

Salehi: U.S. not meddling in uranium contract with Kazakhstan **2**

South Pars 2nd development stage requires \$20-30b **4**

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Oil output capacity seen rising 25% in 5 years: Zanganeh

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh has said he sees the country adding 25 percent to its oil production capacity in the next five years. Development of new fields as well as improved oil recovery from mature reservoirs should allow the country to have the capacity to pump about five million barrels per day (bpd), he added. He made the remarks in an interview with Reuters on the sidelines of the 172nd official OPEC meeting which was held in Vienna on May 25. Iran is currently producing four million bpd. The country is also going to ink deals with oil majors this year to help

reaching its planned goals for the oil industry. "Hopefully this year Iran will sign oil deals with France's Total, Russia's Lukoil as well as Danish Maersk and maybe Indonesia's Pertamina." Iran sees no limitations in negotiation with the U.S. oil companies and these companies are limited by the laws of the United States Congress, Shana reported. On Thursday, IRNA quoted Zanganeh as saying that Iran's main policy in oil industry for the upcoming years is to expand destination markets. "We don't want our markets to be limited to just a few Asian countries anymore."

IRGC to unveil first surface-to-surface ballistic missile

POLITICS TEHRAN — Days after Washington expressed hope for an end to Iran's missile program under reelected President Hassan Rouhani, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps said it will unveil its first surface-to-surface ballistic missile some time in the future, without elaborating. "The first ground-to-ground ballistic missile to be unveiled in the future will be named 'Dezful'," Fars news agency quoted Amiral Hajizadeh, head of the Guard's aerospace division, as saying. Hajizadeh was making the comments in the city of Dezful, southwestern Iran,

which is said to have come under first ground-to-ground missile attack by the Iraqi army in mid-1981, hence, named "the city of missiles". The commander further said: "Iran's third underground factory has been built by the Guards in recent years..." and "we will continue to further develop our missile capabilities forcefully." In October 2015, Iranian state TV showed the first footage of a secret underground missile base with ready-to-fire missiles on the back of trucks, said to be 500 meters (1,600 feet) underground and only the "tip of the iceberg" of the Guard's military might. →2

'Beautiful military equipment' can't buy Middle East peace

ARTICLE
By Mohammad Javad Zarif
Iranian Foreign Minister

As President Trump was being feted in the palaces of the Saudi royal family after concluding a historic arms deal, Iranians were celebrating the outcome of a hard-fought election. The vote manifested the determination of Iran's electorate to continue on the path of moderation and constructive engagement based on mutual respect that brought the world the nuclear deal in 2015.

If past performance is an indicator of future success, another \$110 billion worth of weapons will neither reduce "the burden" on the American military nor support "the long-term security of Saudi Arabia," as the State Department argues.

The last time the Saudis spent that kind of money was when they provided billions to the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein in the 1980s to arm his war of aggression against Iran. Look what that bought them and the world.

At best, Mr. Trump is extorting our Saudi neighbors, milking them for money they do not have. At worst, he could be turning the United States into Saudi Arabia's mercenary in the Middle East, a rather ignominious position for America considering where 15 of the Sept. 11 hijackers came from. →2

Trump gives special prominence to his family and friends: Daniel Pipes

By Javad Heirannia
TEHRAN — Daniel Pipes, president of the Middle East Forum, says Donald Trump "gives a special prominence to his family and his personal friends" in his administration. In an interview with the Tehran Times, Pipes also says, "Trump is the unusual American politician who can largely do whatever he wants."

Following is the full text of the interview:
■ What persons and interest groups have the most influence on Trump?

A: It is said that there are three political parties in the United States: Democrats, Republicans, and the Trump party. Trump is the unusual American politician who can largely do whatever he wants. That said, he cares intensely about the views of two groups of people: the small one of fellow

New York City business leaders and the large one of his voters. So, they are the effective interest groups.

■ Steve Bannon and Stephen Miller were initially called the persons who influence Trump's decisions. Then, speculation focused on Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner. How does Kushner affect Trump's decisions?

A: Again, and unusually, Trump gives a special prominence to his family and his personal friends, who have a much larger role in his administration than is normally the case for a U.S. president. However, Kushner has not given interviews or written on key issues, so we can only guess at his views.

■ Who are the people on the backstage of determining Trump's foreign policy, especially his Middle East policies?

A: You are asking the questions all Washington

is asking. Tillerson at state hardly says anything. McMaster at the National Security Council is discreet. Kushner, as noted above, is an unknown. Nikki Haley at the United Nations seems to report to no one.

■ Which think tanks have effect on Trump's foreign policy?

A: A good question for a conventional president but in this case, there seem to be none, at least so far. The Heritage Foundation has a major role domestically but not in foreign policy. Perhaps a think tank or two will emerge with time.

■ How effective is the Saudi lobby in influencing Trump's foreign policy?

A: At this point, it appears that he is eager for a strong alliance with Riyadh, in part against ISIS, in part against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran reprimands attacks on medical workers, humanitarian staff

Iran's Ambassador to the UN condemned on Thursday attacks on medical and humanitarian staff, facilities and means of transport throughout the world especially in Palestine, Afghanistan, Yemen and Syria.

"These attacks are taking place in various places around the world, but in terms of frequency and ferocity, such attacks in the Middle East are more prevalent," Gholamali Khoshroo told a

UN Security Council open debate on protecting civilians and health centers in armed conflicts.

Following is full text of his speech published by IRNA:

Allow me to begin by thanking the Uruguayan Presidency for convening this open debate. I would also like to express my gratitude to the briefers for their valuable inputs in this debate.

I align myself with the statement by the distinguished Per-

manent Representative of Venezuela on behalf of NAM.

Unfortunately, the issue of the protection of civilians, including their healthcare, in armed conflict, continues to be a recurring tragedy in our time. Mindful of the special significance of medical facilities and the danger their personnel face during conflict, the Security Council adopted resolution 2286 (2016) in response to concerns about attacks and threats against

hospitals and other medical facilities, medical personnel and humanitarian personnel.

Attacks against medical workers and facilities as well as the humanitarian convoys delivering medical supplies, have increased since the adoption of the resolution. Only in 2016, attacks on health care facilities, health workers, ambulances and patients has occurred in 23 countries under these conditions.

(See full text at tehrantimes.com)



Muslims clean mosques in run-up to Ramadan

A few days prior to the fasting month of Ramadan, Muslims get into the ritual of cleaning and dusting community mosques to welcome the holy month.

As cleaning is highly stressed in Islam, cleaning religious centers and mosques begins around 10 days prior to Ramadan. Community members pitch in washing rugs, cleaning the walls with rose water to have their sacred place prepared for the fasting month.

The month of Ramadan is highly regarded among Muslims and is seen a special time for renewing bonds with Allah as well as promoting the spirit of close cooperation in the community.

Are they lucky enough to win Iran oil deals?

ARTICLE
By Mahnaz Abdi
Head of the Economy Desk of the TehranTimes

After the implementation of Iran's landmark nuclear deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), in January 2016, the Iranian oil industry has witnessed a flock of foreign companies willing to participate in different projects.

Reclaiming its share of the global oil market, Iran, once OPEC's second-largest producer, has it on agenda to ramp up crude production especially from the fields it shares with its neighbors.

In this line, boosting production in West Karoun fields (five oilfields the country shares with Iraq at the western part of Iran's southwestern region of Karoun) by 100,000 barrels per day (bpd) to reach 300,000 bpd is the first one among 11 prioritized programs that First Vice-President Es'haq Jahangiri has recently tasked the Oil Ministry with implementing them by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018).

The priority is also attached to the gas fields, especially South Pars gas field, which Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf. The field contains a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves. →4

KSC
INVITATION TO
INTERNATIONAL TENDER
No. 369715
KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY
INTENDS TO PURCHASE
6,000 MT INJECTION
METALLURGICAL COKE
See page 5

International Public Tender Notice (Two Stage)
"Purchase of One Set of Mobile X-Ray Inspection System"
No: 46422119
See Page 3

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Ayatollah Jannati: I confirm health of election

POLITICS TEHRAN — The chairman of the Assembly of Experts has said he confirms the healthiness of the May 19 presidential and council elections, Mehr reported.

Speaking at the assembly's presiding board, Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati also praised the high turnout, saying, "In the Islamic Republic, democracy is real. People are completely free to take part in elections and vote for whoever they like."

He also mentioned that there have been minor election violations, but not enough to change the result.



Cleric hails 73% turnout in presidential election

POLITICS TEHRAN — The interim leader of Tehran Friday prayer has hailed a turnout of 73 percent in the May 19 presidential election.

"The presence of over 41 Iranians and the 73 percent turnout are the source of pride for the Islamic Republic," Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami said, Fars reported.

"Each ballot that was cast was a 'yes' to the Islamic Republic," the cleric stressed.

He also invited the rivals in the presidential election to adopt a path to friendship for the four years ahead.



Tehran Justice Department frees those arrested for election-related violations

POLITICS TEHRAN — Most of those who had been arrested on May 19 for electoral crimes have been released, according to the Tehran Province's chief justice.

Speaking to Mehr on Friday, Qolamhossein Esmaili said on the day of election 120 people had been arrested on elections-related charges.

He said although most of them have been freed, their cases remain open. Esmaili added officials who have been reportedly involved in the crimes will be subpoenaed.



Zarif congratulates Lebanon on liberation day

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif has offered his congratulations to the Lebanese people and government as well as the Hezbollah resistance movement on the 17th anniversary of the liberation of South Lebanon from the Israeli occupation.

In separate messages to Lebanese Foreign Minister Jubran Basil and Hezbollah Secretary General Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah on Thursday, Zarif hailed the anniversary of the country's victory over the Tel Aviv regime, Tasnim reported.



Iran's nuclear chief: U.S. not meddling in uranium contract with Kazakhstan

POLITICS TEHRAN — The head of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran has rejected as "incorrect" recent reports by some British media over the role of Kazakhstan and the new U.S. administration in the suspension of a contract to export uranium ore to the Islamic Republic.

Speaking to Tasnim on Friday, Ali Akbar Salehi said the U.S. government has already announced that it has agreed to the contract, according to which Kazakhstan would export 950 tons of uranium to Iran.



Majlis to elect new presiding board

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Majlis is set to elect new members of its presiding board through three days on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday for a period of one year, the second year of this term, ISNA reported.

The presiding board is comprised of a speaker, two deputy speakers, six secretaries, and three inspectors, all of whom are elected by votes of the lawmakers.

Currently Ali Larijani, a center right politician, is the speaker of the Majlis.

Worshippers protest Bahrain crackdown

POLITICS TEHRAN — Thousands of Iranian worshippers rallied in Tehran and other cities on Friday to condemn a recent raid by Bahraini police on the hometown of a pro-democracy cleric that left five of his supporters dead and 286 arrested.

On Tuesday, Bahraini forces raided the northwestern village of Diraz, the hometown of Sheikh Isa Qassim's hometown. The forces clashed with people who had gathered to protect Qassim, and stormed into his house.

After Friday prayers in Tehran, demonstrators took to the streets chanting "Death to the House of Khalifa," referring to the ruling family of Bahrain.

The protesters also chanted "Death to the House of Saud," for Saudi involvement in cracking down on dissent in Bahrain.

According to IRNA news agency, a number of Bahraini refugees were also seen among the protesters.

Bahrain claimed the Tuesday operation in Diraz was carried out to "maintain security and public order."



Protests escalated in Bahrain on Monday, a day before the attack, after a Bahraini court convicted Qassim of financial corruption and sentenced him to a suspended one-year jail term.

Qassim's supporters have been staging protests almost on a daily basis since authorities stripped him of his citizenship last year.

Ever since, the Bahraini government has placed Diraz village under a siege.

The cleric has been campaigning for a share in governance by the Shias who form the great majority in Bahrain. Human rights groups have been criticizing the Bahraini government for isolating the majority in the country.

Iran's Assembly of Experts also issued a

statement on Friday strongly condemning Bahrain for its recent brutal act.

According to the Assembly, Bahrain's inhumane treatment of Sheikh Qassim, aided by the Saudi regime, would create "a tide and a storm that will not subside except with the toppling of the oppressive Al Khalifah system."

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif described the raid as a consequence of the U.S. President Donald Trump's visit to Riyadh over the weekend during which he signed a \$110 billion arms deal with the Saudis.

"First concrete result of POTUS (Trump) cozying up to despots in Riyadh: Deadly attack on peaceful protesters by emboldened Bahrain regime," Zarif tweeted.

He also said on Friday in a New York Times article that a security crackdown in Saudi Arabia "before Mr. Trump's visit — as well as the Bahraini regime's deadly attack on a sit-in immediately afterward — suggest that the region's despots feel that they've been given carte blanche to stamp out peaceful dissent."

'Beautiful military equipment' can't buy Middle East peace

1 → A security crackdown in Saudi Arabia before Mr. Trump's visit — as well as the Bahraini regime's deadly attack on a sit-in immediately afterward — suggest that the region's despots feel that they've been given carte blanche to stamp out peaceful dissent.

In other words, something deeply rotten is unfolding in our part of the world.

To avoid the spread of terrorism and militant extremism, responsible leaders in regional and world capitals alike must step up and tackle the momentous challenges at hand. Sword dances and lavish banquets aside, fundamental contradictions must be addressed.

In Yemen, Saudi Arabia is attacking the Ansar Allah group, the one force that has

proved adept at beating back Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, the most lethal of the global terrorist network's franchises. The Saudi-led coalition's Western backers explain their motive as support for "democracy," even though the concept finds little favor either in Riyadh or among other Arab allies of the United States.

The absurdities of the tragedy in Yemen are sadly echoed in Syria. There, the forces fighting Wahhabi extremists on the front lines also face perils from Western counterterrorism policy, which is often arbitrary in its distinctions between allies and enemies.

Let me be clear: What President Trump called "lots of beautiful military equipment"

won't drain the swamps in which terrorism and extremist militancy fester. Neither will golden chains or glowing orbs provide a magical solution to the socioeconomic and political challenges that drive radicalization. What will work is a genuine effort to forge inclusive engagement among the regional powers based on a policy of coexistence and acceptance that military solutions are futile.

While Saudi Arabia spends countless millions promoting fear of Iran to distract from its global export of Wahhabism — which inspires the extremist ideology of Al Qaeda, the so-called Islamic State and many other terrorist groups wreaking havoc from Karachi to Manchester — Iran has been

aiding the victims of extremism in Iraq and Syria. By helping to prevent the Islamic State from seizing Baghdad and Damascus, Iran is actively promoting a political solution to the conflicts in both countries.

In 2013, Iran proposed an immediate cease-fire and a plan to end the war in Syria. For over two years, Saudi Arabia categorically rejected the premise that the Syrian conflict had no military solution, clinging to the illusion that its extremist proxies would achieve victory on the battlefield by dragging the United States into the war. Innumerable lives later, in 2015, our Syria plan became the basis for United Nations Security Council Resolution 2254. **→13**

Islamic republic system does not tolerate threats, Dehqan says

POLITICS TEHRAN — Defense Minister Hossein Dehqan said on Thursday that the Islamic Republic system in Iran does not tolerate "threats, insults and conflicts."

"Participation of the people from various social layers in the presidential [May 19] elections confirmed legitimacy of the Islamic system and proved the fact that this country does not tolerate threats, insults and conflicts," the brigadier general said in a speech at the Sacred Defense Museum in Tehran.

He also said that Iran enjoys the "highest military power" in the region with a reliance on its missiles.

Elsewhere, Dehqan said that the hegemonic system and the Zionist regime of Israel do not attach importance to "freedom of speech," noting they just prioritize their own interests.

Hegemonic system is violating human rights in other countries in order to gain benefits, he said in an indirect reference to a \$110 billion arms deal



between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, which is considered the most despotic regime in the Arab world.

He described Saudi invasion of Yemen and its crackdown on Bahraini protestors as examples of human rights violations.

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.

IRGC to unveil first surface-to-surface ballistic missile

1 → "The words of American merchants have no value for us," Hajjzadeh said, a reference to the recent visit to Saudi Arabia by U.S. President Donald Trump, during which arms sales worth \$110 billion were concluded.

The remarks are likely to fan tensions between the two countries after U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said on Saturday in Saudi Arabia he would hope that newly reelected Rouhani "puts an end to their ballistic missile testing."

Responding to Tillerson, Rouhani highlighted in a news conference last week that Tehran would continue its ballistic missile program as "our missiles are for peace and for defense."

Rouhani said, "American officials should

know that whenever we need to technically test a missile, we will do so and won't wait for their permission."

On Thursday, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved the most sweeping sanctions against Iran, a measure claimed to be punishing Iran over its ballistic missile program, alleged support for terrorism and human rights violations.

Tehran and Washington have traded barbs over missile launches regularly since the inauguration of the Trump administration.

Iran says its missile program is for self-defense only and does not violate an historic nuclear deal between Tehran and six world powers in 2015, accordingly, not "up for negotiation."

Iran dismisses Trump's allegations as delusional

POLITICS TEHRAN — Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi has railed against Washington for anti-Iran remarks, saying Iranophobia and repeating false accusations against Tehran are manifests of American government's "failed policies."

The comments followed U.S. President Donald Trump's recent trip to Israel where he told the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that "Iran will never have nuclear weapons. That I can tell you."

"The Islamic Republic has never sought nuclear weapons," Qassemi said on Wednesday, describing Trump's remarks as "delusional".

He further said that the U.S. government is pursuing "an agenda" by making such claims.

"He [Trump] should know that relevant international bodies have time and again stated Iran has fulfilled its commitments," the official said.

Qassemi also said he was surprised to hear such comments being made at a country which has total disregard



for international law, is not committed to a Middle East without nuclear weapons, and is filled with nuclear warheads.

Trump also accused Iran of "deadly funding, training and equipping of terrorists and militias."

The comments received strong condemnation by Qassemi who said they were completely "false" and "baseless", adding that Iran's positive role in fighting terrorism is crystal clear.

U.S. Senate approves new sanctions on Iran

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved on Thursday the most sweeping sanctions against Iran since a nuclear deal was reached in 2015.

The New York Times reported that the Trump administration has supported new sanctions against Iran, which were approved 18 to 3 by the com-

mittee and could receive a full Senate vote as early as next month.

The measure is claimed to be punishing Iran over its ballistic missile program, alleged support for terrorism and human rights violations.

Iran says its missile program is not banned under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as its missiles are

defensive and not designed to carry nuclear warheads.

In a series of Twitter messages, former Secretary of State John Kerry urged the U.S. senators not to move ahead with legislation saying "this is not the moment for a new Iran bill".

"This is a time to tread carefully," Kerry advised the Senate Foreign Re-

lations Committee.

"We need to consider the implications of confrontation without conversation," he tweeted.

In 2015, Iran and the 5+1 group (the U.S., Britain, France, China, Russia and Germany) finalized the text of the JCPOA. The nuclear agreement took effect in January 2016.

Bahrainis hold more anti-regime rallies nationwide

People in Bahrain hold more rallies nationwide in protest at the Manama regime's recent bloodshed in the besieged village of Diraz, which is home to the spiritual leader of the country's Shia majority, Sheikh Isa Qassim.

On Thursday evening, protesters took to the streets in several areas to condemn the Bahraini military's Tuesday raid on Diraz, which killed five supporters of Sheikh Qassim.

The gatherings, however, turned violent when regime forces intervened and attempted to disperse the demonstrators. Nine arrests were made during the skirmishes.

On May 23, Bahraini forces raided Diraz, which has been under a military siege for almost a year, and stormed into the home of Sheikh Qassim.

During the raid, regime forces killed at least five demonstrators, wounded dozens and arrested over 280 people during the crackdown on Diraz, which took place shortly after a meeting between the United States President Donald Trump and Bahraini King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The fresh wave of anti-regime protests broke out on May 21, when a Bahraini court convicted Sheikh Qassim of illegal collection of funds and money laundering. The cleric was sentenced to one year in jail and ordered to pay \$265,266 in fines.

Last year, the cleric was also stripped of his citizenship, sparking repeated sit-ins outside his residence in Diraz.

On Wednesday, the Bahraini Interior Ministry warned the protesters against holding more rallies, but the stern warning has failed to end anti-government marches across the kingdom.



The deadly Diraz raid has drawn angry reactions from prominent human rights groups, with Amnesty International calling for an independent investigation into Manama's use of "excessive force."

New York-based Human Rights First also urged the Trump administration to condemn the Bahraini military for the "deadly disturbing" raid on Diraz.

In a show of solidarity with Sheikh Qassim and his supporters, Iraqi people gathered outside the Bahraini

embassy in Baghdad on Wednesday to deplore the Diraz attack.

Iranians are also set to hold similar marches in different cities following Friday Prayers.

Reacting to the developments, Germany also said it has been "following with concern the latest events in Bahrain, which claimed the lives of 5 people."

The German Foreign Ministry urged, in a statement issued Thursday, all parties to "work towards peaceful coexistence, and return to

the path of national dialogue."

This is while the House of Saud regime, which has been helping the Bahraini military in its crackdown on peaceful protests since 2011, has defended Manama's brutalities in Diraz.

Home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, Bahrain has carried out a crackdown on opposition political activity and dissent since an uprising began in 2011 against the ruling House of Khalifah regime by demonstrators from the Shia Muslim majority.

(Source: Press TV)

Trump: North Korea is a 'big problem' that 'will be solved'

The United States President Donald Trump has assured Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that the question of North Korea "will be solved," ahead of a G7 summit that will discuss a series of missile tests carried out by Pyongyang.

"We will be discussing many things including of course North Korea which is very much on our minds," Trump said on Friday in the Italian town of Taormina where he held a meeting with Abe at the start of the two-day G7 summit.

"It's a big problem, it's a world problem," the U.S. president said.

"It will be solved, you can bet on that," he added, without offering further details.

