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Belgium seeks to tighten economic bonds with Iran

ECONOMY TEHRAN — The **d e s k** Minister-President of the Belgian region of Flanders, Geert Bourgeois, has said his government seeks to expand economic ties with Iran, the portal of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) reported on Thursday.

In a meeting with ICCIMA Chairman Gholam-Hossein Shafeie in Brussels, the Belgian official expressed satisfaction about the future of his country's economic relations with Iran and added that on the way to explore avenues for developing bilateral economic ties, a Belgian delegation will pay a visit to the two Iranian cities of Tehran and Isfahan in November.

Shafeie, for his part, underlined Iranian officials' tendency towards boosting economic ties with Belgium, adding that in this regard, some talks have been held on increasing ties between Iran's port of Shahid Rajaee and Belgium's port of Antwerp. As previously reported, Iran plans to use Antwerp port for exporting petrochemical products.

ICCIMA head named healthcare, medicine, modern irrigation, petrochemicals, and oil as proper available areas for reinforcing economic bonds between the two countries.

He, elsewhere, underscored the vitality of easing visa issuance procedures for two countries' tradesmen in boosting mutual economic ties.

Trump likely to say Iran complying with nuclear deal: U.S. official

U.S. President Donald Trump is "very likely" to state that Iran is adhering to its nuclear agreement although he continues to have reservations about it, a senior U.S. official said on Thursday.

Under U.S. law, the State Department must notify Congress every 90 days of Iran's compliance with the so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Trump has a congressionally mandated deadline of Monday to decide.

The landmark 2015 deal struck with Iran by the United States, France, Britain, Russia, China, Germany and the European Union put limits on Iran's nuclear

activities in exchange for removal of economic and financial sanctions.

If Trump does state Iran is in compliance, it would be his second time since taking office in January to do so despite his promise during the 2016 campaign to "rip up" what he called "the worst deal ever."

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Trump could always change his mind, Reuters reported.

While lifting nuclear-linked sanctions, the United States maintains sanctions related to Iran's ballistic missile program and human rights record.

PERSPECTIVE

Dan Kovalik, Labor & Human Rights Lawyer

U.S. hands off Iran

I just travelled to Iran where I was invited to speak at the University of Tehran about human rights and "humanitarian intervention." I put this term in quotes because I've rarely ever seen any intervention that was truly humanitarian or that produced humane results, but more on that later.

Before I traveled to Iran, a number of friends and family members expressed shock that I would go there, feared for my safety and well-being, with some urging me not to go at all. Of course, this is not surprising given the antipathy of the U.S. towards Iran and how that country is portrayed in the mainstream press.

We in the U.S. are constantly told that Iran is our enemy; that it is indeed part of some "axis of evil" that must be sanctioned, fought against and even subject to "regime change." In terms of the first assertion – that Iran is our enemy – we are usually told that this is so because Iran is allegedly a "state sponsor of terrorism." This is a quite curious claim given that Iran is a sworn enemy of Isis and Al-Qaida, and indeed was set to help fight Al-Qaida and the Taliban after the 9/11 attacks until Donald Rumsfeld intervened. Meanwhile, the U.S.'s close ally Saudi Arabia – a country we just sold \$110 billion of arms to – has been covertly and overtly supporting Isis and Al-Qaida for years. Recall that fifteen of the nineteen 9/11 attackers were indeed from Saudi Arabia and that Saudi Arabia aided and abetted some of the 9/11 attackers.

The claim about Iran sponsoring terrorism is also ironic given the U.S.'s support for the cultish Mojahedin-e Khalq (MEK) organization which itself wants to topple the Iranian government, despite its unpopularity in Iran, and which was actually designated by the U.S. as a terrorist organization from 1997 to 2012. As the London Guardian notes, the MEK has "claimed responsibility for murdering thousands of Iranians" since 1981 (my friends in Iran put the figure of those killed at 17,000); supported the seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Iran in 1979 and the holding of the American hostages; **→2**

Medical tourists visiting Iran are mostly from neighboring states

TOURISM TEHRAN — Patients from **d e s k** Iraq, Azerbaijan, Armenia and the Persian Gulf littoral states constitute the largest number of travelers who visit Iran for medical services.

The Ministry of Health registered some 105,000 inbound patients over the past Iranian calendar year (March 2016-March 2017), a majority of them came from the abovementioned neighboring countries, ISNA quoted a tourism official as saying on Friday.

Currently, 35 authorized institutes facilitate such services in the country, Mohammad Ali Fayyazi, secretary of the medical tourism

steering council, affiliated with the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization, said.

"Our preference is that accepting foreign patients to hospitals in Iran should be done through [such] authorized institutions," he added.

In an interview with the Tehran Times, Vahidreza Mohebpour, who presides over the medical tourism department of the Ministry of Health, asserted that the total number of travelers visiting the country for medical purposes can go beyond 300,000.

"We have a report of 105,000 patients;

however, the number of patients admitted in all the hospitals is much higher than reported and their total number is estimated to be more than 300,000," he explained.

"Cost-effective, high quality, and adequate services have always been the very items on top of our tourist patients' agenda when it comes to select a target country for its medical services," Mohebpour added.

Iran has launched extensive plans to bolster its tourism sector. Under its 2025 Tourism Vision Plan, the country is expecting to increase the number of tourism arrivals from 4.8 million in 2014 to 20 million in 2025.

Big Oil just woke up to threat of rising electric car demand

The world's biggest oil producers are starting to take electric vehicles seriously as a long-term threat.

OPEC quintupled its forecast for sales of plug-in EVs, and oil producers from Exxon Mobil Corp. to BP PLC also revised up their outlooks in the past year, according to a study by Bloomberg New Energy Finance released on Friday. The London-based researcher expects those cars to reduce oil demand 8 million barrels by 2040, more than the current combined production of Iran and Iraq.

Growing popularity of EVs increases the risk that oil demand will stagnate in the decades ahead, raising questions about the more than \$700 billion a year that's flowing into fossil-fuel industries. While the oil producers' outlook isn't nearly as aggressive as BNEF's, the numbers indicate an acceleration in the number of EVs likely to be in the global fleet.

BNEF expects electric cars to outsell gasoline and diesel models by 2040, reflecting a rapid decline in the cost of lithium-ion battery units that store power for the vehicles. It expects 530 million plug-in cars on the road by 2040, a third of worldwide total number of cars.

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries raised its 2040 EV fleet prediction to 266 million from the 46 million it anticipated a year ago. Battery cars under the new projection account for 12 percent of the market within 23 years, compared to 2 percent in the 2015 forecast. Based in Vienna, the group representing 14 nations expects half the number diesel vehicles as it did a year ago.

Others making similar expectations according to the BNEF note include:

The International Energy Agency more than doubled its central forecast for EVs, rais-

ing its 2030 EV fleet size estimate from 58 million from 23 million.

Exxon Mobil boosted its 2040 estimate to about 100 million from 65 million.

BP anticipates 100 million EVs on the road by 2035, a 40 percent increase in its outlook compared with a year ago.

Statoil ASA, the Norwegian state oil company, says EVs will account for a 30 percent of new sales by 2030.

Just a fraction of the world's cars sold today are powered by batteries instead of gasoline. Many analysts increasingly say the market will expand rapidly as almost all major auto makers bring dozens of new EV models to market. OPEC said in its oil market report on Wednesday that electric vehicle sale targets could dampen demand in some parts of Asia as soon as 2018.

(Source: Bloomberg)



'It starts with us' promotes traffic regulation

A national campaign, dubbed 'It starts with us', aims to bring together residents, from pedestrians to drivers, to abide by traffic rules and regulations.

The campaign, organized by the Tehran Municipality's department of transportation in cooperation with street theater performers, was launched back in February.

It aims to enhance the culture of cycling, respect for traffic laws, car pool, cleaner air, as well as pedestrian rights.

"The Saudis [have] not quite appreciated the impact their funding of a certain brand of Islam is having in the countries in which they do it – it is not just Britain and Europe," he stated.

"That is a dialogue we need to have. They are not funding terrorism. They are funding something else, which may down the road lead to individuals being radicalized and becoming fodder for terrorism."

Last week, a British think tank released the report, saying foreign funding for extremism came from Persian Gulf countries, chief among them Saudi Arabia.

The Henry Jackson Society said in the report that since the 1960s, Saudi Arabia has sponsored a multi-million dollar effort to export the Wahhabist ideology across the Muslim world, including to Muslim communities in the West. **→13**

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iranian ambassador meets Qatari PM

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Iranian ambassador **d e s k** to Doha on Thursday sat for talks with Qatar's Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa al-Thani.

Talking about Iran-Qatar ties in the wake of the recent Saudi-led boycott of Qatar, Mohammad Ali Sobhani and Prime Minister al-Thani explored venues for closer cooperation, ILNA reported.

Sobhani on the same day also met with Secretary General of Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ahmed bin Hassan Al Hammadi to discuss the recent developments surrounding the Qatar row.



IRGC seeks more economic co-op with government

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Islamic Revolution **d e s k** Guards Corps is ready to engage in more economic cooperation with the government, the IRGC chief said on Thursday.

The IRGC cannot stand apathetic to poverty and joblessness, Mohammad Ali Jafari said, Mizan news agency reported.

The new approach adopted by the Guards is to focus on offering services, he added, underlining as an example that the water management projects in western Iran are among the brilliant services rendered so far.



Iraqi province urges opening 2nd border crossing with Iran

POLITICS TEHRAN — The Council of Iraqi **d e s k** Province of Maysan has called for opening a second border crossing with Iran as well as expanding academic cooperation and attracting Iranian investment in the province.

The request was made as Iran's ambassador to Iraq visited Maysan on Thursday and met with the head and members of the Provincial Council at the capital city Amarah, IRNA reported.

In the meeting the Iraqi side also invited Iranian companies to invest in their agriculture and transport sectors.



Issuing e-visa for Hajj pilgrims starts

POLITICS TEHRAN — The acting deputy chief of **d e s k** the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization declared on Friday that the process of issuing electronic visa for Hajj pilgrims has begun.

According to an agreement signed with Saudi Arabia, all visas for Iranian pilgrims would be issued in Tehran, Nasrollah Farahmand said, Khabaronline reported.

Elsewhere, Ali Qaziasgar, the Leader's representative in the Hajj organization, said a "poisoned atmosphere" around the Hajj issue has subsided in Iran.



Cleric says Iranian nation does not trust U.S.

POLITICS TEHRAN — Tehran's interim Friday **d e s k** prayers leader has blasted Washington for defying its commitments under the nuclear deal, stressing that the Iranian nation doesn't trust the U.S. at all, ISNA reported.

Ayatollah Mohammad Ali Movahedi Kermani said, "[Iranians] are well aware of America's record of betrayal. As we see in the nuclear deal, the sanctions (against Iran) were due to be removed altogether but they are increasing instead."



WH: No talks between Tillerson and Zarif

POLITICS TEHRAN — The spokesperson for the **d e s k** U.S. State Department on Thursday rejected any direct talks between Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

Heather Nauert said that she does not believe that Tillerson has spoken with Zarif since he took office. However, she added, "We certainly have various diplomatic channels, lines of communication that can be used to communicate with the Iranian government."

The remarks come as Zarif was in New York to attend the UN high-level political forum on sustainable development on Friday.

Zarif: U.S. must review policy on nuclear deal

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian **d e s k** Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Thursday that the Trump administration must review its policy toward the Iran nuclear deal as a "comprehensive" and "international" treaty.

Friday marked the second anniversary of the signing of the deal, negotiated with Iran over a number of years by the United States, Britain, France, Germany, China, Russia and the European Union. On July 20, 2105 the UN Security Council adopted a resolution endorsing the nuclear deal.

"We expect all the sides to abide by their commitments, but the U.S. has remained committed to the agreement at the least level; it has not respected and supported the spirit of the deal by adopting wrong approaches and policies," Zarif said upon arrival in New York.

Zarif was in New York to attend the UN high-level political forum on sustainable development on Friday.

The nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), went into force in January 2016.

According to the deal Iran put limits



on its nuclear work in exchange for termination of economic and financial sanctions.

However, Zarif said the U.S. government "has not let Iran to gain benefits from the deal completely."

According to Reuters, a senior

U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said on Thursday that President Donald Trump is "very likely" to state that Iran is adhering to its nuclear agreement although he continues to have reservations about it.

The new U.S. administration said in

April it was launching an inter-agency review of whether the lifting of sanctions against Iran was in Washington's national security interests.

Under U.S. law, the State Department must notify Congress every 90 days of Iran's compliance with the so-called Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Trump has a congressionally mandated deadline of Monday to decide.

Federica Mogherini, the European Union foreign policy chief, said on Tuesday that the nuclear agreement doesn't belong to a single country.

"The nuclear deal doesn't belong to one country, it belongs to the international community," Reuters quoted Mogherini as saying in a news conference with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov in Brussels.

"We have the responsibility to make sure that this continues to be implemented," she noted.

On June 29, 2017 the UN Security Council renewed support for the nuclear deal, underscoring that Tehran has shown full commitment to the accord and the resolution supporting it.

Jazayeri to U.S.: Don't even dream of regime change

Brigadier General Massoud Jazayeri, deputy chief of staff for the Iranian military, on Thursday attacked remarks made recently by high-ranking U.S. officials such as Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson suggesting they may seek to topple the Iranian government.

The words by Mattis echoed long-held suspicions by Tehran that the U.S. is plotting to forcefully oust the Iranian government, as it did by sponsoring a coup in 1953.

Jazayeri said Iran was unmoved by such comments from the administration of President Donald Trump, but vowed to respond with action.

"The ridiculous dreams of the Americans about the overthrow of the Islamic Republic of Iran is nothing more than disturbed delusions and we are not worried that they have preoccupied themselves in such a way," Jazayeri said, according to Press TV.

"We will respond to the nonsensical talks of the American authorities in the theaters of action," the general noted.

Prior to 1953, Iran's government was headed by a democratically elected prime minister named Mohammad Mosaddegh whose popularity ultimately allowed

him to supersede the authority of the country's monarch, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, known as the Shah. Mosaddegh nationalized Iran's oil industry in 1951, infuriating the UK. The UK ultimately appealed to the CIA to sponsor a coup d'etat against Mosaddegh, which U.S. intelligence did in 1953.

The U.S. only publicly admitted its role in the 1953 coup in 2013, and last month the CIA released a trove of previously top-secret documents publicly revealing new details of the affair, known as Operation AJAX, Newsweek reported.

Relations between the U.S. and Iran somewhat warmed during the administration of President Barack Obama, who signed a deal that lifted U.S. sanctions on Iran in exchange for Tehran limiting its nuclear program. Trump, however, has taken a more hardline stance toward the regional power.

"Until the Iranian people can get rid of this theocracy, these guys who think they can tell the people even which candidates they get a choice of. It's going to be very, very difficult," Mattis said Monday in an interview he granted to a high school journalism student, according to the Middle East Institute.

Comments by Mattis, who has long advocated for tougher U.S. action against Iran, followed Tillerson's response to the House Foreign Affairs Committee last month in which the statesman explained U.S. policy toward Iran as being "to push back on [its regional] hegemony... and to work towards support of those elements inside of Iran that would lead to a peaceful transition of that government."

Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehghan also told reporters Wednesday that, before the U.S. goes after Iran's internal political affairs, it should address its own scandals and potential shortcomings.

"Whenever the Americans have intended to make any type action against us or hire proxies to this end, our nation has proved that it makes them regret their deeds," Dehghan stated.

"The U.S. secretary of defense and the ruling system had better think of resolving their internal issues and study the root causes that will most possibly cause the current U.S. administration to collapse in a not so far future and will make the country's political system face a lot of serious challenges," he added.

Rouhani congratulates Macron on Bastille Day

POLITICS TEHRAN — Iranian **d e s k** President Hassan Rouhani on Friday sent a message to his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron on anniversary of the French National Day, known as the Bastille Day.

In his message, Rouhani expressed hope that relations between Tehran and Paris would increase through more cooperation and tapping potentials in each country.

The French National Day commemorates the first anniversary of Storming of the Bastille on 14 July 1789.

France's national day marks one of the most symbolic moments of the French Revolution.

On July 14, 1789, the people of Paris stormed the Bastille, a military fortress, freed the few prisoners held inside and seized weapons in the most defiant stance towards the old regime. The fall



of the prison became a flash point in the French Revolution, and is celebrated each year in something of an independence day for France.

The day also celebrates the Fete de la Federation, which marks the unity of the French people under a common constitution, the first step towards France's modern nation.

Iranian diplomat warns about political abuse of OPCW

POLITICS TEHRAN — Alireza **d e s k** Jangiri, Iran's representative the UN chemical watchdog, has warned against abuse of the international body by certain countries for political purposes.

Jangiri was making the remarks at the 85th session of The Hague-based Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The diplomat called on the OPCW member states to condemn the terrorist groups for carrying out chemical attacks in Syria and Iraq.

It is necessary to adopt "comprehensive" and "united" strategies to prevent terrorist groups from using chemical weapons, he added.

Jangiri also said that Iran is ready to expand cooperation with the OPCW, especially in treating the victims of chemical attacks in Syria.

Elsewhere, he highlighted the importance of economic and technological de-



velopment by OPCW member states and called for exchange of scientific and technical knowhow in peaceful spheres. The 85th session of the executive council of the OPCW was held on July 11-14. Full implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, annihilation of the chemical weapons, and candidates for future presidency of the organization were discussed in the session.

U.S. hands off Iran

1 -> joined Saddam Hussein in fighting Iran during the Iran-Iraq war; and killed at least six Americans during the 1970s. Yet, the MEK, which was holding a conference in Paris while I was in Iran, is now a darling of such U.S. political bigwigs as John Bolton, Newt Gingrich, Joe Lieberman, Howard Dean and Rudy Giuliani.

Another claim that is made about Iran is that it is a despotic, sexist theocracy which is offensive to our Western values and sensibilities (as if those are the gold standard). Again, given that the U.S. is in lock-step with the retrograde, misogynistic monarchy of Saudi Arabia, this claim rings hollow. Moreover, as any visitor to Iran will tell you, Iran is actually a quite modern, Western country where many people speak English. It is also a country where women, though certainly not as liberated as they should be, for the most part wear minimal head coverings, such as colorful silk scarves (which nearly all of the women on my flight from Frankfurt began to put on their heads as we descended toward the Tehran airport); freely drive cars and are found in every sector of public and commercial life.

