tweeted games developer and U.S. congressional candidate Brianna Wu, in a reference to a mythical

"I am gone from Twitter for like a few hours, and now Trump is a holding a Palantir!" Twitter user chrisError wrote,

a reference to one of the magical crystal balls used by characters in J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" series, notably the evil wizard Saruman, to see across time and space.

Many users also referenced Hydra, the fictional villains in several Marvel comics properties, with some posting pictures of the event along with the group's catch phrase: "hail Hydra".

Others took a different approach to poking fun at the U.S. president. The Church of Satan, a U.S.-based religious group which claims to have "defined Satanism", posted a picture of the event on its official Twitter account with the comment: "For clarification, this is not a satanic ritual".

Trump, a famously prolific user of Twitter, has thus far not made reference to the activity on his personal or official Twitter accounts.

*(Source: Reuters)*

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

## Techmarts to expand across Iran

Two new technology markets will be inaugurated in Iran by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 2017).

Technology markets, called techmarts, are, in fact, places for technology exchange and are seen as bridges between producers, entrepreneurs and investors, head of Iran's national techmarts center said.

Akbar Qanbarpour added that currently there are 16 techmarts in Iran and with the two new techmarts coming on stream in Tehran and Zanjan provinces, they will increase to 18, IRNA reported on Monday.

## ENGLISH PROVERB

### (a) young idler, an old beggar

■ **Explanation:** If you don't work, you won't have any money when you're old

■ **For example:** Sam should not waste his time while he can earn a living for himself; A young idler, an old beggar

## PHRASAL VERB

### zoom out

■ **Meaning:** focus less closely

■ **For example:** if a camera zooms out, it makes the person or thing that you are taking a picture of seem smaller and further away

## ENGLISH IDIOM

### zero tolerance

■ **Explanation:** If an activity or a certain type of behavior is given zero tolerance, it will not be accepted, not even once.

■ **For example:** The authorities have announced zero tolerance for smoking in public buildings



# CIA alerted FBI to pattern of contacts between Russian officials & Trump campaign associates

The United States CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) alerted the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) to a troubling pattern of contacts between Russian officials and associates of the Trump campaign last year, former agency director John Brennan testified on Tuesday, shedding new light on the origin of a criminal probe that now reaches into the White House.

In testimony before the House Intelligence Committee, Brennan said he became increasingly concerned that Trump associates were being manipulated by Russian intelligence services as part of a broader covert influence campaign that sought to disrupt the election and deliver the presidency to Donald Trump.

"I was worried by a number of the contacts that the Russians had with U.S. persons," Brennan said, adding that he did not see proof of collusion before he left office on Jan. 20, but "felt as though the FBI investigation was certainly well-founded and needed to look into those issues."

Brennan's remarks represent the most detailed public accounting to date of his tenure as CIA director during the alleged Russian assault on the U.S. presidential race, and the agency's role in triggering an FBI probe that Trump has sought to contain.

"It should be clear to everyone that Russia brazenly interfered in our 2016 presidential election process," Brennan said at one point, one of several moments in which his words seemed aimed squarely at the president.

Trump has refused to fully accept the unanimous conclusion of U.S. intelligence agencies that Russia stole thousands of sensitive emails, orchestrated online dumps of damaging information and employed fake news and other means to upend the 2016 race.

GOP (Grand Old Party) lawmakers spent much of Tuesday's hearing trying to get Brennan to concede that he had no conclusive evidence of collusion between the Trump campaign and Moscow. Brennan acknowledged that he still had "unresolved questions" about the purpose of those contacts when he stepped down as CIA director in January.

But, "I know what the Russians try to do," Brennan said. "They try to suborn individuals and they try to get individuals, including U.S. persons, to act on their behalf either wittingly or unwittingly."

Brennan refused to name any of the U.S. individuals who were apparently detected communicating with Russian officials. The



FBI investigation, which began last July, has scrutinized Trump associates including Paul Manafort, Trump's former campaign manager; Carter Page, who was once listed as a foreign policy adviser to Trump; and former national security adviser Michael Flynn, who was forced to resign after misleading statements about his contacts with the Russian ambassador were exposed.

The probe has intensified in recent weeks and identified a current White House official as a significant person of interest.

Because Russia uses intermediaries and other measures to disguise its hand, "many times, [U.S. individuals] do not know that the individual they are interacting with is a Russian," Brennan said.

He added that Russian agencies routinely seek to gather compromising information, or "kompromat," to coerce treason from U.S. officials who "do not even realize they are on that path until it gets too late." The remark appeared to be in reference to Flynn.

The Senate Intelligence Committee is issuing two new subpoenas for information from Flynn's companies and challenging his lawyer's refusal to comply with an existing subpoena for documents detailing his contacts with Russian officials, committee leaders announced on Tuesday.

Brennan was also asked about Trump's disclosure of highly classified information to the Russian foreign minister and ambassador in a White House meeting

this month. Brennan said that the CIA at times provided tips about terrorist plots to the Kremlin, but he indicated that Trump violated key protocols.

Sensitive information should only be passed through intelligence services, not divulged to foreign ministers or ambassadors, Brennan said. Referring to the information revealed by Trump, Brennan said it had neither gone through "the proper channels nor did the originating agency have the opportunity to clear language for it."

Brennan was a key figure in the Obama administration's handling of Russian election interference. As alarm grew, Brennan held classified meetings with top congressional officials in the fall to impress upon them the unprecedented nature of Moscow's interference.

Later, Brennan was among the top officials who briefed then-President-elect Trump on the scale of Russia's intervention, and its assessed goal of helping Trump win.

On Tuesday, Brennan testified that he was the first to confront a senior member of the Russian government on the matter, using an August phone conversation with the head of Russia's security service, the FSB, to warn that the meddling would backfire and damage the country's relationship with the United States.

Brennan said he told FSB chief Alexander Bortnikov that "American voters would be outraged by any Russian attempt to interfere in the election" and that such activity "would destroy any near-term

prospect of improvement" in relations with the United States.

Bortnikov twice denied that Russia was waging such a campaign, according to Brennan, but said he would carry the message to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"I believe I was the first U.S. official to brace Russia on this matter," Brennan said.

The Obama administration went on to issue statements publicly accusing Moscow of election meddling, and in December announced punitive measures including the expulsion of 35 suspected Russian intelligence operatives from the United States.

Despite those warnings and efforts at retaliation, Brennan said that Russia was probably not dissuaded from attempting similar interference operations in the future.