Japanese PM Abe said he would highlight the danger posed by North Korea at the G7 summit.

"The issue of North Korea is a grave threat not only to East Asia but also to the world," he told reporters before leaving Tokyo, calling on the group of industrialized economies to act "resolutely".

Trump has warned that a "major conflict" with North Korea is "absolutely" possible in the ongoing standoff over its nuclear and missile programs.

And, according to reports, the Trump administration is considering a range of military actions against the country. But U.S. Democrats have warned Trump not to launch an attack against the North.

A group of 64 Democrats concerned with breakout of war with the nuclear power said in a letter on Tuesday that any preemptive attack should be approved by the U.S. Congress ahead of being operationalized, The New York Times reported.

"Few decisions are more needing of debate than a move to launch attacks, or declare war, on a nuclear-armed state such as North Korea," read the letter. "In such a volatile region, an inconsistent or unpredictable policy runs the risk of unimaginable conflict."

They also asked the Trump administration to present evidence of a policy aimed at boosting prospects of negotiations with Pyongyang.

Tensions have been running high on the Korean Peninsula over the North's nuclear and missile programs, which Pyongyang sees as a deterrent against a potential invasion by its adversaries.

The Trump administration has sent an aircraft carrier and a nuclear-powered submarine to the region in a show of force.

Pyongyang has threatened the U.S. with a nuclear attack in case of a direct military action, and has indicated that weapons tests would continue more frequently.

(Source: agencies)

Gunmen kill 26 in attack on Christians in Egypt

Gunmen attacked buses and a truck taking a group of Coptic Christians to a monastery in southern Egypt on Friday, killing 26 people and wounding 25 others, witnesses and the Health Ministry said.

An Interior Ministry spokesman said the unidentified gunmen had arrived in three four-wheel-drive vehicles.

Eyewitnesses said masked men stopped the two buses and a truck and opened fire on a road leading to the monastery of Saint Samuel the Confessor in Minya province, which is home to a sizeable Christian minority.

Security forces launched a hunt for the attackers, setting up dozens of checkpoints and patrols on the desert road.

The grand imam of al-Azhar, Egypt's 1,000-year-old center of Islamic learning, said the attack was intended to destabilize the country.

"I call on Egyptians to unite in the face of this brutal terrorism," Ahmed al-Tayeb said from Germany, where he was on a visit.

President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi called a meeting of security officials, the state news agency said. The Health Ministry put the toll at 26 dead and 25 wounded.

Coptic Christians, who make up about 10 percent of Egypt's population of 92 million, have been the subject of a series of deadly attacks in recent months.

About 70 have been killed since December in bomb attacks on churches in the cities of Cairo, Alexandria and Tanta.

Those attacks were claimed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Friday's attack.

(Source: Reuters)

'Foreigners fighting' with ISIL-linked Philippine group

Foreign fighters were among local gunmen clashing with the Philippine army in Mindanao island, authorities said on Friday, in a rare admission that outsiders were collaborating with domestic groups.

Military officials said Malaysians and Indonesians were among six killed on Thursday in battles that have raged for four days in Marawi City, where the army has been trying to flush out rebels of the Maute and Abu Sayyaf armed groups, which are linked to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

The Philippines has deployed attack helicopters and Special Forces to drive the gunmen out of the besieged southern city of 200,000 people, with at least 11 soldiers and 31 fighters killed.

"Before it was just a local terrorist group. But now they have subscribed to the ideology of ISIS (ISIL)," Solicitor General Jose Calida told a news conference. "They want to make Mindanao part of the caliphate."

The ongoing violence has forced thousands to flee Marawi, located about 816km south of the capital, Manila.

The International Committee of the Red Cross described the situation as "very fluid".

"We are seriously concerned about those who are trapped or have chosen to stay in the city, who are in need of food and water."

"This is currently a challenge for our teams on the ground as they assess the situation in order to have a clear picture of the number of displaced

people and their needs," said Pascal Porchet, who heads ICRC's efforts in the country.

■ Presence of foreign fighters verified

Al Jazeera's Jamela Alindogan, reporting from Marawi, said: "The Maute has specifically harassed and killed Christians in the area. Since last year, they have been raising ISIL's black flag in government facilities."

She said reports that foreign fighters had joined the group had been circulating since 2012.

"But for years, the Philippine military denied even the existence of Maute and its links with ISIL," our correspondent said. "Although there is very little evidence that Maute is indeed connected to ISIL, the presence of foreign fighters here is verified. They come here and engage in combat training."

President Rodrigo Duterte on Tuesday delivered on his longstanding threat to impose martial law on Mindanao, the country's second-largest island and home to 22 million people - roughly one-third of the population.

A day later, Duterte said he may impose nationwide martial law.

He recently warned that ISIL was determined to establish a presence in the southern Philippines and the country was at risk of "contamination".

Calida said the Maute group and ISIL wanted to create its own "province" in Mindanao and the government was not the only target of their aggression. "People they consider as infidels,

whether Christians or Muslims, are also targets of opportunity," he said.

"What it worrisome is that the ISIS (ISIL) has radicalized a number of Filipino Muslim youth."

His admission elevates the threat of what experts says are moves by ISIL to exploit the poverty and exclusion of the majority Muslim southern Philippines to establish a base for fighters from Southeast Asia and beyond.

■ The rise of Maute

The Maute is a fierce, but little-known group that has been a tricky battlefield opponent for the military.

It was blamed for a bombing in Duterte's home city of Davao in September last year, which killed 14 people and wounded dozens.

The Maute's rise is a source of concern for Mindanao native Duterte, who is familiar with Muslim separatist unrest but alarmed by the prospect of rebels helping ISIL to recruit and establish a presence in the volatile region.

Hostilities erupted after security forces raided a Marawi apartment in a bid to capture Isnilon Hapilon, the leader of Abu Sayyaf.

The operation went wrong after allied Maute fighters called in reinforcements, and then went on a deadly rampage throughout the city.

The government says Hapilon has been the point man for ISIL in the Philippines and has been collaborating with the Maute leaders.

Calida, the solicitor general, said ISIL had declared that Hapilon was "their emir, or leader in the Philippines". (Source: agencies)

IN THE NAME OF GOD

I.R. Iran Customs Administration (IRICA)
Finance and Economic Affairs Ministry

International Public Tender Notice (Two Stage)
"Purchase of One Set of Mobile X-Ray Inspection System"

No: 46422119

Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Administration (IRICA) intends to purchase one set of Mobile X-Ray Inspection System to inspect tracks and containers through Public, international tender according to the following conditions. Therefore, all eligible Iranian or foreign company agencies are requested to refer to mentioned address to obtain the tender documents.

- 1) **Tender Participation:** International Public Tender Notice (Two Stage) "Purchase of One Set of Mobile X-Ray Inspection System"
- 2) The amount of Participation Guarantee Bank shall be either 9'000'000'000 Iranian Rials or 247'886 Euros
- 3) **Tender Participation Guarantee:** As a Bank Guarantee issued by one of the Iranian banks (accredited by Central Bank of I.R.I.) or be deposited to account No.4001001106370306 in the name of IRICA at the Central bank of I.R.I and submit the receipt
- 4) **Deadline for obtaining tender documents:** 27may, 2017 - 03 june, 2017
- 5) **The address for obtaining tender documents and submitting bid envelopes:** Tenders & Contracts Bureau, Room No.104, Development & Equipment Dept. 1 st floor Iran Custom Administration Bldg. Next to Nasser Alley, upper than Valiasr Sq. Tehran, Iran.
- 6) **Deadline for submitting bids:** 04 july, 2017
- 7) **Opening bid envelopes:** 05 july , 2017

Further information would be available at www.irica.gov.ir also "National Database Portal of Iran Tenders Information" or **Tel: +98 21 82992290**

Development and Equipment Dept.
of Islamic Republic of Iran Customs Tenders & Contracts Bureau

NEWS IN BRIEF

USDA **Iran's wheat production to reach 15m tons this year: USDA**

ECONOMY TEHRAN — With a three-percent decrease, Iran's annual production of wheat will reach 15 million tons in 2017, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) forecasted in its latest report.

In its latest report named "Grain: World Markets and Trade", USDA predicted that Iran will produce 15 million tons of wheat by the end of 2017, showing three percent decrease in comparison with the previous year that the figure stood at 15.5 million tons.

The country's annual production of barely will also witness a three percent fall and will reach 2.9 million tons from 2016's 3 million tons.

Rice production in Iran will hover around 1.78 million tons in 2017, registering no significant difference from the preceding year, the same report confirmed.



Tehran, Damascus sign document on boosting economic co-op

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iran and Syria signed a document on enforcement of economic cooperation in Damascus on Thursday, IRNA reported.

The document was penned by Syrian Minister of Economy and Foreign Trade Mohammad Samer al-Khalil and Head of Iran's Expanding Economic Cooperation Committee Saieed Ohadi.

"During the held two-day meeting on increasing mutual cooperation, all the commerce and economic issues regarding the signed document as well as increasing joint investments and bilateral cooperation were explored," Samer al-Khalil told reporters after signing the document.

He also informed that a Syrian delegation will visit Tehran next week to explore avenues of further collaboration.

According to the same report, Ohadi met the Syrian Prime Minister Imad Khamis and Minister of Tourism Bishr Riyadh Yazigi on Wednesday.

UK consumers downbeat on finances as inflation bites

The rise in inflation in Britain after the Brexit vote has made households the most downbeat about their finances in more than two years, and the giant services sector is also feeling the impact, surveys showed on Friday.

Consumers - whose spending is crucial to Britain's economy - are the least confident about their current financial situation since December 2014, and expectations about their finances over the next 12 months also fell, polling firm YouGov said.

Perceptions of job security were at a four-year low. "It looks like this may be the point where the slowing GDP figures start to translate to people's everyday lives," Stephen Harrison, Head of YouGov Reports, said. "The figures indicate that they are starting to experience a downturn."

Britain's economy slowed sharply in early 2017, data published on Thursday showed. Weaker consumer spending played a large part in the loss of momentum.

Britain is due to hold a national election on June 8 which the Conservative Party of Prime Minister Theresa May is expected to win, according to opinion polls.

May has sought to turn the election into a vote on her ability to secure a good deal for Britain as it leaves the European Union, pushing the economy into the background in the campaign.

YouGov said its overall measure of consumer confidence - which it produces with the Centre for Economics and Business Research - fell to its weakest level since the weeks just after the Brexit vote in June last year. The Confederation of British Industry said services firms were also suffering from the rise in inflation.

Demand in the services sector was flat in the three months to May, hurt by weaker consumer demand, and rising costs caused profitability to decline, a quarterly CBI survey showed.

"Rising inflation is squeezing household incomes, which is hitting demand in the consumer services sector," Rain Newton-Smith, the CBI's chief economist, said. "At the same time, cost pressures are building across the board, painting a difficult picture for services firms."

However firms expected to hire more workers and to continue to invest, the survey showed, and optimism among business and professional services firms improved for the first time since November 2015. (Source: Reuters)

Japan's big insurers expand their appetites for U.S. treasuries

Big Japanese life insurers, who are major bond investors globally, are primarily focusing on U.S. bonds while staying cautious on European bonds, earning reports and comments from industry executives' show.

U.S. bonds have become more attractive as some Japanese insurers have been able to earn extra income by lending these to Japanese banks, which in turn use Treasuries as collateral to raise dollars in repo markets.

Nippon Life, Dai-ichi Life, Meiji Yasuda Life, Sumitomo Life and formerly state-owned Japan Post Insurance collectively manage more than \$2 trillion of financial assets.

Earnings disclosures published in the past two weeks showed U.S. bonds accounted for a large part of the increase in their foreign bond holdings during the financial year that ended on March 31.

The five insurers increased foreign bond holdings by a combined 6.3 trillion yen (\$56 billion). Of the total, they increased dollar bonds by 4.8 trillion yen (\$43 billion), to 26.8 trillion yen. (Source: New York Times)

South Pars 2nd development stage requires \$20-30b

ENERGY TEHRAN — Development of South Pars gas field (in the Persian Gulf) in the second stage is estimated to require \$20-30 billion fund, Mohammad Meshkinfam, the managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of developing the gas field, told ILNA.

"It is our initial estimation of the required fund, but it depends on the type of planning and anyway we should take benefit of the foreign capabilities for the second stage", he also noted.

He said: "We are also planning to improve domestic capabilities to become fully prepared for the implementation of the next development stage."

South Pars is divided into 24 standard phases of development in the first stage. Most of the phases are fully operational at the moment.

The huge offshore field, shared with Qatar, covers an area of 9,700 square kilometers, 3,700 square kilometers of which, called South Pars, are in Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf. The remaining 6,000 square kilometers, called North Dome, are situated in Qatar's territorial waters.

The field is estimated to contain a significant amount of natural gas, accounting for about eight percent of the world's reserves, and approximately 18 billion barrels of condensate.

Iran remains exempted from OPEC cuts

ENERGY TEHRAN — After the 172nd official meeting of Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Iran was once again exempted from the OPEC, non-OPEC deal to cut oil production.

The country which was allowed to increase production under the original accord, retains the same output target, Bloomberg reported quoting Kuwait's Oil Minister Issam Almarzooq as saying.

That deal gave the Islamic Republic room to increase output to a maximum of 3.797

million barrels a day. Nigeria and Libya will also remain exempt from making.

OPEC and its allies extended oil production cuts for nine more months after last year's landmark agreement failed to eliminate the global oversupply or achieve a sustained price recovery.

The producer group together with Russia and other non-members agreed to prolong their accord through March, but no new non-OPEC countries will be joining the pact and there was no option set out to continue curbs further into 2018. The market was



unimpressed as prices tumbled more than 5 percent to under \$49 a barrel in New York and more than a billion barrels were traded.

Six months after forming an unprecedented coalition of 24 nations and delivering output reductions that exceeded all expectations, resurgent production from U.S. shale fields has meant oil inventories remain well above the level targeted by OPEC. While stockpiles are shrinking, ministers acknowledged the surplus built up during three years of over-production won't clear until at least the end of 2017. The group is prepared for a long game.

Al-Falih said the cuts are working, adding that stockpile reductions will accelerate in the third quarter and inventory levels will come down to the five-year average in the first quarter of next year. While he expects a "healthy return" for U.S. shale, that won't derail OPEC's goals and a nine-month extension will "do the trick", he said.

The Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee -- composed of six OPEC and non-OPEC nations -- will continue watching the market and can recommend further action if needed, said Almarzooq.

China to shift renminbi market guidance to ward off depreciation

China's central bank will change the way it guides the renminbi exchange rate, a move that appears designed to discourage renminbi depreciation at a time when authorities are still concerned about capital flight.

China's central bank permits the dollar's value against the renminbi to fluctuate by two per cent above or below a so-called "central parity rate" published each morn-

ing, also known as the midpoint price.

The midpoint is ostensibly formulated by compiling quotes from a group of large banks that are active as dealers in the onshore forex market, but the price is understood to be influenced by the central bank.

In August 2015, the People's Bank of China announced a change to the way it would formulate the midpoint, saying that

it would formulate the fixing based primarily on the previous day's closing price in the spot market.

In December, it modified the formula, saying that the midpoint would also reference changes in the renminbi's value against a trade-weighted basket of global currencies.

Under the latest formula announced on Friday, dealers will incorporate a "coun-

ter-cyclical factor" in their quotes, according to a statement on the website of the China Foreign Exchange Trading System, an industry body controlled by the PBoC.

The additional variable will prevent excessive one-way movements in the midpoint at a time when both of the other two factors are pushing in the same direction, the statement said.

(Source: Financial Times)

Are they lucky enough to win Iran oil deals?

I → Last October, Mohammad Meshkinfam, the managing director of Pars Oil and Gas Company (POGC), which is in charge of implementing South Pars development phases, said: "Enhancing the rate of gas recovery should be launched in South Pars by the next five years. The system will be launched first in phase 11 and then it will be applied in the other phases of the field."

The country requires foreign technology and also investment to launch such system as Meshkinfam told the Tehran Times last December: "Enhancing the rate of gas recovery from South Pars gas field through installing related installations and platforms is the main focus of POGC in attraction of foreign investment and also transfer of foreign technology to the country."

The Oil Ministry's main priority in implementing new upstream projects is to increase the recovery rate of fields through applying modern know-how.

To meet such priority and also for development of oil and gas fields, especially the shared ones in line with regaining the country's share of global markets, the Islamic Republic has come to agreement with a number of domestic and foreign companies for conducting related studies on some fields.

Among the foreign companies the National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) has signed memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with, it could be referred to Royal Dutch Shell, which signed an MOU with NIOC to conduct development studies on South Azadegan and Yadavaran oilfields (two West Karoun oilfields) and Kish gas field (near Kish Island in the Persian Gulf).

The Malaysian state-owned oil and gas company Petronas also signed an MOU with NIOC for development studies on South Azadegan and Cheshmeh-Khosh (an oilfield in west of Iran). The agreement marks a return to Iran for Petronas.

Studies on development of Cheshmeh-Khosh was also awarded to Gazprom Neft PJSC, a subsidiary of Russian oil giant Gazprom, based on an MOU which also covers studies on developing Changuleh (an oilfield in west of Iran).

The three above mentioned MOUs were signed in last December, among a number of other similar ones inked after the JCPOA.

Results of studies on 25 projects submitted

Gholamreza Manouchehri, the deputy managing director of NIOC for engineering and development affairs, announced in



late February that NIOC had received results of studies on 25 projects for development of Iran's oil and gas fields conducted by foreign companies.

He said the post-sanctions environment has laid the ground for the presence of international companies for development of Iranian industries.

In November 2015, Iran introduced its long-awaited new model of oil contracts, known as the Integrated Petroleum Contract (IPC), which will replace buy-back contracts. It is expected to offer more flexible terms on oil price fluctuations and investment risks to make the sector more financially attractive.

The new contracts, which include those in the upstream exploration and development sectors, are expected to attract more than \$40 billion in foreign investment.

Iran has pre-qualified 29 international companies to bid for its oil and gas projects based on IPC. Anglo-Dutch Shell, France's Total, Italy's Eni, Malaysia's Petronas, Russia's Gazprom and Lukoil, Austria's OMF, Germany's Wintershall, as well as companies from Spain, Poland, China, Japan, India and some other countries are included in the list released in early January.

Now the question is how the companies with them Iran has signed MOUs on development studies of the fields will be lucky to win the contracts on development projects.

Asked about the issue, Mahmoud Khaqani, an international energy expert, told the Tehran Times in a telephone interview

on Monday: "The fact that major oil companies, particularly French and Italian ones, will go ahead with upstream contracts with Iran, is a matter that we have to wait and see. That will be very much on what President Rouhani's new administration's energy policies will be."

Macro energy policy required

"Obviously there is no macro energy policy in Iran yet. Iran does not know what percentage of its energy supply or domestic market is going to nuclear, or gas or oil. These are regrettably, to my view as an energy expert, policies which have not yet been well defined or publically defined by government in Iran which therefore makes others also be hesitant to make a final decision," Khaqani lamented.

"Don't forget, government's tenure is four years in Iran and contractual agreement on upstream oil and gas production is a minimum 20-25 years period. The risk is very high. And Iran, in my opinion, for the first time now we see that those who lost the election were almost talking in the same line as those who won the election. Now they should sit together and define a national interest policy which also includes a national energy policy and that will put the people's mind at rest to take the risk and enter into a real contractual agreement both in upstream and downstream in Iran's petroleum and energy industry," the energy expert commented.

IPC framework a positive factor

Mohammad-Sadeq Jokar, a senior energy expert in the Institute for In-

ternational Energy Studies (IIES), has a more optimistic view in this regard.

As he told the Tehran Times in a telephone interview on Tuesday, there are three factors which bring about more optimism about international companies' signing deals in Iran. They are: 1- Re-election of Mr. Rouhani (who is a supporter of JCPOA) as the president 2- Trump's changing its approach toward Iran's nuclear deal; as his administration upheld Iran sanctions waiver, keeping nuclear deal alive and 3- Legal framework of IPC (which offers more flexibility, so is more attractive for foreigners).

The energy expert believes that while an appropriate environment has been created recently in Iran for the presence of foreign companies that could be even better, there are three factors that the Islamic Republic should notice to take the advantage of this condition.

He mentioned the first factor as 'time', as the country should do the right thing at the right time and prevent from waste of time. "For example when it comes to the issue of IPC, although it's a good strategy to attract foreign companies, the process to come to the final framework has already taken about two years and in my opinion as an analyst it should have taken less time to come to result," he explained.

He said the second one is to shed light on the country's energy policy and remove the negative image created for example by some Arab media about Iran's energy industry; as one of them has said that nothing positive has occurred in the Iranian energy sector after the JCPOA. So the country is required to express openly and unambiguously its status and policies in this regard.

"And the third one is that we need a comprehensive diplomacy in energy in a way that comprehensive decisions should be made for presenting Iran in the international scene," the analyst concluded.

The optimistic viewpoint of Jokar is reinforced by the perspective of some international analysts believing that President Rouhani is in a stronger position after his re-election to push through plans for wooing foreign investors the country needs to boost oil production.

According to them, re-election of Rouhani, who delivered the nuclear deal and promised to bring in foreign investment, would suggest that there is support for things like the oil contracts.

India may be replaced with Russia in Farzad-B gas field project, Iran warns

Russia could replace India in a long-delayed plan to develop Iran's Farzad-B gas field project, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh said Thursday.

"Russians," Zanganeh was quoted as saying by Russia's state-run Tass news agency when he was asked in Vienna who might enter the project if the deal with India fails.

The Indian side has failed to make an appropriate offer, he said.

Last year, Zanganeh had told the media that a financial proposal from ONGC Videsh, the overseas arm of India's biggest oil and gas explorer, for the Farzad-B project was "not acceptable".