Most importantly, though, talk about "regime change" begs the question of what the regime will be changed to and how it will be changed. In the case of one of the most notable recent acts of regime change the West has effected - Libya - we see that the West is content to topple a government, doing great damage to the people, civilian infrastructure and ancient antiquities in the process, and leave nothing but chaos in its wake. In my view, the West

seems to have the same plans for Syria where it has aimed at toppling the Assad government while claiming to support "moderate rebels" who do not seem to exist. The regime changes in Iraq and Afghanistan have not produced much better results with tens of thousands being killed, the countries being laid to ruin, and at best weak governments resulting from the ashes.

As I walked through the beautiful streets of Tehran and Isfahan, was warmly greeted by the beautiful people of Iran who actually love Americans as I came to find; and witnessed Iran's wealth of ancient architecture, including functioning Armenian Christian Churches and Jewish synagogues, I couldn't help but feel pangs of fear and even anger at the thought of but another "humanitarian intervention" which would surely lay waste to many of the people and antiquities I was encountering.

The truth is that Iran is a society which is progressing, if slowly and in its own way. It has a democratically-elected president and legislature and a vibrant civil society which is pushing for ever greater freedoms and reforms.

And, I wondered what the plan would be for Iran if the U.S. were to seek "regime change." Would the U.S. put in power the unpopular and bizarre MEK? Or, maybe the U.S. would put in power the son of the last Shah (i.e., King) who apparently is making noises of wishing to return. Recall that the U.S. installed the Shah in 1953 after overthrowing the democratically-elected Prime Minister, Mohammed Mossadeq because Mossadeq wished to nationalize Iran's oil fields and use the oil revenue for the benefit of the Iranian people - an unforgivable offense. The Shah was kept in power until the 1979 revolution through the help of the SAVAK - a brutal security apparatus which the CIA helped to set up and train in torture techniques to prevent democracy from breaking out in Iran. I had the chance to tour the main SAVAK prison and torture center - now a museum - and see the rows and rows of photos of those imprisoned, tortured and killed by the SAVAK. Is the U.S. interested in again handing over Iran to this terrible regime?

The truth is that Iran is a society which is progressing, if slowly and in its own way. It has a democratically-elected president and legislature and a vibrant civil society which is pushing for ever greater freedoms and reforms. If we haven't learned by now, it is up to the Iranian people to decide their own fate and what type of government they will have. I am confident the Iranian people will find their way, in their own manner and in their own time, if we just allow them to do so.

(Source: Huffington Post)

Bastille Day march-past closes Trump's Paris visit

People protest Trump's visit in French capital

President Donald Trump watched U.S. and French soldiers march together through the Paris sunshine on Friday in a double celebration marking 100 years since the United States entered World War One and France's annual Bastille Day holiday.

Also featuring a bi-national fly-past of American F16 and French Rafale jets symbolizing military cooperation in the Middle East and elsewhere, the occasion followed a day of talks with French President Emmanuel Macron, a first ladies' tour of Paris, and a dinner for the four at a restaurant in the Eiffel Tower.

"Great evening with President @EmmanuelMacron & Mrs. Macron. Went to Eiffel Tower for dinner. Relationship with France stronger than ever," Trump wrote in a tweet.

The ceremonies brought to an end a visit Macron needs as a boost to France's standing on the world stage - one which could also help a U.S. leader left short of international friends by his stance on free trade and climate change.

Trump, also dogged at home by an investigation into alleged Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. election, appeared on Thursday to leave open the door for more talks on the Paris accord which he pulled the United States out of earlier this year.

■ Military Cuts

Macron arrived standing in a military jeep and surrounded by cavalry - repeating a scene from his inauguration two months ago aimed at reinforcing a message that he heads an important military power.

But it came as a fierce row raged between Macron and his armed forces chief, General Pierre de Villiers, over proposed defense budget cuts that are part of his bid to put the French economy in order.

Trump arrived with his wife Melania in a black sedan to be greeted by French first lady Brigitte Macron.

At the parade, the two heads of state sat together in a stand applauding, pointing and touching each other on the arm as military aircraft flew overhead. Trump saluted as U.S. military personnel - some in World War One battledress - opened the march-past with the Arc de Triomphe in the background.



"Mr. Trump's presence at my side is a sign of an enduring friendship and I want to thank him," Macron said in a speech afterwards. "Nothing can ever separate us... I want to thank America for the choice made a hundred years ago"

By the end of the 1914-1918 war, more than a million U.S. troops were stationed in France alongside soldiers of French, British and other nationalities fighting Germany.

One marching group evoked another military landmark of Franco-American history, carrying a pennant marked "Fregate Lafayette", a frigate of the French navy named after the 18th century French aristocrat general Marquis de Lafayette, who helped in the American Revolutionary War against the British.

For France, this year's Bastille Day has an additional poignancy as the first anniversary of one of the deadliest extremist militant attacks of the past few years.

After the parade, his first as President, Macron will head for the Mediterranean city of Nice, where he will

join a commemoration for the 86 people who died when a Tunisian man drove a truck at a crowd on the waterfront a year ago.

■ People protest Trump's visit

Meanwhile, hundreds of people have taken to the streets in the French capital of Paris to voice their opposition to a visit by United States President Donald Trump to their country.

Demonstrators, waving flags and carrying placards denouncing Trump's policies, marched in the streets as Trump was welcomed by French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday.

Protesters also created their own "No Trump Zone" and held signs reading "No Hate" and "Save the Planet! Resist Trump!"

The rally was the first in a series of anti-Trump protests organized by activists from the "Paris against Trump" activist group via social media.

(Source: Reuters)

3 Palestinians, 2 Israeli officers killed in al-Quds shooting

A shooting incident in the Old City of Jerusalem al-Quds has left at least three Palestinians and two Israeli police officers dead.

The incident took place on Friday morning close to Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount), Reuters reported, citing the Israeli police.

The Israeli police claimed the Palestinian fatalities comprised "attackers," who had fired at its forces before being shot themselves.

The Palestinian victims were identified as Muhammad Ahmad Muhammad Jabarin, 29, Muhammad Hamid Abd al-Latif Jabarin, 19, and Muhammad Ahmad Mufdal Jabarin, 19.

Two Israeli forces were also killed in the incident, according to the police.

Sources also reported the apprehension of four Palestinian females at Bab al-Asbat (Lions' Gates) in al-Quds' Old City Walls, without characterizing the nature of the arrests.

The police announced the closure of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East al-Quds and prohibition of Friday prayers amid the tensions.

Haram al-Sharif is home to the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the

Rock. The site is holy to both Muslims and Jews.

According to an agreement signed between the Tel Aviv regime and the Jordanian government - which administers Al-Aqsa Mosque - after Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem al-Quds in 1967, visits to the compound by Israelis are permitted but non-Muslim worship is prohibited.

The occupied territories have already been the scene of increased tensions ever since Israeli forces imposed restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshippers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East Jerusalem al-Quds in August 2015.

Over 300 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli force since October that year, when the clashes intensified.

Separately, the Palestine al-Yawm news agency said a Palestinian youth, named as 17-year-old Bara' Hamadah, had been killed in clashes with Israeli forces south of the southern West Bank city of Bethlehem.

Palestinian sources said the confrontation had also injured two other Palestinians.

(Source: Press TV)

150 Saudi intelligence officers joined ISIL in Mosul battle

Saudi Arabia had dispatched more than 100 intelligence officers to Mosul to join the ISIL (Daesh) militants and direct them in battles against Iraqi government forces and allied fighters from Popular Mobilization Units, a recent report has revealed.

Lebanon-based Arabic-language al-Manar television network, citing a report published by Qatari al-Sharq newspaper, revealed that 150 Saudi intelligence agents were fighting alongside Daesh members in Mosul, and working hard to extend the battle.

The paper added that Iraqi government forces confiscated important documents certifying Saudi intelligence officers' assistance to Daesh terrorists once they liberated Mosul from the clutches of the Takfiris.

On Monday, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi formally declared victory over Daesh extremists in Mosul, which served as the extremists' main urban stronghold in the conflict-ridden Arab country.

In the run-up to Mosul's liberation, Iraqi army soldiers and volunteer fighters from the Popular Mobilization Units had made sweeping gains

against Daesh since launching the operation on October 17, 2016.

The Iraqi forces took control of eastern Mosul in January after 100 days of fighting, and launched the battle in the west on February 19.

An estimated 862,000 people have been displaced from Mosul ever since the battle to retake the city began eight months ago. A total of 195,000 civilians have also returned, mainly to the liberated areas of eastern Mosul.

Twenty-eight aid groups working in Iraq have issued a statement, calling for international support for the reconstruction of Mosul and urged Iraqi authorities not to press civilians to return.

They have also expressed deep concerns for Iraqis trapped in Daesh-controlled areas in Iraq, namely Tal Afar, Hawijah district in the oil-rich northern province of Kirkuk and the troubled western province of Anbar.

Meanwhile, Iraqi security forces have found a large number of Daesh militants, who were hiding in tunnels dug beneath the Old City of Mosul.

(Source: Press TV)

U.S. judge narrows travel ban in defeat for Trump

U.S. President Donald Trump's temporary ban on travelers from six Muslim-majority countries cannot stop grandparents and other relatives of United States citizens from entering the country, a U.S. judge said.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Derrick Watson in Honolulu also opens the door for more refugees and deals Trump a fresh courtroom defeat in a long back-and-forth over an executive order that has gone all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The state of Hawaii had asked Watson to narrowly interpret a Supreme Court ruling that revived parts of Trump's March 6 executive order banning travelers from Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for 90 days, as well as refugees for 120 days.

The Supreme Court last month said the ban could take effect, but that anyone from the six countries with a "bona fide relationship" to a U.S. person or entity could not be barred.

The Trump administration then interpreted that opinion to allow spouses, parents, children, fiancés and siblings into the country, but barred grandparents and other family members, in a measure Trump called necessary to prevent attacks.

Watson harshly criticized the government's definition of close family relations as "the antithesis of common sense" in a ruling that changes the way the ban can now be implemented.

"Common sense, for instance, dictates that close family members be defined to include grandparents. Indeed, grandparents are the epitome of close family members," he



wrote.

A Justice Department spokeswoman declined to comment.

Trump's order is a pretext for illegal discrimination, Hawaii Attorney General Douglas Chin said in a statement. "Family members have been separated and real people have suffered enough," Chin said.

Chin had asked Watson for an injunction allowing grandparents and other family members to travel to the United States. Hawaii and refugee groups also had argued that resettlement agencies have a "bona fide" relationship with the refugees they help, sometimes over the course of years.

The Justice Department said its rules were properly grounded in immigration law.

Watson said the assurance by a resettlement agency to

provide basic services to a newly arrived refugee constitutes an adequate connection to the U.S. because it is a sufficiently formal and documented agreement that triggers responsibilities and compensation.

"Bona fide" does not get any more 'bona fide' than that," Watson said.

Melanie Nezer, vice president of global refugee advocacy group HIAS, said the ruling should mean that refugees can continue to be resettled in the United States, beyond a cap of 50,000 set by the executive order. That limit was reached this week.

"We are thrilled that thousands of people will be reunited with their family members," said Becca Heller, director of the International Refugee Assistance Project.

More than 24,000 additional refugees should be allowed to travel to the U.S. under Watson's order, she estimated.

Watson did not grant everything the state of Hawaii sought, however. He rejected a request to categorically exempt all Iraqis refugee applicants who believe they are at risk due to their work for the U.S. government since March, 2003, as interpreters and translators, for instance.

Watson also refused a blanket exemption for those eligible to apply to a refugee program aimed at protecting certain children at risk in El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala.

The roll-out of the narrowed version of the ban was more subdued than in January, when Trump first signed a more expansive version of his order. That sparked protests and chaos at airports around the country and the world.

(Source: Reuters)

Tillerson urges direct talks to solve Qatar-PGCC crisis

UAE minister says demand to shut Al Jazeera dropped

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has called for direct talks between Saudi Arabia-led group and Qatar, as he wrapped up a four-day mission to solve the Persian Gulf crisis.

Before leaving for Washington, Tillerson returned to Doha on Thursday to meet Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani for the second time in 48 hours, together with a Kuwaiti mediator.

"Based on his meetings, the secretary believes that getting the parties to talk directly to one another would be an important next step," U.S. State Department spokesman Heather Nauert said on Thursday.

"We look forward to that happening," she said without giving a specific timeline.

Despite an intense round of shuttle diplomacy that also took him to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, tensions remain high between Qatar and four Arab states that accuse Doha of funding "terrorism" and is being too close to Iran - allegations Qatar has repeatedly denied.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt imposed a land, sea and air blockade on Qatar on June 5.



U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson (L) and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani (R)

Al Jazeera's Hashem Ahelbarra, reporting from Doha, said officials do not expect the crisis to end in the near future.

"Qatar's foreign minister and the Kuwaiti mediator seem to have been exploring new ideas that could be the framework for any future deal, but we've been told that it's not happening any time soon," he said.

"Tillerson has left Doha but the Qatari government officials' stance remains that they won't negotiate anything unless the embargo is lifted. At the same time, they are open to anything that is not considered infringing on their sovereignty."

Tillerson's clearest achievement has been to secure a memorandum of understanding with Qatar to strengthen its counterterrorism efforts.

"Since Qatar signed the memorandum of understanding with the US, newspapers owned by Saudi Arabia and the UAE have lashed out at Tillerson, blaming him to be leaning towards Qatar and describing the shuttle diplomacy as something that is not going to come up with any tangible results," Ahelbarra said.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian is expected to arrive in the region over the next few days.

The anti-Doha quartet is holding fast to its insistence that Qatar bow to a 13-point list of demands that includes shutting down Qatar's Al Jazeera Media Network, sever all alleged ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and with other groups, including Hezbollah, al-Qaeda and ISIL (also known as ISIS), limiting Qatar's ties with Iran and expelling Turkish troops stationed in the country.

Qatar denies the charges of extremism and called the demands "unrealistic".

On Thursday, a human rights group said abuses were caused by the Saudi-led group's blockade.

"Hundreds of Saudis, Bahrainis, and Emiratis have been forced into the impossible situation of either disregarding their countries' orders or leaving behind their families and job," said Sarah Leah Whitson of Human Rights Watch.

The U.S. and its Western allies have vast economic and political interests in the Persian Gulf, which pumps one fifth of the world's oil supplies.

■ Demand to shut Al Jazeera dropped

Meanwhile, a UAE minister says Emirates sought 'fundamental change and restructuring' and not shutting down Al Jazeera.

Saudi Arabia and three other Arab countries that have imposed a political and economic blockade on Qatar are to drop their demand that the Al Jazeera Media Network be shut down.

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt imposed a land, sea and air blockade on Qatar on June 5.

The anti-Doha quartet then issued a 13-point list of demands that included shutting down Al Jazeera Media Network, severing all ties with the Muslim Brotherhood and with other groups, including Hezbollah, al-Qaeda and ISIL (also known as ISIS), limiting Qatar's ties with Iran and expelling Turkish troops stationed in the country.

In an interview published by The Times newspaper, Noura al-Kaabi, the UAE minister for the federal national council, said the Emirates sought "fundamental change and restructuring" of Al Jazeera rather than to shut it.

"The staff at the channel can keep their jobs and Qatar can still fund a TV channel but not one which provides a platform for extremists and where the English channel is a protective shield for the much more radical Arabic one," Kaabi told The Times.

She also said that the Saudi-led group was ready to negotiate with Qatar.

"We need a diplomatic solution. We are not looking for an escalation."

The group previously called the list of demands "non-negotiable".

In response to the concessions expressed by the UAE minister, Al Jazeera Media Network rejected outside intervention.

(Source: agencies)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Fara Bourse's main index up 1.1% in a week

ECONOMY TEHRAN — IFX, the main index of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), rose 1.1 percent to stand at 909 points in the week ended on Friday, Tasnim news agency reported.

As reported, some 1.487 billion securities worth 9.165 trillion rials (about \$242.460 million) were dealt in Fara Bourse market during the mentioned week.



Over \$42b needed for uncompleted industrial projects

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Iranian Deputy Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade Mahmoud Dodangeh said over 1.6 quadrillion rials (about \$42.328 billion) is needed for completing more than 22,000 uncompleted industrial projects across the country.

As IRNA reported, the official noted that completing these projects will create over 600,000 jobs.

"By the end of the last Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2017) more than 60,000 industrial projects were underway in the country," he said.



Industrial parks to create 136,000 jobs by Mar. 2018

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Head of Iran Small Industries and Industrial Parks Organization (ISIPO) Ali Yazdani said that some 136,000 direct jobs will be created in the country's industrial parks by the end of the current Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2018).

According to Yazdani, 956 industrial parks are active across the country and over 50 percent of Iran's industrial workforce are employed in industrial parks and small businesses, IRNA reported.

With these new jobs to be added, the number of people working in Iran's industrial parks and small businesses will reach 936,000, the official announced.

Iran sees oil output rising to 4 million bpd by year end

Iran's oil output will rise to around 4 million barrels per day by the end of the year, an Iranian oil official said on Wednesday as the OPEC member tries to ramp up production after years of international sanctions.

"By the end of 2017 we hope to reach about 4 million barrels per day," Amir Hossein Zamaninia, Iran's deputy oil minister for trade and international affairs, told reporters in Istanbul.

Iran has been producing around 3.8 million barrels per day in recent months. (Source: Reuters)

Trump says he is considering quotas, tariffs on Chinese steel dumping

U.S. President Donald Trump said he is considering quotas and tariffs to deal with the "big problem" of steel dumping from China and others.

"They're dumping steel and destroying our steel industry, they've been doing it for decades, and I'm stopping it. It'll stop," he told reporters on Air Force One during a flight from the United States to France.

"There are two ways: quotas and tariffs. Maybe I'll do both," he said.

Steel stocks rallied on the news, recovering some of the year-to-date declines in the sector.

The S&P 1500 steel sector index added as much as 3 percent shortly after Trump's remarks. The index rallied nearly 40 percent in the weeks following the Nov. 8 election, but so far this year it was down 6.6 percent at Wednesday.

On Thursday, the VanEck Vectors steel exchange-traded fund rose 0.6 percent after being down 1 percent before Trump's remarks. AK Steel shares gained 7.9 percent, Nucor gained 2.6 percent and US Steel added 4.0 percent. (Source: Reuters)

Trump spending plan will cut deficit but not balance budget: CBO

WASHINGTON (Reuters) — President Donald Trump's proposed government spending plan would reduce the federal deficit over the next decade but fail to balance the budget, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said on Thursday.

The 2018 fiscal year budget, unveiled in May, put numbers on Trump's vision of a government that would boost military spending while radically cutting assistance to lower-income Americans.