The former CIA chief is the latest senior Obama administration official to appear publicly before Congress in hearings that have often produced damaging headlines for Trump.

Earlier this month, former acting attorney general Sally Yates testified that she expected White House officials to "take action" after warning that Flynn had misled administration officials about his contacts with Russia.

At that same hearing, former director of national intelligence James R. Clapper Jr. said that Moscow's leaders "must be congratulating themselves for having exceeded their wildest expectations with a minimal expenditure of resource," a reference not only to the outcome of the 2016 race but also to the chaos that has characterized the early months of the Trump administration.

Brennan has feuded publicly with Trump over the president's treatment of intelligence agencies. In January, he lashed out at Trump for comparing U.S. spy agencies with Nazi secret police.

Brennan was particularly offended by Trump's remarks during a speech at CIA headquarters on the day after he was inaugurated. Trump used the CIA's Memorial Wall — a collection of engraved stars marking the lives of agency operatives killed in the line of duty — to launch a rambling speech in which he bragged about his election victory.

Brennan called the appearance "despicable" and said that Trump should be "ashamed."

(Source: agencies)

## Iran kicks off massive military exercise

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The Iranian army launched a military exercise in central Isfahan Province on Wednesday, as the country celebrates the 35th anniversary of the Liberation of Khorramshahr from the Iraqi occupation.

Dubbed Beit ol-Moqaddas 29, the drill comprises day, night and anti-terrorist operations, ISNA reported.

It was named after Beit ol-Moqaddas Operation which was launched by Iranian forces in the early years of the 8-year-long war in order to retake the strategic city of Khorramshahr from Iraqi forces.

The two-day drill puts on display various units of the Iranian Army's Ground Forces, including infantry, artillery, quick response, drones and helicopters.

The army's elite forces, dubbed the 65 Nohed Airborne Brigade, as well as fighters of Army Air Forces have also taken part in the war game.

A number of homegrown weapons will also be test-fired during the drill.

Iran regularly holds military drills to enhance the defensive capabilities of its armed forces and to test modern military tactics and equipment.

Meanwhile, since Donald Trump took office in Washington, the United States has taken a more aggressive tone towards the Islamic Republic and imposed new sanctions on Tehran in response to recent missile launches.

However, Iran says its military poses no threat to other countries. Recently, President Hassan Rouhan said Iran's missiles were not for attacking other countries and only for "peace and defense".

## Nicolas Maduro launches constitution overhaul

Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro has pressed ahead with a plan to create a popular assembly with the ability to rewrite the constitution, drawing instant criticism from the opposition.

Maduro says the grassroots body is needed to bring peace to Venezuela, where nearly two months of anti-government protests have left more than 50 people dead, but opponents view it as a cynical tactic to buy time and avoid a general election.



At an open air rally before thousands of red-shirted supporters, Maduro on Tuesday signed a document formally establishing the terms for electing members of a "constituent assembly" that will be tasked with drafting a new constitution.

"Votes or bullets, what do the people want?" Maduro asked the crowd, presenting the proposed 540-member body as a way to defuse increasingly violent protests, which he says are part of a United States-backed conspiracy to overthrow "21st Century socialism".

"Let's go to elections now!" he said, before detailing how the new assembly will be partially elected by votes at a municipal level and partially by different groups, including workers, farmers, students, and indigenous people.

The head of the pro-government electoral council said on Tuesday voting for the "constituent assembly" would be held in late July.

Regional gubernatorial elections, meant to have been held last year, would take place on December 10, he added.

The opposition-controlled National Assembly promptly rejected Maduro's plan.

"The Venezuelan people do not want a fraudulent Madurist constitution and we will not accept it," opposition leader Henrique Capriles tweeted.

Maduro's rivals fear that a new constituent assembly could rewrite rules or exclude opposition parties, making a sham of future elections that could vanquish the ruling socialists if the polls were free and fair.

"Today's decision is nothing more than an evil announcement meant to divide, distract, and confuse Venezuelans further," said Congress President Julio Borges, the opposition leader whose coalition is pushing for early elections, humanitarian aid to alleviate food and medicine shortages, and freedom for jailed activists.

"Today we've entered a new stage and that means more struggle and more street action," Borges added.

A Supreme Court magistrate decried the planned assembly, saying it was "not the solution to the crisis" and called on Maduro to "think carefully" to avoid more bloodshed.

Venezuela's state prosecutor also warned that Maduro's plan also risked deepening the crisis.

The opposition is demanding elections to remove Maduro from power. They blame him for an economic crisis that has caused shortages of food, medicine and basic supplies.

Maduro accuses protesters of seeking a violent coup and says he is the victim of a United States-backed capitalist conspiracy.

Hundreds of people have also been injured in the violence, around 2,700 arrested, with 1,000 still behind bars, and 335 tried in military tribunals, according to rights groups.

(Source: agencies)

## Situation tense in Bahrain after deadly Diraz raid

The situation in Bahrain is tense one day after the Manama regime forces violently stormed into the house of prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Isa Qassim and killed some of his supporters.

On Tuesday, regime forces broke into Sheikh Qassim's residence in the village of Diraz, killing at least five people and wounding dozens more.

They fired birdshot and teargas to disperse supporters of the clergyman and detained 286 of them. Reports said 19 policemen were also injured in the clashes.

In the evening, several parts of Bahrain witnessed protests against the Diraz attack. The demonstrators expressed their solidarity with Sheikh Qassim and the victims of Tuesday's raid.

Qassim, the spiritual leader of Bahrain's dissolved opposition bloc the al-Wefaq National Islamic Society, is under house arrest. He was stripped of his nationality last June over accusations that he used his position to serve foreign interests and promote sectarianism and violence.

Despite denying the charges, the cleric was handed a suspended one-year prison term and ordered to pay a fine last week.

### ■ Iraqis protest Bahrain crackdown

In a show of support for the Bahraini nation's cause, Iraqi nationals held demonstrations outside Bahrain's

Embassy in Baghdad and its Consulate in Najaf to denounce the deadly Diraz raid.

The protests were called by Iraqi influential cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, the al-Sumaria news website reported. The participants in the Najaf rally called on Manama to end Qassim's house arrest.

### ■ Iran MPs blast Manama

Additionally, 154 Iranian lawmakers strongly condemned the Bahraini regime's crimes and the verdict against Sheikh Qassim.

"Unfortunately, the Bahraini administration has issued a cruel ruling against Sheikh Qassim... based on false charges in an unwise and sectarian move," the MPs said in a statement.