India and Iran have missed several deadlines to finalize "development, financial and commercial" terms for the gas field that was discovered by an Indian consortium led by ONGC Videsh in 2008. It has in-place gas reserves of 21.7 trillion cubic feet (tcf), of which 12.5 tcf are recoverable.

In March, ONGC Videsh informed Iran it intended to spend more than \$3 billion for developing the gas field within five years. The firm's managing director NK Verma told reporters in Mumbai it was waiting for feedback from Tehran.

(Source: Hindustan Times)



OPEC leaves market guessing on exit strategy after oil pact

OPEC may be celebrating an historic deal to extend supply cuts, but after the party, the organization will face a trio of questions it left unanswered.

Will the lucrative yet delicate relationship between Saudi Arabia and Russia survive the life of the agreement? Will surging U.S. shale output prove too much temptation for OPEC countries to stick to their own production promises? And, perhaps most perplexing: What does OPEC have planned long-term?

The deal to maintain the cut another nine months, hammered out this week in Vienna, could expire in March with a return to OPEC's pump-at-will policy that prevailed between 2014 and 2016 and pushed prices below \$30 a barrel. Or the organization could keep adjusting production.

"What concerns me is that there is no clear messaging around the exit strategy," Ebele Kemery, head of energy investing at JPMorgan Asset Management, told Bloomberg TV. "The way we look at the market going forward, there's going to be oversupply in 2018. They're talking about price stability. To get price stability we need to know what the end-game is."

Kemery's concern over a lack of strategy appeared to be widespread. Brent crude fell 5 percent to \$51.24 a barrel on the decision, wiping out most of the gains since Russia and Saudi Arabia publicly backed the nine-month extension last week. Futures in London

slid 25 cents to \$51.21 a barrel at 12:35 p.m. Singapore time, heading for a weekly decline.

Despite an admission that November's landmark agreement to limit output failed to eliminate the global oil glut, the commitment of two-dozen oil-producing countries did succeed in establishing a new floor for prices that's well above the lows seen last year.

"OPEC is settling in for the long haul," said Roger Diwan, an OPEC watcher at consultant IHS Markit Ltd. in Washington. "I think we'll remain between \$50 and \$60 a barrel for the time being."

The agreement, which includes countries accounting for 60 percent of the world's oil production, has already delivered for national budgets from Moscow to Tehran, as higher prices outweighed lower production.

"This is a historic deal, it already was in November and now still more," said Jan Stuart, chief energy economist at Credit Suisse Group AG. "Now we have more confidence of a 2017 rebalance."

The extension to March prolongs a rare period of collaboration between the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries and some of its biggest rivals. The last time both sides worked together was 15 years ago. Back then, the agreement fell apart soon after it was made.

Alexander Novak, Russia's energy minister, said the relationship between OPEC and non-members of the cartel was at a "pivotal moment."

Shifting calculus

The calculus may shift in 2018, testing the increasingly close cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Russia, according to Ronald Smith, senior oil analyst at Citigroup Inc. in Moscow. It may not be in the best interest of Vladimir Putin's balance sheet to keep new oil fields on the shelf. The lost revenue would be felt mostly by state-owned Rosneft PJSC on projects scheduled to ramp up production in 2018 and 2019.

"Rosneft, the state-owned champion, will have invested a lot of money in these fields that will be sitting idle if they continue to extend the agreement," Smith said. "The math is going to be more ambiguous going forward. At some point they may decide they need to take back some market share."

Also a contender in the battle for market share -- and producers who didn't sign on to the Vienna agreement -- are U.S. shale drillers, who could benefit from this week's deal.

Higher inventories

Resurgent U.S. production has meant oil inventories remain well above the level targeted by OPEC ministers.

Analysts at energy consultant Wood Mackenzie said the deal extension would help U.S. shale oil output accelerate to its fastest growth rate in years. In 2018, global oil inventories would increase by about 600,000 barrels a day in the first quarter, followed by about 500,000 each quarter for the rest of the year.

"There's still an oversupply to wres-

tle with," said Simon Flowers, chief analyst at the consultant.

Even so, after more than two years of flip-flopping from market management to pump-at-will and back again, it's not clear what OPEC will do next.

As recently as March, the production ceiling was envisaged as a short-term prop to rapidly bring a glut of global oil inventories back to historically typical levels.

In March, Saudi Oil Minister Khalid Al-Falih told an industry conference in Houston that the kingdom's policy was to manage output "for a restricted period of time, with the aim of accelerating rebalancing, and then allowing the free market to work."

That is exactly what some fear, and Al-Falih did not dispel those concerns on Thursday, telling Bloomberg, "This is not a structural intervention."

With the deal agreed to, Al-Falih said he expected OPEC to achieve its goal of returning global oil inventories to their five-year average by the end of the year. He reiterated a pledge "to do whatever it takes" to rebalance the market.

If Al-Falih's optimistic outlook is correct, OPEC may not need a clear exit strategy.

"The exit strategy for OPEC is, eventually, when the market is tight enough, start to cheat on the cuts," said Gary Ross, global head of oil at PIRA Energy Group, part of S&P Global Inc.

(Source: Bloomberg)

India said to choose arrangers for \$1 billion IOC share offering

The Indian government has chosen arrangers for the sale of a nearly \$1 billion stake in the country's largest refiner, Indian Oil Corp., according to people with knowledge of the matter.

The country picked Citigroup Inc, Deutsche Bank AG and Goldman Sachs Group Inc. to advise on the offering, said the people, who asked not to be identified because the information is private. ICICI Securities Ltd. and SBI Capital Markets Ltd. are also among banks selected to work on the sale, the people said.

The three percent stake the government is aiming to divest is worth 63.9 billion rupees (\$990 million) based on Thursday's closing price. The country, which currently owns 58.3 percent of the energy giant, is pursuing a sale as it seeks to meet a 725 billion-rupee investment target for the fiscal year beginning April 1. India has met or exceeded its privatization target only six times since 1998.

Banks will get a fee of 1 rupee for advising on the Indian Oil share sale, according to the people with knowledge of the matter. A spokesman for Goldman Sachs declined to comment, while representatives for the government, Citigroup, Deutsche Bank, ICICI and SBI didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

The Indian cabinet last month approved a plan to sell stakes as big as 25 percent in 11 state-run companies through public offerings. The earmarked companies include Indian Railway Finance Corp., Bharat Dynamics Ltd. and North Eastern Electric Power Corp.

(Source: Bloomberg)

Oil edges up after dip on disappointing OPEC meeting outcome

Oil prices edged higher on Friday as some investors were tempted back to a market that tumbled five percent in the previous session on disappointment that an OPEC-led decision to extend current production curbs did not go deeper.

At Thursday's meeting in Vienna, the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and some non-OPEC producers agreed to extend a pledge to cut around 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) until the end of the first quarter of 2018. The initial agreement would have expired next month.

Producers are confident of this plan bringing down crude oil stocks to their five-year average of 2.7 billion barrels but oil investors had hoped for a last-minute agreement on more far-reaching action.

"The problem is that investors look at impact today, while OPEC focuses on reaching stability in the coming 6-9 months, so the long squeeze yesterday was overdue a bit," said Hans van Cleef senior energy economist at ABN Amro.

Clawing back some of Thursday's losses, global benchmark Brent futures were up 28 cents at \$51.74 a barrel at 0837 GMT.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures remained below \$50, at \$49.11, though up 21 cents from their last close.

"The front of the curve declined the most, which at least for now implies that the market doesn't quite believe that a tightening and/or backwardation is really coming," said analysts at JBC Energy.

Concerns remain that OPEC-led production cuts will support a further rise in output from the United States, where producers can operate at much lower costs.

Ann-Louise Hittle, vice president at energy consultancy Wood Mackenzie said the "decision in Vienna sends a signal of continued support for oil prices from OPEC which helps U.S. onshore drillers make plans" to further raise their production.

U.S. oil production has already risen by 10 percent since mid-2016 to over 9.3 million bpd, close to the output of top producers Russia and Saudi Arabia.

(Source: Reuters)

Russia's Novak sees room to do more for oil after OPEC's flop



After top oil exporters failed to impress markets with their extended supply cuts, Russia's Alexander Novak said there's more they can do.

Russia and OPEC have tools to further support crude prices if needed, the nation's energy minister said in an interview as a lackluster outcome from their meeting in Vienna sent futures slumping below \$50 a barrel in New York.

The partners are able to act accordingly "if any actions or adjustments are needed," Novak told Bloomberg TV. "These adjustment actions can both be aimed at increasing the amount of cuts or reducing the amount of cuts -- all would depend on the market situation, what is needed for the market."

The comments signal a determination to work with Saudi Arabia and other OPEC allies to support

prices for crude, their economic and political lifeblood. Since they joined forces, futures have rebounded from last year's lows and the exporters have been able to earn more while pumping less.

"We've said we'll do whatever is necessary," Saudi Energy Minister Khalid Al-Falih said after the meeting.

While the exporting nations will prolong the current output targets through March, no new non-OPEC country will be joining the pact, and there was no formal option set out to continue curbs further into 2018. Prices tumbled more than 5 percent to under \$49 a barrel in New York.

"It happens all the time -- these fluctuations," Novak said about the slump. Extending the agreement was a "very important long-term fundamental decision" which will help in re-balancing the market

and bringing the investments back. "We could have seen much worse reaction of the market if no decision to extend the declaration of cooperation was taken."

Russia maintains its oil-price outlook at \$50 to \$60 a barrel on average for this year, Novak said.

The country and its oil-producing companies -- which made the cuts voluntarily -- will fully meet the obligations set in the agreement, Novak said. "We know that it takes a lot of time to build the trust but it can be lost in a day," he said. "We, in our history, know that very well."

Russia, which relies on energy for more than 40 percent of its budget, has sought to boost its revenues in the run-up to next year's presidential election. The country will go to the polls next March, and incumbent Vladimir Putin is widely expected to seek another term. Novak said at a press conference in Vienna that the election wasn't a factor in the decision to extend cuts.

While strengthening of the ruble has reduced the windfall from Russia's energy exports, which are denominated mainly in dollars, the nation's overall budget revenue from oil and natural gas taxes recovered to two-year highs in February and March thanks to the pact.

The country pledged last year to reduce production by 300,000 barrels a day from its post-Soviet record of 11.247 million in October. The extended deal implies the same output caps that were agreed on last year for all non-OPEC states, Novak said.

(Source: Bloomberg)

IN THE NAME OF GOD



INVITATION TO INTERNATIONAL TENDER
No. : 369715
KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY INTENDS TO PURCHASE 6,000 MT INJECTION METALLURGICAL COKE

WITH THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATIONS:

SPECIFICATION	PERCENT	
Fixed Carbon	85%	MIN
S	1%	MAX
P	1%	MAX
ASH	10%	MAX
V.M.	2%	MAX
MOISTURE	1%	MAX

SIZE	0.3 – 2 mm	100%
	1-2 mm	MIN 70%
	0.3 – 1 mm	MAX 30%

INTERESTED BIDDERS MAY OBTAIN SET OF DOCUMENTS, CONTAINING THE RELEVANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS BY SUBMISSION OF A WRITTEN APPLICATION AND PAYMENT OF A NON-REFUNDABLE FEE OF EUR 50 ("FIFTY EURO") TO THE ACCOUNT NO. 0100013543943 OR RIALS 2,000,000, ("TWO MILLION RIALS") TO THE ACCOUNT NO. 0100014511008 AT "EXPORT DEVELOPMENT BANK OF IRAN, GENERAL BRANCH" AND PRESENT THE PAYMENT RECEIPT TO THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

RAW MATERIAL & ENERGY PURCHASING DEPARTMENT
KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY (KSC)
KM 10 AHWAZ -- BANDAR IMAM KHOMEINI ROAD
PO.BOX: 1378
POST CODE: 61397-31398
AHWAZ--IRAN

Note1: ALL BIDS MUST BE DELIVERED TO THE AFORESAID ADDRESS ON OR BEFORE THE CLOSING DATE 14TH JUNE 2017. THE OPENING DATE OF ENVELOPES WILL BE AT 11 AM ON THE 18TH JUNE 2017 IN THE BUYER'S CONFERENCE ROOM, LOCATED AT THE HEAD OFFICE OF KSC AHWAZ -- IRAN AND THE BIDDERS OR THEIR AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVES CAN ATTEND THE MEETING OF THE TENDER.

Note2: THE OFFERED PRICE SHOULD BE VALID UP TO 30 DAYS AFTER THE OPENING DATE FOR ISSUING L/C.

Note 3: DELIVERY TIME MUST BE "AUGUST 2017".

Note 4: FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT WITH FOLLOWING DETAILS:

Tel No. : +98 61 32908114
Fax No. : +98 61 32908115

EMAIL : F.NOORI@KSC.IR/H.MOHAMMADNEJAD@KSC.IR OR VISIT: <http://WWW.KSC.IR>

How the world can prepare for the 'day after' the ISIL

The Manchester terrorist attack by an alleged Islamic State (ISIL) terrorists will accelerate the push by the United States and its allies to capture the terrorist group's strongholds in Mosul, Iraq, and Raqqa, Syria. But it should also focus some urgent discussions about a post-Islamic State strategy for stabilizing the two countries.

For all of President Trump's bombast about obliterating the Islamic State, the Raqqa campaign has been delayed for months while U.S. policymakers debated the wisdom of relying on a Syrian Kurdish militia known as the YPG that Turkey regards as a terrorist group.



All the while, the clock has been ticking on terrorist plots hatched by the Islamic State and directed from Raqqa. U.S. officials said a few weeks ago that they were aware of at least five Islamic State operations directed against targets in Europe. European allies have been urging the United States to finish the job in Raqqa as soon as possible.

■ The final blows

The horrific bombing in Manchester, England, is a reminder of the difficulty of containing the plots hatched by the Islamic State — and the cost of waiting to strike the final blows. The Islamic State is battered and in retreat, and its caliphate is nearly destroyed on the ground. But a virtual caliphate survives in the network that spawned Salman Abedi, the alleged Manchester bomber, and others who seek to avenge the group's slow eradication.

The Raqqa assault should move ahead quickly, now that the Trump administration has rejected Turkish protests and opted to back the YPG as the backbone of a broader coalition known as the Syrian Democratic Forces. These are committed, well-led fighters, in northern Syria.

The Trump administration listened patiently to Turkish arguments for an alternative force backed by Ankara. But the Pentagon concluded that this force didn't have a significant battlefield presence and that the real choice was either relying on the Kurdish-led coalition to clear Raqqa or sending in thousands of U.S. troops to do the job.

■ Ankara's worries

The White House rightly opted for the first approach several weeks ago. To ease Ankara's worries, the United States is offering assurances that the Kurdish military presence will be contained and that newly recruited forces will help manage security in Raqqa and nearby Deir al-Zour.

The endgame is near in Mosul, too. Commanders say only about 6 percent of the city remains to be captured, with 500 to 700 Islamic State terrorists hunkered down in the old city west of the Tigris River.

Once Raqqa and Mosul are cleared, the challenge will be rebuilding the areas of Syria and Iraq — with real governance and security — so that follow-on extremist groups don't quickly emerge. This idea of preparing for the "day after" the Islamic State has gotten lip service from U.S. policymakers for three years but very little serious planning or funding.

Intelligence services from several key allies are said to have met in recent weeks with Sunni leaders from Iraq to form a core leadership that can take the initiative. But so far, this effort is said to have produced more internal bickering than clear strategy — a depressing rewind of failed efforts to build a coherent Sunni opposition in Syria.

CIA Director Mike Pompeo told several journalists in an interview Tuesday that he plans to move the agency to a more aggressive, risk-taking stance. Here's a place to start.

The Kurds are the wild cards in both Iraq and Syria. The Syrian Kurds are already governing the ethnic enclave they call "Rojava." That should be an incentive for Syria's Sunnis to develop similar strong government in their liberated areas. Meanwhile, Iraqi Kurds have told U.S. officials that they plan to hold a referendum on Kurdish independence soon, perhaps as early as September.

U.S. officials feel a deep gratitude toward Iraqi Kurds, who have been reliable allies since the early 1990s. But the independence referendum is a potential flash point, and U.S. officials may try to defer the Kurdish question until well after Iraqi provincial elections scheduled in September.

Iraq and Syria need to be reimagined as looser, better-governed, more inclusive confederal states that give minorities room to breathe. The trick for policymakers is to make the post-Islamic State transition a pathway toward progress, rather than a continuation of the sectarian catastrophe that has befallen both nations.

(Source: *The Washington Post*)

U.S. officials said a few weeks ago that they were aware of at least five Islamic State operations directed against targets in Europe. European allies have been urging the United States to finish the job in Raqqa as soon as possible.

President Trump isn't budging on NATO

Trump's priorities won't be well received by allies to the north or east—though members in the Mediterranean may think differently



By **Nikolas K. Gvosdev**

U.S. commitment to Article Five is directly proportional to increases in defense spending by the other member states.

Donald Trump will not be handled, interpreted or managed. That is the first conclusion I drew after his appearance at the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization on Thursday. In the run-up to his first direct, face-to-face encounters with the other leaders who make up the Euro-Atlantic alliance, the U.S. national-security establishment was attempting to run a classic reassurance campaign. Europeans were being told that, despite his campaign rhetoric and ongoing skepticism, this president — like all of his predecessors — would remain absolutely committed to the North Atlantic framework. This was supposed to be his "growing up" moment where Trump, like other recent "outsider" presidents (Bill Clinton, George W. Bush or Barack Obama) would accept initiation into the mysteries of the transatlantic relationship, notably the proviso that American leadership is purchased by the United States' willingness to continue shouldering the majority of the defense burden.

■ Article Five

Trump appears to have dispensed with that script. He did not cast the symbolic pinch of incense standing before the shrine of the alliance by reciting the fundamental creed of Article Five: the

pledge that an attack against one is to be considered an attack against all. In some ways, of course, whether Trump believes it or not is irrelevant, since Article Five is enshrined in a treaty ratified by the Senate in 1949, and re-ratified every time a new member joins the alliance, with Montenegro being the most recent.

Trump chose not to veto the accession of the newest member of NATO, and so, his silence in essence equals consent that he is prepared to accept the requirements of the alliance. The North Atlantic Treaty, according to Article Six of the U.S. Constitution, now holds equal weight as the "law of the land," so whether Trump repeats the words or not does not matter in terms of American legal commitments.

The problem, of course, is that the language of Article Five is quite squishy. It does not automatically commit any nation to have to go to war, only stating that they are prepared to undertake consultations in the event of an armed incursion against one of the member states. What a number of alliance members — notably in the Baltic Sea basin — were hoping to hear was to have

the president, in his own words, show that he accepts the interpretation of Article Five as an automatic defense guarantee that will trigger a U.S. military response.

Indeed, the entire Eastern Reassurance Initiative is based on the strategic assumption that a small number of U.S. and allied military personnel deployed in the east will act as a tripwire that, if crossed, will lead to a massive response. Trump's silence today — combined with the frank comments from EU Council president Donald Tusk earlier that morning that he and the president did not see eye to eye on their assessments of Russia — will not be well received in the northern and eastern portions of the alliance.

In addition, Trump demonstrated that he is not prepared to completely jettison his campaign rhetoric about "freeloaders." He chose to directly address the question of whether alliance members are paying their fair share — not in coded, polite language, but in blunt statements that made other NATO leaders visibly uncomfortable. From there, it is not difficult to see an

equation developing: U.S. commitment to Article Five is directly proportional to increases in defense spending by the other member states. In his emphasis on the importance of combating the Islamic State (ISIL), Trump has also suggested that NATO's value to him is directly connected to its utility in confronting what he sees as his principal national security challenges.

The silver lining is that Trump's emphasis on the threat to the Euro-Atlantic world emanating from the Middle East aligns more with the southern and western wings of the alliance in Europe, particularly for France, Italy and Spain. They may be more inclined to see common ground with a new administration that de-emphasizes the Russia threat in favor of the metastasizing problems in the Mediterranean basin. Yet Trump's initial encounter with newly elected French president Emmanuel Macron suggests that there will not be an easy convergence on such issues between the Élysée Palace and the White House.

The hope when Trump left Washington was that he would put European fears about the strength, depth and reliability of the U.S. commitment to their security to rest. He will leave Brussels having done just the opposite.

(Source: *National Interest*)

Saudi Arabia's duplicity

By **Cal Thomas**

Trusting Saudi Arabia to combat terrorists and extremists and "drive them out," as President Trump called on the kingdom and other Arab and Muslim nations to do in his Riyadh speech, is akin to forging an alliance with the Ku Klux Klan to combat racism and anti-Semitism. Saudi Arabia has for years promoted the very evil they now "commit" to fighting through a newly established Global Center for Combating Extremist Ideology. Never forget that 15 of the Sept. 11 hijackers were citizens of Saudi Arabia.

President Trump's speech was written by Westerners, delivered by a Westerner and based on a faulty Western premise, namely, that radical Muslims can be persuaded to abandon their goal of establishing a worldwide caliphate. It is a central theological principle of Wahhabism, an austere form of Islam which Saudi Arabia has for years promoted in children's textbooks, in mosques and through its media.

No reporter asked the central question that should have been put to Saudi Foreign Minister Adel al-Jubeir during his press availability with Secretary of State Rex Tillerson: Since Saudi Arabia's domestic and foreign policy is based on a theological worldview, have those views changed and if so, how did that "revelation" come to you?

One indication the Saudis might be engaging in duplicity that is common practice throughout the Middle East comes in a Washington Post story. The Saudis, the newspaper says, helped block a Trump administration proposal to impose sanctions against a Saudi branch of ISIS: "The plan to add the Islamic State (ISIS)'s Saudi affiliate to a UN list of terrorist groups was quietly killed two weeks ago in a bureaucratic maneuver at the UN Security Council, records show. U.S. officials familiar with the move said the Saudis objected to the public acknowledgment of the existence of a separate Saudi offshoot of the terrorist group inside the kingdom."