The annual budget deficit in 2027 would be about \$720 billion under Trump's proposal, the CBO said in a report, not eliminated as promised by the White House, which has projected a \$16 billion surplus.

There was no immediate reaction to the report from the Trump administration. But in a pre-emptive strike on Wednesday, the White House wrote on Twitter: «Faulty Numbers = Faulty Results.»

Trump's budget, which slashes funding for the Medicaid healthcare program for the poor and disabled, is unlikely to become law in its current form.

Iranian railways require 28,000 wagons: RAI head

ECONOMY TEHRAN — Saeid Mohammadzadeh, head of the Islamic Republic of Iran Railways (known as RAI), announced that 28,000 wagons is required in the country's railway network, Mehr News agency reported on Friday.

Mohammadzadeh made the remarks when meeting the members of Iranian parliament (Majlis)'s Urban Development Committee.

He said although some fruitful measures have been taken in terms of locomotive supply in the country over the

past three years, the railway fleet is still in need of the mentioned number of wagons.

He also said that some big jobs have been done in the field of rail supply, and mentioned investment making by the private sector in this due as one of them.

The official further stressed that the shortages in the country's railways should be removed within the next five years.

He also said that all cargo loading hubs in the country should be connected to the railway network by the next five



years; adding, all policies for development of railway transportation should be followed up by that time in a way that the

capacity of cargo and passenger transportation by railway will be increased in the country.

Nigeria willing to strengthen technological ties with Iran

Nigerian Minister of Science and Technology Ogbonnaya Onu in a meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Nigeria Morteza Zarchi in Abuja expressed his country's desire to consolidate relationship with Iran, especially in the area of technology.

According to him, both countries have had warm relationship, noting that there is need for the relationship to grow from strength to strength.

"I must commend you for the good work you have done to promote good relationship between Iran and Nigerian", he told the Iranian envoy.

"At one of the conferences I attended representing my country in Pakistan, your minister of science and technology told us that Iran as of last year, was investing 1.2 percent of your GDP in science and technology", the minister added.

"There is that decision to even boost allocation of more resources to science and technology because you understand and appreciate the importance and relevance of science and technology to nation building", he noted.

Onu said that Nigeria was also working hard in using science, technology and innovation? as tools for nation building.

The minister said that science and technology would help Nigeria to use its resources more efficiently to create jobs.

He told the ambassador that Nigeria would be happy to cooperate with Iran.

Zarchi stressed that Nigeria and Iran were exploring sources of revenue by diversifying their economies to technology and agriculture.

He said that Iranian investors were interested in partnering with Nigeria in the science sector (Source: thenationonline.net)

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Iraq will need Iranian gas for electricity generation for 7 years

Iraq will need sustained supplies of Iranian natural gas for the next seven years to operate its electricity-generating stations, Iraqi's electricity minister said on Thursday.

That is because natural gas produced from the country's fields in southern Basra province is not sufficient to maintain the generation of electricity, Qassem al-Fahdawi said in press statements quoted by Almasalah website.

Gas from Basra fields cannot be directed to power generators directly before bypassing a process of refining and insulation, according to the minister. "Over the past two years in particular, the ministry added a huge amount of that gas, and we hope it increases further," said the minister. "New stations are



entering into service soon, hence the country's need for gas imports".

The minister, however, noted that this need for gas could diminish after

planned fields for the production of non-associated gas go into service, such as Siba, Mansouriya and Western Anbar.

Iran began exporting gas to Iraq in June after several years of delays. The export deal signed in 2013 was hampered by Iraq's unstable security situation.

Exports started at nearly 7 million cubic meters per day and are meant to eventually reach 35 million cubic meters per day.

The deal involves two separate export contracts for supplying power stations in Baghdad and Basra.

In April, Iraq's oil ministry said the country's natural gas production would triple to 1700 million cubic feet daily by 2018 with more projects undertaken to curb gas burning. (Source: iraqinews.com)

Iran holds huge promise not just in energy: London-based investor

Iran has piqued financial interest throughout the world for its massive energy reserves, but the country actually has a host of other opportunities in less obvious areas, according to one global investor.

For Clemente Cappello, CIO of London-based Sturgeon Capital, Iran holds promise in part for its cheap labor, abundance of natural resources, and well-educated youth. Specific sectors that could benefit from this mix include glass, manufacturing and petrochemicals, he explained, but Iran could also grow its technology sector.

In fact, the country already has local versions of Uber, Amazon and eBay.

In addition, Cappello mentioned that he thinks "equity opportunity is the easiest and most profitable" option in the

country. Stocks, he said, are trading on average of six times price-to-earnings ratio, dividend yields are "well into the double digits" and interest rates could soon be cut in half.

Iran's recent election in May could provide a strong mandate for President Hassan Rouhani to continue with a foreign policy of re-integrating Iran's economy with the rest of the world, and also with his domestic economic reforms, especially in the banking sector.

Cappello, who launched Sturgeon Capital's Iranian fund, told CNBC's "Street Signs" that service providers such as banks are the "real obstacle" for foreign investors. Those banks, he said, "are not keen to do business with Iran."

The investor also highlighted the risk foreign investors run when they lack un-

derstanding about the changing Iranian business dynamics. Other risks associated with doing business in Iran include not understanding the stakeholder structure of entities, he said.

A week before the Iranian election, the U.S. signed a waiver extending sanction relief. That was followed by a statement from French energy giant Total, stating it will resume investments in Iran.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development has put Iran among successful countries in terms of attracting foreign investments in 2016. In its 2017 World Investment Report, Iran attracted \$3.372 billion worth of foreign investments, which is a 63 percent increase from the previous year.

It is plausible that the prospect of new sanctions could scare off foreign inves-

tors, as President Donald Trump's administration has said it is "putting Iran on notice."

Nonetheless, Cappello said, the U.S. cannot legally alter the international agreement with Tehran on its own and "the continued aggressive rhetoric clearly does not help sentiment and makes perceived risks higher than what they actually are."

And when it comes to Iran developing a fruitful economic relationship with investors, it will depend on continued reforms, he said.

"Our hope is that ... deals such as the one Total signed will set a precedent that doing business with Iran is okay and encourage the global business community to re-engage the country." (Source: CNBC)

China sees faster growth of fiscal revenue, spending in June

China posted faster growth in fiscal revenue in June as it saw signs of improvement in the economy, official data showed Friday.

Fiscal revenue rose 8.9 percent year-on-year to 1.7 trillion yuan (\$251.8 billion) last month, accelerating from the 3.7 percent growth in May, according to the Ministry of Finance (MOF).

In the first six months of 2017, fiscal revenue climbed 9.8 percent year-on-year, relatively fast growth, the MOF said in a statement.

"It reflected the overall stability and positive outlook of the economy," the statement said.

Income from VAT, which accounted for over 30 percent of fiscal revenue in the first six months, rose 2.2 percent year on year, helped by higher industrial product prices and faster sales growth in certain industries, the ministry said.

Revenue from corporate income tax went up 15.6 percent year-on-year due to increasing company profits, while that from VAT and consumption tax on imported goods soared 34 percent on strong import growth.

Recent indicators have shown improved factory activity, strong consumption and brisk foreign trade growth.

China will release a series of econom-



ic data Monday, including GDP fixed asset investment, industrial production and retail sales, for the second quarter and the first half.

The country's GDP grew 6.9 percent in the first quarter of the year, up from 6.8 percent the previous quarter and above the government's annual growth target of around 6.5 percent.

In June, China's fiscal expenditure surged 19.1 percent year-on-year to 2.7 trillion yuan, picking up speed from a 9.2-percent increase in May, the MOF data showed.

In the first six months, fiscal expenditure grew 15.8 percent year-on-year, with spending on education rising 17.2 percent and that on social security and employment up 24.6 percent.

(Source: Reuters)

Euro zone trade booms in May, EU-Russia commerce surges

Euro zone's trade boomed in May with both exports and imports of goods to the rest of the world growing markedly, in a new sign that global commerce was in good health.

The European Union, the world's main trader, also saw its trade increase with all its main partners, with a surge of exchanges with Russia despite economic sanctions on Moscow.

The European Union statistics office Eurostat said on Friday the 19-country currency area in May exported goods worth 189.6 billion euros (\$216.3 billion) to the rest of the world, an increase by 12.9 percent on the year.

Imports also grew yearly by 16.4 percent for a total volume of 168.1 billion euros, according to data not adjusted for seasonal factors.

Both figures were the second highest ever-recorded for the euro zone after the peak reached in March when exports were above 200 billion euros and imports stood at 176 billion euros.

The faster growth of imports compared to exports slightly reduced the bloc's trade surplus which stood at 21.4 billion euros in May, lower than the 23.4 billion surplus recorded in May 2016.

Commerce among the 19 euro



zone states also increased by 15.3 percent in May on a yearly basis, for a volume of 162.4 billion euros of traded goods.

The European Union as a whole also recorded a 15.9 percent surge of exports to the rest of the world in May year-on-year and a 17.2 percent increase of imports, Eurostat said.

The 28-country bloc expanded its trade with all its main partners in the period between January and May, with exports to the United States rising on the year 6.6 percent and to China 20.3 percent, while imports increased respectively 4.0 and 6.8 percent.

The highest increases were recorded with Russia, which overtook Switzerland as the third main source of imports for the EU.

(Source: Reuters)

In Annual Ordinary General Assembly for Fiscal Year Closing on March 20, 2017: IRANOL Oil Co., Forerunner in Profitability Growth in Lubricants

Net profitability growth at 39%, realizing objectives of profit at 2,025 rials and approving dividend at 1,800 rials

The Annual Ordinary General Assembly of IRANOL Oil Company for the fiscal year closing on March 20, 2017 was held on Saturday June 24 in the presence of more than 94 percent of its shareholders. Benefited from the expert management bureaus coupled with the most experienced manpower, the company held one of its best assemblies in recent years.

The company's management took giant strides in line with gaining satisfaction of its shareholders. As headed by Mr. Khaleq, the meeting was supervised by Messrs. Diyanat and Partoei. Moreover approving financial statements, the company registered the highest profitability among oil (lubricant) production companies. 39 percent increase in net profit to its preceding year from 145 billion tomans in 1394 (ended March 20, 2016) to 203 billion tomans in the last Iranian calendar year in 1395 (ended March 20, 2017) is salient advantages taken by the company, caused by reducing its spending and sales cost price. Equity per share (EPS) of company hit 2,025 rials and it was approved that 1,800 rials i.e. 89 percent of actualized dividend was distributed among shareholders. Also, **Ettela'at Persian Daily** and **Hoshyar Behmand Auditing Institute** were introduced and widely circulated paper and legal inspector of the company respectively in the current Iranian calendar year in 1396 (started March 21, 2017).

Message of Board of Directors

Relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God, giant steps were taken by the company in the past Iranian calendar year in 1395 (ended March 20, 2017). IRANOL Oil Company is one of the leading companies in the production of various types of quality lubricants in the country. The company also has got the lion's share of products in the country.

The management of company has resorted to the most modern technology in order to increase quality of its products, observing requirements of international standards. In the current year 1396 (started March 21, 2017) named after "Resistance Economy, Production,



Managing Director of IRANOL Oil Company, Eng. Isa Es'haqi

Job Creation, by the supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, the company will make all its utmost efforts to generate new employment coupled with increasing its sales volume in the global market. Considerable sales increase of company in current year 1396 (started March 21, 2017) in comparison with the last year is a solid evidence for the said claim. Benefitted from high technical knowhow and knowledge of Iranian engineers, a large portion of tanks project in Bandar Imam Khomeini (RA) and also final oil production in Abadan Lubricant Refinery after 36 years were implemented inside the country. With the coordination made in this regard, this giant project will be put into operation in current year.

In the end, the Board of Directors of the company seizes this opportunity to express its special thanks to the industrious staff and personnel who took giant strides in materializing objectives of this company.

It is hoped that the company will make all its utmost efforts to lead the company towards boom and prosperity in national and international levels.

Salient Achievements of Company in Last Year

Hereunder are regarded as salient achievements taken by the company in last Iranian calendar year in 1395 (ended March 20, 2017):

Registering maximum profitability rate among lubricant oil production companies in the country and attaining 39 percent net profit in 1395 (ended March 20, 2017) as com-

pared to the same period of last year,

Increasing share of at least four percent (4%) in domestic sales market among domestic companies with the competition condition due to the impacts of macroeconomic components as a result of deepening economic downturn in the reported fiscal year within the framework of financial status of most companies in the country.

Registering maximum record, increasing sales volume in rials, and promoting net profit of performance in comparison with the budgets presented between domestic lubricant production companies,

Reducing crude selling of products as much as 30 percent, implementing one of the important objectives of resistance economy in the year named after "Resistance Economy, Action and Implementation",

Saving in spending especially in various sectors as well as reducing financial costs at least 13 billion tomans,

Completing construction operation of tanks in Mahshahr Port with the production capacity of 25,000 cubic meters with 95 percent physical progress which will be put into operation before termination of the reported fiscal year.

Construction operation of first phase for boosting grade for one of products of the company named Slack Wax and increasing base lubricant production volume concurrent with the chemical operation

Separating utility units of Tehran and Abadan refineries in three fields of power, water and steam from Oil Company and providing it with other methods such as construction of its first phase i.e. creation and construction of power equipment and transmission of power from the regional power company for Tehran Refinery with the annual saving of 7 billion tomans in the report fiscal year,

Construction operation of railroad for loading, unloading and transporting products from Tehran Refinery,

Fulfilling all assignments of the Assemblies in previous years such as exertion of ownership and possessing pesticide production unit in Tehran Refinery after 10 years,

Construction of tens of projects in the production and logistics fields such as construction of storage and equipping unused spaces



in Tehran and Abadan refineries,

Producing new tetra oil with herbal base for the first time in the country and Middle East, commissioning Alvand Oil Company's production line in Abadan Refinery after 36 years,

Implementing tens of project in the field of software in IT Unit, etc.

Company's New Customers and Markets

1-Adaption of change in sales policies and implementation of various sales incentive projects, promoting validity and credit of customers, setting up competitive environment in the field of supplying products of the company at domestic market especially in joint fields with rival companies,

2- Commissioning widespread sales and distribution system across Tehran Province and some neighboring provinces along with equipping part of required transport fleet

3- Maintaining previous customers and attracting new customers in two domestic and foreign markets along with the geographical development, implementing strategic policy of company,

4- Adoption of basic changes in Durable Credit Sale in export market using cash sale due to preventing from risk of collecting currency demands due to the specific structure of regional and international markets

5- Implementing plan to create various brands based on brand sales model

Appreciation Letters and Certificates Obtained in Last Year

At the unsparing efforts of its industrious staff and personnel, IRANOL Oil Company

managed to receive different types of certificates and appreciation letters, the most important of which is referred as follows:

Winning National Award for promoting excellence of company,

Winning Plaque of Honor as first exemplary unit in the field of export of oil products,

Obtaining a Plaque of Appreciation in the field of materializing objectives of resistance economy of country,

Winning Plaque of Honor from the Department of Environment, etc.

Future Programs of Company

Increasing power of competition, getting lion's share at domestic market in the field of lubricants, increasing sales volume in the field of export along with reducing raw selling of materials, compiling and implementing strategic plan in 2025, development of company's expansion projects, promoting quality of products, increasing technical knowhow in knowledge-based companies, developing widespread after-sales services across the country

Inking Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the production of new plan, co-operating with prestigious European and international companies such as PETRONAS Company, setting up different committees such as sales pathology department, etc. for invigorating current activities,

Implementing various programs for increasing efficiency and output of activities of company.



Commissioning ALVAND Oil Production Line in Abadan Refinery after 36 Years



Project for Construction of Tanks in Mahshahr Port with the Capacity of Approx. 25,000 Cubic Meter



Installing Filters in Waxing Unit

IRANOL Oil Company (P.J.S)

Consolidated Balance Sheet for Fiscal Year Closing March 20, 2017
(Revision Presented)

Assets	Note	Mar. 20, 2017	Mar. 20, 2016	Liabilities and Owner's Equity	Note	Mar. 20, 2017	Mar. 20, 2016
Current assets:		Million rials	Million rials	Current Liabilities:		Million rials	Million rials
Cash balance	3	101,209	130,256	Nontrade and trade payables	12	1,137,357	844,209
Short-term investments	4	37,386	32,815	Payable tax	13	284,996	259,245
Nontrade and trade receivables	5	5,258,753	4,870,755	Payable dividend	14	1,646,454	2,597,044
Balance of goods and materials	6	2,623,306	2,405,842	Receivable financial facilities	15	2,246,209	1,816,953
Down payments	7	237,296	173,269	Prepayments	16	346,729	324,981
Total current assets		8,257,950	7,612,937	Total current liabilities		5,661,745	5,842,432
Noncurrent assets:				Noncurrent Liabilities:			
Long-term receivables	5	27,577	26,271	End-Service Reserve	17	134,434	103,050
Long-term investments	8	91,879	91,882	Total noncurrent liabilities		134,434	103,050
Tangible assets	9	109,922	96,918	Total liabilities		5,796,179	5,945,482
Intangible assets	11	1,316,684	1,200,621	Owner's Equity:			
Total noncurrent assets		1,546,062	1,415,692	Capital	18	1,000,000	1,000,000
				Legal reserve	19	100,000	100,000
				Cumulative dividend		2,907,833	1,983,147
				Total Owner's Equity		4,007,833	3,083,147
Total assets		9,804,012	9,028,629	Total Liabilities and Owner's Equity		9,804,012	9,028,629

IRANOL Oil Company (P.J.S)

Profit and Loss Account for the Fiscal Year Closing on March 20, 2017
(Revision Presented)

	Note	March 20, 2017	March 20, 2017	March 20, 2016
		Million rials	Million rials	Million rials
Operating revenues	20		1,074,609	11,187,617
Cost price of operating revenues	21		(7,451,487)	(7,976,026)
Gross profit			3,296,122	3,211,591
Sales, administrative and general costs	22	(1,099,035)		(1,225,929)
Other operating items	23	72,357		3,586
			(1,026,678)	(1,222,343)
Operating profit			2,269,444	1,989,248
Financial costs	24	(322,678)		(451,197)
Other non-operating costs and revenues	25	362,916		155,318
			40,238	(295,879)
Profit prior to taxation			2,309,682	1,693,369
Income tax	13		(284,966)	(235,433)
Base dividend of each share (EPS):				
Operating profit of each share - rials	26		1,911	1,652
Non-operating profit (loss) of each share - rials	26		114	(194)
Net profit of each share - rials	26		2,025	1,458
			Cumulative Dividend Account Turnover	
Net profit			2,024,686	1,457,936
Cumulative dividend in the beginning of the year		2,096,440		3,525,060
Yearly adjustments	27	(113,293)		(199,849)
Cumulative dividend in the beginning of year - adjusted		1,983,147		3,325,211
Approved dividend		(1,100,000)		(2,800,000)
Appropriate dividend			883,147	525,211
Cumulative dividend in the yearend			2,907,833	1,983,147

A big Bastille Day for America

By Curt Mills

The Donald finally caught a break in Paris, basking in rare Franco-American bonhomie as he joined the new president of France on Bastille Day, this year to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the American arrival on the battlefields of World War I.