The statement added that the Iranian nation is gravely concerned about Qassim's verdict and Tuesday's raid on Diraz, which took place after the United States President Donald Trump's trip to the region, and with the green light of the U.S. and Britain as well as the House of Saud regime support.

It further warned that the House of Khalifah regime's continuation of its "anti-religion, inhumane" policies as well as Manama's disregard of people's legitimate demands would have "unpredictable consequences."

Lebanon's Hezbollah also issued a statement warning Bahrain of "serious unanticipated repercussions" if

anything happens to Qassim.

### ■ 5 dead as security forces clash with protesters

Elsewhere, five people were killed in Bahrain after security forces launched an operation near the home of the kingdom's Shia-Muslim spiritual leader and his supporters responded with violence.

The raid on Tuesday took place in Diraz, the home village of Ayatollah Isa Qassim and the site of a sit-in encampment of his followers.

Security forces opened fire and killed the five "outlaws", Bahrain's Interior Ministry said in statement.

It said 286 people had been arrested, including "fugitives" who had escaped from Jau prison.

The violence is likely to raise tensions in Bahrain and the region. Daily anti-regime rallies have been held in the tiny Persian Gulf state since the popular uprising began in February 2011.

The demonstrators are demanding that the House of Khalifah relinquish power and let a just system representing all Bahrainis be established.

Scores of people have been killed and hundreds of others wounded or detained amid Manama's crackdown on dissent and discrimination against the country's Shia majority.

(Source: agencies)

## Trump's Anti-Iranian Gambit

**1→** nuclear deal, and ironically, outside their rhetorical flourishes, so has the Trump administration. The rest of the world has accepted the legitimacy of the nuclear deal and Iran has indicated that it will fulfill its obligations in accordance with the nuclear deal.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of such anti-Iranian rhetoric is that President Trump has turned a blind eye to Iran's internal political dynamics. Domestically, Iran is undergoing a massive transfor-

mation caused by technology, evolving civic culture, and a growing commitment on the part of the youth to control their destiny. The mood has changed in Iran and pronouncedly the public pulse is in favor of integrating into the world economy and breaking from years of strategic isolation. Two groups: youth and women, have overwhelmingly supported Rouhani in his re-election, and are hopeful that he will lift social restrictions and normalize ties with the West. Demo-

graphics has become destiny in Iran, as it has caught up with Iran's internal politics. The religious right has lost its ideological and political appeal. Iranian elections are yet another testament to the social power prevailing over established authority, with the power of ICTs and social media playing a crucial role in Rouhani's victory. President Rouhani will face many formidable challenges ahead, but he has secured a resounding public endorsement—at least for now. This is the time

when diplomacy, dialogue, and engagement with Iran should take precedence and should be utilized as a means of resolving conflicts and disputes—regionally or otherwise.

*Mahmood Monshipouri, PhD, teaches Middle Eastern Politics at San Francisco State University and University of California, Berkeley. He is the editor, most recently, of Inside the Islamic Republic: Social Change in the Post-Khomeini Iran (NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).*

## ATR Deputy CEO: European Banks Admit Cooperation Terms and Conditions with BIM

European banks accepted terms and conditions set for cooperating with the Bank of Industry and Mine (BIM), the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

For his part, Deputy Chief Executive of ATR Plane Mfg. Company Giovanni said: "Banking sanctions have not created any hurdle for plane

sales contracts for the Islamic Republic of Iran and readied to make their utmost collaboration for transferring money for plane purchase contract."

Although some western banks did not ready to cooperate with the Iranian banks, "We have established cooperation with the banks in Italy and France, so that they expressed their readiness to cooperate with the

transfer of money with Iran in this regard."

Elsewhere in his remarks, he emphasized: "When the contract party and banks forced to verify the opposite party, this move will cost dearly."

In the end, he said: "Under such circumstances, we have found banks that are ready to cooperate with Iranian banks."



## Toure and agent to donate £100k to Manchester attack victims

Yaya Toure and his agent will each donate £50,000 to victims of the suicide bomb attack in Manchester.

An explosion at the Manchester Arena left 22 people dead and a further 59 injured on Monday following an Ariana Grande concert.



In the wake of the attack, the names of some victims were revealed, with eight-year-old Saffie Rose Roussos being the youngest identified among teenagers and adults.

but Manchester City midfielder Toure is digging into his pockets to help those affected.

“The news an eight-year-old girl went to see her favourite singer and didn’t return home is too much to

bear,” his agent, Dimitri Seluk, told Sky Sports News.

“Yaya and I want to help. We talked this morning about what happened and he asked me what he thought we could do.

“We have agreed to donate £50,000 each to help the victims of this terrible crime. It doesn’t matter whether the victims are from Manchester or not.

“Those of us lucky enough to work every day in football can do so because of the generosity of fans across the world.

“Yaya is from Cote D’Ivoire, I am Russian. It doesn’t matter. Today is a chance for those of us in football to help out.

(Source: Goal)

## Arsenal face defensive crisis ahead of FA Cup final

Arsenal face a defensive crisis ahead of Saturday’s FA Cup final against Chelsea with Gabriel ruled out with a knee injury and Laurent Koscielny suspended after being red-carded against Everton last weekend.

With Shkodran Mustafi also an injury doubt, manager Arsene Wenger is running out of central defensive options.

The only good news was that Brazil defender Gabriel’s injury is not as bad as first feared when he was taken off on a stretcher in Sunday’s league finale.

“Gabriel is out for six to eight weeks,” Wenger told a news conference on Wednesday. “We had a scare about his cruciate but it’s medial. He avoids surgery.

“Shkodran Mustafi, we have some worries, because he is still sick at the moment. He has not trained yet,” said Wenger.

“It’s unbelievable and unpredictable and we are hit hard in a position where we need to be strong on Saturday. We have to find solutions and hopefully I can find those solutions.”

Per Mertesacker came on for Gabriel for his first action of the season against Everton and look set for a place in Saturday’s final squad.

(Source: Reuters)

## Terry hits back at critics over Chelsea leaving celebrations

John Terry has hit back at criticism over his controversial celebrations during the defender’s last ever game for Chelsea at Stamford Bridge, insisting that he ‘couldn’t care less’ what people think.



Terry organised for himself to be substituted after 26 minutes of Chelsea’s last game of the season against Sunderland, who had agreed before kick-off to put the ball out of play at the agreed time.

The fact that Terry had arranged to be substituted during the game and disrupted the fixture caused anger among some fans - but the 36-year-old said that the reaction hasn’t affected him.