Here, a definition of duplicity may be helpful: "Deceitfulness in speech or conduct, as by speaking or acting in two different ways to different people concerning the same matter." Arab and Muslim leaders have long said one thing to the West and the opposite



A pledge from a terrorist haven to fight terrorism is not credible.

to their own people. This is not "breaking news." The surprise is that Westerners continue to fall for it.

Trump's speech was well delivered and he got some economic benefits from Saudi Arabia by signing a nearly \$110 billion arms deal, effective immediately, plus another \$350 billion over the next 10 years, which the president said would create thousands of new American jobs. All of that is good, but Saudi Arabia will stop promoting an ideology that encourages terrorism only if their god cancels the order for establishing a worldwide caliphate, the elimination of Israel and the vilification of Jews. This is what the secular West under several administrations has failed to grasp.

A policy forged in theology is not about to be changed by the urging of "infidels."

Saudi Foreign Minister Jubeir also said, "If we can

change the conversation in the Islamic world from enmity towards the U.S. to partnership with the U.S., and if we can change the conversation in the U.S. and in the West from enmity towards the Islamic world to one of partnership, we will have changed our world and we will have truly drowned the voices of extremism and we will have drained the swamps from which extremism and terrorism emanates."

It is an interesting metaphor in a desert land. Speaking of Iran and its recent election, Jubeir said, "From our perspective, we judge Iran by its actions, not by its words."

That's a suitable standard by which to judge the words of Saudi leaders. Without a change in their theological worldview, however, I'm not buying it.

(Source: *The Washington Times*)

Denouncing terror: Islam promotes the good and forbids the bad

By Catherine Shakdam

"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. Whether one is rich or poor, Allah is more worthy of both. So follow not [personal] inclination, lest you not be just. And if you distort [your testimony] or refuse [to give it], then indeed Allah is ever, with what you do, Acquainted." Quran 4:135

Late this Monday Manchester became the latest target of an ideology: Wahhabism, that sole purpose and ambition have been to sow fear and shed blood. So that it could assert its own perversion of the Scriptures, Wahhabi-inspired radicals have branded a world religion — an entire people, under the despicable brush of extremism, and thus betrayed those very tenets of the Quran Wahhabis have claimed to best abide by.

Islam it needs to be said does not exist in rejection of humanity or communities' right to freedom of religion. Islam commands the good and forbids the bad. Islam, as Imam Ali said is the religion of the middle — that, which offers hope to the hopeless and justice to those who have been wronged.

Islam needs not to be affirmed in bloodshed. It needs not to be exported by the sword... not even the Prophet of Islam: Muhammad, had power over men's hearts. His duty, his only duty was to act a messenger to the Word of God so that people could attest they were indeed informed of their Lord's Commands.

Islam was never meant as a burden — rather a promise of salvation if only one chose to follow.

There can be no words strong enough to condemn the abomination of radicalism. There can be no statements that could ever convey the injustice of a life stolen by senseless violence and unfettered hatred.

Hatred and exclusion are what animate Wahhabism and it is against hatred and exclusion that we ought to speak against, rise against, and most importantly act against. Speaking fear and



Islam needs not to be affirmed in bloodshed. It needs not to be exported by the sword... not even the Prophet of Islam: Muhammad, had power over men's hearts.

anger at one another out of a misplaced sense of self-righteousness will only serve to empower those very groups we ought to evaporate.

Islam does not live on the lips of murderers — Islam does not live on the streets or kings in golden palaces, we must recognize the seed that feeds them if we are to defeat them. Are we that bind that we cannot see the correlation in between Terror and Terror's patrons?

Are we that deluded and obsessed with materialistic gains that we close our eyes to the demons that seek us dead for the sake of a bottom line? Can we measure life to the tune of billions of dollars?

Can we sell our future and the well-being of our children and pretend that Wahhabism is not a cancer eating at our world?

Yes, there is a war raging today but it is not that that mainstream has framed.

Yes, there is a struggle in between light and darkness but that darkness

you speak of does not live within Islam's many communities, it exists in the literature Saudi Arabia's Wahhabist clergy has drowned the world into. And yet blame is laid somewhere else. This radicalism, this devolution that has reduced women to be commodities and religious minorities to be slaves has a name... will you dare say it? Will you dare stand to a system that has bought most of our institutions and reduced world leaders to docile mercenaries?

Today Wahhabism/Takfirism/Salafism has called the first victims of its Terror the devils who need annihilating. Shia Islam you see has been labelled the apostasy to be driven out.

"Drive them out. Drive them out of your places of worship. Drive them out of your communities. Drive them out of your holy land. And drive them out of this earth." US President Donald Trump said during his visit to Riyadh- Saudi Arabia.

Who are those infamous "they," There is great cruelty in accusing the

victims of a crime of terror with terrorism. What offense has Shia Islam ever committed other of course than to remain true to its traditions? What crimes so grave have Shia communities ever committed that for 14 centuries our places of worship, our holy grounds, and our very blood have been forfeited under the claim we are an apostasy?

Today blood is being spilled once more and blame will be laid at innocents' feet while kings dance in their palaces, drunk on the deception they sold the world.

Are we really that blind that we cannot recognize whose enemy is really ours?

Before the threat of Terror we are all equal. Terror hate all that is not its ideology. Terror wants all communities to be enslaved to its ideology.

Whether in Manchester, in Bahrain, in Yemen, in Iraq, or in Syria... wherever swords and guns are being wielded to affirm Wahhabism's hunger for power it is Terror we should learn to see and Resistance we should offer.

Let us not allow for those parties who seek in fact to combat, oppose, and denounce Terror to be mislabelled and shun for politicians have a propensity to lie — that so far has been our greatest shame.

If we are ever to heal the suffering that has spread under Wahhabism its patrons' names ought to be spoken out to be forever shun.

Shia Muslims more than any other community today understand the abomination of Wahhabism. For 14 centuries Shia Muslims have tasted martyrdom and sorrow by the hands of Wahhabism ... do not label us with the infamy of that Terror which has bled us from our tears.

It is because we know the horrors of Wahhabism that we will continue to stand in solidarity of any community in the throes of such Terror. We shall stand, and condemn with those who aim to defeat Terror and restore Freedom.

Any alliance with Terror equates to the promotion of Terror ... it is how we act now that will define how our future as a global community will be written.

Donald of Arabia: A disgusting spectacle

By Justin Raimondo

Has there been a more disgusting spectacle during the four months of this presidency than the sight of Donald Trump slobbering all over the barbarous Saudi monarch and his murderous family of petty princelings? It's enough to make any normal American retch, especially when one remembers what Trump said about them during the election:

"Saudi Arabia and many of the countries that gave vast amounts of money to the Clinton Foundation want women as slaves and to kill gays. Hillary must return all money from such countries!"

And then there was this tweet: "Tell Saudi Arabia and others that we want (demand!) free oil for the next ten years or we will not protect their private Boeing 747s. Pay up!"

Now Trump's son in law, Jared Kushner, is calling up Lockheed-Martin to get a discount for the Saudis, personally brokering the biggest arms deal in U.S. history. What a difference a presidency makes!

The old Trump told us that the Saudis were "mouth pieces, bullies, cowards," who were "paying ISIS," but now they're our partners in the "war on terrorism." Why it seems like only yesterday that he was calling out Saudi princes like Al-waleed bin Talal for thinking they can "control our U.S. politicians" — today he's kowtowing to them.

Most tellingly, it was Trump who made a campaign issue out of the missing 28 pages redacted from the Joint congressional report on the 9/11 terrorist attacks. In calling for their release, he painted a scenario in which the Saudi royals assisted the hijackers and said: "You know, it's sort of nice to know who your friends are, and perhaps who your enemies are."

Does Trump know who are our friends and who are our enemies?

While the U.S. government, under both Trump and Obama, has routinely maintained that Iran is the biggest exporter of terrorism, that is utter nonsense: the Saudis easily outdo the mullahs of Tehran. Riyadh funds radical madrassas throughout the world that

preach pure hatred of the West: they are incubators of terrorism, and have been wreaking havoc from one end of the globe to the other for decades. The terrorist groups that have destroyed Syria are the progeny of the Saudis, and their allies among the Gulf states.

Most shameful of all, the Saudis have invaded nearby Yemen, slaughtering children and women with impunity, bombing funeral processions, and causing a famine that will kill hundreds of thousands of noncombatants: the very young, the sick, and the old. And they're doing it with U.S. assistance, a pact signed in blood under the Obama administration, now continued and beefed up under Trump.

In all fairness, this is nothing new as far as the U.S. is concerned: our relationship with the Saudi monarchy goes all the way back to Franklin Roosevelt, who cemented the alliance in 1943 by declaring that the defense of their medieval dictatorship was "vital" to our national security: U.S. taxpayer dollars flowed into the Saudi treasury via the Lend-Lease giveaway. The flow hasn't stopped since that time: indeed, it has

only increased.

And the flow will turn into a torrent if Trump's wacky idea of an Arab NATO ever comes to fruition. We'll be paying their "defense" bills unto eternity, while they send their army of head-chopping assassins out to murder infidels on a global scale — and U.S. arms dealers rake in cash hand over fist.

Yes, the U.S.-Saudi relationship is one of the central pillars of our globalist foreign policy — but wasn't Trump supposed to be different? Wasn't he supposed to be putting America first? Of all the betrayals we've had to endure since he took the White House, his pilgrimage to the epicenter of world terrorism has got to be the absolute worst. As he kneels before the Saudi king, he humiliates all of us.

Trump's next stop was Israel, and that's no accident: the Jewish state is Saudi Arabia's main ally in the region, although the relationship is supposed to be covert. They don't even bother to keep it under wraps anymore. While the Saudis fund the head-chopping barbarians who have destroyed Syria, the Israelis succor them in their hospitals



The old Trump told us that the Saudis were "mouth pieces, bullies, cowards," who were "paying ISIS," but now they're our partners in the "war on terrorism."

Qatari approach to refugees and security in the Middle East

By Sophie Mangal

According to Gulf Times, The Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, called for a political settlement of the conflict in Syria, where millions of people had been forced to leave their homes.

Addressing the opening session of the two-day 17th Doha Forum, being held under the topic 'Development, Stability and Refugees Issues,' the Emir stressed that the international community must take responsibility for a huge number of migrants and finally solve this problem, and dialogue, he said, is the most suitable way for resolving all the regional and international conflicts.

Sheikh's words on the Syrian refugees looks right, at a glance, but at least cynically, given the country's vast contribution to financing terrorism. Throughout the conflict, Qatar contributed to the escalation of the conflict by supplying arms to the radical groups in Syria. It seems that Al Thani also ignores the fact that the State of Qatar in co-ordination with its powerful Al Jazeera's disinformation campaign is one of the catalysts for a humanitarian disaster, refugee disaster. It was Qatar that became one of the key sponsors of the 'Arab Spring', which influenced the entire Middle East region for decades to come.



The refugee crisis could have been settled if Qatar really had wanted to help Syria. However, Doha will not refuse to support the Syrian anti-government forces under any circumstances. Why so?

According to El Mundo, there are members of the Muslim Brotherhood among the so-called moderate opposition and Sheikh maintains close ties with radical movements.

Do not forget that Doha granted political asylum to the former Syrian Prime Minister, Riyad Farid Hijab. He actively called for a fight against B. Assad emphasizing the role of Qatar in defending and supporting Islamists, whom he even called "fighters for justice" from Al Jazeera TV studios afterward. Such a policy cannot be called friendly but surely can be called an escalation of the conflict.

It is an open secret that Qatar has long-standing plans to build a gas pipeline through the territory of Syria to Europe. This particular explains the Emir's desire to arm and finance various radical groups. An expert in the field of Gulf States' gas-oil geopolitics, James Durso, confirms this in his analysis of Qatar's strategy on organizing direct gas supplies. He argues that irresponsible activity of the leaders of the country aimed at gaining super

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profits has led to the most serious and negative consequences for the entire Middle East.

Apparently, the appeal to help the Syrian people will remain unrealized. Speaking like that The Emir of Qatar only tries to create the image of the faithful country on the eve of the sixth round of the inter-Syrian talks in Geneva. Qatar seeks to present itself as a state with an ideal Islamic society, the main center of Arab and Islamic culture and as a state where the modern age, Islamic social justice, freedom and equality are successfully combined.

A coordinated approach to refugee crisis is something that perhaps should be pursued. But in fact, the leadership of this country does not make any efforts for a political settlement of

the Syrian conflict, but only seeks to rekindle it with a renewed vigor in every possible way. Even The Washington Post accuses Qatar of supporting the Islamists in fact. It looks like Qatar is unlikely to abandon such an aggressive policy in the near future.

■ **Al-Thani's summary**

Al Thani is the eighth and current Emir of Qatar. He is the fourth son of the previous Emir, Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. He became Emir of Qatar on 25 June 2013 after his father's abdication. Qatar called for a military intervention of the Arab countries to end the bloodshed in Syria in 2012. Analysts expected that Al Thani would have been under immediate pressure to reduce Qatar's support for the rebels in the Syrian Civil War, which Tamim had previously supported. In fact, Sheikh Tamim took a step back after taking charge, primarily in response to the irritation voiced by Western powers at Qatar's operation to arm Syrian rebel groups which had been directed haphazardly.

Recently, under the aegis of a joint initiative with Saudi Arabia and Turkey promoted by Sheikh Tamim, Qatar has provided Syrian rebels with new weapons and forged a new opposition coalition in Syria known as 'Army of Conquest.' The Sheikh has also renewed his country's support for the Syrian people's demands for justice and freedom during a meeting with the chief of the Syrian National Coalition Khaled Khoja and his delegation in April 2015. In July 2014 Tamim renewed the defense agreement with the U.S. and confirmed Qatar's cooperation with the United States in the Combined Air Operations Center (CENTCOM) at Al Udeid Air Base. Political analysts expected Tamim to be more conservative and risk averse than his father. Because Tamim is very close to the Muslim Brotherhood, preserving a national identity grounded in traditional values is expected to be Tamim's first priority.

It's been a very long four months — that seems more like four years. In voting for Trump, many of his supporters were hoping for a return to normalcy. What they got instead was a descent into Bizarro World. (Source: Antiwar)

By David Brooks

The campaign of 2016 was an education in the deep problems facing the country. Angry voters made a few things abundantly clear: that modern democratic capitalism is not working for them; that basic institutions like the family and communities are falling apart; that we have a college educated elite that has found ingenious ways to make everybody else feel invisible, that has managed to transfer wealth upward to itself, that crashes the hammer of political correctness down on anybody who does not have faculty lounge views. As Robert W. Merry put it recently in The American

The alienated mind

Conservative, "When a man as uncouth and reckless as Trump becomes president by running against the nation's elites, it's a strong signal that the elites are the problem."

The last four months, on the other hand, have been an education in the shortcomings in populism. It's not only that Donald Trump is a bad president. It's that movements fueled by alienation are bound to fail. Alienation, the sociologist Robert

Nisbet wrote, is a "state of mind that can find a social order remote, incomprehensible or fraudulent; beyond real hope or desire; inviting apathy, boredom, or even hostility."

The alienated long for something that will smash the system or change their situation, but they have no actual plan or any means to deliver it. The alienated are a hodgepodge of disparate groups. They have no positive agenda beyond the sort of

fake shiny objects Trump ran on (Build a Wall!). They offer up no governing class competent enough to get things done.

As Yuval Levin argues in a brilliant essay in Modern Age, "Alienation can sometimes make for a powerful organizing principle for an electoral coalition ... But bit does not make for a natural organizing principle for a governing coalition."

■ Alienation breeds distrust

Worse, alienation breeds a distrust that corrodes any collective effort. To be "woke" in the alienated culture is to embrace the most cynical interpretation of every situation, to assume bad intent in every actor to imagine the conspiratorial malevolence of your foes. →13

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8 superfoods that can heal your entire body

The food we eat is so important to our health and well-being, and yet so much of the product on sale in supermarkets and high street stores has been selected for rapid growth, is genetically modified, and much of its best nutrition has fallen by the wayside. Here are 8 superfoods to watch out for that deliver great nutrition, and super health benefits by the boatload.

■ Superfood # 1 – Aloe vera

Aloe Vera is a treasure trove of nutrition. It contains 18 amino acids, 20 different minerals, 200 various phytonutrients, and 12 vitamins. If that's not enough, it also has powerful antibacterial, antifungal, and antiviral characteristics. This veritable powerhouse of nutrients enables Aloe Vera to offer some amazing health benefits including:

- The easing of inflammation, including arthritic pain.
- It can help to heal ulcers, and remedy all sorts of digestive disorders and conditions.
- It is able to combat Candida Albicans and most types of parasites.
- It will help to guard against stroke and heart attack.
- It can help to arrest the growth of cancerous tumors.

■ Superfood # 2 – Bee pollen

Where would we be without honey bees? Something I would rather not think about. Honey bees give us honey of course, propolis, and bee pollen.

Bee pollen is a plentiful source of amino acids, (of which it has 22), over 68 minerals, the vitamins B, C, and E, and a variety of carotenoids and enzymes. This awesome mix of ingredients means bee pollen can help to:

- Fight arthritis, depression, cancer, and diabetes.
- Boost body strength, enhance stamina and endurance, and is a great source of energy.
- Improve the ability to concentrate and enhance memory.
- Facilitate fertility and libido
- Strengthen our ability to fight off infection.

■ Superfood # 3 – Maca

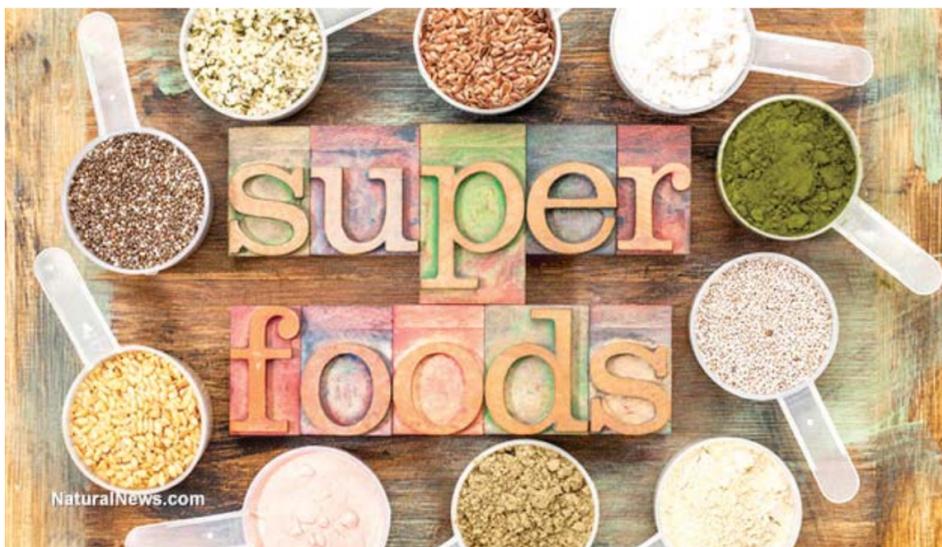
Maca is a root vegetable belonging to the radish family. It is one of the top nutritious superfoods, with its storehouse of many amino acids. Maca also contains vitamins C and E, plus the B-vitamins. In addition it's also an important source of many minerals including: calcium, copper, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, and zinc. This powerful blend of ingredients means that Maca can:

- Keep anemia at bay
- Lessen chronic tiredness
- Combat stress and depression
- Boost sexual appetite and fertility
- Support the function of the adrenal gland
- Enhance memory

■ Superfood # 4 – Reishi

The Reishi mushroom (also known as the Lingzhi mushroom) is native to both Asia and North America. It is a powerful source of antioxidants as well as the B-vitamins, and a number of beneficial minerals including: copper, magnesium, niacin, phosphorus, potassium, and selenium. The many health benefits of the Reishi mushroom include:

- It fights autoimmunity (including arthritis), and wards off cancer
- It helps to minimize both physical and mental stress
- It helps to lessen inflammation



- It guards liver health
- It promotes digestive health

■ Superfood # 5 – Goji berries

Goji berries are native to China, and indeed had been part of ancient Chinese medicine for thousands of years. They contain 18 amino acids, vitamins A, B-complex, C and E. As well as having 21 trace minerals, they are also a rich source of antioxidants. The benefits that Goji berries provide include:

- They can add a significant boost to your immune function
- They help to protect DNA
- They help to protect your eyes, and liver
- They have characteristics that can reduce inflammation.
- They enhance cardiovascular health
- They boost the "feel-good" factor and consequently lift your mood
- They improve your libido

■ Superfood # 6 – Chlorella

You may not have heard of this superfood before, and if you haven't, it's well worth knowing about. Chlorella is an algae that is grown in freshwater ponds in Asia. Not only is it an abundant source of complete protein, but it is also a super source of chlorophyll, and is rich in what is known as the entire vitamin complex. It is also a wonderful source of many minerals including calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, and zinc. This algae superfood provides many exceptional health benefits.