A contingent of American troops even led the parade down the Champs-Élysées. Not even a president can resist a parade, especially a military parade with marching bands and serried ranks of fighting men. On Thursday, President Emmanuel Macron of France did not even try.



Neither did Donald Trump, once a schoolboy at a military academy. Regimental flags floating on a peaceful breeze, despised as nationalist symbols to some, are but reminders to all that "greater love hath no man than this," in the words of Christ as recorded by the Apostle John, "that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Few national leaders have traded such fierce hostility over so short a time than Messrs. Trump and Macron. When the two men met for the first time at a NATO summit two months ago, Mr. Macron seemed to avoid a Trump embrace, moving out of the way to greet other leaders first, a snub much remarked on.

When Mr. Trump announced that he would withdraw the United States from the Paris climate-change agreement, brokered in Paris, he employed a particularly sharp verbal elbow: "I was elected to represent the citizens of Pittsburgh, not Paris." President Macron then released a video, in English, inviting U.S. scientists to live in exile in France, with a parody of the Trump campaign slogan, "Make Our Planet Great Again."

■ The European leader

This was forgotten this week in Paris, with both men eager to overlook past slights and snubs to get on with what binds the two fractious allies. "It is high time to finish with the juvenile rivalry of handshakes," the influential Paris daily *Le Monde* warned Mr. Macron not long ago. The French president "may have copied the American president's monopoly on being unpredictable ... but [he wants] to become the European leader of the international political scene, and to achieve this he'll have to go beyond images and symbols."

Bastille Day, after all, commemorates the storming of the Bastille in 1789, copying the example of the American Revolution. Not bad as either image or symbol. The day was a happy symbol for President Trump, too, to restore sheen to America's transatlantic ties and to renew the ancient Franco-American friendship which has survived harsh words and sometimes bitter misunderstandings.

Mr. Macron, who has clashed with Mr. Trump on climate change, immigration and other issues, invited the president and the first lady only last week to Paris for Bastille Day. "What our countries share," Mr. Macron said, "is stronger [than our differences], given our peoples and our histories and our values as well."

The 100th anniversary celebrations are particularly poignant reminders of Franco-American friendship when it was backs-to-the-wall time. America arrived late to the war, as it always does, and just in time, as it always is. The Germans had ordered an advance on Marigny through Belleau Wood, and the newly arrived U.S. Marines were ordered by the French to dig defensive trenches in the rear.

The American general countermanded the order, telling the Marines to "hold where you are." The Marines dug positions in the dirt with their bayonets, taking prone firing positions, and waited with bayonets fixed. When the Germans, advancing through a grain field, got within a hundred yards, the Marines opened ferocious rifle fire, mowing down the ranks of the Bosch until the survivors fled into the woods.

Much of the lore of the Marine Corps grew from Belleau Woods. Having suffered heavy casualties, the Germans dug in on the road to Paris and the Marines were urged by the French to retreat with them to the rear. It was there that Capt. Lloyd W. Williams of the 5th Marines retorted, "Retreat? Hell, we just got here." It was at Belleau Wood that Sgt. Daniel Daly, twice awarded the Medal of Honor in other wars, famously led his company against the Germans with the cry: "Come on, you sons of b****s, do you want to live forever?"

A German officer recalled later that "the Marines do not understand this 'live and let live' attitude by the French, they simply wanted to kill Germans." Said a French officer at the time, "the Americans were irreplaceable! They climbed like cats into the highest trees to 'kill the Bosch' and began to fire into the enemy sentries or on the German platoons running between the first and second line of trenches."

Paris was saved, and the Marines and the Americans have been popular heroes in France since ("the devil dogs of Belleau Wood"). Bastille Day is sometimes nice for Americans, too.

Mr. Macron, who has clashed with Mr. Trump on climate change, immigration and other issues, invited the president and the first lady only last week to Paris for Bastille Day

(Source: *The Washington Times*)

U.S. and UK acting above the law to support the Saudi war in Yemen

By Nafeez Ahmed

Britain and America are above the law. Our complicity in Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen proves it.

This week, the High Court in London ruled that British arms sales to Saudi Arabia are lawful, dismissing a judicial review filed by Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT), which had demanded that weapons exports be halted over humanitarian concerns.

CAAT are appealing the ruling, and no wonder – it was ultimately decided on the basis of largely secret evidence supplied by the UK government, heard in closed court. This is not open justice: it is evidence of how the Whitehall foreign policy establishment abuse "national security" as a carte blanche to protect themselves from legal accountability.

The same thing is happening across the pond. According to a former senior war crimes advisor to the U.S. State Department, U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia are "prohibited" under U.S. laws due to "credible allegations" of illegal actions during the kingdom's bombing campaign in Yemen.

The analysis is set out in a compelling white paper published in May by Professor Michael Newton, who teaches the International Law Practice Lab at Vanderbilt University Law School. The American Bar Association sent Newton's paper to the U.S. Senate saying that "questions had arisen" concerning whether the sales were "consistent with U.S. statutory obligations".

Unfortunately, despite the robustness of the legal argument, it did not prevent the U.S. Senate from narrowly backing the sale of \$500m worth in precision-guided munitions to Saudi Arabia in mid-June.

If our domestic laws have no power to prevent our governments from becoming complicit in Saudi state terror in Yemen, this does not make those arms sales legitimate. It means, simply, that our laws are not fit for purpose – that the rule of law has become a farce, a figleaf to enable the U.S. and Britain to outsource illegal wars to their [Persian] Gulf proxies.

■ Precipitating "humanitarian catastrophe"

According to the UN's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, there have been over 13,000 civilian casualties in Yemen, with 21 million Yemenis in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Saudi Arabia's indiscriminate bombing campaign in Yemen, which has contributed directly to this crisis, has been condemned as unlawful by a UN panel of experts, the European Parliament and humanitarian NGOs.

Lynn Maalouf, deputy director for research at Amnesty International's Beirut regional office, said that British and American weapons "have been used to commit gross violations and helped to precipitate a humanitarian catastrophe" in Yemen.

Like Britain, the U.S. has played a lead



A former State Department war crimes expert warns that arms sales to Saudi Arabia is 'prohibited' under U.S. law - but the lethal exports still go ahead.

role in supporting Saudi Arabia's war in Yemen through exports of military equipment, including for in-flight refueling to support the bombing campaign. Over the last eight years, the U.S. has provided more than \$115bn in arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

Last year, the Obama administration authorized \$1.3bn in arms sale, despite internal warnings from some State Department officials that the U.S. could be implicated in war crimes for supporting the Saudi-led air campaign in Yemen.

In May, President Donald Trump announced a \$110bn arms deal with Saudi Arabia over the next 10 years although, like all things Trumpian, the scale of the deal may well have been deliberately overblown.

■ Profiting off civilian deaths

But it's the thought that counts, of course: the earnest joint American and Saudi desire for a lucrative, long-term arrangement in which the U.S. military-industrial complex profits from the massacre of Yemeni civilians.

But according to Professor Michael Newton, ongoing U.S. arms sales are "prohibited" under the Arms Export Control and the Foreign Assistance Act.

Following a distinguished U.S. military career, Newton served as the senior advisor to the ambassador-at-large for war crimes issues in the U.S. State Department. He also taught international law at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Newton told me that despite these strong findings, he was not trying to say "that Saudi Arabia committed war crimes, but merely that they have done an insufficient job of addressing the serious allegations". The remedy, he said, is for the U.S.

and Saudi Arabia "to coordinate closely on transparency and improved targeting".

Yet this is not happening. There is no transparency, and no evidence of improved targeting. And as long as this doesn't happen, U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia "should not be presumed to be permissible," writes Newton.

"In the face of persistent reports of wrongdoing, Saudi Arabia has failed to rebut allegations or provide detailed evidence of compliance with binding obligations arising from international humanitarian law," wrote Newton in his working paper for Vanderbilt Law School's Legal Studies Research Paper Series.

Even after Saudi military units received training and equipment to reduce civilian casualties, "multiple credible reports of recurring and highly questionable strikes" continued to emerge. Newton thus argued that the U.S. government "cannot continue to rely on Saudi assurances that it will comply with international law and agreements concerning the use of U.S.-origin equipment".

He therefore concluded that under federal law, further arms sales "are prohibited... until the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia takes effective measures to ensure compliance with international law and the president submits relevant certifications to the Congress".

■ Growing opposition

Of course, neither is happening, but at least U.S. "defense" companies are making a killing. Literally.

I asked Andrew Smith, a spokesperson for CAAT, about these findings. "We welcome all scrutiny of governments that

are complicit in arming and supporting the brutal bombardment that has been unleashed on Yemen," he said.

"The growing opposition to the U.S. government's uncritical support of the Saudi regime is very important and it is only right that it is questioned not just in Congress and on the streets, but also by legal experts."

I also asked the State Department what they thought of Professor Newton's damning conclusions. A spokesperson replied over email, but did not address the main allegation that the arms sales are simply prohibited under federal law.

"All potential U.S. defense sales are carefully assessed under the U.S. government's Conventional Arms Transfer (CAT) Policy to examine issues including regional security, nonproliferation, and human rights concerns," the spokesperson wrote. All this is done "as part of a broader determination [emphasis added] as to whether or not a sale is in the best foreign policy and national security interests of the United States".

The spokesperson went on to assure me that a review and monitoring process is always undertaken to ensure that U.S. arms "are used in the manner intended and consistent with our legal obligations, foreign policy goals, and values".

But in the context of Newton's argument, this suggests that the U.S. government is in fact intimately aware of the Saudi state's systematic violations of international law in Yemen – and is happy to continue supporting the war all the same.

(Source: *middleeasteye.net*)

Talk of resurgent Turkish democracy dominates failed coup anniversary

Opposition to Turkey's authoritarian president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has been re-energized by the success of a month-long, cross-country anti-government "justice march" and last weekend's unprecedented mass rally in Istanbul attended by more than a million Turks.

The show of strength momentarily shocked the government into nonplussed silence. This week is supposed to be dominated by a series of official events marking the first anniversary of the 15 July attempted coup – the planned culmination of which is Erdogan's address to parliament in the early hours of Sunday morning, exactly a year since the attempt was launched.

■ One-man regime

Erdogan will stress the perils the nation has faced and his own heroic steadfastness, by way of justifying his subsequent harsh crackdown. But the anniversary is being dominated instead by excited talk of a resurgent Turkish democracy, led by Kemal Kilicdaroglu of the centrist main opposition party, the Republican People's party (CHP). He has vowed to fight Erdogan's "one-man regime" and overturn what he calls the "second coup" – the Erdogan power grab that has followed the failed putsch.

Turkey was on the brink of "a new beginning" after one of the darkest periods in its recent history, Kilicdaroglu told an estimated crowd of 1.5 million people in Istanbul on Sunday. "It's a new climate, a new history, a new birth," he said.

A shy, unassuming man, Kilicdaroglu has often been dismissed as a political lightweight. But his show of defiance has transformed his image and that of the CHP and mitigated the sense of hopelessness many Turks feel about the repressive political climate.

"Turkey is no longer the country of 25 days ago," said Murat Yetkin, a columnist for the *Hurriyet* newspaper. "There are signs that the pacifistic but huge action of the justice march ... has started to change the ruling Justice and Development party's (AKP) stance. It may also have changed ... the wider political culture in Turkey."



Recep Tayyip Erdogan planned to stress perils nation faced to justify crackdown but mass rally has reinvigorated opposition.

About 190,000 people have been detained, fired or suspended from their jobs since the coup attempt, which Erdogan is accused of exploiting to neutralize opponents. They include judges, army and police officers, lawyers, academics, politicians and journalists. Kilicdaroglu has been widely abused and threatened by AKP officials and supporters, and condemned as subversive and a traitor.

■ The justice marchers

Erdogan went even further, at one point condemning the justice marchers as terrorists. But as people from different, non-political backgrounds rallied to Kilicdaroglu's banner, Erdogan was forced to back off. This was partly because polling showed scant public sympathy for his stance. Even AKP supporters were unhappy, particularly over the politicization of the judiciary, Yetkin said. The march was supported by the main pro-Kurdish opposi-

tion party – whose co-leader, Selahattin Demirtas, is in jail on terrorism charges – as well as trade unionists and other civil society groups, and ordinary citizens.

"No one expects an overnight miracle [but] Kilicdaroglu has reinvigorated hope in millions of Turks who are deeply worried about the rapid deterioration of their democratic and secular system," wrote Semih Idiz, a commentator. "The government was caught completely off guard by this act of protest [that] garnered a lot of public sympathy on the way."

Kilicdaroglu is now trying to build on the momentum by pushing a list of 10 demands. They include restoring parliament's authority, lifting the state of emergency, re-establishing judicial independence and releasing detainees. The effect would be to roll back sweeping executive powers granted to Erdogan after he narrowly won last April's constitutional referendum.

Kilicdaroglu promised further street protests and warned on Tuesday against AKP attempts to "abuse" the commemorations. He is also organizing what he calls "the world's biggest petition" on behalf of the detainees, some of whom are taking legal action in the European court of human rights.

An AKP spokesman, Mahir Unal, said the CHP leader was playing a dangerous game and accused him of encouraging anarchy. "If you are calling on people to hit the streets, this is fascism," Unal said this week. But Erdogan has remained unusually quiet.

Increasingly vocal domestic resistance is putting growing international pressure on Erdogan to ease his iron grip on Turkish society. Relations with the EU commission and European parliament are already strained. The U.S. ambassador to Turkey recently urged the government not to abuse its counter-terrorism powers. And the Netherlands and Austria have followed Germany in refusing to allow Turkish ministers to address expatriate Turks on the coup anniversary.

(Source: *The Guardian*)

By Dr. James M. Dorsey

Persian Gulf crisis: A case study for the future of international relations

The five-week-old Persian Gulf crisis raises questions about the fundamentals of international relations, the definition of national security, and the ability of small states to chart an independent course that are likely to be debated long after Persian Gulf states have buried their hatchets.

The crisis that pits a Saudi-UAE-led alliance against Qatar entered a new phase this week with the arrival of US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson in the region in a bid to resolve the dispute among states that are US allies, many of which host key US military facilities. The United States is widely seen as the only power capable of brokering a resolution.

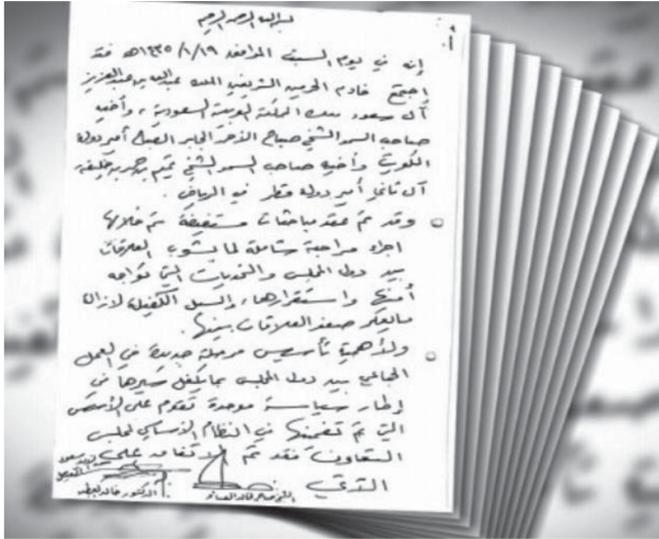
Mr. Tillerson arrived in the region as the lay of the land shifted with the leaking to CNN of secret agreements concluded in 2014 between Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait.

The Saudi-UAE-led alliance declared last month a diplomatic and economic boycott of Qatar because it had failed to implement the 2014 agreement that put an end to an earlier diplomatic embargo of Qatar by Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain.

The leaked documents leave little doubt that Qatar has violated those agreements. Qatari actions at the time of the signing of the agreements, however, made clear even before the ink was dry that the Persian Gulf state had no intention of being bullied into accepting a policy dictate and would at best take minimal steps to implement the accord.

Last month's boycott of Qatar was designed to force the Persian Gulf state to fully comply with the agreement under which Qatar would halt its support for Islamist groups like the Muslim Brotherhood as well as jihadist organizations, refrain from interfering in the domestic affairs of other Persian Gulf states as well as Yemen, and temper free-wheeling reporting and debate on the controversial Al Jazeera network that operates in a regional media landscape that is dominated by state-controlled outlets. Some of the Saudi-UAE demands went beyond the original agreement.

The Saudi-UAE-led boycott, despite the legal weakness of Qatar's position based on the 2014 agreement, goes



The 2014 Persian Gulf agreement

however to much broader issues that are likely to shape future international relations and spark debate on what the distinction is between national interest and the interest of rulers to ensure their survival at whatever cost. The crisis has already prompted debate in small states elsewhere on the degree to which size limits their ability to chart their own course.

At the bottom line, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are seeking to force Qatar, ironically an autocratic state in its own right, to accept a Middle East that is dominated by the Persian Gulf behemoths and designed to ensure the survival of autocratic and repressive rule irrespective of

what is legal under international law. The Saudi-UAE demands ignore the fact that some of Qatari attitudes towards political Islam as well as more militant groups were approaches adopted for decades by Saudi Arabia and its other detractors.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE long supported the Brotherhood dating back to the 1950s and 1960s when members of the group were forced into exile in the Persian Gulf by a crackdown by then Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's whose Arab nationalism was perceived as a threat to absolute monarchical rule in the Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia moreover has over the years supported militant groups in countries like Pakistan

and Bosnia Herzegovina that served its geopolitical ambitions, and in Syria, together with Qatar.

Similarly, Saudi Arabia and the UAE tinkered with their demands in the last five weeks to suit their geopolitical designs. Hamas, a Muslim Brotherhood offshoot that controls the Gaza Strip, was dropped off the two states' list of terrorist organizations to accommodate the possible return to Palestine of a UAE-backed Palestinian politician and former security chief who aims to become Palestine's next leader.