John Terry has hit back at critics of his substitution in his last game at Stamford Bridge

‘I couldn’t care less, I promise you,’ he said. ‘All I care about is celebrating with my Chelsea fans. Me and them have a wonderful rapport and have done for 22 years. Nothing that people write or say can ever get in the way of that.

‘If that’s the way I want to go out, that’s the way I go out because I’ve been here 22 years, I’ve won so many trophies — so if I wanted to play one minute and come off, I would have done.

‘I wanted to play 26 minutes because the shirt number means a lot to me and the supporters so as long as they are happy — and I was over the moon with the reception — I promise you I could not care less.’

Terry is likely to be on the bench for Saturday’s FA Cup final against Arsenal, with Antonio Conte returning to his first-choice back three of Gary Cahill, David Luiz and Cesar Azpilicueta.

(Source: Sun)

# Supreme Court upholds 21-month prison sentence for Lionel Messi

Spain’s Supreme Court on Wednesday upheld a 21-month suspended prison sentence for Barcelona star Lionel Messi in his appeal over three counts of tax fraud, a judicial source confirmed.

However, the Barcelona star’s father, Jorge Messi, has seen his sentence reduced from 21 to 15 months for his cooperation in returning some of the defrauded money.

Neither is likely to serve any jail time, given that under Spanish law a tax prison sentence under two years can be served under probation.

Messi and his father were first sentenced on July 6 last year but launched an appeal, with prosecutors eventually asking the Spanish Supreme Court to review the sentences last month.

Prosecutors in last year’s case judged that Messi and his father had used tax havens in Belize and Uruguay as well as shell companies in the U.K. and Switzerland to avoid paying taxes totalling €4.1 million on earnings from image rights between 2007 and 2009.

The five-time World Player of the Year was also ordered to pay a fine of around €2m at the time, while his father was fined €1.5m.

When news of the investigation first broke in the summer of 2013, Jorge Messi, acting on behalf of the Messis, is reported to have paid over €5m in arrears and extra charges -- he is also believed to have paid €10m in taxes due on the image rights income for 2010 and 2011.

Those actions are behind the six-month reduction in his sentence.

Messi said during last year’s trial that he signed many documents when he was younger without reading their contents and had visited a notary’s office to set up a company to handle his finances without understanding what was going on.

But Mario Maza, the state attorney representing the tax authorities at the trial, said he found it unlikely that Messi knew nothing about the situation.



“It could be that they are inexperienced with tax matters and the law and are not able to set up their own companies, but they are able to understand what paying your taxes means,” he added.

Messi is currently in talks over a contract renewal with Barcelona, with his current terms due to expire at the end of next season.

(Source: ESPN)

## F1 to hold minute’s silence for Manchester victims



Formula One organisers are planning to hold a minute’s silence before Sunday’s Monaco Grand Prix as a mark of respect for the victims of the Manchester bomb attack.

A Formula One Management source told Reuters the 10 teams, a majority of them British-based, had also agreed to carry the #Manchester hashtag on their cars.

A statement was expected later.

Monday night’s attack in the northern English city, claimed by the Islamic State militant group, killed 22 people at a concert venue packed with children, and wounded dozens more.

The Cannes Film Festival, under way just down the French Riviera coast from Monaco, held a minute’s

silence on Tuesday for what organisers condemned as an “attack on culture, youth and joyfulness”.

An appearance by triple Formula One world champion Lewis Hamilton to promote the Disney franchise “Cars” was also cancelled “out of respect for the casualties and all of those impacted”, according to the film’s publicist.

A deadly truck attack in the nearby Riviera city of Nice on July 14 last year killed 86 people who had gathered to watch the fireworks on Bastille Day.

Ross Brawn, Formula One’s managing director for motorsport, was born near Manchester and is a fervent supporter of the Manchester United soccer club.

(Source: Reuters)

## Golf champion ready to switch clubhouse for military barracks



Kim Si Woo might have become the youngest ever winner of the Players Championship in golf, but the 21-year-old from Seoul won’t be receiving too much special treatment back in South Korea.

That’s because all able-bodied South Korean men must complete military service between the ages of 18 and 35 as the country is still technically at war with neighbor North Korea,

While exemptions are offered to athletes who medal at the Olympic Games or win gold at the Asian Games, significant achievements on the PGA Tour do not yet warrant an exception.

“I really wish I could have that benefit,” Kim, who is only the second

South Korean after K.J. Choi to reign supreme at Sawgrass, told reporters through a translator Sunday.

“However, regardless of me winning this tournament I really have to go to the military service and I’ve already decided I’m going to go so I’m ready for that.”

When asked when he will take time out to complete his service, which will last for at least 21 months, Kim said he still wasn’t sure.

Kim’s triumph saw him replace Australia’s Adam Scott as the youngest ever winner of the Players Championship, which is regarded as golf’s unofficial fifth major.

(Source: CNN)

## Djokovic admits to being in crisis

Novak Djokovic fell to the clay and looked to the sky — after three hours on court, the elusive French Open title was finally his at the third time of asking.

There were no tears like Roger Federer seven years before him, but this was a moment in history and the boy from Belgrade had become the first player to simultaneously hold all four grand slam titles since Rod Laver in 1969.

“I remember how difficult it was to arrive at that moment,” Djokovic told CNN, reflecting on his 2016 triumph ahead of this year’s tournament -- which starts Sunday.

“The hours, commitment, and practice. Several years of not managing to make that final step. And then finally being able to make it and sharing that with the closest people in my life.

“It was an unforgettable moment.”

Djokovic had fought back from a set down to beat an ascendant Andy Murray, calling upon all his steel and reserve, arriving at the pinnacle of his sport.

But while the outside world looked on and marveled, it would not prove easy to keep on climbing.

In the 12 months since, Djokovic has failed to add to that long-awaited 12th grand slam title, surrendering his world No. 1 ranking to Murray in the process.

In a bid to arrest his decline, Djokovic recently parted ways with his entire coaching team. He’s turned to Andre Agassi, hoping for some form of “shock therapy” as he



plots his path back to the top.

“I am experiencing a little bit of a crisis, if you want to call it that,” he admitted, having confronted what he calls “the other direction” after five years of success.

Djokovic, who turned 30 earlier this month, believes that “finally being able to make it” in tennis’ only clay-court grand slam may have diminished his motivation going forward.

He is the first to acknowledge how “very fortunate” he’s been to have achieved so much, ever since “practically the beginning” of his career.