- The detoxification of heavy metals and bio toxins
- It is able to strongly fight of Candida Albicans
- It is credited with being able to fight cancer
- It can ward-off diabetes and improves the body's resistance to insulin
- Relieves the pain associated with both arthritis and fibromyalgia
- Assists with the healing and repair of skin tissue
- Fights digestive maladies and improves digestive health

■ Superfood # 7 – Hemp

Our next superfood, Hemp, has 20 amino acids and is also a rich source of plant protein. As a plant,

Hemp is unusual in that it is a plentiful source of essential fatty acids, displaying the perfect balance between Omega 6 to Omega 3 oils. The many benefits of Hemp include:

- Strengthens the immune system
- Is able to lessen inflammation
- Enhances memory and wards off certain brain related illnesses
- Combats skin disorders
- Improves digestive tract health
- Reduces the risk of developing cancer
- Lessens the possibility of developing diabetes

■ Superfood # 8 – Coconut

Coconut is a true superfood that counts has come into recognition in the West in recent years. It is a wonderful source of fatty acids, including Lauric acid and Caprylic acid, both of which have the ability to kill bacteria and viruses, and fight off fungal infection. As well as being an excellent source of the B-vitamins, coconut is also rich in the minerals calcium, copper, iron, manganese, magnesium, and zinc. Its health benefits include:

- Boosting the strength of your immune system
- Offering good protection against brain related illnesses
- Reducing the risk of developing diabetes
- Lessening inflammation in joints and muscles
- Helping to protect your liver
- Fighting off bacteria and parasites
- Combating immune related diseases
- Helping to prevent cancer
- Relieving acid reflex
- Enhancing the health of your digestive system

■ Keeping good health on track, and enhancing well-being

With so many processed foods available on the supermarket shelves today, and so many farmed foods failing to deliver the goods in terms of nutrition, knowing which superfoods you can rely on is essential to anyone's holistic health lifestyle; and you can rely on the fact that the superfoods reviewed above will keep good health on track, and will also enhance your wellbeing.

(Source: healthy-holistic-living.com)

What snacks to eat for better sleep

By Jacqueline Howard

Many people chug caffeine-packed coffee or scarf down an energy bar to wake up, but what should you eat to wind down?

More than a third of adults in the United States are not getting enough shut-eye, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

So, to make sure that your bedtime snack can be effective in promoting sleep, some experts say it should contain one essential amino acid: tryptophan.

"There is a real lack of studies that show that specific nutrients can influence sleep, either better or worse. There are a few exceptions. Tryptophan has been shown to induce sleep," said Michael Grandner, director of the University of Arizona College of Medicine's Sleep and Health Research Program.

Tryptophan, an amino acid, might help you snooze because once it enters your body, it's converted into two brain chemicals associated with sleep: melatonin, which helps regulate your body's natural sleep and wake cycles, and serotonin, which causes relaxation and drowsiness.

"Tryptophan is the reason why it is widely perceived that a Thanksgiving dinner causes drowsiness, because of the tryptophan in turkey. However, other foods contain tryptophan, and some have more tryptophan than turkey," said Dr. Donald Hensrud, medical



director of the Mayo Clinic Healthy Living Program and specialist in nutrition and preventive medicine.

Snacks containing high amounts of tryptophan include egg whites, soybeans, low-fat cheese, chicken and seeds, such as pumpkin or sesame, Hensrud said.

Foods rich in carbohydrates, lean in protein and low in fat also may boost the production of serotonin and melatonin, such as granola, unsweetened cereals or whole-grain crackers with milk, according to the University of Maryland Medical Center.

Have a sweet tooth? Pineapples, or-

Tryptophan, an amino acid, might help you snooze because once it enters your body, it's converted into two brain chemicals associated with sleep: melatonin, which helps regulate your body's natural sleep and wake cycles, and serotonin, which causes relaxation and drowsiness.

(Source: CNN)

Anxiety

Worried that you worry too much? Everyone worries or gets scared sometimes. But feeling extremely worried or afraid much of the time, or repeatedly feel panicky, may be signs of an anxiety disorder.

Anxiety disorders include panic attacks, post-traumatic stress disorder, and obsessive-compulsive disorder. They are among the most common mental illnesses, affecting roughly 40 million American adults. A person has an anxiety disorder if she or he has persistent worry for more days than not, for at least several months. Some people with anxiety feel they have always been worriers, even since childhood or adolescence. In other people, anxiety comes on suddenly, triggered by a crisis or a period of stress, such as the loss of a job, a family illness, the death of a relative, or other tragedy.

Numerous therapies can help control anxiety. These include psychotherapy and medication, ideally supported by good nutrition, sleep, and regular exercise. People who are anxious tend to reach for unhealthy "comfort" food—and then worry about it. Or they completely avoid food, skipping meals or even fasting—and worry that something is wrong, such as an undiagnosed cancer. Healthy eating can avoid these anxiety triggers.

Not getting enough sleep can boost a person's anxiety level. On the flip side, getting enough sleep can help control stress and anxiety. So can getting regular exercise—aim for 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise five days a week.

■ Is health anxiety linked to heart disease?

If you worry you'll develop health problems, you may wind up making yourself sick, suggest the authors of a study published online Nov. 3, 2016, by BMJ Open. They looked at the role health anxiety plays in heart disease. Health anxiety is a persistent preoccupation with having or acquiring a serious illness. It often accompanies other anxiety disorders or depression.

Researchers analyzed survey answers and physical exam information of about 7,000 middle-aged people, then followed their heart health for about 12 years. The study found people with health anxiety developed heart disease about 73% more often than people without health anxiety. The study was observational and doesn't prove health anxiety caused heart disease. For example, people with health anxiety may have been experiencing symptoms from early heart disease, which is why they were anxious. But other studies have shown a link between anxiety disorders and heart disease, and we know persistent anxiety takes a toll on mental and physical health. Tell your doctor if you feel anxious about your health.

(Source: health.harvard.edu)

9 foods that help relieve nausea

■ Apple

A little fiber goes a long way toward clearing nausea-inducing chemicals out of your system — but too much at one time can make you feel even worse. Throughout the day, snack on such fiber-rich foods as a whole apple (Gala apples are a good choice) and crunchy raw vegetables. Try applesauce or apple juice if you're having trouble digesting solid food.

■ Crackers

Foods high in starch — such as saltines, bread, and toast — help absorb stomach acids and settle a queasy stomach. Keep a handful of crackers on your nightstand; eating a few before you get out of bed may help ease nausea in the morning.

■ Ginger

Capsules of powdered ginger have been found to reduce nausea and vomiting. You could also try a cup of ginger tea, a glass of ginger ale (some people swear it works better if it's flat), a few gingersnap cookies, or a piece of ginger candy. Pickled ginger, the kind that usually comes with sushi, may also help.

■ Water

Small sips from a plain glass of water will help you stay hydrated — and avoid the headaches that often accompany nausea. Start out by slowly drinking tiny amounts until you feel you can stomach a larger amount.

■ Nuts

A lack of protein can make nausea feel even worse, so look to protein-packed foods, such as nuts — even peanut butter (as long as you're not allergic) — that are easy to digest. They'll quickly replenish your depleted energy and help keep your nausea at bay.

■ Chicken broth

Chicken soup may make you feel better when you have a cold, but it's too heavy when you're nauseated. Instead try chicken broth to soothe your symptoms — the lower in fat, the better. Broth made from bouillon cubes may be your best bet because it's easy to prepare and less likely to spoil.

■ Sports drinks

Most sports drinks contain the electrolytes sodium and potassium, which help restore an athlete's depleted nutrients. While you may not be up for sports, sports drinks can help even non-athletes feel better when they're suffering from nausea.

■ Banana

If your nausea is accompanied by dehydration, or if you have been vomiting, snack on a piece of this peel-and-eat fruit. Bananas can help restore potassium, which is often depleted as a result of diarrhea and vomiting. Doctors also recommend starting on «bland» foods like bananas when you're ready to eat solids again.

■ Sprig of mint

The refreshing aroma alone may be enough to make you feel better, but actually chewing on fresh mint or drinking a glass of mint tea is considered an effective remedy for nausea.

(Source: everydayhealth.com)

10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

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

- 1** Kik Interactive, which created the chat platform Kik, said it was launching a crypto-currency or token called Kin that would enable customers to use a whole range of digital services. Kik is a free chat and messaging application founded in 2009 and built for teenagers, with about 300 million registered users.
- 2** Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg returned to Harvard University, the school he dropped out of to start the pioneering social network, to urge its graduating class to help create a new social safety net to allow creative risk-taking. The 33-year-old said he would never have been able to risk leaving the elite Ivy League school if he had not known that his family would have been able to support him if he failed.
- 3** A newly found flaw in widely used networking software leaves tens of thousands of computers potentially vulnerable to an attack similar to that caused by WannaCry, which infected more than 300,000 computers worldwide, cybersecurity researchers said.
- 4** China's police have arrested 44 people over a scam which saw many as 93,000 people contribute start-up capital to "unfreeze" assets smuggled overseas when the Nationalist government was overthrown in 1949, police authorities said late.
- 5** Drones are getting smaller and smarter. The DJI Spark sets a new standard for small drones. The \$499 drone can shoot high-definition video, flies at speeds of 31 miles per hour and is the size of a soda can.
- 6** Google's AlphaGo clinches series win over Chinese Go master. Google's artificial intelligence program, AlphaGo, beat Chinese Go master Ke Jie for a second time, taking an unassailable 2-0 lead in a best of three series meant to test the limits of computers in taking on humans at complex tasks.
- 7** Qualcomm updates legal claim, alleges Apple tried to 'twist hands'. The battle between the two tech giants has been snowballing for months, with Tim Cook saying in January that this particular saga might drag on for quite a while.
- 8** Intel is pushing its Thunderbolt 3.0 USB port as the defacto input mode for future PCs. Chipzilla announced that it will be throwing its weight behind an effort to make the next-gen port standard the biggest thing since USB.
- 9** Microsoft working on making its HoloLens AR headset dramatically better. Microsoft's AR headset HoloLens is still available for developers only, and there are no signs that the situation could change in the foreseeable future.
- 10** Oukitel has just announced its brand-new entry to the K series — the K10000 Pro. The series is comprised of midrange handsets with massive batteries and the new member does not deviate from that formula.

Samsung files patents for a tablet with a rollable display and a smartwatch with a camera

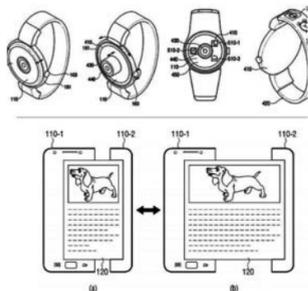
It's truly amazing what you can find if you go digging deep into the public database of the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Both granted patents and patent applications hide some surprising diamonds in the rough.

Among the many patents for ornamental designs of washing machines, Samsung has snuck in a rather interesting application for a new kind of smartwatch. The document describes a wearable device, portrayed with a circular display featuring a camera lens in the middle. That's right – a camera right in the center of the screen. Not just that, but it also comes

with optical zoom capabilities, which makes it protrude from the surface of the display when zooming in.

Additionally, the wearable is also described as having a secondary flexible display right in the watch band. From what the application shows, it will work a lot like the edge panels on the Samsung Galaxy S series of smartphones, holding various quick-launch icons, for example.

The second patent application that caught our eye describes an electronic device with a rollable display. It features what appears to be a tablet with a roll on one side. A flexible display is wrapped around said roll, and when the opposite side of the device is pulled outwards, the display rolls out. Depending on the roll's rotation, the device is supposed to determine what the active area of the display should be and react accordingly. (Source: sammobile)



Fitness trackers out of step when measuring calories, research shows

By Nicola Davis

Fitness devices can help monitor heart rate but are unreliable at keeping tabs on calories burned, research has revealed.

Scientists put seven consumer devices through their paces, comparing their data with gold-standard laboratory measurements.

"We were pleasantly surprised at how well the heart rate did – under many circumstances for most of the devices, they actually did really quite well," said Euan Ashley, professor of cardiovascular medicine at Stanford University and co-author of the research.

"At the same time we were unpleasantly surprised at how poor the calorie estimates were for the devices – they were really all over the map."

The team tested seven wrist-worn wearable devices – the Apple Watch, Basis Peak, Fitbit Surge, Microsoft Band, Mio Alpha 2, PulseOn, and Samsung Gear S2 – with 31 women and 29 men each wearing multiple devices at a time while using treadmills to walk or run, cycling on exercise bikes or simply sitting.

"There were diversity of ages, male and female, and then also we looked at diversity of skin tone, and then size and weight to try and represent the population generally," said Ashley.

The resulting heart rate data and energy expenditure estimates for each device were then extracted and compared to data that had been collected simultaneously by "gold standard" laboratory-based measures: electrocardiograph (ECG) to measure heart rate, and indirect calorimetry – a measure of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the breath – to measure calories burned.

The results, published in the Journal of Personalised Medicine, reveal that overall the fitness trackers performed well at



measuring heart rate. For all forms of exercise compared to the lab tests the most accurate readings were from the Apple Watch, which had a median error rate of 2%, while the Samsung Gear S2 came bottom of the pile with a median error in heart rate of 6.8%.

However, errors on energy expenditure were far greater, ranging from the lowest at 27.4% for the Fitbit Surge to the highest error of 92.6% for the PulseOn device. Data on energy expenditure was not available for the Samsung device.

The errors in energy expenditure, said Ashley, could be down to a range of factors including problems with the devices' algorithms or poor data input

by users. Errors were found to vary due to factors including sex and mode of exercise.

The team say the findings have ramifications for those relying on their fitness trackers as a measure of their health.

"When you consider that people are using these estimates to essentially make lifestyle decisions like what they are going to eat for lunch then I think that is something that is worth knowing and people should know to take these estimates with more than a pinch of salt," said Ashley.

While the team have previously collaborated with various tech companies, including Apple and Samsung, they point out the current research was not funded by any of the companies who produced

the tested devices.

Ashley adds that those who have bought fitness trackers should not necessarily consign them to the drawer just yet, pointing out that while consumers should be wary of relying on the measures of energy expenditure, the heart rate data could prove valuable.

"More attention to diet and exercise is always going to improve the health of our population," he added.

A spokesperson from Fitbit said that the company is confident in the performance of their trackers based on their own "extensive, ongoing research and development" together with consumer reviews.

(Source: Guardian)

The LG G6's wide-angle lens is the best travel camera

By Ben Sin

As a tech reviewer, handing out the "best smartphone camera" title is a tough, if not impossible, task.

The LG G6 (and before that, the V20) has been my go-to device for a while, because LG's wide-angle lens is able to capture a canvas that's wider (or taller) than the human eye, or all other phone camera lens, can see. This may not be that useful on a Wednesday night at the local noodle joint or if you're capturing pics of your baby to spam social media. But when you're traveling to locations with stunning architectures or landscape (like, say, Rome), being able to capture the everything is extremely useful.

This isn't to say the G6's camera beats every other



camera in everything. If you're going to a dimly lit bar with friends, the S8 will capture better photos inside than the G6. And when I take product shots of devices for review, I tend to default to my Huawei Mate 9 Pro over everything. But if you're traveling to a city in Europe full of epic architecture? The wide-angle lens is your best friend. I still remember some tech sites dismissing the wide-angle lens on the G5 as a gimmick last year -- those mainstream tech dudes are so biased towards Apple/Samsung my eyes hurt from rolling -- none of them are saying that now, because once you use it a few times you realize how practical having an extra wide lens can be.

(Source: forbes)

Lenovo will never phase out its own brand



Last November an intriguing report surfaced claiming that Lenovo would give up on using its own brand for smartphones. Instead, it would only sell Moto-branded devices starting at some point in the future.

Today however this has been denied by none other than Lenovo CEO Yang Yuanqing. He told reporters that the reorganization will not affect its mobile business on the mainland. Despite a widening loss for its mobile division, the company is intent on moving forward with the same dual-brand strategy as before - selling handsets under both Lenovo and Motorola names. (Source: Reuters)

Sony to focus on mid-range and flagship devices from now on



Sony was off to a rocky start ever since it shed itself of the Xperia Z series to give birth to a new category of devices that would be known as "Premium Standard". The Xperia X didn't do very well given its price point, choice of processor and lack of features from the Xperia Z lineup.

Now the company confirm that it will no longer be making smartphones in the ~\$500 price range or what it calls its 'Premium Standard' category of smartphones. From now on, Sony will only focus on the midrange XA lineup and the flagship Xperia XZ. (Source: xperiablog)

Xbox Game Pass subscription service is coming next month



Microsoft is busy readying a subscription service for its Xbox One gaming console. This will be called Xbox Game Pass when it launches next month. It will give you access to more than 100 titles created for the Xbox One and Xbox 360. In return, you'll have to pay \$9.99 per month. The Game Pass service, or better put the idea of such a service, was first unveiled by Microsoft back in February.

Unlike Sony's PlayStation Now, Game Pass will let you download the included games - no streaming necessary. (Source: theverge)

Fight against ISIS is shifting from the 'battlefield to the internet'

Theresa May urged G7 leaders to tell technology firms that they should do more to suppress extremist content online, arguing that fight against Islamic State is shifting from the "battlefield to the internet". The prime minister told fellow leaders at the summit in Sicily that every country should encourage companies like Facebook, Google and Twitter to block users who post extremist content and report individuals to authorities if there is evidence of imminent harm.

The prime minister believes that cooperation between major industrial countries could help force



the social media companies to develop tools that could automatically identify and remove harmful material based on what it contains and who posted it.

In March No 10 said companies like Facebook and Google "can and must do more" to remove inflammatory material from the web and that it was up to them to respond to public concern.

"Social media companies have a responsibility when it comes to making sure this material is not disseminated and we have been clear repeatedly that we think that they can and must do more," a spokesman said. (Source: The Guardian)

Jupiter isn't like what researchers expected

Beneath its heavy cloud cover, Jupiter has been able to keep its secrets from astronomers. Now, first results from NASA's Juno mission are challenging researchers' beliefs about the gas giant.

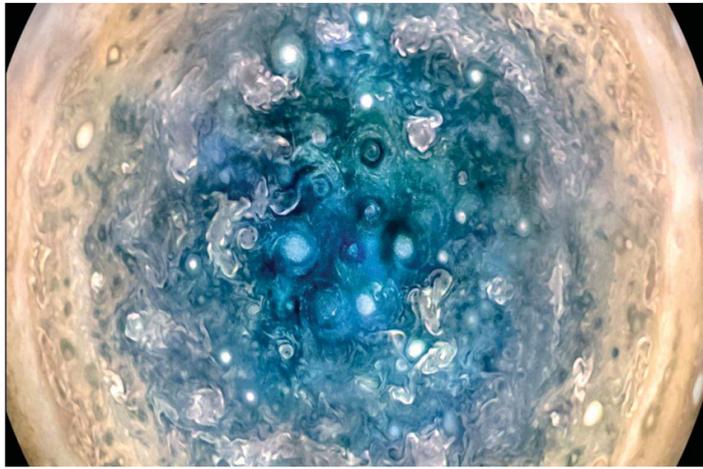
The results were revealed during a media teleconference Thursday with NASA researchers and published in corresponding studies through the journal *Science* and *Geophysical Research Letters*.

Juno launched in August 2011 but didn't arrive at Jupiter until July. The craft has been orbiting the planet and performing calculated flybys over the clouds. These happen every 53 days as Juno "screams by" Jupiter, going from the north to south pole in about two hours.

The "general theme of our discoveries is really how different Jupiter looked from how we expected," said Scott Bolton, Juno principal investigator, from the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio. "This is a close-up and personal look at Jupiter. We thought it was uniform inside and relatively boring. What we're finding is anything but that. It's very complex. Jupiter from the poles doesn't look anything like it does from our usual view."

■ During the flybys

During the flybys, observations and data showed Jupiter's previously unseen poles. Bright ovals at the poles were revealed to



The "general theme of our discoveries is really how different Jupiter looked from how we expected," said Scott Bolton, Juno principal investigator, from the Southwest Research Institute in San Antonio.

be gigantic cyclones spanning 870 miles. Juno was also able to probe the cloud cover and discover wells of ammonia that form giant and violent weather systems in the

deep atmosphere.

But this ammonia isn't consistently mixed, like researchers believed. The variation shifts from high to low.

(Source: CNN)

Scientists pinpoint how a flamingo balances on one leg

Most anyone who has encountered a flamingo has probably been impressed by its signature ability to balance on a single long, spindly leg for remarkably long periods of time.

But actually, scientists have now shown that what appears to be a feat requires almost no muscle activity from the bird.

In fact, they found even a dead flamingo's body will naturally fall into a stable one-leg balance if positioned vertically. That research was recently published in *Biology Letters*.

Until now there have been two basic schools of thought about why a flamingo stands on one leg, Lena Ting, a biomedical engineer at Emory University and Georgia Institute of Technology, tells *The Two-Way*.

Some scientists have suggested it was a way for the bird to conserve heat that would have been lost if that foot had been in the cold water. Others thought it was a way to reduce muscle fatigue, letting one leg rest while the other did the work.

■ Measuring body motions

Ting and co-author Young-Hui Chang from the Georgia Institute of Technology headed to Zoo Atlanta, where they tested eight juvenile Chilean flamingos using a

device called a force plate. She compares the machine to a Wii balance board or a high-tech bathroom scale – it "can measure the small motions of the body when you stand."

They recorded a small amount of swaying motion when the animals were awake. But then something surprising happened – when an animal dozed off, the swaying dropped off dramatically.

"And that's the opposite of what we would expect for you or me – if I was standing on one leg and then closed my eyes, typically I would see a great increase in the amount of body sway and usually that results in people having to put their foot down," she says.

It suggests that while awake and active, the bird's swaying could be correcting for other movements, ultimately settling into a position while asleep that requires little to no muscle activity.

That was put to the test in an experiment with a flamingo cadaver, which of course has no muscle activity because it is not living.

First, the researchers tried manipulating the cadaver's joint in search of a locking mechanism that could explain the stability,



she says. But the joint moved very loosely and did not lock.

The key moment happened when they rotated the bird into a standing position: "We held onto its ankle ... and we turned it vertically, and then all of a sudden it just

collapsed right into the position that you see when they're standing on one leg."

This video shows the remarkable stability of the cadaver, even when it is pushed and pulled in different directions.

(Source: npr.org)

How demands of female birds changed the DNA of a species

Darwin's finches, those little birds in the Galápagos with beaks of different sizes and shapes, were instrumental in the development of the theory of evolution.