Ironically, Saudi Arabia was heavily criticized in 2002, less than a year after 9/11 for a tele-marathon on state-run television that raised millions of dollars for Palestinian groups, including Hamas. Saudi Arabia, together with one of Jordan's main financial institutions, Arab Bank, stood at the time accused of funding terrorism. Saudi Arabia has since faced multiple allegations that its five-decade long, global funding of Sunni Muslim ultra-conservatism fos-

tered environments that enable militancy.

The Saudi-UAE demands, moreover, involve a measuring with two yardsticks on a far broader scale. Beyond the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood is only proscribed in Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Egypt and not under international, US or European Union law, it also is a legally active organization in some of Qatar's detractors like Bahrain and Jordan.

While there is little doubt that offshoots of the Brotherhood have employed political violence to achieve their goals, the group itself is perceived as a threat by Persian Gulf autocrats because it advocates an alternative, republican form of Islamic government. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have not attempted to prove that the Brotherhood advocates violence.

The targeting of the Brotherhood raises the question whether demands for greater pluralism; more transparent, competitive politics; and free public debate constitute a threat to national

security defined as a threat to territorial integrity or issues such as economic, energy, environmental and military security.

A Qatari cave-in to the Saudi-UAE demands risks legitimizing a definition of terrorism that would go far beyond defining it as the use of violence by non-state actors to achieve a political goal. It would give credence to the definition employed by autocrats and authoritarian leaders like Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that includes all forms of political dissent or in the case of Saudi Arabia, atheists.

Similarly, the Saudi-UAE demand to shutter Al Jazeera goes to the heart of the struggle for freedom of expression and the media. There is little doubt that Al Jazeera Arabic's programming is slanted towards political opposition groups in the Middle East and North Africa, among which first and foremost the Muslim Brotherhood.

The question is what the distinction is between Al Jazeera Arabic and Fox News, that popularized opinionated, politically biased reporting in US broadcasting, or Breitbart, the tendentious, right-wing, online news website that was long directed by Steve Bannon, one of President Donald J. Trump's closest advisors.

In short, the resolution of the Persian Gulf crisis is likely to determine the ability of autocrats and authoritarians to impose their will on smaller or financially weaker states, and rewrite definitions of what constitutes national sovereignty and independence with serious implications for the ability of small states to chart their own course. It could also cement the politically convenient conflagration of national security and political interest of a party in power, irrespective of whether it is democratically elected or not, and redefine what constitutes basic human rights.

As a result, how the Persian Gulf crisis is resolved could well reshape legitimate norms of behaviour in international relations; concepts of sovereignty and independence; the ability to peacefully question government; and freedom of religious belief, including the right not to believe. All in all, the stakes in the Persian Gulf crisis could not be higher.



The question is what the distinction is between Al Jazeera Arabic and Fox News, that popularized opinionated, politically biased reporting in US broadcasting, or Breitbart, the tendentious, right-wing, online news website that was long directed by Steve Bannon, one of President Donald J. Trump's closest advisors.

Qatar has the strength to resist Saudi hostility

By Jason Unruhe

Saudi Arabia has unleashed a good deal of power against Qatar since the very suspicious incident of emails being leaked to the media. The Qatari national news website was hacked and had emails allegedly from the government showing links to terrorist groups and growing ties to Iran. With these "revelations" the Saudis have pounced on the opportunity to carry out hostile actions against them. Many believe that this is an attempt to force Qatar back to their client state status from decades ago.

It should not be seen as a coincidence that this hacking and the resultant hostilities come as Qatar has lifted its moratorium on the development of the North Field natural gas region back in April. In 2005 the government halted development after they decided they needed to study the effects on the reservoir that would develop as a result of increased output.

Thirteen demands were made of Doha by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) spearheaded by the Saudis. They include cutting ties with the Muslim Brotherhood, scaling back cooperation with Iran, and shutting down the state broadcaster Al-Jazeera. Qatar has dismissed them as 'unrealistic'. Qatar is under no obligation to bow to the demands of the GCC who have no legal basis for threatening them.

Since the diplomatic row between Qatar and its neighbors, Doha has suffered from an economic blockade. The Saudis have been able to do this because they control the only land connection Qatar has. As it is, Qatar imports 80% of the food it consumes. 40% of that comes across the land border with the Saudis. Qatar was also importing \$5 billion worth of goods from the blockading countries Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Bahrain.

They, however, have not been left without support. In the absence of these goods, alternative sources of milk, eggs, and cheese have been offered by other countries. Most notably, Turkey and Iran. The irony is that, as they've demanded Qatar pull away from Iran, they have only moved closer out of necessity.

Despite the impact of the economic war on Qatar, there has been little real damage to the economy. The central bank currently has a huge foreign currency exchange reserve which it can use to support its currency. As of 2016, Qatar's Foreign Exchange Reserves as a percent of their GDP was reported at 19.79%. They've also made it clear that additional liquidity will be made available to anyone who requires it.

Qatar has the power to withstand a Saudi financial assault. When demands were made by the Saudis, Qatar took a moment to think them over, using up the time that they were given to answer. Their response was a casual dismissal that told them that their demands were unrealistic. The almost off-handed manner with which they replied must have irked the Saudis something fierce. Few states in the region wield the significant political capital to do such a thing. This says something very important about how Qatar views their chances in further hostilities.

The Saudis have certainly underestimated the tenacity of the Qatari government. They've also underestimated the will-



When demands were made by the Saudis, Qatar took a moment to think them over, using up the time that they were given to answer. Their response was a casual dismissal that told them that their demands were unrealistic.

ingness of other Arab states to assist them during this time. Perhaps they have had a free hand by US imperialism for so long that they've forgotten what the situation in the Middle East is like. Materially and politically we've seen other countries step up and give support for the Qatari government. The Saudis thought they would have them over a barrel unable to defend themselves. They have most certainly been proven incorrect.

Many are concerned that the tensions between the two countries could break out into a war. The prospect is very unlikely. As it is the Saudis are already bogged down in a vicious struggle in Yemen. The rest of their military capacity is focused on controlling terrorist forces in Syria and Iraq. There isn't really any forces to speak of left to carry out a campaign on their northern border. The manpower simply isn't available to them. The recent low gas prices also begs the question as to whether they have the budget for it as well. The Saudis cannot carry out any kind of military action against Qatar on a large scale.

It's also very unlikely that Qatar will launch a military campaign against the Saudis. Qatar's air power alone is quite modest in comparison to Saudi Arabia's. Qatar is not a large spender when it comes to its military. Qatar's defence expenditures were a total of \$1.913 billion, about 1.5% of the national GDP, as of 2010. By contrast, Saudi Arabia spent \$63.7 billion, about 10% of the national GDP as of 2010. It should be noted that the Saudis are the fourth largest military spenders in the world.

The Saudis must have thought themselves gods. They have attempted to manipulate the entire region to their whims. Every time they have struggled to dominate someone, they have encountered significant resistance. The region, it seems, is unwilling to kowtow to the Saudi Royal family. It also looks as though the Qataris will be no different in their resistance.

(Source: Global Research)



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With ISIS on the brink of defeat, is Trump planning a surge in Libya?

By Karim Mezran and Elissa Miller

As the chaos in Libya continues, recent reports indicate that the United States is considering ramping up its diplomatic and military involvement in Libya.

On July 10, CNN reported that the Trump administration could soon finalize a new policy for Libya to expand U.S. presence in the country.

If realized, a new policy for Libya must prioritize the stabilization of the country in coordination with key European allies. Despite President Trump's initial hesitation to consider Libya of critical importance to U.S. national security, it has become clearer that the United States cannot ignore the security threat that Libya poses to U.S. allies in the southern Mediterranean.

Southern Europe faces three major security threats emanating from Libya: illegal migration, criminal activity, and terrorism.

Libya is the largest crossing point for migrants to Europe; more than seventy thousand migrants reached Italy this year; the number reached more than 180,000 in 2016. Criminal organizations engage in cross-border human trafficking networks from sub-Saharan Africa to the Mediterranean and smuggle products including drugs and weapons.

■ Militant fighters

A member of the Libyan National Army, loyal to

the country's east strongman Khalifa Haftar, in central Benghazi on July 6, 2017, after retaking the area from militant fighters. Libyan military strongman Khalifa Haftar on July 5 announced the "total liberation" of second city Benghazi, which was overrun by militants three years ago. Defense Secretary Mattis and his Italian counterpart recently discussed how to best intervene in Libya. ➔13

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Nano-antibiotics

Antibiotic resistance is a growing problem, especially among a type of bacteria that are classified as "Gram-negative." These bacteria have two cell membranes, making it more difficult for drugs to penetrate and kill the cells.

Researchers from MIT and other institutions are hoping to use nanotechnology to develop more targeted treatments for these drug-resistant bugs. In a new study, they report that an antimicrobial peptide packaged in a silicon nanoparticle dramatically reduced the number of bacteria in the lungs of mice infected with *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, a disease-causing Gram-negative bacterium that can lead to pneumonia.

This approach, which could also be adapted to target other difficult-to-treat bacterial infections such as tuberculosis, is modeled on a strategy that the researchers have previously used to deliver targeted cancer drugs.

"There are a lot of similarities in the delivery challenges. In infection, as in cancer, the name of the game is selectively killing something, using a drug that has potential side effects," says Sangeeta Bhatia, the John and Dorothy Wilson Professor of Health Sciences and Technology and Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and a member of MIT's Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research and Institute for Medical Engineering and Science.

Bhatia is the senior author of the study, which appears in the journal *Advanced Materials* ("Porous Silicon Nanoparticle Delivery of Tandem Peptide Anti-Infectives for the Treatment of *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* Lung Infections"). The lead author is Ester Kwon, a research scientist at the Koch Institute. Other authors are Matthew Skalak, an MIT graduate and former Koch Institute research technician; Alessandro Bertucci, a Marie Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of California at San Diego; Gary Braun, a postdoc at the Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute; Francesco Ricci, an associate professor at the University of Rome Tor Vergata; Erkki Ruoslahti, a professor at the Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute; and Michael Sailor, a professor at UCSD.

■ Synergistic peptides

As bacteria grow increasingly resistant to traditional antibiotics, one alternative that some researchers are exploring is antimicrobial peptides — naturally occurring defensive proteins that can kill many types of bacteria by disrupting cellular targets such as membranes and proteins or cellular processes such as protein synthesis.

A few years ago, Bhatia and her colleagues began investigating the possibility of delivering antimicrobial peptides in a targeted fashion using nanoparticles. They also decided to try combining an antimicrobial peptide with another peptide that would help the drug cross bacterial membranes. This concept was built on previous work suggesting that these "tandem peptides" could kill cancer cells effectively.

For the antimicrobial peptide, the researchers chose a synthetic bacterial toxin called KLAKAK. They attached this toxin to a variety of "trafficking peptides," which interact with bacterial membranes. Of 25 tandem peptides tested, the best one turned out to be a combination of KLAKAK and a peptide



Infectious disease is a fairly new area of research for Bhatia's lab, which has spent most of the past 17 years developing nanomaterials to treat cancer.

called lactoferrin, which was 30 times more effective at killing *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* than the individual peptides were on their own. It also had minimal toxic effects on human cells.

To further minimize potential side effects, the researchers packaged the peptides into silicon nanoparticles, which prevent the peptides from being released too soon and damaging tissue while en route to their targets. For this study, the researchers delivered the particles directly into the trachea, but for human use, they plan to design a version that could be inhaled.

After the nanoparticles were delivered to mice with an aggressive bacterial infection, those mice had about one-millionth the number of bacteria in their lungs as untreated mice, and they survived longer. The researchers also found that the peptides could kill strains of drug-resistant *Pseudomonas* taken from patients and grown in the lab.

■ Adapting concepts

Infectious disease is a fairly new area of research

for Bhatia's lab, which has spent most of the past 17 years developing nanomaterials to treat cancer. A few years ago, she began working on a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to develop targeted treatments for infections of the brain, which led to the new lung infection project.

"We've adapted a lot of the same concepts from our cancer work, including boosting local concentration of the cargo and then making the cargo selectively interact with the target, which is now bacteria instead of a tumor," Bhatia says.

She is now working on incorporating another peptide that would help to target antimicrobial peptides to the correct location in the body. A related project involves using trafficking peptides to help existing antibiotics that kill Gram-positive bacteria to cross the double membrane of Gram-negative bacteria, enabling them to kill those bacteria as well.

(Source: *nanowerk.com*)

Are 10,000 steps a day really best for your health?

By Robert J. Davi

that very few Americans know how much exercise they're supposed to get. But many people are familiar with the idea of walking 10,000 steps per day (or roughly five miles). And it's not unusual to see members of the 10K-a-day club constantly checking their fitness trackers (even jogging laps around their dining room table) in hopes of achieving the magic number.

Certainly anything that gets people to move more is a good thing. But it turns out that the 10,000-steps-per-day guideline is overly simplistic and based more on marketing than science. To understand how we got there, here's a little history lesson.

The concept originated in the 1960s with a Japanese manufacturer of a pedometer called manpo-kei, which translates to "10,000 steps meter." It's thought that the number 10,000 was chosen because of its exalted status in Japanese culture, not necessarily because it's a golden number for health.

■ 10,000 steps

So what does science say? Research shows that getting fewer than 5,000 steps per day equates to being sedentary (no bueno). Adding 3,000 to this baseline, for a total of 8,000 steps, is enough to meet the standard exercise recommendations for healthy adults and be considered "somewhat active." But there are two key requirements here: 1) The 3,000 additional steps need to be taken at a relatively brisk pace of at least 100 per minute, which is a fast walk or jog, and 2) they need to be done in increments of at least 10 minutes.

If you don't meet both of these



The 10,000-steps-per-day recommendation is a general guideline for healthy individuals. But if your goal is to lose weight, increase performance, or challenge your cardiovascular system, there's more to it than just steps.

conditions, you could be falling short of the amount of exercise you need for general health, even if you get 10,000 steps. For example, in a study of people who had osteoarthritis of the knee or were at high risk for it, more than 75 percent of those who walked at least 10,000 steps per day failed to meet the general exercise guidelines for Americans.

On the other hand, if you walk briskly, jog, or run—anything that gets your heart rate up for 10 minutes or more—fewer than 10,000 steps a day may suffice. You'll even

score extra credit if you use the stairs. Whether you're going up or down, stairs require you to engage more muscle groups and thus will help you burn more calories per minute compared to walking on flat ground. Stair steps and running steps are more "valuable" for your overall health than walking steps, which is why you can fall short of 10,000 and still get a healthy dose of exercise.

Which brings us to the marketing side of this: Can we even be sure these devices are accurate? It's not exactly clear. In a study of four

popular devices, two worn on the wrist and two on the hip, the trackers were generally accurate at counting steps but severely overestimated calories burned during walking and jogging. Another more recent study suggests that waist pedometers are more accurate than wrist pedometers but that cost and accuracy have an inverse relationship. Translation: The more expensive the tracker, the less accurate it is. Another study showed the pedometers tested generated significant errors at slow speeds and therefore cannot be used reliably. Which is all to say you can't always trust the tracker and that more advancements and research are needed.

■ The bottom line

The 10,000-steps-per-day recommendation is a general guideline for healthy individuals. But if your goal is to lose weight, increase performance, or challenge your cardiovascular system, there's more to it than just steps.

While many people find that tracking steps with these devices motivates them to be active, you don't need to track your steps to be healthy or stay fit. If you love to geek out over the numbers, by all means, use your favorite fitness tracker and keep moving! Just know that it's best used as a general gauge (e.g., is your step count consistent most days?) and that all the numbers might not be 100 percent accurate all of the time.

If you're not into counting steps, that's totally cool too. Just try to move as much as you can and get your heart rate up for a total of at least 30 minutes on most days.

(Source: *greatist.com*)

Hope and hype around cancer immunotherapy

By Jacqueline Howard

Some hospitals and health care systems call it a "miracle in the making" and a "game-changer." It's a treatment approach that harnesses the body's own immune system to target and attack a disease, such as cancer. Immunotherapy can come in many forms -- vaccines, antibody or cellular therapies, or drugs -- and can be received through an injection, a pill or capsule, a topical ointment or cream, or a catheter.

Ninety-two-year-old former President Jimmy Carter famously received a form of immunotherapy two years ago that he called "the key to success" in his melanoma fight. He had the treatment along with surgery and radiation.

Yet as promising as the therapy seems, could the spotlight on immunotherapies detract from other areas of cancer research? Some experts argue yes, while many others don't seem concerned.

Now, cancer researchers from around the world are convening in Chicago on Friday for the American Society of Clinical Oncology's annual meeting to discuss various treatment methods, including immunotherapy.

While other treatment options -- from targeted therapy to chemotherapy -- still and will continue to play an important role in cancer research, immunotherapy simply expands the options and possibilities for patients, said Dr. Jeff Weber, medical oncologist and deputy director of NYU's Perlmutter Cancer Center in New York, who added that he has seen many of his own patients respond positively to immunotherapy.

"It's made a big impact in the field in a sense that influential investigators in many different fields are now quite interested in immunotherapy," said Weber, who will be among the researchers attending the ASCO meeting.

"Many companies are interested in immunotherapy, and there's a significant weight of creative and capable minds now devoted to that field," he said. "Obviously the major progress we've seen is the benefit to patients, but the other advance is now the increasing attention being drawn to the field and the large number of really smart, capable, creative, and clever people that are now in the business, and you've got to believe that that's going to lead to even more advances."

However, the history of cancer research is one of episodic fads, said Dr. Vinay Prasad, a hematologist-oncologist and assistant professor of medicine at the Oregon Health and Sciences University. To him, immunotherapy might just be another fad.

"The problem is, when fads are in vogue, we neglect everything outside the fad. We spend disproportionate energy chasing what's new and forget the most rational science portfolio is broad; the most optimal portfolio is broad," he said. "There are truly some dramatic responses with immunotherapy, but like many cancer fads, it is easy to believe that the early success will extend to all cancers, and over and over, we have learned that there is no one solution to cancer."

On the other hand, a swelling interest in immunotherapy could enhance -- rather than inhibit -- other research fields, leading to some unexpected solutions, said Dr. Philip Greenberg, head of immunology at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center in Seattle and a professor at the University of Washington.

"Immunotherapy is going to be a critical and essential component of cancer care. It's becoming increasingly evident that even for people who were achieving complete responses to standard chemotherapy in the past, there was probably a component of their immune system that was critical in making that work," Greenberg said.