But this time something was different.

“There were so many emotions involved and so many things that were on the line,” he said. “When I was able to achieve that, I was just so empty.”

Djokovic needed time to recuperate and take stock of what he had achieved.

Instead, he was launched straight into the defense of his 2015 Wimbledon crown, before a trip to Rio de Janeiro for the Olympics.

And he simply couldn’t cope, crashing out to world No. 28 Sam Querrey at the All England Club before falling — this time in tears — at the first hurdle to Juan Martin del Potro in the Olympic tennis tournament.

“Superman never loses,” they lamented in his native Serbia, bemused and shaken by their hero’s new-found fallibility.

But it kept getting worse.

And when he was sent packing from this year’s Australian Open in the second round by unheralded wildcard Denis Istomin — departing at the earliest stage of any grand slam since 2009 — Djokovic was haunted by doubts he would ever be the same again.

“It’s all part of the sport,” he shrugged. “I’m feeling much better now than I was maybe three or four months ago. I’m excited to go back to Paris again, obviously.

“It’s been a year and it feels like it was yesterday.”

(Source: CNN)



# Iran stunned by Zambia at FIFA U-20 World Cup

**S P O R T S** Iran squandered a two-goal advantage to lose 4-2 to Zambia in the FIFA U-20 World Cup Korea Republic 2017 on Wednesday.

Reza Shakari put the Persians in front in the 7th minute. He extended the lead in the 49th minute from the Penalty spot.

The tide began to turn six minutes later. A hoofed ball by Solomon Sakala found namesake Fashion who cut inside and volleyed low to half the deficit, then drew level with one of the goals of the tournament so far. A lovely flowing move down the right resulted in Emmanuel Banda's flick being slotted home by Enock Mwepu.

With momentum flowing fiercely for those in green, Banda put them ahead following a goalmouth scramble before Patson Daka gave the win some gloss as he picked out the bottom corner from 20 yards.

Iran meet Portugal in Group C on Saturday.

The 2017 FIFA U-20 World Cup is the 21st edition of the competition, the biennial international men's youth football championship contested by the under-20 national teams of the member associations of FIFA, since its inception in 1977 as the FIFA World Youth Championship.

The tournament is hosted by South Korea between 20 May and 11 June 2017.

Along with Japan and Mexico, Korea Republic became the third nation to have hosted all of FIFA Men's international competitions, namely the 2002 FIFA World Cup, the 2001 Confederations Cup and the 2007 FIFA U-17 World Cup.



## Iran advance to AFC U-20 Futsal Championship final

**S P O R T S** Iran advanced to the 2017 AFC U-20 Futsal Championship final after a resounding 7-5 victory over Thailand on Wednesday.

In a clash between two futsal giants, Thailand's Panut Kittipanuwong opened the scoring in the first 30 seconds, but Iran's skipper Touhid Lotfi responded moments later to level the score.

Iran looked to extend their lead at the 10th minute, but a swift Thai counterattack ensued and Kittipanuwong duly doubled the host nation's advantage.

Iran, however, found an equalizer once again, when Mohammad Taheri's free kick found the back of the net after Thailand received their fifth foul in the first-half.

Both sides began to play more cautiously thereafter, conscious that another foul would mean offering their opponents a penalty kick, and both sides seemed content to reach the break with two goals apiece in Bangkok Arena.

Sarawut Phalaphruek and Worrapluch Jiwjaratrong's crisscrosses in the Iranians' penalty area were excep-



tional but custodian Abolfazi Shahbazi dealt with any threats.

All was almost said and done when Iran's Mohammad Jame broke the deadlock in the 39th minute giving Ali Sane'i's side the lead, but it was to be short-lived as Jiwjaratrong's short-range strike gave Miguel Rodrigo's

side a chance to fight again, forcing the game into extra-time.

Lotfi then picked up his second goal of the match in the 43rd minute, before Thailand's power play handed Muhammad Osamanmusa the opportunity to etch his name on the scoresheet in the last second of the first-half of extra-time, the-afc.com wrote.

Thailand committed their sixth second-half foul, giving Hamidreza Karimi the opportunity to score through a penalty, before Lotfi claimed his third a minute later.

Kittipanuwong's goal in the 48th minute narrowed the margin to just one goal but their power play backfired when Hamzeh Kamdkhoda slid the ball into an unguarded goal, sending the Iranians to the final and Rodrigo's side into the third-place play-off on Thursday.

The tournament will serve as qualifying for the futsal tournament at the 2018 Summer Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires, with the winner and the runner-up qualifying for the boys' tournament, where they will be represented by their U-18 representative teams.

## Sarmayeh Bank drawn with Thailand representative in Asian Women's Club Volleyball Championship

**S P O R T S** Sarmayeh Bank of Iran have been drawn in Pool A of the 2017 Asian Women's Club Volleyball Championship.

The Iranian team have been pitted against Kazakhstan's Kazakhstan Altay, Thailand's Thailand Supreme Chonburi and Taiwan Power of Chinese Taipei.

Iran will start the competition with a match against Supreme Chonburi on Thursday.

Pool B consists of Japan's Hisamitsu Springs, Tianjin Bohai Bank from China, Vietnamese Vietinbank and Rebisco-PSL from the Philippines.

The 2017 Asian Women's Club Volleyball Championship is the 18th edition of the competition an international volleyball club tournament organized by the Asian Volleyball Confederation (AVC) with Volleyball Federation of the Republic of Kazakhstan (VFRK).

The 2017 Asian Women's Club Vol-

leyball Championship will be held in Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan from 25 to 31 May 2017.

The tournament will serve as the Asian qualifiers for the 2018 FIVB Volleyball Women's Club World Championship with the champions qualifying for the world championship.



"Given the heightened security threat announced by the Government, and recognising that this is a developing situation, we have given this careful consideration. We strongly believe, in the interests of everyone, this is

the correct course of action. We are sure our fans will understand this decision.

"Having consulted with the Metropolitan Police, Hammersmith and Fulham Council and other authorities, we know the emergency services would have been as professional as ever, but we would not want in any way to divert important resources by holding an additional, non-ticketed event on the streets of London.

"Furthermore, as a mark of respect, our players will wear black armbands at the FA Cup final against Arsenal on Saturday. Chelsea Football Club will also make a donation to a fund supporting the victims of this horrific attack."

Arsenal confirmed they had cancelled a screening of the Wembley clash that was due to be shown at Emirates Stadium, adding that no victory parade would take place should they win the match.