Similar birds had large and small beaks and beaks in between, all related to what kinds of insects and seeds they ate. From one ancestor, it seemed, different adaptations to the environment had evolved, giving the birds that adapted a survival edge in a particular ecological niche – evolution by natural selection.

Biologists who came later went on to identify the genetic changes that had produced different beak shapes.

Now another group of finch-like birds has provided a similar example, but of a different kind of evolution, one driven not by the demands of the environment, but by the demands of female birds. Their preferences in color and pattern caused the evolution of different species of seedeater, all with the same behavior and diet, but with males that look different. That's a process called sexual selection, which Darwin also wrote about.

Leonardo Campagna, a researcher at Cornell University and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and a group of scientists from the United States and South Amer-



ica investigated nine species of southern capuchino seedeaters, doing full genomes for each one and reported their findings in *Science Advances*.

■ Feeding on grass seeds

They found that the DNA of all the species is remarkably similar, as are the birds. All the females look alike and all of the species feed on grass seeds plucked

from grass stalks of living plants. Only the males are different. They have a wide variety of colorations and their courting songs are also distinct.

Dr. Campagna and the other researchers found that differences between species DNA were all minimal, ranging from as little as 0.03 percent to as great as 0.3 percent. All the species showed variation in the same area, DNA that appeared to have a role in regulating genes for the pigment melanin.

We'll bring you stories that capture the wonders of the human body, nature and the cosmos.

The study, Dr. Campagna said, is a reminder that one species can split into multiple species with very little underlying genetic change. It's also interesting because the color patterns of the male do not seem to give one species any survival advantage over another. They do identify different species, but the patterns themselves seem to be dictated by female mating choices.

Much about sexual selection remains unknown. For instance, what combination of brain and sensory function leads to a liking for one color over another, and what genes are responsible?

(Source: The NYT)

Fitbits are way off the mark when calculating weight loss, study finds

Trendy fitness trackers like Fitbits do not work on overweight people and are "way off the mark" when calculating weight loss, according to new research.

Scientists set out to measure the accuracy of wristband activity trackers – including Fitbit and Apple Watch – worn by millions of people to monitor their own exercise and health.

But if it measures energy expenditure, it's probably out by a "significant" amount, according to the study by researchers at Stanford University School of Medicine in the US. An evaluation of seven devices in a group of 60 volunteers showed that six of the devices measured heart rate with an error rate of less than five per cent.

The team evaluated the Apple Watch,

Basis Peak, Fitbit Surge, Microsoft Band, Mio Alpha 2, PulseOn and the Samsung Gear S2.

■ Body mass index

Some devices were more accurate than others, and factors such as skin color and body mass index affected the measurements, according to the researchers.

Even the most accurate device was out by an average of 27 per cent while the least accurate was off by 93 per cent, according to the findings published by the *Journal of Personalized Medicine*.

The study's senior author Professor Euan Ashley said: "People are basing life decisions on the data provided by these devices."

But he said consumer devices aren't

held to the same standards as medical-grade devices, and it's hard for doctors to know what to make of heart-rate data and other figures from a patient's wearable device.

Professor Ashley said: "Manufacturers may test the accuracy of activity devices extensively, but it's difficult for consumers to know how accurate such information is or the process that the manufacturers used in testing the devices."

■ Energy expenditure

He and his colleagues set out to independently evaluate activity trackers that met criteria such as measuring both heart rate and energy expenditure and being commercially available.

Colead author graduate student Anna Shcherbina said: "For a lay user, in

a non-medical setting, we want to keep that error under 10 per cent."

The volunteers wore the seven devices while walking or running on treadmills or using exercise bikes. Each volunteer's heart was measured with a medical-grade electrocardiograph (ECG).

Metabolic rate was estimated with an instrument for measuring the oxygen and carbon dioxide in breath. Results from the wearable devices were then compared to the measurements from the two "gold standard" instruments.

Professor Ashley said: the "heart rate measurements performed far better than we expected, but the energy expenditure measures were way off the mark." (Source: The Telegraph)

Learning to read can dramatically change the adult brain

Scientists have long known that learning shapes the brain. Speaking multiple languages, accruing new skills or even just quitting a habit can forge new neural pathways. But a new study has brought a surprising twist to our understanding of how the brain molds itself to new abilities—in particular, learning to read as an adult. Literacy, it turns out, changes ancient regions of the brain that researchers never suspected played a role in reading. The finding expands not only our understanding of reading but also disorders that impair it, namely dyslexia.

Neurologists and psychologists from several institutions worldwide recruited 30 illiterate people, mostly women around age 30, from two villages near the northern India city of Lucknow, to their study. Over six months, a local school teacher taught the participants to read Devanagari, the alphabet used for many languages including their native Hindi. The researchers took MRI images of all the participants' brains before the instruction began and at the end of the six months.

The villagers learned to read and write the 46 characters used in Devanagari during the first month and soon became adept with two-syllable words. By the end of the study, the participants could read complex words, knew basic grammar rules and understood tense and gender rules. Their literacy was tested at the beginning and end of the study, with a total of 21 participants completing the full study, which has just been published in *Science Advances*.

The images taken at the start and end of the six months showed stark differences in what neurologists refer to as the subcortical structures of the brain. These structures are located between the retina, where light enters our eyes, and the visual cortex, where our brains begin consciously perceiving visual information.

The dramatic reshaping of the subcortical structures as the adults learned to read was surprising. Reading is a relatively recent skill, explains lead study author Michael Skeide, a neuropsychologist at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Sciences in Germany, but the subcortical structures are, "very old in evolutionary terms." (Source: Newsweek)

Brain scans show how fathers are more attentive to daughters than sons

Fathers behave differently with their toddler daughters than with their toddler sons, scientists have said. Dads not only act differently in their daily interactions with the children, but scans of their brains also revealed different patterns of activity depending on whether they have a boy or a girl.

In recent years, a number of studies has shown that fathers treat girls and boys differently – suggesting in some cases that their behaviors could reinforce gender stereotypes in their children.

This is nevertheless a complex area of research, and scientists are confronted with important methodological challenges.

For instance, studies often rely on parents' self-reports of their interactions with their children. These are not always accurate, meaning the findings are not always reliable.



Few studies have looked at whether these paternal behavioral differences could be linked to different paternal brain responses in male and female children.

The new study, published in the journal *Behavioral Neuroscience*, compares how fathers of young girls and fathers of young boys act, and analyses their neural responses when seeing pictures of their child.

The scientists recruited 52 fathers of toddlers – 30 girls and 22 boys – living near Atlanta, U.S. They asked them to wear a special device on their belts on a Monday and a Sunday, in order to record their interactions with the children. In addition, the mothers were asked to fill in questionnaires regarding the fathers' parenting.

(Source: IBT)

Expressing genetic interactions through music

An artistic collaboration between musician and sound producer Max Cooper, respected visual artist Andy Lomas and researchers from the Babraham Institute in Cambridge has produced an emotive new way for anyone to experience the elegance and complexity of DNA organization. The five-track *Chromos EP* available from May 26th on digital download, captures the microscopic elegance of gene organization using moving, evocative soundscapes.

The first two tracks, 'Chromos' and 'Coils of Living Synthesis', are inspired by the work of Dr. Csilla Varnai at the Babraham Institute. As part of Dr. Peter Fraser's Lab in the Institute's nuclear dynamics research, Dr. Varnai is generating computer models that fully recreate how genetic information, recorded on DNA molecules, is organized within living cells. Her research is changing our understanding of biology by revealing how genes that are not close together in the genome interact and influence each other.

We often see DNA inside cells represented as little 'X'-shaped chromosomes arranged in neat little lines, with plenty of space between one chromosome and the next. Yet with more than two meters of DNA crammed into each cell nucleus – a space less than 100th the size of a grain of sand – nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the 46 chromosomes in a human cell spend most of their time as part of a tangled mass of DNA that most closely resembles a ball of wool. (Source: EurekaAlert)

Kermanshah's great antiquity, attractive landscapes, rich culture

Kermanshah, located in western Iran, is a city with great antiquity, attractive landscapes, and rich culture.

In the Iranian mythology, construction of the city is attributed to Tahmuras, the third king of Pishdadian dynasty (the first dynasty ruled over Iran according to Shahnameh, a long epic poem written by the Persian poet Ferdowsi). However, it is generally believed that the Sassanid (224 to 651 AD) have constructed Kermanshah and Bahram IV (the thirteenth king of the Sassanid from 388 to 399 AD) gave this name to the city.

Kermanshah has a rather large population of 2 million who are mostly Kurdish-speaking. There are numerous natural and historical sightseeing places in the city and in the towns around.

Being located at the foothills of the Zagros mountain range, the city enjoys a temperate climate and hosts a great deal of tourists every year.

Out of the city's 4,500 landscapes, ancient relics, and historical sites, 736 have been registered on the national heritage list.



PHOTO

Leila Qodratollahi-Fard
Tehran Times photographer



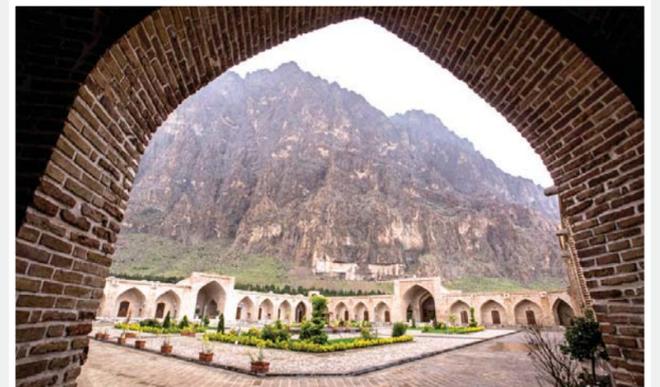
A shot from the outer courtyard of Tekyeh Biglarbeygi, a place where Shia Muslims gather for mourning of Muharram.



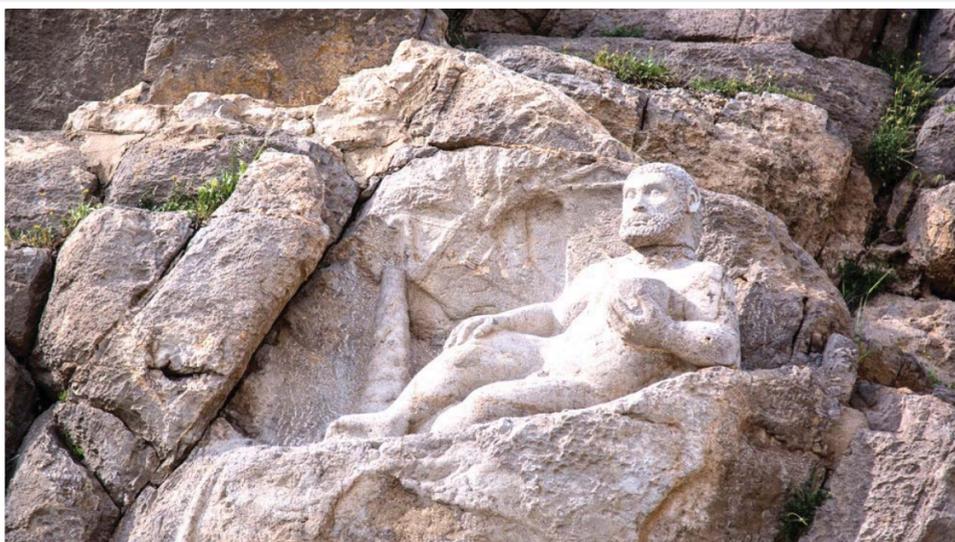
Built during Qajar dynasty (1785 to 1925) Tekyeh Biglarbeygi is well known for unique mirror decoration.



Qoori Qale cave is the biggest water cave in the Middle East with 65 million years history. The length of the cave is 12km and the depth of its water is 14m in some sections.



A view of a Safavid era (1501 to 1722) caravanserai known as Shah Abbasi caravanserai, which was built in Bisotun, a town at the foot of Bisotun Mountain.



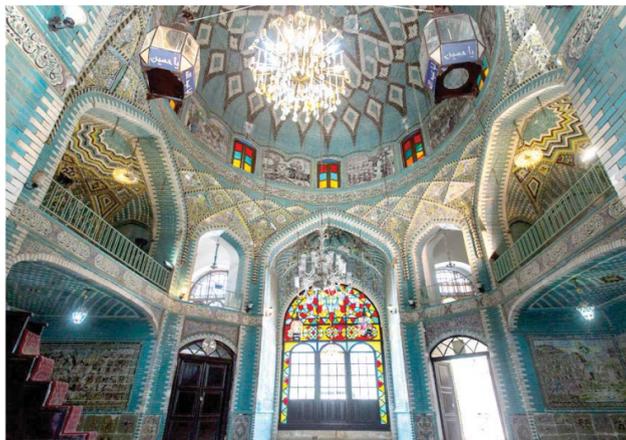
The stone statue of Herakles in Bisotun complex; the stony work, attached to the rocks by the foot of the mountain, is holding a bowl in his left hand while his right hand is on its right foot.



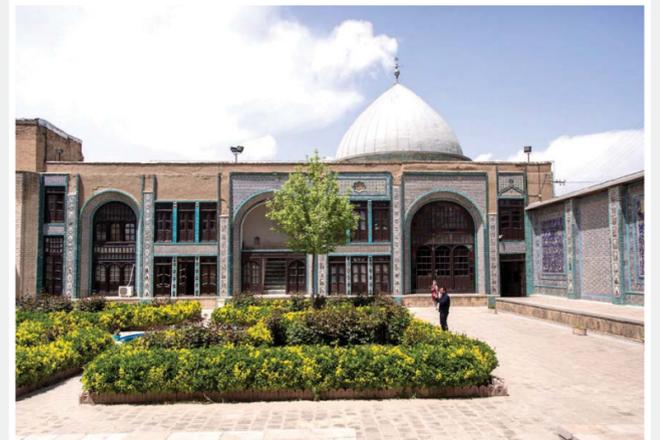
Tekyeh Moaven al-molk, made during Qajar era (1785 to 1925) as a Shia mourning site, is well known for its exclusive tiling.



A tiled tableau depicting battles of Qasem and Ali al-Akbar, the sons of Imam Hassan (AS) and Imam Hossein (AS), on the 10th day of Muharram during the battle of Karbala in Tekyeh Moaven al-molk



Hussainiya Abbasiya, another mourning place inside the Tekyeh Moaven al-molk, is also beautifully designed with colorful tiles.



The dome of Hussainiya Zaeynabiya in the azure sky

Jared Kushner now under FBI scrutiny in Russia probe, say officials

Jared Kushner, the United States President Donald Trump's son-in-law and one of his senior advisers, has come under FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) scrutiny in the Russia investigation, multiple U.S. officials told NBC News.

Investigators believe Kushner has significant information relevant to their inquiry, officials said. That does not mean they suspect him of a crime or intend to charge him.

The FBI's scrutiny of Kushner places the bureau's sprawling counterintelligence and criminal investigation not only on the doorstep of the White House, but on the cusp of the Trump family circle. The Washington Post first reported last week that a senior White House official close to Trump was a "person of interest," but did not name the person. The term "person of interest" has no legal meaning.

The officials said Kushner is in a different category from former Trump aides Paul Manafort and Michael Flynn, who are formally considered subjects of the investigation. Records of both Manafort and Flynn have been demanded by



grand jury subpoenas, NBC News has reported.

It is not known whether Kushner has received any records requests from federal investigators.

Also unclear is what precisely about Kushner's activities has drawn the FBI's interest as it investigates whether Trump associates coordinated with the Russian campaign to interfere in the election. Former

FBI Director Robert Mueller is now leading the probe as a special counsel.

Kushner met at least once in December with the Russian ambassador, Sergey Kislyak, and he also met last year with a Russian banker, Sergey Gorkov.

"Mr. Kushner previously volunteered to share with Congress what he knows about these meetings," Kushner's lawyer, Jamie Gorelick, told NBC News.

Congressional aides have said they would like to question Kushner about that meeting, and Kushner has said he would voluntarily appear before the Senate intelligence committee as part of its Russia investigation.

Gorkov is chairman of Vnesheconombank, a Russian government-owned institution that has been under U.S. sanctions since July 2014. Gorkov studied at the training school for the FSB, one of Russia's intelligence services.

Kushner, whose family's real estate empire is worth \$1.8 billion, according to Forbes, wields significant power in the White House. He is married to Trump's daughter, Ivanka.

(Source: NBC)

Qatar target of 'hostile media campaign' by Saudi, UAE: FM

Qatar says it is being targeted in a "hostile media campaign" after the House of Saud regime and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) blocked its websites and broadcasters over certain remarks attributed to the Qatari emir.

"There is a hostile media campaign against the State of Qatar, which we will confront," Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said on Thursday.

A day earlier, Qatar's state-run news agency ran a story, saying the kingdom had ordered the withdrawal of its ambassadors from Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates over "tension" with the administration of the United States President Donald Trump.

The article, quoting Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, called Iran an "Islamic power" and praised the Hamas resistance movement as "the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people."

Qatar's Foreign Ministry later claimed that its state agency had been hacked and the emir's statements had been forged.

Following the alleged hack, the House of Saud regime and the UAE blocked Qatari websites and

broadcasters in their respective countries.

The Qatari state television's nightly newscast had on Tuesday showed clips of the monarch at an official military ceremony with a scrolling ticker at the bottom of the screen showing the same remarks.

They included reference that Qatar had "strong relations" with Iran.

"Iran represents a regional and Islamic power that cannot be ignored and it is unwise to face up against it," the ticker read at one point. "It is a big power in the stabilization of the region."

The Qatari top diplomat, however, played down any existing rifts with the country's fellow Persian Gulf littoral states by saying Doha was always in favor of maintaining "strong and brotherly relations" with them.

Among the media outlets allegedly antagonizing Doha, Al Thani said, were American ones.

There were 13 opinion articles "focused on Qatar" in U.S. media in the last five weeks, he said.

On the day of the hack, "a conference on Qatar convened without us attending while the authors of those articles were there," he said, asking, "Is this a coincidence?"

(Source: Press TV)

'Beautiful military equipment' can't buy Middle East peace

2 → More recently, the dialogue initiative led by Iran, Turkey and Russia, while far from perfect, has also proved effective as a de-escalation mechanism. The twin-track diplomacy on Syria, where fighting has abated and counterterrorist efforts have made progress, provides a credible formula for conflict resolution elsewhere in the region.

In Yemen, since the first days of hostilities over two years ago, Iran has proposed a four-point plan to end the war, which Saudi Arabia boasted would be over in two weeks. The proposal entails securing an immediate cease-fire, dispatching emergency humanitarian aid, promoting dialogue among Yemeni groups and helping them to establish an inclusive government of national unity with the support of neighbors.

With seven million Yemenis on the brink of a man-made famine and virtually half of Syria's population displaced, the crises are too urgent to waste time pointing the finger of blame at the parties responsible. Rather, to find a long-overdue end to these calamities, the regional powers must recognize and address the underlying issues that fan violent extremism.

In this vein, the United States

and its allies face two choices. They can continue to lend moral and material support, and encourage the perpetrators to intensify their war efforts, though this has proved futile and only brings more death and destruction and further complicates the path to a lasting solution. Or, as Iran has stated from the start, these governments can focus on helping to forge inclusive political solutions with the participation of all the political groups involved.

Back in 1990, when I was a young diplomat, I witnessed how, in the aftermath of Saddam Hussein's decision to turn against his Arab neighbors and invade Kuwait, the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and its Arab allies failed to respond to their Iranian counterpart's offer to explore an inclusive arrangement for regional security. With billions of dollars wasted on arms, and after years of bloodshed, we are back to square one.

If we don't break this cycle, we will leave only the same momentous task to our children and grandchildren. We must be the generation that learns from history rather than be condemned to repeat it.

(The article first published by the New York Times)

Saudi-led airstrikes kill more Yemeni civilians

Airstrikes by the House of Saud regime and a number of its vassal states on residential buildings in Yemen's south have killed six civilians, including women and children.

The indiscriminate airstrikes hit houses in the southern Yemeni city of Ta'izz on Friday, killing the six people and injuring a number of others, Yemen's al-Masirah TV reported.

The House of Saud regime has been leading an invasion of Yemen from the air, land, and sea since March 2015. The war has been killing increasingly large numbers of civilians, raising concerns among international rights organizations and the United Nations (UN).

Those organizations have been repeatedly calling on Saudi regime and the countries it

has been shepherding in the war to end the indiscriminate targeting of areas in impoverished Yemen.

The aggressor regimes have also imposed a total embargo on Yemen, causing severe shortages of food and medicine. A recent cholera epidemic has been blamed on those shortages.

On Friday, warplanes from the Saudi regime-led coalition also pounded the east-central city of Ma'rib, although no casualty figures were available from those strikes.

A Yemeni movement called Ansarullah (Houthi) movement has teamed up with loyal army forces, and they have been fighting the invaders together, including by launching retaliatory strikes.

Those allied forces hit two districts in Ta'izz on

Friday, killing and injuring an unspecified number of mercenaries paid by and working for Saudi Arabia. Separately, the joint Yemeni forces targeted a newly-established Saudi regime military base in Saudi Arabia's city of Najran, killing seven Saudi military personnel, according to al-Masirah.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization (WHO), affiliated to the UN, has reportedly offered an updated tally of Yemenis who have died as a result of cholera.

The Yemen Monitor website cited the WHO as announcing that 420 people had died of cholera over the past thirty days. The WHO was also cited as saying that 19 Yemeni provinces had now been afflicted with the cholera epidemic.

(Source: Press TV)

U.S. lawmakers to fight massive Trump Saudi arms deal

The United States lawmakers introduced legislation on Thursday seeking to stop at least a portion of President Donald Trump's sale of weapons to the House of Saud regime.