"Using therapies that target different aspects of a cancer, to try to bring them together so that they synergize, that will unquestionably be a real focus in the next half-decade," he said. "So, we're going to see new forms of combination therapies."

■ 'Oncologists are putting their eggs in two baskets'

The research field already has seen dramatic responses in melanoma, kidney, lymphoma, lung cancer and other cancers using immunotherapies, said Dr. Otis Brawley, chief medical officer at the American Cancer Society, who will be attending this year's oncology society meeting.

"I personally have seen patients with widely metastatic disease have remission and have long asymptomatic periods with good quality of life. Immunotherapy deserves support so that it can be further developed," he said.

At the same time, Brawley added, there are other modalities that deserve equal support.

"While I would not give up on the old and newer cytotoxic chemotherapies, the hormones and the hormone blockers, I also do not see this as either/or," he said. "Both areas are fertile ground for more research. I would like to see all of these modalities and several others pursued and investigated."

As for immunotherapy, research showing that the drugs ipilimumab and nivolumab stopped melanoma from advancing for nearly a year in 58% of cancer cases garnered excitement at the ASCO meeting in 2015. Many other studies showing the promise of immunotherapy also have been presented at the meetings since then.

"I suspect that ASCO will be just like the last few," Prasad said of this year's meeting, which he will miss due to a time conflict. "Immunotherapy will be showered with praise; there will be little mention of the downsides, harms or costs or, worst of all, that it may have limits in fighting cancer."

Food and Drug Administration regulations, potential side effects and costs mean that only a small percentage of cancer patients may benefit from immunotherapy today, Prasad said. Immunotherapy side effects include possible skin reactions, flu-like symptoms, heart palpitations, diarrhea, infection, arthritis, or severe or even deadly allergic reactions. In 2015, it was estimated that ipilimumab and nivolumab ranged in cost from about \$100,000 to \$150,000, respectively, for a course of therapy.

Prasad and Nathan Gay, an oncology fellow at Oregon Health and Science University, co-authored an editorial in *STAT News* in which they used US national cancer patient data and FDA approvals of immunotherapy treatments to calculate the possible percentage of patients who currently could benefit from immunotherapy.

The editorial, published in March, showed that only about 8% of all cancer patients would benefit, if they could get access to and afford immunotherapy drugs, since the treatment has been approved for only a few cancers.

"Since that article, we have had some new data," Prasad said of the editorial. "Maybe the number is as high as 12% or 15% at present, and it may peak at 15% or 25%. That would be a great success, but to me, the glass will still be 75% empty."

Weber, however, prefers to view the glass as half-full. (Source: *CNN*)

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 LG has sent save-the-dates to the media for an announcement event to take place in Berlin on August 31. Just one day before IFA kicks off. The LG V30 will be the star of this announcement given that the invite is a tall 18:9 display with a V-shape design in the background.

2 Apple engineers are reportedly working tirelessly to implement a 3D laser sensor to the back of the iPhone 8 that will help improve autofocus and be used for Augmented Reality. It's reportedly a vertical-cavity surface-emitting laser and will bring a huge improvement to depth detection.

3 Vertu will be forced to liquidate its UK-based manufacturing arm after the luxury phone maker has failed to cover its £128m deficit, of which Vertu owner Murat Hakan Uzan intended to pay £1.9m. The liquidation will result in some 200 people losing their jobs and seems to spell the inevitable doom of Vertu as a whole.

4 Several consumer advocacy groups have written U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions asking him to block AT&T's purchase of Time Warner. The groups worry that AT&T would lose the incentive to widely distribute Time Warner programming after closing on the \$85.4 billion transaction. The seven groups asking Sessions to block the deal include Common Cause, Consumer Federation of America, Consumers Union, Public Knowledge and other groups.

5 Huawei will have a very busy H2 2017 if we are to believe what Richard Yu, CEO of Huawei's Consumer Business Group, told the audience at 2017 China Internet Conference. Apparently, the Chinese company plans to launch an application processor that will feature combined functions of CPU, GPU (graphics processing unit) and AI (artificial intelligence). The new processor will be released in the second half of the year, as Huawei hopes to better compete with Google and Apple in the new sector of AI application processors.

6 Some of the customers who purchased a new Surface Pro have been noticing that the convertible tablet has a bug that's making it randomly enter hibernation mode, or shut down. Microsoft says it may have identified this issue, so it's now working to solve it.

7 Honor has shipped 1 million Honor 9 units globally. Huawei announced that it has shipped over 1 million Honor 9 units, less than a month after launching the headset. While that number might seem relatively low, compared to the five million the Samsung Galaxy S8 and Galaxy S8+ sold in their first weeks, it's a major success for Honor.

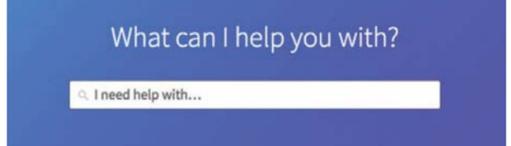
8 Three days after releasing the Developer Preview Beta 3 for iOS 11, Apple has now started rolling out Public Beta 2 to all enrolled devices. There is nothing major in the new update, just minor tweaks and fixes.

9 Google Home owners around the globe are starting to get an update that allows them to play tracks purchased on or uploaded to Google Play Music. Google Play Music allows you to store up to 50,000 songs in its cloud that could be streamed "anywhere for free".

10 Apple, in its constant efforts to move away from Samsung as components supplier, has tasked the production of its 2017 edition A11 chipset entirely to the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. (TSMC). Its 86-year-old chairman Morris Chang has just become a billionaire in the process. Shares of TSMC have jumped 27% in a year, making his stake in the company valued at a cool \$1 billion.

AI lawyer can help you with a thousand different legal issues

Over two years ago, Joshua Browder, now a junior at Stanford University, created a chatbot that could contest parking tickets in New York City and London. By June of 2016, DoNotPay had successfully contested 160,000 parking tickets -- a 64 percent success rate -- and earlier this year, Browder added capabilities to assist asylum seekers in the US, UK and Canada. Now, the bot is able to assist with over 1,000 different legal issues in all 50 states and across the UK.



To use DoNotPay's AI-assisted help, you just type your problem into its search bar and links to relevant aid pop up that are specific to your location. After you navigate through different options, a chatbot then asks you questions and puts together a letter or other legal documentation. The bots can help you write letters or fill out forms for issues like maternity leave requests, landlord disputes, insurance claims and harassment. Browder hasn't accepted any outside funding as of yet, but monetization of DoNotPay is in its future. While he hasn't decided on how that will go, Browder is considering bot sponsorships, like a car dealership sponsoring a parking ticket bot specific to its city, for example. The "world's first robot lawyer," as Browder refers to his service, has beaten an estimated 375,000 parking tickets and saved around \$9.3 million in fines. If that success can translate to the 1,000 new legal areas the bot is taking on, DoNotPay can become a seriously useful free legal aid. (Source: theverge)

Games software/hardware revenue to top \$150 billion in 2017

By Tim Merel

Games software and hardware combined are set to drive more than \$150 billion revenue for the first time ever in 2017, with software taking around three-quarters and hardware around one-quarter of the total (Note: this is games software/hardware combined — non-hardware revenues could deliver over \$110 billion globally this year). With a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 7.9 percent for the next 5 years, games software/hardware combined could top \$200 billion by 2021 (as detailed in Digi-Capital's new Games Report and Database Q3 2017).

Mobile games have grown like a weed since the launch of the iPhone, and the sector could top \$50 billion revenue for the first time in 2017. Yet despite this out-performance, mobile games growth could slow to 14.5 percent CAGR to reach over \$80 billion by 2021 (gross apps revenue across iOS, Google Play and all the Chinese app stores). That's more revenue than the entire games market when we first covered it back in 2010 (coincidentally, it's when we first forecast mobile games' coming dominance, which folks thought outrageous back then).

Console games and MMO/MOBA games should each deliver less revenue individually than mobile this



year, and with slowing growth could each individually drive around \$30 billion revenue in five years' time. This could make mobile games bigger than console games and MMO/MOBA games combined by then. The remaining big sectors of PC hardware and console hardware are broadly ex-growth (although Nintendo Switch has given console hardware a big bump this year and might help longer term), but could still drive well over \$30 billion combined revenue by 2021.

VR hardware (headsets, peripherals and PCs/GPUs) could deliver in the low single digit billions-range this year, and drive over \$7 billion revenue by 2021. But VR hardware is dominated by giants like Facebook and Samsung already, so solutions for specific technical problems are probably best for startups in this sector.

AR games software — particularly mobile AR games — had its first hit with Pokémon Go (even if industry insiders don't like to call it AR). If mobile AR goes

mass market in the next 12 months (helped by Facebook, Apple, Google and others), AR games software could drive almost \$7 billion revenue in 5 years' time — more than VR games.

Pokémon Go might have made more money than all VR games combined last year, but VR games software still has a lot of runway. With high growth rates, VR games software could top \$6 billion by 2021.

Combining the 50 major countries in our forecasts into regions gives a pretty consistent picture. Led by China, Asia has dominated games revenue for the last few years (which we also forecast for the first time in 2010 to much bemusement), and that dominance looks set to continue. This year China, Japan, and South Korea alone could deliver \$4 of every \$10 spent on games globally, and together with the rest of Asia-Pacific, it could see just under half of all games revenue globally. By comparison, the North American market could take around a quarter of games revenue and Western Europe a fifth. In some of the hottest growth sectors such as VR games, AR games, and esports, Asia has changed from the outdated view of it being an importer of Western approaches to becoming a true innovator. (Source: Digi-Capital)

BMW drivers can't escape work thanks to in-car Skype access

In the age of after-hours company emails, working lunches and constant connectivity, the one place you can escape is your car, right? Not so fast, easy rider. With help from Microsoft, BMW has installed Skype for Business in select vehicles running BMW iDrive, the company's infotainment and mobility system. Just a few months ago, BMW added Microsoft's Office 365 tools to BMW's iDrive, so certain Bimmers really are turning into (very) high-speed offices.

BMW isn't the first company to unveil Skype-ing on the road, as that honor goes to Volvo. The feature allows users to join meetings via voice or screen taps, receive alerts about an upcoming Skype call, and be notified if it's cancelled. "Microsoft Exchange will also integrate calendars, to-do lists and contacts using the car's voice and navigation systems," Microsoft said in a press release.



BMW is going all in on Microsoft business tools, with support for Office, Exchange and now Skype for Business. That service will roll out in Germany, France and the UK, and BMW will ponder expansion to other markets like North America afterwards. It should hit most 5-series vehicle with iDrive, but Microsoft or BMW didn't specify exactly which vehicles would get the feature. (Source: TechCrunch)

Uber's answer to ride-sharing in Russia is a merger

Uber and Yandex, the 'Google of Russia', have agreed to combine their Russian ride-sharing businesses. The move further heralds the slowdown of Uber's global expansion, while it bolsters Yandex's position in its field: the company has invested \$100 million into the venture compared to Uber's \$225 million, but will own 59.3 percent. Yandex.Taxi chief executive Tigran Khudaverdyan will become the CEO of the combined business.

Both companies will work together to provide ride-hailing and food delivery services in Russia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia and Kazakhstan. Customers can complete their transactions using either the Uber or Yandex app, while driver apps are set to be integrated once the merger is complete at the end of the year.

The deal seems to benefit both parties. Yandex is eliminating a potentially aggressive competitor, while Uber gets the support it needs to continue its



operations in Russia following months of legal setbacks and driver protests. However, the San Francisco company struck a similar deal with rival Didi Chuxing in China last year, only to withdraw from the country completely a few months later. Plus the new company is up against fierce competition from the likes of Fasten/Rutaxi, Maxim and Gett, the Israeli startup backed by German automaker Volkswagen. (Source: Reuters)

Mobile game revenue finally surpasses PC and consoles

Two-thirds of the world now has a mobile phone in their pocket, and apparently a lot of them are spending money on games. A new report from industry analyst DFC Intelligence found that mobile games revenue exceeded PC and console revenue for the first time ever in 2016.

The mobile games market grew 32 percent to reach \$38 billion last year, and according to market analyst Newzoo, will reach \$65 billion in 2020. In China, tech giants Tencent and NetEase both doubled their revenue. NetEase overtook Tencent as the No. 1 mobile publisher last year, but Tencent is still the largest gaming company in the world and has a huge presence in not just mobile but in the PC gaming world as well with subsidiaries like League of Legends studio Riot. It reported a 58 percent increase in Q1 this year and is currently valued at \$316 billion.

DFC examined over 30 companies in its report, and found that casual and social casino games have started



to peak in the mobile space. Now the market will move toward increasingly complex games, which means that

there will be even more crossover from PC and console publishers moving forward.

Large companies like Square Enix have already been making a big push. It's brought its popular Hitman series to mobile with Hitman Go, its title Final Fantasy Brave Exvius has been downloaded more 20 million times, and it's teamed up with MZ (Game of War) to make a Final Fantasy XV massively multiplayer online mobile game.

DFC taps Activision Blizzard and Electronic Arts as the ones to watch on small screens for significant growth in the future. Both show up in the 2016 top mobile publishers ranking by market researcher AppAnnie, with Activision at No. 5 and EA at No. 13. Activision's revenues were \$6.61 billion last year, up 42 percent from 2015. This was due in part to its acquisition of the hugely successful mobile studio King, which developed the smash hit Candy Crush. (Source: DFC Intelligence)

This gadget tells you if you smell so others don't have to

Ever had to rush somewhere and begun to worry that you stink like a teenage locker room? Well, thankfully, there's now an app that can measure exactly how badly you smell. Connecting to your smartphone via Bluetooth, Kukun Body is a pocket-sized device that lets you test your stench in four different locations. Developed by Japanese camera manufacturer Konica Minolta, the tape recorder shaped device can be used to scan four areas: feet, behind the ear, near the head and of course — the all important armpits.

Testing for three different smells, the device checks your body for readings of sweat, middle-fat odors and a third category called karesihu -- which roughly translates to old age smell. After conducting the analysis, the Kukun



Body gives you the brutal truth, discreetly sending you the verdict via the Kukun app. Given the public odor shaming of Japan's other hygiene testing solution, this sweat testing device will probably win a few more fans than its breath-testing equivalent. (Source: Guardian)

China might not block personal VPNs after all

With China making "unapproved" virtual private networks illegal at the start of the year, we previously reported that the nation planned to completely block public access to VPNs by February 1st. Now, just a few days later, China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology has issued a statement that appears to debunk the claims. The minister states that VPNs with "permissions" such as domestic and international companies won't be affected. The Ministry then goes onto say that "the majority of users" will also be safe, stating that it will only crack down on "unapproved" VPNs. Predictably, the statement doesn't clarify exactly how users go about getting said approval.

If true, however, the Ministry's vague positioning on person VPN use could be an encouraging sign for those in China who



want more than just a heavily censored version of the internet. With China even opting to create its own version of Wikipedia, allowing its citizens to continue using VPNs seems entirely at odds with the country's desire to control everything its people see online. (Source: thepaper)

Ravens surprise scientists by showing they can plan

As recently as 10 years ago, humans were thought to be the only species with the ability to plan.

Recent studies on great apes showed the ability is not uniquely human. Now, scientists in Sweden have come to the surprising conclusion that ravens can also deliberately prepare for future events.

"It is conservative to conclude that ravens perform similarly to great apes and young children," the researchers write. However, monkeys have failed similar experiments.

We've known that ravens, and other members of the corvid family, are smart. Previously, they were shown to think ahead by caching food to eat later.

But some scientists argued that food caching was not proof of an ability to plan because the birds could simply be biologically wired to do so, cognitive zoologist Can Kabadayi from Lund University tells *The Two-Way*.

Series of experiments

So, Kabadayi and co-author Mathias Osvath set up a series of experiments to see if five ravens could flexibly plan during tasks that they don't do in the wild: using tools and bartering. These are similar to studies done on great apes. Their findings were published today in the journal *Science*.

The researchers trained the birds how



to use a simple tool, a rock, which could be used to open a box containing a treat (a piece of dog food) if the birds dropped it through a small tube.

One version of the experiment had a delay of 15 minutes between selecting

an object and being presented with the reward box, and the ravens succeeded 86 percent of the time. The second extended that period to 17 hours, and the success rate was even higher, at 88 percent.

Some scientists argue that food caching was not proof of an ability to plan because the birds could simply be biologically wired to do so.

The birds were also trained to use a specific token to barter with a human for a food reward. Then, a different experimenter offered them a tray with the token on it along with other distracter objects.

Tokens stored

"When the ravens knew that trading would only happen on the next day, they chose and stored these tokens as soon as they were offered to them," scientists Markus Boeckle and Nicola S. Clayton wrote in a separate *Science* paper on the Lund University research.

They were more likely to be willing to endure delayed gratification when they only had to wait a few seconds, rather than minutes for the larger treat — which is also a key component of human decision making. "We basically found that the further ahead in the future a reward for ravens, the less value it gets," says Kabadayi.

He says this kind of complex cognition may have developed in reaction to ravens' complex social hierarchy — for example, they would need to remember previous interactions with other birds, which could contribute to memory and planning skills. However, he says there are many other hierarchical species that don't have planning abilities.

(Source: npr.org)

Even if every country cuts emissions, the climate would still be screwed

A planet devastated by climate change may seem like a distant future. But Earth is already experiencing the effects of rising global temperatures today.

Worldwide, the mean rate of sea level rise increased 50% in the last two decades. In 2017, temperatures have already reached their highest levels in history in some areas, from California to Vietnam. The past three years were the hottest on record.

These changes are caused by increasing levels of carbon dioxide and methane in the Earth's atmosphere, a product of human activity. And as *New York Magazine's* David Wallace-Wells recently noted, no single emissions reduction program we have today is enough to prevent climate disaster — not even the Paris agreement.

Even if every signatory country in the accord meets its current pledge for reducing emissions — including the U.S., though Trump has pledged to pull the country out of the agreement — the world is still projected to warm over 2 degrees Celsius by 2050. The Paris agreement points out this reality in a section titled, "Notes with concern."

Substantial impacts

Two degrees may not seem like much, but the rise would have substantial impacts. Scientists say that places

that supply the world's food, including Southern Europe and much of the Middle East, Australia, Africa, South America, and China, would be in permanent, extreme drought by 2080.

Flooding would become a serious issue near the coasts, where a third of the world's major cities are located, since sea levels are projected to rise by at least 10 feet by the end of the century.

Experts also warn that if the Arctic ice continues to melt, ancient diseases trapped in glaciers could get released. Plus, the world would face the extinction of many animal species and rising human mortality.