(Source: Soccerway)

## Sharapova handed wild card for Rogers Cup in Toronto

Maria Sharapova's comeback from a doping ban will include an appearance at the Rogers Cup in August after the former world number one was granted a wild card by the organizers of the Toronto tournament on Tuesday.

Sharapova returned to the court last month after serving a 15-month suspension when she tested positive for a banned substance at last year's Australian Open and the Russian has so far been handed three wild cards to play WTA events. The Russian reached the semi-finals of her first event back on the tour in Stuttgart but was surprisingly denied a wild card for the French Open with organizers uneasy about fast-tracking her into a tournament she has won twice. Considered one of the biggest names in tennis, Sharapova will attempt to qualify for Wimbledon in July and has been invited to play in the Toronto event that serves as one of the main

warm-up tournaments for the U.S. Open.

### ■ ADVERTISING

Rogers Cup tournament director Karl Hale called Sharapova a "fan favorite" with the 30-year-old saying she was keen to compete at an event she last played in 2014.

"I'm really looking forward to coming back to Canada," Sharapova told reporters. "This is one of the biggest events of the year and I hope to play my best tennis that week."

Canada's top female player, Eugenie Bouchard remains one of Sharapova's fiercest critics and maintains the Russian "cheater" should have been banned for life and not welcomed back to tennis so enthusiastically.

The pair met in a feisty second round encounter in Madrid earlier this month with the 23-year-old Canadian emerging a 7-5 2-6 6-4 winner.

(Source: Reuters)



### ACL 2017 Rd of 16 - 1st

### Leg: Iran's Persepolis 0 – 0 Qatar's Lekhwiya

Mehdi Taremi's second-half penalty miss ensured Persepolis and Lekhwiya will go into the second-leg of the 2017 AFC Champions League Round of 16 with it all to play for after the sides ended scoreless in the first-leg on Tuesday.

The tournament's leading marksman Taremi headed over early on for the hosts before Luiz Junior's fizzing effort from distance struck the post on 15 minutes in a first-half of few chances at Azadi Stadium.

Mohsen Mosalman fired wide from just inside the box shortly after the restart as Persepolis sought to gain the upper hand while Nam Tae-hee's curling effort was well tipped over by Alireza Beiranvand as the hour approached.

But with 10 minutes remaining the home side were given the perfect opportunity to win it when Ali Afif nudged Taremi in the penalty area, only for the forward to see his spot kick pushed away by Qasem Burhan.

The custodian then made arguably an even better save when he got down low to deny Vahid Amiri from close range with four minutes to play to leave the tie finely balanced ahead of the return fixture in Doha next Tuesday.

(Source: AFC)



### ACL 2017 Rd of 16 - 1st

### Leg: Iran's Esteghlal Khuzestan beaten by Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal came back from going a goal behind to notch up a 2-1 first-leg win over Iran's Esteghlal Khuzestan in the Round of 16 in the 2017 AFC Champions League on Tuesday.

Hassan Beit Saeid gave the Iranian team – who were designated the home side for the first-leg despite the game being played in Oman – the lead three minutes before the halftime break, only for goals from Abdullah Al Dossary and Carlos Eduardo within six second-half minutes to earn Al Hilal an advantage ahead of the second-leg.

Esteghlal Khuzestan had shaded the opening exchanges and took the lead in the 42nd minute when Peyman Shirzadi crossed from the left and Beit Saeid nodded the ball beyond Abdullah Al Muaiof in the Al Hilal goal.

But Al Dossary's low shot from just inside the penalty area levelled the scores for Ramon Diaz's side in the 51st minute and, six minutes later, Eduardo steered his header home following Nicolas Milesi's corner to put Al Hilal in charge ahead of the second-leg next week.

(Source: AFC)

### Los Ticos peg back Portugal

Portugal saw their start to the FIFA U-20 World Cup Korea Republic 2017 continue to stutter as they relinquished a lead to draw 1-1 with Costa Rica.

The two sides had shown their passing prowess in their opening encounters with Iran and Zambia, but both had also left with nothing. Among today's elegant and incisive interchanges, Diogo Goncalves stood out, providing Xande Silva with the second of two early chances – a superb through-ball to send him clear – but Los Ticos keeper Erick Pineda denied him superbly.

Pineda came within a whisker of stopping Goncalves opening the scoring, too, getting hands to the Benfica man's penalty – given for handball – but parrying it just inside the post.

Immediately after the break, déjà vu struck. Same end, another penalty – this time for a foul on Jonathan Martinez – and another unfortunate goalkeeping error. Diogo Costa stopped Jimmy Marin's effort, only to see it ricochet in off his knee.

Portugal put pedal to the metal for the win with attacking substitutions but a red card for captain Ruben Dias undermined their efforts as they pressured with little end result.

(Source: FIFA)

### Yahya Golmohammadi appointed as Iran's Tractor Sazi coach

Yahya Golmohammadi was named as new head coach of Tractor Sazi football team on Wednesday.

The 46-year-old coach has signed a one-year contract with the Tabriz-based team.

He started his coaching career at Saba in 2008 and led them to a third-place finish behind Persepolis and Sepahan, which is the best result for Saba in Iran Professional League in the club's history.

Golmohammadi, who has played most of his professional career for Persepolis, has also coached Naft Tehran, Persepolis and Zob Ahan.

Zob Ahan won Iran's Hazfi Cup twice under leadership of Golmohammadi.

He replaced Amir Ghalenoei, who parted company with the team at the end of the season.

Abdollah Viesi, Faraz Kamalvand, Javad Nekounam and Rasoul Khatibi also were candidates to take charge of the team.

(Source: Tasnim)



# “Darkened Water” named best film at Australia SCINEMA festival

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian director Alireza Dehqan's documentary “Darkened Water” (“Owsia”) has been picked as best film at the 14th SCINEMA International Science Film Festival in Australia, the organizers have announced.

The film is about an aqueduct in the central Iranian city of Yazd that has supplied water to the city for 2,500 years. Now, it is rotting away due to bureaucracy and corruption.