Republican Rand Paul and Democrats Chris Murphy and Al Franken introduced a resolution of disapproval in the Senate to force a vote on whether to block part of the sale.

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee received formal notice of the pending sale on May 19.

The Arms Export Control Act of 1976 allows a senator to force a vote on an arms sale, once Congress is formally notified of plans to go ahead. The same three senators introduced a similar resolution last year seeking to block the sale of \$1.15 billion of tanks and other equipment to Saudi Arabia. That measure was defeated overwhelmingly.

Saudi Arabia was the first stop on Trump's first international trip this week, and he marked the visit by announcing the arms deal in Riyadh on May 20. The House of Saud regime agreed to by \$110 billion of U.S.



arms, with options running as high as \$350 billion over 10 years.

The lawmakers aim to block about \$500 million of the sale, the portion including precision-guided munitions and other offensive weapons.

"Given Saudi Arabia's past support of terror, poor human rights record, and questionable tactics in its war in Yemen, Congress must carefully consider and thoroughly debate if selling them billions of dollars of arms is in our best national security interest at this time," Paul said in a statement.

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives also took action on the planned sale on Thursday. Republican Representative Ted Yoho and Democrat Ted Lieu wrote to the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee asking for a hearing to review the sale of precision-guided munitions to Riyadh.

Democratic President Barack Obama's administration suspended the planned sale of precision-guided munitions in December because of concerns over the Saudi-led military campaign in Yemen and civilian casualties.

But Trump has said he wants to encourage international weapons sales as a way to create jobs in the United States.

(Source: Reuters)

U.S.: Mosul strike in March killed over 100 civilians

A United States-led air raid in March against a building in the Iraqi city of Mosul killed at least 105 civilians, the Pentagon admitted on Thursday after concluding an investigation into the attack.

According to the Pentagon's summary of the investigation, the March 17 strike on Mosul's al-Jadidah district targeted two snipers of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group in the building who had engaged with Iraqi counterterrorism forces.

The Pentagon said, however, that the high civilian death toll was caused by a secondary explosion of munitions placed by ISIL fighters in the building, where civilians were also sheltering.

"There is no way the munition a US plane dropped March 17 in the Jadidah neighborhood could have caused the extensive damage that killed 101 people in a house and four in a neighboring house," it said in a statement.

The report's summary added that the coalition "could not have predicted the presence of civilians in the structure prior to engagement" and that an additional 36 civilians remain unaccounted for.

Samuel Oakford of Airwars, a London-based collective of journalists and researchers that tracks civilian deaths in Iraq and Syria, told Al Jazeera that "any armed actor in Mosul has to assume there are civilians nearby because that's almost always the case".

The Mosul strike was the single deadliest incident for civilians arising from a coalition strike since anti-ISIL operations in Iraq and Syria nearly three years ago.

Initial reports from those inside Mosul said that anywhere between 130 to more than 200 civilians died in the strike.

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said in a statement that a local commander had ordered the air raid, which was then carried using a single precision-guided bomb.

It added that it was "the most appropriate and proportionate means of engagement to neutralize the threat and to minimize collateral damage".

Major-General Joe Martin, the commanding general of coalition forces, expressed condolences to those affected.

"The coalition takes every feasible measure to protect civilians from harm. The best way to protect civilians is to defeat ISIL (ISIL)." U.S. Air Force Brigadier-General Matt Isler, who led the investigation, said no condolence payments have been made, though such a move has not been ruled out.

The investigation comes amid broader claims that U.S. forces under President Donald Trump are killing more civilians as the military fulfills a plan to "annihilate" ISIL.

Airwars has said a minimum of 3,350 people have been killed in coalition strikes in Syria and Iraq.

As of the most recent U.S. military count at the end of April, a total of 396 civilians had been killed since the beginning of the bombing campaign against ISIL nearly three years ago.

The 105 figure from the March incident would push that number beyond 500.

(Source: agencies)

The alienated mind

8 → Alienation breeds a hysterical public conversation. Its public intellectuals are addicted to overstatement, sloppiness, pessimism, and despair. They are self-indulgent and self-lionizing prophets of doom who use formulations like "the Flight 93 election" — who speak of every problem as if it were the apocalypse.

Alienation also breeds a zero-sum mindset — it's us or them — and with it a tribal clannishness and desire for exclusion. As Levin notes, on the right alienation can foster a desire for purity — to exclude the foreign — and on the left it can foster a desire for conformity — to squelch differing speakers and faiths.

The events of the past four months have demonstrated that Donald Trump is not going to solve the problem he was elected to address; neither the underlying economic and social ruptures nor the alienation that emerges from them.

The events of the past four months illustrate that we do need a political establishment in this country, or maybe a few competing establishments. We need people who have been educated to actually know something about public policy problems. We need people who have had gradual, upward careers in government and understand the craft of wielding power. We need people who know how to live up to certain standards of integrity and public service.

But going forward we need a better establishment, one attuned to Trump voters, those whose alienation grows out of genuine suffering.

Better establishment

The first task for this better establishment is to not make the political chasm worse. As the impeachment investigation proceeds, it'll be important for us Trump critics to not set our hair on fire every day, to evaluate the evidence as if it were against a president we ourselves voted for. Would we really throw our own candidate out of office for this?

Over the longer term, it will be necessary to fight alienation with participation, to reform and devolve the welfare state so that recipients are not treated like passive wards of the state, but take an active role in their own self-government.

It'll be necessary to revive a living elite patriotism. That means conducting oneself in office as if nation is more important than party; not using executive orders, filibusters and the nuclear option to grab what you can while you happen to be in the majority. It means setting up weekly encounters to help you respect and understand the fellow Americans who reside across the social chasms.

Finally, it'll be necessary to fight alienation with moral realism, with a mature mindset that says that, yes, people are always flawed, the country always faces problems, but that is no reason for lazy cynicism or self-righteous despair. If you start with an awareness of human foibles, then you can proceed with what Levin calls pessimistic hopefulness — grateful for the institutions our ancestors left us, and filled with cheerful confidence that they can be reformed to solve present needs.

Impeached or not, it's hard to see how Trump recovers as an effective governing force. Now is the moment for a new establishment to organize, to address the spirit of alienation that gave rise to Trump, but which transcends him.

(Source: The New York Times)

Barca, Alaves face off in final of farewells

Only victory in Saturday's Copa del Rey final against Alaves will salvage some pride from Barcelona's season and give coach Luis Enrique a successful send-off, whilst the Basques dream of lifting the trophy for a first time.

On a night of goodbyes as Atletico Madrid's Vicente Calderon hosts its final competitive fixture, Enrique will take charge of Barca for the last time.



A win would complete a clean sweep of the Copa del Rey in his three seasons in charge.

However, in contrast to the previous two years when Cup success was the icing on a successful season having won the treble in 2015 and a league and Cup double last season, Barca this time head into the end-of-season showpiece without a major trophy.

Enrique faces a selection headache with both Luis Suarez and Sergi Roberto suspended after being sent-off in a tempestuous semi-final win over Atletico back in February.

Paco Alcacer is expected to be handed a rare big game start in Suarez's absence up front, whilst the Catalans are hopeful that Javier Mascherano will shrug off a hamstring problem to fill in at right-back.

Even without Suarez, Barca still have plenty of firepower to call upon with Lionel Messi set to start his 700th match for club and country, whilst Neymar has netted in the final in the past two seasons.

Manuel Pellegrino could also be taking charge of Alaves for the final time after a terrific campaign in which they have reached their first Cup final and finished ninth on their first season in a decade back in the top flight.

(Source: Tribune)

Monaco star arrives in Manchester to complete big-money move

Bernardo Silva has arrived in Manchester with Manchester City in pole position to sign the Monaco midfielder, according to reports.

Manchester Evening News claims the Portugal international was on a flight from Mallorca on Thursday evening.

And Pep Guardiola's side are favourites to secure the transfer.

Chelsea have also been linked with the 22-year-old, who is reportedly valued at around £70 million.

After United's 2-0 win over Ajax in the Europa League final on Wednesday evening, Jose Mourinho was asked about a potential deal for Silva, but admitted a move could already be beyond his side's reach.

'I think not. Honestly, I think not,' he told Sport TV.

'But you never know. Good players are always welcome.'

Silva, who has been a key figure in Monaco's title success this season with eight goals and nine assists in Ligue 1, has made no secret of his desire to move to a bigger club.

'I am finishing my third season in Monaco, who gave me the opportunity to play at a higher level,' he said in an interview with Portuguese television network SIC last week.

'But of course, every player dreams of playing for the best teams and in the best divisions one day. I'm no exception.'

(Source: Metro)

Dortmund eye German Cup glory against Frankfurt

Borussia Dortmund will take on Eintracht Frankfurt in the DFB-Pokal final on Saturday at the Olympiastadion in Berlin.

BVB have reached the final for the fourth year in a row but lost all three previous efforts, twice to Bayern Munich either side of a defeat to Wolfsburg, and they'll be looking to finish a slightly disappointing domestic season on a high note.

Frankfurt have won the competition four times in their history—once more than their opponents—but their last win came in 1988, having lost to Bayern in their only final since, in 2006.

By their own standards, it hasn't been a vintage season for Dortmund in the Bundesliga.

Not only did they not finish in the top two because of RB Leipzig's incredible rise, they amassed just 64 points, 14 fewer than last year.

However, they do boast one of the most in-form strikers in European football in Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang.

Since February 25, the forward has only failed to find the net on four occasions in all competitions, and in the other 13 matches played, he's plundered a magnificent 18 goals.

Not only will Frankfurt have to contain Aubameyang, they'll have a whole host of threats to deal with including Dembele, Marco Reus and Shinji Kagawa.

Dortmund and Frankfurt have shared the spoils this season with each winning on home turf, the former's 3-1 victory in April being the most recent.

BVB will rightfully be considered favourites and should be able to come out on top on Saturday, but they're not infallible, and Frankfurt can capitalise on that if they play well.

(Source: Bleacher Report)



Manchester United win Europa League on emotional night

Manchester is a city in mourning and so the meaning of Manchester United's Europa League final against Ajax Wednesday changed significantly in the two days since the suicide bombing which killed 22 people and injured many more.

At the Friends Arena in Stockholm, a United fan held aloft a poster which read: "Come on United, do it for Manchester." And they did, beating their Dutch opponents 2-0.

Paul Pogba, the world's most expensive footballer and a man who, less than a fortnight ago, lost his father to a long-term illness, gave United the lead with a 25-yard deflected strike.

Henrikh Mkhitaryan, another expensive summer purchase, hooked the ball home from six yards to double United's lead and secure the English side a first Europa League title and a place in next season's Champions League.

A sixth-place finish in the English Premier League meant United had to win this match if they wanted to secure Champions League qualification.

Not only will Jose Mourinho's men be playing among Europe's elite next season, benefiting from the prestige and financial rewards that will bring, but the club has now completed its collection of major trophies.

United are now only the fifth club -- alongside Ajax, Chelsea, Juventus and Bayern Munich -- to have won all three European trophies.

"If we could, we would obviously change the people's lives for this cup, immediately," Mourinho told reporters.

"We wouldn't think twice. Does this cup make the city of Manchester a little bit happier? Maybe. But we just came to do our job.

"We came without the happiness we should bring with us, because when you come for these big matches you come happy, you come proud. And we didn't. We just came to do our job."

Last week there was talk that this match would determine the success of Mourinho's first season in charge at Old Trafford.

The only manager in United's history to win a trophy



in his first season -- his team won the League Cup in February and Community Shield in August -- Mourinho concludes the campaign with three trophies.

But win or lose, with the identities of those who lost their lives on Monday continuing to be released, now would not have been the time to critique the team's performance.

In Stockholm, a city recovering from its own terrorist atrocity after a stolen truck was driven into pedestrians on a busy shopping street, killing five, the consensus was that the pre-match mood was somber.

A minute's silence held before the match turned into a minute's applause and United's players wore black armbands in tribute to those who had been killed and injured in Monday's terrorist attack.

"We played for the people who died," Pogba told BT Sport.

"These things are terrible all over the world, in London and in Paris," added the French international, who was also playing at the Stade de France on the night of the November 2015 Paris terror attacks.

(Source: CNN)

James surpasses Jordan as playoffs scoring leader



Cleveland forward LeBron James moved past Hall of Famer Michael Jordan as the leading scorer in NBA playoff history on his way to helping the Cavaliers ease into a third successive NBA Finals series on Thursday.

James needed 28 points to surpass Jordan (5,987 points), as he entered Game Five of the Eastern Conference Finals against the Boston Celtics and reached the milestone in style late in the third quarter with a three-point jump shot.

James celebrated the record by raising his right index finger to signal number one, but quickly retreated to the backcourt to defend as the game continued.

The three-pointer put the Cavaliers up by 32 points. James promptly knocked down two more three-pointers before the end of the third period.

With victory in the bag, he sat out the fourth quarter as the Cavaliers routed the Celtics 135-102 to clinch the best-of-seven series 4-1, and set up a third successive

championship series against the Golden State Warriors.

The 32-year-old James, who is seeking a fourth NBA title, took 212 post-season games to surpass Jordan, a six-time champion who played 179 playoff games.

James said he was honored to pass Jordan, his boyhood idol.

"I think first of all I wear the number (23) because of Mike," he told reporters after finishing the game with 35 points to take his total to 5,995 points.

"I think I fell in love with the game because of Mike, but when you're growing up and seeing Michael Jordan it's almost like a god, so I never did believe I could be Mike.

"The biggest thing for me sitting here after breaking the all-time scoring record in playoff history, is I did it just being me.

"I don't have to score to make an impact on a game and that was my mindset when I started playing, if I'm not scoring how can I still make an impact on the game?"

(Source: Reuters)

Baseball for the blind takes flight in Cuba



Yubis Zapata had to stop playing baseball when he lost his eyesight during military service due to an explosion, so for him, it is a miracle to be able to play once more, in Cuba's growing league for the blind.

Baseball has long been a national passion. The Communist-run country quickly adopted this version after it was developed in the 1990s in Italy, but it has only really caught on in recent years, spreading to all corners of the Caribbean island.

Players like Zapata are ambitious. Their dream is for blind baseball to be included in the 2020 Paralympics, and to bring home the trophy for Cuba.

"When you lose your vision, these first years are difficult," said Zapata, 41, at a training session in Havana where players wore white uniforms. "When you get this kind of opportunity, it's fabulous. Your world didn't end, it continues." The players, who are blind or visually impaired and wear colorful blindfolds while playing, say baseball has helped them refine their sense of orientation by sound.

The ball has bells inside so that fielders can hear where it lands and scramble for it. First base is a beeping mat, and players clap paddles at second and third base to orient runners.

There is no pitcher; the batter tosses the ball in the air and hits it. Fly balls are not allowed. "This is different from conventional baseball - you have to be more concentrated," said Carlos Fuentes, 32, a physical therapist who lost his sight in recent years. "This sport in a way has served me as rehabilitation, for spatial orientation."

The game was brought to Cuba by Italian coaches, who also provided the specialized equipment. Enthusiasts say it is more truthful to the original sport than its American parallel, beep baseball.

Havana coach Roberto Carmona says the game is played throughout Europe, Asia, in Cuba and Panama. But for it to be included in the Paralympics, there need to be two teams per continent, which he is confident can happen by 2020.

(Source: Reuters)

FA Cup success won't help Arsenal, Chelsea prove change is the only way

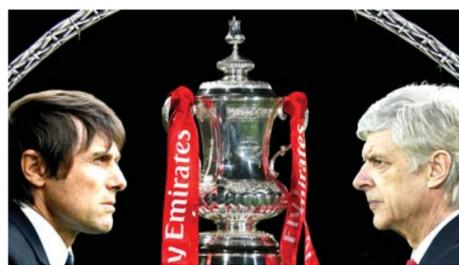
There was a time when Arsene Wenger played the role of the slick, vibrant, bold, fresh-thinking foreign coach in the Premier League, winning a league and FA Cup double in his first full season as Arsenal manager and leaving his rivals trailing in his wake.

Wenger was 48 at the time, so hardly a coaching novice, but by guiding Arsenal to the Double in 1998, he injected English football with something new and set the club on course for almost a decade at the top, jostling with Sir Alex Ferguson's Manchester United in a two-way battle for supremacy.

But as the "Wenger Out" banners and chants at the Emirates show, those days are long gone and Wenger is now a man clinging on to his job as younger, more confident rivals, breeze past him, almost failing to notice the 67-year-old on their way.

Little will highlight the shifting sands under Wenger more than the presence of Antonio Conte prowling the Wembley touchline on Saturday, with the Italian attempting to drive Chelsea on to the league and cup double in his first season in charge at Stamford Bridge.

At 47, Conte is the ambitious, driven, but experienced, coach that Wenger was when he arrived at Arsenal from



Japanese club Grampus Eight in 1996. He has energised and renewed Chelsea, just as Wenger did at Arsenal 21 years ago, and it is he who is now attempting to create his own dynasty in London.

That is why Saturday's trip to Wembley may become an ordeal rather than a cause for celebration for Wenger, even if Arsenal win. When Louis van Gaal walked up the Wembley steps as Manchester United manager last May to collect the FA Cup after his team had defeated Crystal Palace, the Dutchman, who was sacked within 48 hours, was booed by his own club's supporters.

Perhaps that is an indictment of the modern game and the insatiable, unrealistic demands for success from supporters of the biggest clubs. But after failing to guide Arsenal into the Champions League, an FA Cup win will not appease those fans who want Wenger to go and he might find himself subjected the same treatment as Van Gaal, simply because so many Arsenal

The situation that Arsenal and Chelsea now find themselves in sums up the argument quite nicely.

Chelsea, a year after finishing in mid-table after their woeful title defence cost Jose Mourinho his job, are now on the brink of the club's second league and cup double under Conte. The former Juventus and Italy coach has given the whole club a jolt, brought a positive energy, new ideas and demands, and the players have responded.

But Arsenal and Wenger have failed to deliver the bare minimum this season, and not even winning the FA Cup will make up for that. As Wenger stands on the Wembley touchline, many fans will be looking over to the opposite dugout where a hungry club led by an ambitious and driven manager will highlight what a difference a change can make.

(Source: ESPN)

Iran seal AFC U-20 Futsal Championship title

Bangkok: An ecstatic Islamic Republic of Iran claimed the inaugural AFC U-20 Futsal Championship title on Friday thanks to a narrow 2-0 win over Iraq at the Bangkok Arena.

The victory was Iran's seventh straight success at the tournament, an imperious run of form that leaves the country proud owners of both the U-20 and senior AFC Futsal Championship crowns.

With all to play for and a large measure of national pride on the line, it was to be Sahand Rezapour who opened the scoring for Iran in the fourth minute, before Iraq - who were playing more offensively compared to their recent matches - came close to restoring parity through a Moamin Fawzi free-kick which goalkeeper Abolfazi Shabazi did well to save.

However, disaster was to strike for Iraq shortly after, Zaid Ali's seemingly innocuous tackle somehow finding its way into his own goal to hand the Iranians a two-goal advantage midway through the first half.

Iran defended resolutely and maintained their lead going into the break, with Mohammad Jame and skipper Touhid Lotfi's excellent partnership in the final third then threatening to put the game beyond Iraq after the restart.

With time running out, Iraq head coach Ali Talib's side switched to a power play, a bold move that came close to reaping dividends and providing a glimmer of hope when Hasan Kadhim's last minute shot fizzed narrowly wide.

However, it was not to be as an impressive Iran resolutely held on to seal the title and emphatically underline the country's futsal prowess.

(Source: AFC)



Asian Women's Club Volleyball Championship: Iran's Sarmayeh Bank beat Taiwan Power

Iran's Sarmayeh Bank defeated Chinese Taipei's Taiwan Power 3-1 (18-25, 25-21, 25-22, 25-22) in Group A of the 2017 Asian Women's Club Volleyball Championship on Friday.

In a post-match interview at the Boris Alexandrov Sports Palace, Sarmayeh Bank's Farnoosh Sheikhi shared her comments on the team's performance: "We played well today and this is something important for the Iranian people. I hope we do even better in the next matches."

Chinese Taipei's Taiwan Power rushed to a commanding 13-4 lead in the opening set, and established good rhythm and timing in blocks from Tseng Wan-Ling and Lee Tsu-Ying. Captain Chang Li-Yun set off from the flanks to score for attacks.

Iran's Sarmayeh Bank, meanwhile, had to deal with miscues in attack and formation. They encountered challenges in passing the ball to set up their plays. The Iranian side managed to save four set points, but eventually lost 18-25 in the first set.

Sarmayeh Bank vastly improved in the second set to



challenge their opponents. The Iranian hitters were now more aggressive with Sheikhi attacking at the middle. They were also able to run combination plays especially after they have come to manage their reception better. Maedeh Borhani attacked ferociously from the flank. Mahsa Saberi went for the tip-in to nab the second set, 25-21.

In the third set, Chinese Taipei reverted to their

well-executed plays. Iran started to play good defence, as they stood their ground to sustain long rallies against their opponents. Sarmayeh Bank minimised their errors and was able to keep up with Chinese Taipei.

Chinese Taipei gained a narrow two-point lead (16-14) at the second technical time-out, but Iran managed to gain momentum in the middle with Tahmine Dargazani. Sarmayeh won the third set, 25-22.

In the fourth set, teams contested every point with all their might. Taiwan Power's Chang Li-Yun snapped with her attacks from the wing, while Sarmayeh Bank's Borhani continued to deliver powerful spikes.

The Iranian side took a 16-15 lead at the second technical time-out. By this time, Taiwan Power's attacks were going haywire, but vindicated themselves to bring to the set to a 21-21 tie. Sarmayeh's Sheikhi delivered the final point with a tip-in, to close the fourth set at 25-22.