Negative emissions levels

The planet has already warmed nearly 1 degree Celsius, and James Hansen, a renowned climate scientist at Columbia University, suggested in a recent paper that keeping global warming below 1.5 degrees is nearly impossible. Hansen suggested that hitting the goal would require negative emissions levels, which would mean capturing carbon and taking it out of the atmosphere.

To make matters worse, our best protection against the effects of rising carbon dioxide levels comes from so-called "carbon sinks" — patches of land and ocean that absorb large chunks of the carbon dioxide we pump



into the atmosphere. But now those sinks may be at capacity, prompting the Earth to continue cooking even as emissions get curbed.

In a recent open letter, six prominent scientists and diplomats, including former UN climate chief Christiana Figueres and physicist Stefan Rahmstorf, wrote that the world has approximately three years before the worst effects of climate change take hold.

(Source: Business Insider)

Electrified droplets create mini Saturn planets

By electrifying tiny drops of fluid, scientists have created miniature versions of the ringed planet Saturn.

Though gorgeous to look at, the resulting "planet" has more than aesthetic value: The achievement could help lead to new ways of generating microscopic and uniform particles and capsules often used in products such as drugs, inks, cosmetics, paints and ceramics, researchers said.

When a drop of electrically conductive liquid is exposed to an electric field, the droplet responds by forming two electrically charged poles. Previous research has shown that these poles can get pulled toward the sources of the electric field, taking on cone shapes.

Experiments regarding this effect,

known as electrospraying, often involved drops of liquid surrounded by less electrically conductive fluids. In the new study, senior author Petia Vlahovska, an engineer at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and colleagues wanted to explore what happens when drops of liquid are submerged in more electrically conductive fluids — specifically, drops of silicone oil suspended in castor oil.

Electrified plates

Previous research found that when a drop that is more electrically conductive than its surroundings gets caught between two electrified plates, its poles take on the opposite electric charge of those plates. When it comes to electricity, opposites attract, so the poles of the droplet get pulled outward (toward the

plates) to become cones, with the drop taking on a football shape.

These new findings reveal that when a drop is less electrically conductive than its surroundings, its poles take on an electric charge that is the same as the electrodes (the electrified plates). Since like repels like, "the repulsion between the electrodes and the poles squashes the drop into [an] M&M-like shape," Vlahovska told *Live Science*.

If an electric field is strong enough, the researchers found that the equators of these squashed drops emit concentric rings of droplets, making the drops look like miniature versions of Saturn. In experiments, drops of silicone oil about 1 millimeter wide generated droplets that were about 100 times smaller, Vlahovska said.

"I was surprised by the fact that rings detached from the drop — I was not expecting it all," Vlahovska said.

When an electric field is applied to a drop of silicone oil suspended in castor oil, the drop can flatten and emit rings of fluid from its equator that break up into droplets. Q. Brosseau and P.M. Vlahovska Vlahovska noted they could generate rings in a very controllable way. "You can turn the streaming on and off at will," she said.

Future research will explore what materials can be used to produce this "ring of particles" effect. The "broader the range of materials, the wider the applications will be," Vlahovska said.

(Source: Live Science)

You can play this instrument using just your thoughts

Neurologists have created a musical instrument that can be controlled using only the power of the mind — and its creators hope it could improve life for people living with disabilities.

Dubbed the encephalophone, the instrument uses a method for recording brain activity called the electroencephalogram (EEG) to control a synthesizer.

Sounds are generated via two different types of brain signals; those associated with opening and closing the eyes, and those related either to movement or just imagining movement.

The instrument's co-creator, Thomas Deuel, a neurologist at Swedish Medical Center who is also a neuroscientist at the University of Washington and a jazz trumpeter and guitarist, tells *Newsweek* that while researchers have used an EEG to make sounds before, what makes his instrument novel is that it allows for "creating music in real time without movement, with intentional control, (and) now with proven basic accuracy."

Instrument's capabilities

Deuel and three co-authors recently laid out the instrument's capabilities in a report for *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*. In the write-up, they describe an experiment in which 15 people who had never used the encephalophone were hooked up to the equipment and asked to hit a series of target notes.

Even without prior training, the subjects were able to pass the test with 67.1 percent accuracy when using brain signals related to closing their eyes, and 57.1 percent accuracy when using movement-related signals. In both cases, they significantly outperformed a random note generator, which scored just 19.03 percent accuracy.

With more testing, the researchers argue, the instrument could have medical applications.

The device "may hold promise for patients — such as those with locked-in syndrome — who are severely incapacitated and may be more likely to respond to auditory (and specifically musical) stimulus and feedback than to visual stimulus and feedback," they write.

Visual impairment

"This is particularly so for those who may have visual impairment (e.g., cortical blindness), and particularly to those who played music before their injury."

Deuel says he is almost ready to begin trials with patients with motor disabilities at Swedish Medical Center in Seattle, pending approval by the hospital's review board.

"These trials are to see if those with motor disability can be empowered to play music, enjoy it, and can achieve basic accuracy," he says. "The next phase after this will try to see if we can improve motor rehabilitation and cognitive recovery."



And if you can't wait that long, it's already being used in live performances — playing jazz tunes in a five-piece ensemble.

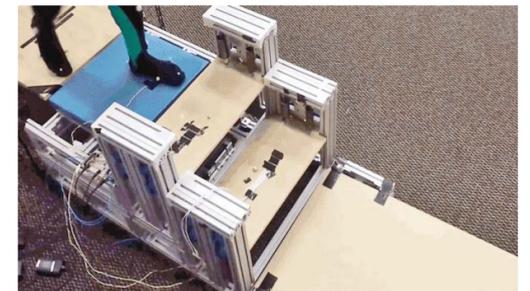
"Musically it is exciting to enable musicians who've lost their ability to play from motor disease or injury," says Deuel, but also, he says, "I have found unique effects on musical phrasing and call-and-response when playing with other musicians."

Deuel adds: "It's a totally new way to think, in short, when generating music, from any other instrument."

(Source: Newsweek)

Staircase design stores extra energy to make it easier to climb later

Do you deliberately avoid visiting friends who live in multi-story buildings without an elevator? No one would fault you—having to climb even just a single flight of stairs is like being forced to work out against your will. But thanks to engineers at Georgia Tech and Emory University, stairs might one day do all the hard work for you.



In a paper published today in the journal *PLOS ONE*, that team details their energy-recycling stairs, which store energy when you descend, and then release it to make the ascent easier on the way back up.

You probably don't stop to think about it while you race down a flight of stairs, but your body expends a considerable amount of energy in the process to prevent you from falling. It's usually wasted energy, but these energy-recycling stairs take advantage of those forces using a spring-loaded mechanism that compresses each step and locks it down as you descend.

This leaves every step charged with potential energy once you've hit the bottom. When you go to climb back up, pressure sensors on each tread release the locking mechanism on the step below it, turning that stored potential energy into kinetic energy that helps lift a climber's leg as the spring-powered step raises again.

As the stairs compress on your descent, the engineers have calculated they save around 26 percent of the energy you normally use to brace yourself as each foot makes contact. And on the way back up, the energy-recycling stairs make it around 37 percent easier on the knee, making these stairs ideal for people who are pregnant, dealing with mobility issues, or are just simply out of shape.

(Source: Gizmodo)

High-speed Hyperloop project ready for key test in Nevada

Engineers will soon conduct a crucial test of a futuristic technology championed by entrepreneur Elon Musk that seeks to revolutionize transportation by sending passengers and cargo packed into pods through an intercity system of vacuum tubes.

Hyperloop One, the Los-Angeles-based company developing the technology, is gearing up to send a 28-foot-long (8.5 meter-long) pod hurtling down a set of tracks in a test run in Nevada in the next few weeks, spokeswoman Marcy Simon said.

Hyperloop One is working to develop a technical vision proposed by Musk, the founder of rocket maker SpaceX and electric car company Tesla Motors. In 2013, he suggested sending pods with passengers through giant vacuum tubes between Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Hyperloop aims to achieve speeds of 250 mph (402 km/h) in its upcoming phase of testing.

As it gears up for that experiment, the company on Wednesday released the results from a May 12 test in the Nevada desert. A Hyperloop One sled on wheels for the first time coasted above a track using magnets, Simon said.

It levitated for 5.3 seconds in a vacuum-sealed tube and reached speeds of 70 miles per hour (113 km/h), the company said in a statement. By comparison, another test by Hyperloop One that made national headlines last year was done on an open-air track, not in the tube, a key to achieving high speeds.

(Source: Reuters)

Researchers have just discovered the tiniest star known to science

Astronomers have discovered the smallest star known to science: EBLM J0555-57Ab, about the size of Saturn, is 600 light-years from Earth. This tiny star may help us understand more about fusion and how to find distant worlds that can sustain life.

Scientists have discovered the smallest star known to science; in fact, it is so tiny that it barely qualifies as a star. Called EBLM J0555-57Ab, it is only slightly larger than Saturn. The star is part of a binary system, orbiting a much bigger star approximately 600 light-years from Earth.

"Our discovery reveals how small stars can be," astronomer Alexander Boetticher from the University of Cambridge said in a press release. "Had this star formed with only a slightly lower mass, the fusion reaction of hydrogen in its core could not be sustained, and the star would instead have transformed into a brown dwarf."

The issues that make this star a bit of a "borderline" case are the same that cause brown dwarves to be called "failed stars." EBLM J0555-57Ab is just massive enough to enable hydrogen fusion to occur in its core, forming helium, as the researcher describe in their study published in *Astronomy & Astrophysics*. However, it remains very faint and difficult to see; it is approximately 2,000 to 3,000 times fainter than our Sun.

(Source: futurism.com)

11 centers for EB patients operational across Iran

SOCIETY TEHRAN — There are currently 11 centers operational across Iran providing services to patients who are suffering from Epidermolysis Bullosa or EB, a rare genetic connective tissue disorder, IRNA reported.

The centers are located in the cities of Isfahan, Shiraz, Tabriz, Mashhad, Kerman, Kermanshah, Ahvaz, Rasht, Tehran and Arak, said Jamshid Kermanchi an advisor to the health minister.



There are some 800 patients identified with EB in Iran, of them around 500 have been registered by the Ministry of Health, he added.

EB treatment is very complicated and has many difficulties, Iran's Food and Drug Administration Director Rasoul Dinarvand told IRNA.

"Unfortunately, the EB disease has no cure and it just needs intensive care and sometimes several medical operations," he added.

Since one year ago, the administration has been providing wound dressings for EB patients, he said, adding that 50 billion rials (about \$1.2 million) is spent annually on healing the patients, he said.

Dressing management in EB simplex focuses on preventing infection, cooling the blister sites and protecting the skin from trauma.

There are many genetic and symptomatic variations of EB, but all share the prominent symptom of extremely fragile skin that blisters and tears from minor friction or trauma.

Internal organs and bodily systems can also be seriously affected by the disease.

Those born with Epidermolysis Bullosa are often called "Butterfly Children" because as the analogy goes, their skin is as fragile as the wings of a butterfly. While many who live with milder forms of EB can lead long and productive lives, the list of manifestations and secondary complications in the more severe forms is lengthy and requires multiple interventions from a range of medical specialists.

Iran spends \$270m annually on foreign students

SOCIETY TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic of Iran spends some \$270 million per annum on the education of foreign nationals living in the country, an official with the Interior Ministry said on Wednesday.

"However, merely \$2 million of the expenses are covered by international entities," IRNA quoted Ahmad Mohammadifar, the ministry's director general for foreign nationals and immigrants affairs as saying.

International bodies are still covering some of the expenses pertaining to refugees and immigrants living in Iran, however, the international funding is limited, Mohammadifar lamented.

Currently, some 420,000 foreign students are studying in Iran, the official said, adding that education expenditure per foreign student amounts to 20 million rials (\$500) annually.

Foreign nationals are treated fairly
There are some 1.5 million foreign



nationals living in Iran who either have full citizenship or limited-validity passports (Amayesh); they are being provided with

full services, he pointed. Additionally, there are some one to 1.5 million undocumented foreign nationals

who required registration, Mohammadi far added.

Mohammadifar further underlined that the Interior Ministry has undertaken painstaking efforts for documentation of these foreign nationals.

The rumors about deporting some of the foreign nationals are not true; some 600,000 of foreign nationals would like to return to their homelands willingly every year, he explained.

Even those illegal immigrants will not be jailed and solely deported to their countries, he highlighted, adding, "We are also discussing the possibility of issuing limited-validity passports for three years rather than one year."

Undocumented children can be enrolled in schools and educational institutions in accordance with the decree issued by the Supreme Leader and the foreign nationals are being provided with health care services in Iran, he added.

Math genius Mirzakhani fighting cancer: Pray for her

SOCIETY TEHRAN — Maryam Mirzakhani, the Iranian genius mathematician and the first-ever female winner of the prestigious Fields Medal prize, is battling cancer at a hospital in the U.S..

Mirzakhani who had been diagnosed with breast cancer four years ago is now hospitalized for the recurrence of cancer as the disease has spread to her bone marrow.

"Mirzakhani is a jewel for all Iranian women and for all women worldwide. She is a role model for being humble and humane as well as her intellectual and academic abilities," Mohammad-Ali Najafi, a former education minister and the current advisor to President Hassan Rouhani wrote in a letter published by IRNA on Thursday.

"In 1994, when I was in charge of the ministry of education, to our surprise Maryam beat our expectations, winning a gold medal in the International Mathematical Olympiad as the first female Iranian student to do so," Najafi said.

In the 1995 International Mathematical Olympiad, she became the first Iranian student to achieve a perfect score and to win two gold medals, he added.

In the world of mathematics Maryam can be compared to Emmy Noether [German mathematician known for her landmark contributions to abstract algebra and theoretical physics] and her achievements in the field would be certainly used and discussed in world academic circles for years, the former minister said.



"But what has impressed me even more than her genius are her virtues which made her a complete human being; over the years she has travelled to Iran for several times to share her research results with Iranian mathematicians, she loves her country," he highlighted.

Najafi concluded his letter saying "losing dear Maryam at such young age would bring an immense sorrow to the world of mathematics and the Iranian scientific community as she can still make invaluable contribution in recognition and understanding of mathematical sciences. So I ask all Iranians to pray for her to restore

her health once again."

Maryam Mirzakhani received her Bachelor of Science in mathematics from Iran's Sharif University of Technology in 1999 and earned a PhD degree in mathematics from Harvard University in 2004.

From 2004 to 2008 she was a Clay Mathematics Institute Research Fellow and an assistant professor at Princeton University. She is currently a professor at Stanford University. Her honors include the 2009 Blumenthal Award for the Advancement of Research in Pure Mathematics and the 2013 Satter Prize of the American Mathematical Society.

Mirzakhani also became the first woman and the first Iranian to be awarded a Fields Medal. The citation for her award recognized "her outstanding contributions to the dynamics and geometry of Riemann surfaces and their moduli spaces."

"As a kid, I dreamt of becoming a writer. My most exciting pastime was reading novels; in fact, I would read anything I could find. I never thought I would pursue mathematics until my last year in high school," she said in an interview published in The Guardian in August 2014.

"[Math] is fun – it's like solving a puzzle or connecting the dots in a detective case," she explained to the Stanford Report after winning Fields Medal in 2014. "I felt that this was something I could do, and I wanted to pursue this path."

World Youth Skills Day: skills for the future of work

In 2014, the UN General Assembly designated 15 July as World Youth Skills Day. World Youth Skills Day serves as an opportunity to highlight the importance of youth skills development.

World Youth Skills Day underscores the need to support programming and initiatives that equip young people with tools and resources to enhance their ability to make informed life and work choices.

According to a recent International Labor Organization (ILO) publication, 73.4 million young people were

estimated to be unemployed in 2015 (13.1% youth unemployment rate), and this figure is expected to increase in most regions by 2017.

One reason for youth unemployment is structural unemployment, a mismatch between the skills that workers in the economy can offer and the skills demanded of workers by employers. Structural unemployment affects all regions around the world and it impacts not only economies but also hampers the transition to equitable and inclusive societies envisaged in the 2030 Agenda

for Sustainable Development.

Young people are almost three times more likely to be unemployed than adults and continuously exposed to lower quality of jobs, greater labor market inequalities, and longer and more insecure school-to-work transitions. In addition, women are more likely to be underemployed and under-paid, and to undertake part-time jobs or work under temporary contracts.

That is why education and training are key determinants of success in the

labor market. But unfortunately, existing systems are failing to address the learning needs of many young people, and surveys of learning outcomes and skills show that a large number of youth have low levels of achievement in basic literacy and numeracy. Skills and jobs for youth feature prominently in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and SDG target 4.4 calls for a substantial increase in the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills.

(Source: un.org)

LEARN ENGLISH

Daily Life - Having Leftovers

A: What's for dinner?

B: **Leftovers**.

A: What? Leftovers of what and from when?

B: From last night! I took the leftover **turkey**, **mixed** it with some **diced** peppers and onions, added a little bit of mayonnaise and made some sandwiches!

A: Isn't that dangerous though? I mean **bacteria** and **germs** reproducing on food that was left out or reheated?

B: Well, I didn't leave the turkey out at room temperature for more than an hour and I **refrigerated** it soon after we finished eating. Also, when **reheating**, I put it in the oven for fifteen minutes at one hundred degrees Celsius.

A: Well ok, I am just afraid of getting **food poisoning**.

B: Don't worry about it! Making a new meal out of leftovers is almost an art! Not only do you save money, but you also get to be creative and have something different to eat!

Key Vocabulary

leftovers: food remaining uneaten at the end of a meal

turkey: a large American bird similar to the chicken

mix: of different kinds combined

dice: to cut into small cubes

bacteria: small organisms

germ: a microorganism

refrigerate: to make or keep cold

reheat: to make hot or warm again

food poisoning: becoming sick because of bacteria in food

Supplementary Vocabulary

sanitary: of or pertaining to health or the conditions affecting health

microwave: to cook, defrost, or otherwise prepare in a microwave oven

soap: a substance used for washing and cleansing purposes

contaminate: to make impure or unsuitable by contact or mixture with something unclean, bad

(Source: irlanguage.com)

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

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

UN climate fund calls for new ideas by Iran

Green Climate Fund, a global fund aimed to support the efforts of developing countries to respond to the challenge of climate change, has called for new ideas by Iranian entities to implement regional climate change projects.

The fund was set up by the 194 countries who are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2010.

Private sector companies, the chamber of commerce, and NGOs are invited to submit their ideas to the department of environment until August 23, 2017.

The fund has allocated \$500 million for the selected projects.