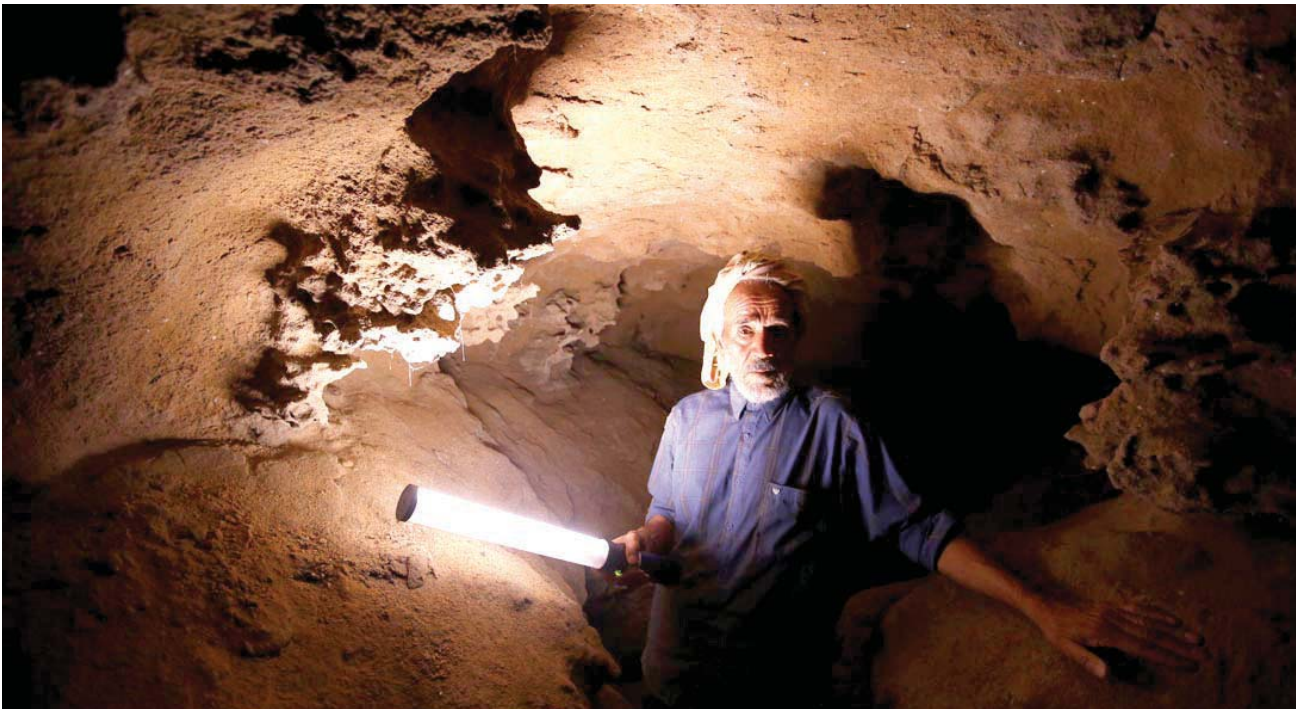
“A fascinating well-made film about this living UNESCO heritage site, social politics and the complex issue of water rights,” the jury of the festival wrote about the film.

SCINEMA, which is the largest science film festival in the southern hemisphere, is being organized every year in collaboration with the BBC Earth.

Winners were announced before the screening of the films selected to be shown at the festival, which will be held at Palace Cinemas in Adelaide, Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra and Perth from June 7 to 19.

Science features, shorts, documentaries, animated and experimental films from filmmakers around the world will be shown during the event.

The award for best documentary went



A scene from Iranian director Alireza Dehqan's documentary “Darkened Water”

to “Fix and Release” by Canadian director Scott Dobson while Kim Albright from Australia was crowned best director for

“The Purple Plain”.

“Einstein-Rosen” by Spanish director Olga Osorio was selected as best short

film and the special jury award was presented to British writer/director Alice Wade for her “Test Tube Babes”.

## Iranian Film Festival in Zurich to honor Dariush Mehrjui

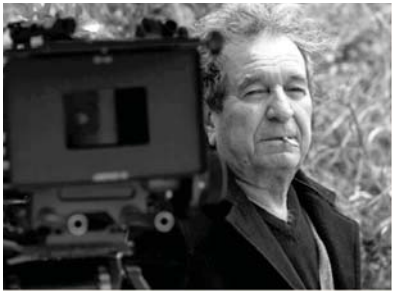
**A R T TEHRAN** — Veteran Iranian filmmaker Dariush Mehrjui will be honored for his lifetime achievements during the 3rd Iranian Film Festival in Zurich, Switzerland.

He will be awarded a Golden Cyrus Cylinder at the opening ceremony of the weeklong festival on June 1, the organizers announced.

They also plan to screen his acclaimed movies “The Cow” and “Leila” in a special program.

The festival also plans to pay tribute to legendary Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami by screening “76 Minutes and 15 Seconds with Abbas Kiarostami”, a montage film made by Kiarostami's close friend Seifollah Samadian, and Kiarostami's last film “Take Me Home”.

A lineup of Iranian films has been selected for screening in the official



competition.

Among the films are “Being Born” by Mohsen Abdolvahab , “Inversion” by Behnam Behzadi, “Polaris” by Sudابه Moradian , “Breath” by Narges Abyar and “A Long Day” by Babak Bahrambeigi.

The lineup also includes “I” by Soheil Beiraghi, “Life+1 Day” by Saeid Rustai, “Blind Spot” by Mehdi Golestaneh, and “The Descendants” by Yaser Talebi.

## “24 Frames” good ending for Kiarostami’s career: film expert

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian film expert Mohammad Atebbai said on Tuesday Abbas Kiarostami's “24 Frames” was a good ending for the career of the world-renowned filmmaker.

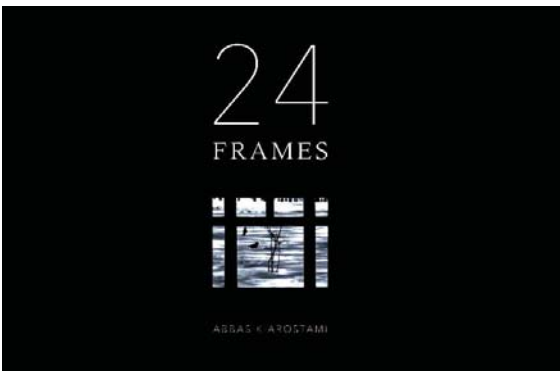
He made the remarks in an interview with the Persian service of ISNA after watching the film in the 70th Anniversary Events at the Cannes Film Festival.

“It is a masterful and innovative film that shows his great expertise in cinema,” he stated.

“24 Frames” was completed months before Kiarostami's death in July 2016.

“It began with musings on epochal paintings and evolved with the photographs I had taken over the years,” Kiarostami once said about his film.