Sarmayeh Bank are set to play against home team Altay VC on Saturday, May 27, at 19:00 local time.

(Source: asianvolleyball)

Claycourt king Nadal favorite to regain Paris throne

For the first time in three years, Rafael Nadal will bounce through the Roland Garros gates at the peak of his powers and favorite to take his collection of French Open titles to 10.

The Spaniard, who hits 31 next week, has turned back the clock to sweep through the European claycourt season with titles in Monte Carlo, Barcelona and Madrid and is a daunting obstacle for anyone with genuine title ambitions.

With man-of-the-season Roger Federer sitting it out to focus on Wimbledon, defending champion Novak Djokovic just showing signs of finding his mojo and world number one Andy Murray badly out of sorts, Nadal is clear favorite.

Potential challenges could come from a new generation of big hitters such as rising Austrian Dominic Thiem and Germany's new wunderkind Alex-

ander Zverev, but Nadal looks in the mood to regain his Parisian throne.

It feels right too because Roland Garros without the Mallorcan in full flow is a lesser spectacle.

There was something unsettling about watching Nadal being thrashed by Djokovic in the 2015 quarter-finals, only his second ever loss at the slam he has owned since 2005. A chronic loss of form, fitness and confidence contributed to that defeat, while last year he was looking good until a wrist injury forced him to withdraw before a third-round match against Spaniard Marcel Granollers.

The last of Nadal's 14 grand slam titles came on a drizzly day in Paris in 2014 when he beat David Ferrer and there have been times since then when his major-winning days looked over.

(Source: Reuters)

Soccer giants donate \$1.3 million to help terror victims

English soccer giants Manchester United and Manchester City have come together to donate £1 million (\$1.3 million) to the emergency fund set up following Monday's terror attack in the city.

It's now been confirmed that 22 people -- including children -- were killed in the bomb blast at an Ariana Grande concert and a further 64 have been injured.

The hashtag #ACityUnited was created to show solidarity between Manchester's two rival teams, boosting the 'We Love Manchester Emergency Fund' by £2 million in the past 24 hours. The fund is designed to help victims and families affected by the attack.

"We have all been humbled by the strength and solidarity shown by the people of Manchester in the days since the attack," said Manchester City chair-

man Khaldoon Al Mubarak.

"The hope of both our clubs is that our donation will go some small way to alleviate the daunting challenges faced by those directly affected and that our acting together will serve as a symbol to the world of the unbreakable strength of the spirit of Manchester."

Along with the help of local news organization the Manchester Evening News, the emergency fund total now stands at over £3 million.

"The barbarism of Monday evening's attack has shocked everyone," said Manchester United executive chairman Ed Woodward.

"Our clubs are right at the heart of our local communities in Manchester and it is right that we present a unified response to this tragedy.

(Source: CNN)

Analysis: Persepolis struggle against Lekhwiya

Persepolis from the Islamic Republic of Iran were held to a 0-0 draw by Qatari side Lekhwiya on Tuesday, missing a penalty en-route to the shutout ahead of next week's second leg.

However, while the missed penalty will claim headlines, it was a display of overall wastefulness in the final third which leaves Persepolis in a tricky position ahead of their journey to Qatar.

Once again, Lekhwiya showed that much can be achieved with a patient, compact approach to the game—albeit assisted by the travails of Persepolis' forward line.

Persepolis will feel disappointed to have ended the tie at 0-0, having enjoyed three golden chances inside the opposition penalty area besides a Mehdi Taremi missed penalty.

Despite 59.2 percent of possession and 10 shots to their opponents' five, Persepolis were unable to find a breakthrough to give them a lead ahead of next weeks' return trip to Qatar.

The normally deadly strike duo of Taremi and Vahid Amiri were both guilty of big misses inside the opposition six-yard box, as goalkeeper Qasem Burhan excelled in the Lekhwiya net.

For all the quality of their build-up play on the night, Persepolis' squandered chances leave them with a difficult task in the away leg.

Overall, 42.6 percent of Persepolis' attacking play was focussed down the right side of the pitch with Farshad Ahmadzadeh particularly prominent on the ball throughout.

Yet it was from the left-side of the pitch that the Iranian side's best moments were created, switching play and exploiting the space available on the far flank.

Striker Amiri was responsible for one delightful ball into the area, while left-back Hossein Mahini twice delivered crosses into the area which seriously tested their opponents' defence.

With Taremi a natural target in the centre, width was key to the Persepolis game plan on the evening—successful with 25 percent of their 12 crosses.

However, once more the finishing on show left much to be desired.

It will surprise few observers to note that Lekhwiya carried a threat throughout thanks to the excellence of Korean playmaker Nam Tae-Hee—once more an influential figure in the clash.

While Nam's side were forced to concede possession for long periods, the Korean looked capable of causing damage whenever he picked up the ball—winning five free-kicks as Persepolis struggled to deal with his slippery attacking runs.

It was also Nam who created four of the five shooting opportunities which Lekhwiya enjoyed on the night, using his quick feet and vision to provide chances for his side when all else were failing.

Back on home soil Lekhwiya will fancy their chances of being more dominant in the flow of the encounter and with Nam in this kind of form, they will certainly expect to create what could be decisive chances.

(Source: AFC)

Pourmousavi named Iran's Foolad Khuzestan coach

Sirous Pourmousavi was appointed as new head coach of Foolad Khuzestan on Friday.

Current Esteghlal Khuzestan coach will replace Naeim Sadavi in the Ahvaz based team.

The 46-year-old coach has reached a one-year contract with Foolad for an undisclosed fee.

Pourmousavi has already worked at Foolad Khuzestan club as assistant in 2010.

Under leadership of Pourmousavi, holder Esteghlal Khuzestan football team finished in seventh place, 25 points adrift of Persepolis at top of Iran Professional League.

Pourmousavi has also led Esteghlal Khuzestan to the AFC Champions League Round of 16.

The Iranian team has lost to Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia 2-1 in the first leg.

(Source: Tasnim)



Georgian Kakhaber Kakashvili joins Iran's Gostaresh Foolad

Georgian midfielder Kakhaber Kakashvili has joined Gostaresh Foolad of Tabriz football team.

Kakashvili joined the Iranian club on a two-year contract for an undisclosed fee.

He started his playing career at Georgian football team Tskhinvali and also played at Metalurgi Rustavi and Chikhura.

The 23-year-old Georgian midfielder was a member of Machine Sazi football team which was relegated from the Iran Professional League (IPL) last season.

Gostaresh Foolad will be headed by Luka Bonacic in the IPL new season.

The Croat replaced Faraz Kamalvand in the Tabriz based football team.

(Source: Tasnim)



The Peiravani football fraternity

For some families, sport is clearly in the blood. When it comes to the Peiravani, you will be hard-pressed to find many better examples.

Amirhossein Peiravani is currently the helm of an Iran side on the brink of their best-ever FIFA U-20 World Cup, but he arrives from quite the sporting stock. One of eight brothers in total, three of the Peiravani siblings have shone in Iranian football.

The eldest of the trio, Gholam - 16 years Amir's senior - has gone from seasoned defender to revered coach, while younger brother Afshin appeared at FIFA World Cup France 1998 before going on to manage the likes of Iranian giants Persepolis.

And while the trio have seen their footballing family tree branch off in differing directions, they enjoyed a brief spell where their sporting paths all intersected as the "very influential" Gholam's playing career was winding down and the younger pair's was just beginning. "The three of us managed to play together at Bargh Shiraz in the Iranian Premier League," Amir told FIFA.com.

"[Gholam] was at center-back, Afshin at right-back and I was in defensive midfield. It was great for fans to see three out of the 11 players being brothers. When we first went our separate ways to different teams it was very hard for us to play against each other, but you have



to put fraternity aside for football."

Duels in the dugout

From all competing on the field, they would then go on to square up on the sidelines too, with the family at one point occupying a sixth of all the managerial positions in the Iranian top flight. "Everyone respects [Gholam] as a coach, and our family, as he is seen as something of an icon and moral role model in football,"

Amir explained, following his brother's long spell inspiring modest outfit Fajr Sepasi.

Amir played the role of assistant to his older sibling as part of the Iran U-23 outfit that finished fourth at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, a team he is set to inherit come the end of Korea Republic 2017. With their football seemingly in healthy shape - Iran head to the FIFA U-17 World Cup in India and Russia 2018 is within sight for the seniors - he will no doubt infuse that squad with the same organisation and solidity he has looked to instil in the U-20s.

"I have always been a disciplined coach, that's how I get my message on to the field," he explained. "Two things are key for me when coaching my teams: one is belief, the other is effort. With today's connected world, techniques and tactics have become a more commonplace matter, but these two things are really important. They have been key to raising our level [here]."

Beyond the three brothers' exploits, the Peiravani's sporting lineage is set to continue. Amir's daughter is an Asian-level medal-winning rower, while his nephew swam in the Youth Olympics. Therefore, however Iran fair in Korea Republic, chances are good there will be plenty more additions to the family trophy cabinet.

(Source: FIFA)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

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Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603
www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.
Tel: 88911433
Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com
Printed at: Kayhan - ISSN: 1017-94

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran
P.O. Box: 14155-4843
Zip Code: 1599814713



NEWS IN BRIEF



“Poets of Life” wins award at Seoul Green filmfest

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian director Shirin d e s k Barqnavard's documentary “Poets of Life” won the special jury award at the Green Film Festival, which was held in Seoul from May 18 to 24.

The film is about Shirin Parsi, an Iranian graduate of French literature from the University of Paris who returns home to work on her rice farm in northern Iran, where many farmers are forced to sell their lands at very low prices to developers.

“Plastic China” by Wang Jiu-Liang from China was picked as best film while “Angry Inuk” by Alethea Amaqu-Baril from Canada won the PUCCA Audience's Choice Award.



Avaye Rood to perform in Germany

A R T TEHRAN — The Iranian ensemble d e s k Avaye Rood led by Behzad Ansari will be performing a selection of Iranian traditional music today at the Rudolf Oetker Hall in Bielefeld, Germany.

The ensemble is composed of young musicians who have received national awards for their versatile music since it was founded in 2006.

The band features Ansari on tar and setar, Nazanin Barzegar on tombak and Pegah Kheirdush on kamancheh.

Mehdi Tafakkori is the singer of the band, which also cooperates with composer Chavosh Eskandari.

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Photo

Seyhun Gallery 2 is playing host to an exhibition of photos by Arman Sedaqat.

The exhibition named “Light, I, Flower, Tree” runs until June 7 at the gallery located at 24 Sinai Alley, off Keyhan St. and Moqaddas-e Ardabili Ave.

Photos by Faraz

Habibollahian are currently on display in an exhibition at Aliha Gallery.

The exhibition titled “A Thousand and Two Nights” will run until June 2 at the gallery, which can be found at 31 Ramezani Alley, Mahurzadeh St., Shariati Ave.

Photos by Shahbaz Zaman

are on display in an exhibition titled “Hotel Boutique” at the Niavaran Cultural Center.

The exhibit, which is organized in collaboration with the Embassy of the Czech Republic, will continue until June 3.

An exhibition of photos by Shahram Jahansuz

is currently underway at Shalman Gallery.

The exhibition entitled “Once Upon a Time Life” will be running until June 1 at the gallery located at 27 Kavusi Alley, West Rudbar St., off Mirdamad Blvd.

Painting

A collection of paintings by Behruz Paknahad is on display in an exhibition at Saless Gallery.

The exhibition named “I Am” runs until June 7 at the gallery located at 148 Karim Khan St.

Paintings by Gita Meh

are on display in an exhibition at Afrand Gallery.

The exhibit named “We Are Travelers on the Earth, Not Wreckers” runs until June 2 at the gallery located at 8 Jalal Hosseini St., Jahan Ara St., off Jalal Ale-Ahmad Highway.

Iran's Hossein Alizadeh wins Asia World Music Award

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k tar virtuoso Hossein Alizadeh won the Asia World Music Award, the Persian service of IRNA reported on Thursday.

The award is presented biennially by the World Music Center Foundation in Seoul and Alizadeh earned the accolade on December 26, 2016.

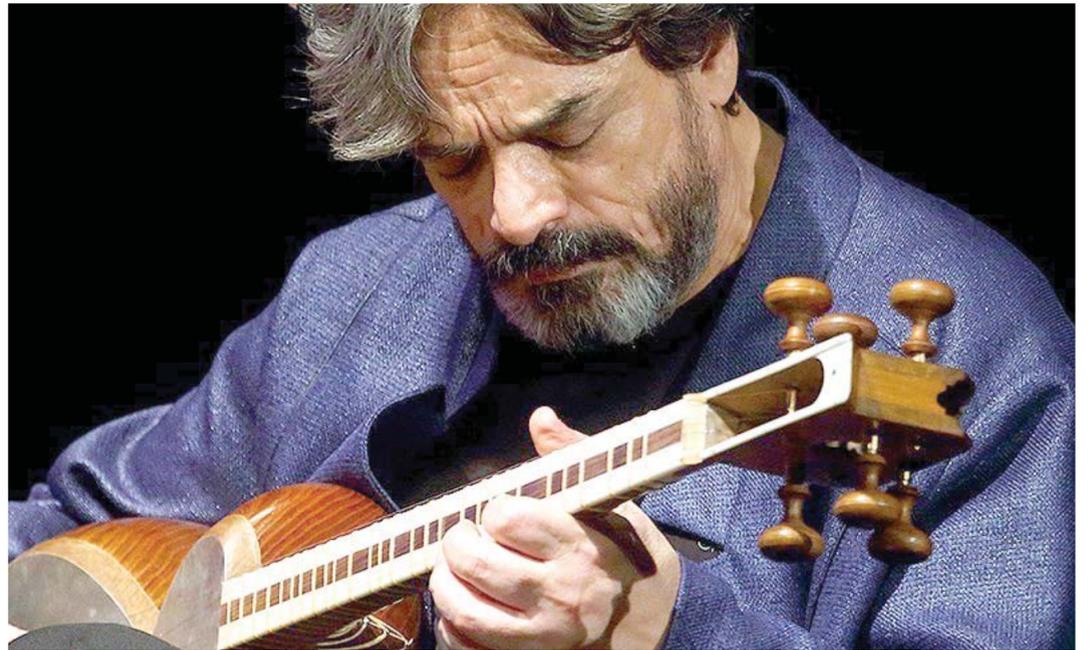
Iranian Ambassador Hassan Taherian received the award on behalf of Alizadeh from the foundation's director, Kang Sun-dae, on Thursday. It is a plaque and a cash prize of \$10,000.

In a letter published on Thursday, Alizadeh expressed his thanks to the organizers of the award, which was presented for the first time in 2014 to the French-born Chinese American cellist Yo-Yo Ma.

Alizadeh has collaborated with numerous top Iranian and world musicians, including his fellow Iranian legendary vocalist Mohammadreza Shajarian and Armenia's Djivan Gasparyan.

A recording of a concert by Alizadeh and Gasparyan in Tehran titled “Endless Vision: Persian and Armenian Songs” was one of five Grammy Award nominees for “Best Traditional World Music Album” in 2007.

In 2014, Alizadeh declined to accept



Iranian tar virtuoso Hossein Alizadeh performs in a file photo.

(Tasnim/Mohammad Hassanzadeh)

the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor award, the highest decoration awarded

by the French government, stating that he doesn't need decorations and that he derives satisfaction from his good name.

Nike creator's memoirs published in Persian

A R T TEHRAN — American business magnate and philanthropist Phil Knight's memoirs “Shoe Dog” about his early days with the Nike brand has been published in Persian.

Saeid Kalati is the translator of the book, publisher Hirmand announced in a press release on Thursday.

“Shoe Dog” was among Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates' five favorite books of 2016.

In an article published on Gatesnotes last December, Gates called the memoir “an amazing tale”



and wrote, “I don't think Knight sets out to teach the reader anything.”

“Instead, he accomplishes something better. He tells his story as honestly as he can.”

“Release from Heaven” honored at Animation Day in Cannes

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian d e s k director Ali Nuri-Oskui's “Release from Heaven” received the Animation that Matters Award at the 3rd edition of the Animation Day in Cannes (ADIC) last Tuesday, the organizers announced.

The film is about a female writer and teacher, who accompanies two of her students on an inner spiritual journey in a war torn country.

Three filmmakers are presented awards at the ADIC that is organized on the sidelines of the Cannes Film Festival in France.

“Iqbal” co-directed by Michel



Fuzellier from France and Babak Payami from Iran and “Junod” by Japanese director Shinichiro Kimura also were other winners of the award.

Division of Persian literary books opens in University of Peshawar

CULTURE TEHRAN — The Pakistan Study d e s k Center at the University of Peshawar has dedicated a division to Persian literary books, in particular, works by Persian poet Sadi and publications about his works.

The Sadi Shirazi Corner provides interested readers with a number of books on Persian poetry and literature, the Iranian Embassy in Pakistan announced on Thursday.

The director general of Iran's Cultural Center in Islamabad, Ali Yusefi, and the director of the

University of Peshawar, Pakistan



center, Fakhr-ul-Islam, attended the opening ceremony on Wednesday.

Sheikh Muslih od-Din Sadi Shirazi (C. 1213-1291) is one of the greatest figures of classical Persian literature, famous worldwide for his Bustan (The Orchard) and Gulistan (The Rose Garden).

Earlier in October 2016, the National Book Foundation in Islamabad also dedicated a division to Persian books named “Hafez Shirazi Corner”.

A “Pirates” life for Depp as he sets sail in fifth film

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Dead men tell no tales, unless, of course, they are undead decaying pirates seeking mythical treasure in the vast fathoms of the sea in the fifth installment of Disney's “Pirates of the Caribbean.”

“Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales”, out in theaters worldwide this weekend, sees Johnny Depp reprise his role as the hapless, swaying, slurring pirate Captain Jack Sparrow, once again roped into an adventure on the high seas.

Depp, who's had a tough year in the headlines thanks to an acrimonious divorce from wife Amber Heard, as well as claims and counter claims about his behavior and lavish lifestyle, sat out media interviews for the film in Los Angeles.

But his co-stars rushed to his defense and to deny reports, stemming from dueling court documents over his finances, that he is fed his movie lines through an earpiece and was difficult and late while filming.

“Pirates” franchise producer Jerry Bruckheimer said Depp is “not fed lines at all,” and credited him with crafting the tone of the franchise.

“(The pirates) are irreverent characters, something he totally created



The Premiere of Disney's “Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales” — Los Angeles, California, U.S., 18/05/2017 -Actor Johnny Depp. (Reuters/Mario Anzouni)

and the kind of irreverent fun attitude that all the movies have is because of Johnny,” Bruckheimer said.

He added that as long as Depp, 53, was aboard for more films, the “Pirates” saga has no definitive end.

“As long as the audience wants to come, we'll be there, and Johnny wants to make it and Disney wants to finance it. I hope it goes on forever,” he said.

The “Pirates” franchise has grossed \$3.7 billion since the first film in 2003 and despite poor reviews, “Dead Men Tell No Tales” is expected to take in some \$80 million at the North American box office this weekend, trade publication Variety said.

London premiere for “The Mummy” axed after Manchester bombing

LONDON (Reuters) — Universal Pictures on Thursday became the second Hollywood studio to cancel a London red carpet film premiere following the suicide bombing in Manchester that killed 22 people and caused Britain to raise its terrorism alert to critical.

“The Mummy”, an action adventure starring Tom Cruise and Russell Crowe, was due to have a premiere in London featuring cast members on June 1.

“All of us at Universal have been devastated by the terror attack in Manchester and continue to stand with the community and country as it recovers,” Universal Pictures, a unit of Comcast Corp, said in a statement.

“Out of respect to those affected by this tragedy we have decided not to move forward with the London premiere for ‘The Mummy’ scheduled to take place next week,” it added.

Citing similar reasons, Warner Bros on Wednesday said it had canceled the May 31 London red carpet premiere of “Wonder Woman.”

Pop singer Ariana Grande, whose Manchester show was the target of Monday's suicide bombing, has called off two London concerts this week and five dates in Europe.

Scooter Braun, who manages Grande



Actor Tom Cruise signs autographs after unveiling a 75-foot tall sarcophagus to promote the film “The Mummy” at the Hollywood and Highland gateway in Hollywood, California, May 20, 2017. (Reuters/Patrick T. Fallon)

as well as pop singer Justin Bieber, posted a series of defiant messages late on Wednesday.

“The wish of terrorism is to take away (a) feeling of freedom and joy,” Braun wrote on Twitter.

“We can't allow it. Fear cannot rule the day. More people die each year from car crashes than terrorism, yet I will get in my car. I will choose to live (rather than) be afraid.”

“So if you think you scared us ... if you think your cowardice act made us change how we live ... sorry. All you did was make us appreciate every day. We must fight extraordinary evil with extraordinary greatness,” Braun wrote.

Carrie Fisher would have led next ‘Star Wars’ before her sudden death

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Late actress Carrie Fisher was supposed to be the leading force of the ninth film in the “Star Wars” saga, plans derailed by her sudden death last year, Lucasfilm Ltd president Kathleen Kennedy said in an interview

published on Wednesday.

Kennedy told Vanity Fair that Fisher, who died in December at age 60 after suffering a heart attack, had finished filming the forthcoming eighth film “The Last Jedi” and was hoping her character, General Leia Organa, would

be the central figure of Episode IX.

“The minute she finished, she grabbed me and said, ‘I'd better be at the forefront of IX!’ because Harrison(Ford) was front and center on VII, and Mark (Hamill) is front and center on VIII. She thought IX would

be her movie. And it would have been,” Kennedy said.

Fisher rose to fame as Princess Leia in the original “Star Wars” franchise from 1977 to 1983, alongside Ford's roguish Han Solo and Hamill's Jedi fighter Luke Skywalker.