“Each of these frames is in essence 4 minutes and



A poster for Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami's final film “24 Frames”

## “RIP Mr. Bond”: 007 actor Roger Moore dead at 89

**LONDON (Reuters)** — Actor Roger Moore, who earned international fame playing British secret agent James Bond in seven movies, died of cancer on Tuesday at the age of 89, his family said.

His 12 years as action man 007, the fictitious spy with a voracious appetite for danger, made Moore a millionaire and a heartthrob the world over, though in reality he was a shy, private man who found some of Bond's escapades embarrassing.

“It is with a heavy heart that we must announce our loving father, Sir Roger Moore, has passed away today in Switzerland after a short but brave battle with cancer,” his three children announced in a statement on the Twitter account.

Tributes poured in from celebrities including actors Russell Crowe and Mia Farrow and from UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund for which he worked as a “goodwill ambassador”.

The official Twitter feed of British composer Andrew Lloyd Webber posted, “Farewell dearest Roger, All our love”, while U.S. reality TV star Kris Jenner dubbed Moore “the ultimate James Bond”.

“Breaking Bad” star Bryan Cranston tweeted: “Saddened @sirrogermoore passed today. Had a great

chat about acting & life 6 mo. ago. Generous and kind. RIP Mr. Bond.”

The son of a London policeman, Moore once said the upper-crust image he portrayed both on and off the screen was a carefully nurtured cover for his shyness and timidity.

“I couldn't walk into a restaurant on my own for 20 or 30 years ...” he once said, saying that all changed when he found fame in the role. “(But) that's not really me. Timid me would rather stay home and have a sandwich.”

Moore said he was terrified by the stunts he had to perform as Bond and would steel himself before facing the cameras with a mixture of valium and beer.

Moore's big breakthrough as an actor came in 1962, when he won the part of “The Saint” in a popular television series of the same name. In this role, he honed his image of the urbane Englishman with a stream of damsels to rescue from distress.

In 1973 came the role of James Bond, writer Ian Fleming's suave secret agent, and it held cinemagoers across the world in thrall. The Bond films were said to have earned Moore 14 million pounds (\$22 million).

Moore, who replaced Sean Connery as 007 and was the third actor to take on the role, starred in seven Bond

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## Iranian cartoonists awarded at Romanian festival

**A R T TEHRAN** — Five Iranian artists were honored at the 11th edition of the HumoDeva International Cartoon Contest, which was held in Deva, Romania on May 12.

EVA International Cartoon Cont



Arash Forughi received the Special Prize for Portrait, while Sogand Seyju won the Special Prize of “ACCES” Association.

In addition, Javad Takju, Shahram Shirzadi and Ehsan Ganji, all from Iran, received honorable mentions.

Rodrigo da Silveira from Brazil and Gabi Rusu from Romania both received the festival's gold prizes, while Alecus from El Salvador and Valentin Chibrit from Romania were awarded

silver and bronze prizes respectively.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### IAF to host Asma-ul-Husna exhibition

**A R T TEHRAN** — The 13th Asma-ul-Husna Annual Poster Exhibition that displays typographical works featuring the names of Allah, will open at the Iranian Artists Forum (IAF) in Tehran on Friday.

Over 60 artworks by Iranian artists will go on display at the exhibit, which will run until June 5.

The winners of this year's exhibit will be announced during the opening ceremony at Jalil Shahnaz Hall of the IAF, which can be found on Musavi St., off Taleqani Ave.

## Ariana Grande returns to U.S. following Manchester bombing

**NEW YORK (Reuters)** — Ariana Grande returned to the United States on Tuesday, one day after a suicide bomber killed 22 people at the singer's concert in Manchester, England, as questions lingered over whether she would continue her European tour.

Grande, 23, was seen in photographs posted on the Daily Mail website walking down the steps of a private plane at an airport in her hometown of Boca Raton, Florida, and being met by family members.

The Daily Mail images showed the diminutive pop star dressed casually in sweats and appearing downcast as she greeted her boyfriend, the rapper Mac Miller, on the tarmac and getting into a waiting car.

Grande had not been seen publicly since an explosion ripped through the packed Manchester Arena at the end of her performance there. Some of the 22 people who died in the attack were teens or young girls. Grande was apparently unharmed.

British police have identified the man suspected of carrying out the massacre as 22-year-old Salman Abedi, who was born in Manchester to parents of Libyan origin. Islamic State claimed responsibility for what it called revenge against “Crusaders,” but there appeared to be contradictions in its account of the operation.

In her only statement so far, Grande took to Twitter some five hours after the bombing to describe herself as “broken” in the aftermath of the attack.

“From the bottom of my heart, i am so so sorry. i don't have words,” she said in the tweet.

Grande was performing in Manchester during the European leg of a tour to promote her third album, “Dangerous Woman,” which also has her scheduled to visit London, Belgium, Poland, Germany, Switzerland and France in the coming weeks.

Despite speculation that she would cancel the rest of the tour, no formal announcement had been made as of Tuesday. Grande's manager, Scooter Braun, did not respond to requests for comment by Reuters.

“We mourn the lives of children and loved ones taken by this cowardly act,” Braun said in a statement posted on Twitter on Monday evening. “We ask all of you to hold the victims, their families and all those affected in your hearts and prayers.”

Grande, a native of Boca Raton, starred in the Broadway musical “13” and on the Nickelodeon TV series “Victorious” before releasing her solo debut album, “Yours Truly.”

around them automatically according to the chosen patterns.

Children can scan their drawn art and have it incorporated into an animated world of colorful rockets and vehicles moving on a rollercoaster-like highway.



Flowers are pictured on the star of late actor Roger Moore on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles, California U.S., May 23, 2017. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)

movies including “The Man with the Golden Gun”, “The Spy who Loved Me”, “Moonraker” and “Octopussy”.

He moved to the United States to become a tax exile.

“I don't see why a chap shouldn't do what he likes and live where he wants on his money, and the British government, which allows talent to go abroad because of taxation, has only itself to blame,” he said in an interview in 1989.

## Japanese interactive art exhibition dazzles Beijing

**BEIJING (Reuters)** — A new digital interactive exhibition in Beijing allows visitors to create their own art and see it immediately reflected in the work being displayed around them.

The project, “Living Digital Forest and

Future Park”, is the first to be opened in China by the Japanese art collective teamLab.

The Tokyo-based company said its work aims to blend art, science and technology into an interactive experience.

The Beijing exhibition includes a digital garden of floating flowers and forest animals, and a crystal universe of light sculptures.

Visitors can use their smartphones to send commands to change the artworks