GCF helps developing countries limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change and seeks to promote a paradigm shift to low-emission and climate-resilient development, taking into account the needs of nations that are particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts.

فراخوان صندوق اقلیم سبز برای سرمایه گذاری بخش خصوصی

صندوق اقلیم سبز از فعالان بخش خصوصی، اتاق بازرگانی و انجمن های مردمی دعوت می کند ایده های مربوط به پروژه ها تاثیرگذار با اولویت های تغییر اقلیمی ملی را به دبیرخانه این کمیته ارسال کنند.

به گزارش خبرگزاری صداوسیما به نقل از پایگاه اطلاع رسانی سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست، صندوق اقلیم سبز از همه فعالان بخش خصوصی، اتاق بازرگانی و انجمن های مردمی دعوت می کند ایده های اولیه مربوط به پروژه ها تاثیرگذار با اولویت های تغییر اقلیمی ملی را حداکثر تا تاریخ ۲۳ آگوست ۲۰۱۷ برابر با اول شهریور برای بررسی در کمیته ملی، به دبیرخانه این کمیته واقع در پارک طبیعت پردیس، سازمان حفاظت محیط زیست، معاونت محیط زیست انسانی ارسال کنند.

ENGLISH PROVERB

When in Rome, do as the Romans do

Explanation: You should adopt the customs of the people or country you are visiting and behave in the same way

For example: Eat your food with hands. All of these people are eating it that way. When in Rome, do as the Romans do!

PHRASAL VERB

Wriggle out of

Meaning: to avoid doing something by using clever excuses

For example: Don't try to wriggle out of your responsibilities.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Walk a tightrope

Explanation: If a person is walking a tightrope, they are in a difficult or delicate situation where they must act carefully.

For example: The management is walking a tightrope in their efforts both to keep the costs down and satisfy the trade unions."

Trump hails Syria ceasefire deal with Russia, to invite Putin for state visit

U.S. President Donald Trump says a recent Syria ceasefire deal brokered by the U.S. and Russia shows his meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin was a success.

"By having dialogue we were able to have a ceasefire. It's going to go on for a while and frankly we're working on a second ceasefire in a very rough part of Syria," Trump said at a joint press conference with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron at the Elysee Palace in Paris.

"And if we get that and a few more, all of a sudden you're going to have no bullets being fired in Syria. And that would be a wonderful thing," he added.

The ceasefire in southwestern Syria was the main outcome of Trump and Putin's highly-anticipated first meeting on the sidelines of the annual G20 summit in Hamburg, Germany, last week.

Jordan was also involved in the trilateral agreement on the ceasefire, which went into force at noon Damascus time on Sunday.

Trump has been speaking proudly of the deal, touting it as an example of "working constructively" with Russia to address serious global issues.



■ 'Fools won't invite Putin to White House'

The American head of state was so pleased with the meeting that he said he would invite his Russian counterpart over to the White House in future but only "at the right time."

He also took a jab at those who criticized him for cooperating with Russia,

saying it would be foolish not to do so.

"Let's be the smart people not the stupid people. The easiest thing for me to tell you is that I would never invite him, we will never ever talk to Russia; that all of my friends in Congress will say, 'oh he's so wonderful, he's so wonderful,'" he said. "If you don't have dialogue, you have to be fools. Fools."

The United Nations has hailed the partial truce in Syria, calling it a "positive" step that could help efforts to reach permanent peace in the Arab country, which has been grappling with foreign-backed militancy since 2011.

The agreement was the first of its kind between the Kremlin and the White House, who remain on the opposing sides over the fate of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

While Russia has been helping the government of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad to defeat terror groups across his conflict-ridden country, the U.S. has been openly aiding militant groups fighting to oust him.

The French head of state also weighed in on the situation in Syria and said the West's "new approach" on the Arab country no longer pushed for Assad's ouster and was rather focused on "eradicating terror."

"We have one main goal, which is to eradicate terrorism, no matter who they are. We want to build an inclusive and sustainable political solution. Against that background, I do not require Assad's departure. This is no longer a prerequisite for France to work on that," he declared.

(Source: agencies)

Israel to be 'surprised' if attacks Lebanon: Hezbollah official

A senior official with Lebanon's Hezbollah movement has said that the resistance group will "surprise" Israel in any future war, relying on its enhanced military capabilities.

In an interview with Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV channel on the 11th anniversary of the Second Lebanon War, head of Hezbollah's Executive Council Sayyed Hashem Safieddine noted that the resistance group has been changing and developing new military capabilities.

Safieddine said that Israeli reports on Hezbollah's weaponry are "inaccurate as the enemy intelligence agencies can never reach veracious data in this context."

The Kuwaiti Al-Jarida newspaper reported last March that Hezbollah has set up and operated underground weapons factories which can produce missiles with a range of over 500 kilometers, surface-to-air and antitank missiles as well as unmanned aerial vehicles capable of carrying explosives.

According to a recent report by the French web magazine Intelligence Online, one of the underground facilities is located near Hermel in northeastern Lebanon. The factory manufactures the Fateh-110 rocket which can carry half-ton warheads and is relatively accurate with a range of 300 kilometers, covering the majority of Israel.

Another underground facility is located near the Mediterranean coast between the cities of Tyre and Sidon in southern Lebanon and produces smaller munitions, the report said.

Last week, Israeli minister for military affairs Avigdor Liberman described Hezbollah's access to sophisticated weaponry is as a redline for Israel, stressing that



Tel Aviv will prevent the resistance group from owning such capabilities.

"We take everything seriously. We are certainly aware of the reports and we will do what needs to be done. This is a significant phenomenon and we cannot ignore it. Precise weapons such as these missiles are a challenge. Compared to past wars they will hit deep inside Israeli territory," Liberman pointed out.

Israel launched two wars on Lebanon in 2000 and 2006, during both of which the resistance fighters inflicted heavy losses on the regime's military. About 1,200 Lebanese, most of them civilians, lost their lives during the 33-day war in the summer of 2006.

In April, Hezbollah's deputy leader Naim Qassem said the group's high level of defense readiness has so far deterred Israel from launching a new act of aggression against the country, warning that any such war would end in a "guaranteed loss" for the regime.

Earlier in April, Lebanese Prime Minister Sa'ad Hariri warned against signs of Israel's desire to wage another war on Lebanon after Tel Aviv unveiled the latest addition to its missile system.

(Source: al Alam)

Turkey to pay \$2.5bn for Russian S-400 missiles: official

Turkey has agreed to shell out \$2.5 billion in order to purchase Russia's most advanced missile defense system S-400, provided that Moscow agrees to transfer the technology as well, an official says.

"For Turkey, the key aspect of any deal is transfer of technology or know-how. The Russian agreement to allow two of the S-400 batteries to be produced in Turkey will serve that aim," the unnamed official told Bloomberg.

Under the deal, Russia would send two S-400 systems to Turkey within the next year and then help the country to domestically produce two more batteries.

If true, the deal would be a slap in the face for NATO. The U.S.-led military alliance has tried to prevent Turkey—a strategic member— from forging close ties with Russia.

However, Turkey's drift towards Russia seems to be a direct result of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's growing frustration with the West and in particular with America.

Ankara has been upset with Washington's lack of respect for its demands on extraditing key opposition figure Fethullah Gulen, whom Turkey accuses of staging last year's botched coup in the country.

The Turkish government says it has "85 boxes of concrete evidence" that prove Gulen was behind the coup attempt on July 15 last year, which killed some 250 people and injured over 2,100.

Erdogan has also been disappointed with the U.S.' support for some



Kurdish groups in Iraq and Syria, which he deems a threat to his country's national security.

The move has also been described by experts as Turkey's response to Washington's decision in 2015 to withdraw its Patriot surface-to-air missile system from Turkey's border with Syria.

Before turning to Russia, the Turkish military walked out of a \$3.4-billion contract for a similar Chinese system under pressure from the U.S.

Neither the S-400 nor its Chinese equivalent, FD200, are compatible with other NATO military systems, meaning that they are not bound by NATO's instructions that prevent Turkey from placing such weapons on the Armenian border, Aegean coast or Greek border.

According to the official, the Turkish S-400s would not be equipped with a friend-or-foe identification system, allowing them to be used against all targets without any restrictions.

Designed to detect, track and destroy aircraft, drones or missiles as far as 250 miles away, the missile defense system has only been sold to China and India so far.

(Source: Bloomberg)

With ISIS on the brink of defeat, is Trump planning a surge in Libya?

8 → Terrorists and other extremist armed groups in Libya benefit from these criminal activities. Libya's porous borders also benefit terror organizations; ISIS has launched attacks from Libya in neighboring countries such as Tunisia as well as in Europe.

These threats are products, rather than causes, of instability and the absence of rule of law in Libya.

The Libyan coast guard's cooperation with powerful armed militia groups in the country's coastal cities has led to criticisms of human rights abuses. UN investigators and activists have accused some armed groups of patrolling migrant sea crossings in order to protect their own criminal interests.

And while ISIS was pushed out of its Libyan stronghold in Sirte in late 2016 with the help of U.S. airstrikes, the group is by no means eradicated from the country. ISIS may seek to draw on Libya's criminal networks as it regroups.

The UN-backed Presidency Council and Government of National Accord (PC/GNA), meanwhile, remain unable to assert authority over the country as it battles both the opposition in Tripoli and faces opponents in the east.

Against this backdrop, Italy has repeatedly called on the international community, including the United States, to elevate solving the conflict in Libya as a priority for global stability.

So far, those calls appeared to have fallen on deaf ears; Trump in March said that he did not foresee a role for the United States in Libya beyond counter-terrorism.

■ Importance of stabilizing Libya

However, the report by CNN could indicate that the administration's view has shifted or that individuals within the administration that recognize the importance of stabilizing Libya may prevail in crafting a Libya policy.

Moreover, a recent meeting between U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Italian Defense Minister Roberta Pinotti emphasized U.S. and Italian cooperation on terrorism and the migrant crisis; and therefore the importance of solving the Libyan crisis.

According to the CNN report, the new policy for Libya would aim to support reconciliation between rival factions in the east and west and would send up to fifty U.S. special operations troops to Libya on a rotating basis to engage in counterintelligence sharing, as well as possible training of Libyan forces.

The Libya policy would also seek to reopen the U.S. embassy in Tripoli and re-establish a U.S. presence in the city of Benghazi.

This plan could face several immediate challenges. The first of which is the ongoing proxy war in Libya that has severely weakened the PC/GNA.

The United States will need to convince Egypt and the United Arab Emirates to cease their proxy support for the House of Representatives and Khalifa Haftar in the east and push for all parties to come to the negotiating table, led by the UN, in good faith.

Meanwhile, on the issue of training, European training programs for Libyan troops have not seen much success, and U.S. efforts to train forces in Syria in the fight against ISIS also witnessed little progress.

The reestablishment of a U.S. diplomatic presence in Tripoli would send a powerful message of support for the PC/GNA. Italy's move earlier this year to become the first Western diplomatic mission to reopen its embassy in Tripoli was a significant vote of confidence for the UN-backed government.

However, fighting continues near Tripoli between rival militia forces opposed to and aligned with the PC/GNA. And although Haftar recently proclaimed Benghazi liberated from Islamists by his Libyan National Army, security in the city remains uncertain.

In particular, the statement in the CNN report that the new policy would call for closer cooperation and intelligence sharing with Haftar, should be viewed warily. It is clear that the eastern strongman must be included in a settlement to end the Libyan conflict.

However, in any settlement, a strong central government must be empowered to establish authority and promote good governance; Haftar cannot rule the country militarily. Should Haftar continue to refuse to accept civilian oversight, U.S. intelligence sharing with him and his Libyan National Army would damage the credibility of the PC/GNA.

The United States should pursue a new policy on Libya in coordination with key European partners including Italy that elevates the stabilization of the country as the primary goal.

In doing so, emphasis should be placed on eradicating criminal networks in Libya that exacerbate the migrant issue and empower terror groups. These are the two threats that most significantly impact European national security and therefore the security interests of the United States.

Moreover, greater stability in the country could contribute to empowering the PC/GNA to undertake critical reconstruction efforts.

Italy should continue to press the Trump administration on the importance of stabilizing Libya. Coordinated Western engagement is necessary to end insecurity in the country, address major threats to shared transatlantic interests, and support Libyan efforts to find a negotiated solution to the crisis.

(Source: Newsweek)

Saudi Arabia fueling extremism in UK, Europe: Ex-UK ambassador

1 → "Foremost among these has been Saudi Arabia, which since the 1960s has sponsored a multimillion dollar effort to export Wahhabi Islam across the Islamic world, including to Muslim communities in the West," the report said.

Prime Minister Theresa May argues that relations with the Saudi kingdom are important for British security and economy, turning a deaf ear to numerous calls by opposition and human rights groups for the immediate suspension of UK arms exports to the Riyadh regime.

But, opposition Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has said Britain needed to have "some difficult conversations" with its ally Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states.

(Source: agencies)

India rejects China's mediation offer on Kashmir

India has rejected China's offer to mediate and help resolve the Kashmir issue, insisting talks will only take place with Pakistan without the intervention of another nation.

China had said it was willing to play a "constructive role" in improving relations between India and Pakistan, especially after the increased hostility along the Line of Control, a de facto border that divides the disputed Kashmir valley between the two nuclear-armed neighbors.

However, talking to reporters on Thursday, a spokesman for the Ministry of External Affairs turned down China's offer. "We are ready to talk Kashmir with Pakistan, but no third party mediation," Gopal Baglay said.

"Our stand is absolutely clear. You are aware that the heart of the matter is cross-border terrorism emanating from a particular country that threatens peace and stability in the country, region, and the world."

China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said India and Pakistan are important South Asian countries but the "situation in Kashmir has attracted the attention of the international community".

The comments came at a time when India and China are disagreeing over the construction of a road in the Doklam area near the Sikkim state of India.

Pakistan's Foreign Office, meanwhile, said the country's government believed in resolving all issues through dialogue.

"The UN chief, the U.S. president, the Chinese leadership and others have offered to play a role in resolving the Kashmir issue," said the Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Nafees Zakaria.

Kashmir, a Muslim-majority Himalayan region, is administered by India and Pakistan in parts and claimed by both in full.

Pakistan and India have fought three wars since gaining independence from British rule in 1947. Two of those wars have been over Kashmir.

Kashmiri resistance groups have been fighting against Indian rule for independence, or for unification with Pakistan.

More than 70,000 people have reportedly been killed in the conflict since 1989. India maintains more than half a million troops in the disputed region.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

UN urges Venezuela to allow dissent as asylum requests soar

The United Nations called on Venezuela's government to let people take part in an unofficial referendum on the constitution on Sunday and make sure security forces do not use excessive force against protesters.

Opposition groups have called the plebiscite after months of protests, saying Venezuelans should have their say on President Nicolas Maduro's plan to rewrite the constitution.

"We urge authorities to respect the wishes of those who want to participate in this consultation and to guarantee people's rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly," UN human rights spokeswoman Liz Throssell told a Geneva news briefing on Friday.

Hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets in Venezuela in recent months calling for an end to Maduro's presidency, amid food shortages, a collapsing currency and soaring inflation.

About 100 people have died and more than 1,500 have been injured in anti-government unrest that started in April.

The UN rights office has received accounts that "some members of the Venezuelan security forces have used repressive tactics, intimidating and instilling fear, to try to deter people from demonstrating," Throssell said.

Thousands of demonstrators are reported to have been "arbitrarily detained" and more than 450 civilians are believed to have been brought before military tribunals, she said.

Maduro is seeking to create a new super body called a Constituent Assembly, which would have powers to rewrite the constitution and dismiss the current opposition-controlled legislature, via a July 30 vote.

His opponents have accused the Socialist leader of economic incompetence, while Maduro says pro-opposition businessmen and Washington are waging an "economic war" against him.

Applications for asylum lodged by Venezuelan nationals have "soared", with 52,000 already this year against 27,000 all of 2016, the UN refugee agency said. This represented "only a fraction" of those in need of safe harbor from violence and food shortages.

Venezuelans have sought asylum mainly in the United States, Brazil, Argentina, Spain, Uruguay, and Mexico, UNHCR spokesman William Spindler said.

"UNHCR reiterates its call to states to protect the rights of Venezuelans, particularly the right to seek asylum and to have access to fair and effective asylum procedures," he said. "Venezuelans should not be sent back against their will."

(Source: Reuters)

Soccer: French Guiana fined, forfeit match for fielding Malouda

French Guiana have been fined and forced to forfeit their CONCACAF Gold Cup clash with Honduras for playing ineligible Florent Malouda.

French Guiana, boosted by the inclusion of the 37-year-old former Chelsea player, claimed a surprise 0-0 draw with Honduras on Tuesday but their opponents have now been handed a 3-0 victory.



CONCACAF said in a statement on Friday that its disciplinary committee had confirmed Malouda, capped 80 times by France, was in breach of rules over the switching national teams.

Malouda has also been banned for two games, although it is unclear when he will be able to serve that suspension.

French Guiana Football League had been fined an "undisclosed amount" after using Malouda, who now plays in India's Super League for the Delhi Dynamos.

French Guiana coach Jair Karam said after the Honduras game that FIFA rules should not apply because they were not members of the global soccer body.

Karam pointed out that Jocelyn Angloma helped Guadeloupe reach the semi-finals in 2007, despite having previously played for France.

Similar to the French Caribbean islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe, French Guiana is a member of CONCACAF but not of FIFA - the overseas French department has qualified for the Gold Cup for the first time.

(Source: Sky Sports)

Barcelona agree deal for Nelson Semedo

Copa del Rey holders Barcelona have announced they have agreed a deal with Benfica for the transfer of full-back Nelson Semedo.

The right-back has established himself as one of the most exciting young defenders in the world at the Portuguese giants.



He had previously been linked with a move to Premier League side Manchester United, but Barcelona have won the race with the Catalunians confirming that a medical will take place on Friday.

Right-back was a problem position last season for Barcelona following the departure of Dani Alves to Juventus.

Alex Vidal struggled for form and fitness while academy graduate Sergi Roberto did not offer the same attacking outlet that Alves did.

Semedo has the same attacking mentality as Alves and could bring that dimension back to the Barcelona team.

Semedo is the third transfer made by Barcelona this summer following the return of Gerard Deulofeu from Everton and Brazilian defender Marlon seeing his loan move made permanent.

(Source: Eurosport)

Juventus defender Leonardo Bonucci arrives to seal AC Milan switch

Leonardo Bonucci arrived at AC Milan's headquarters on Friday ahead of a proposed transfer from Juventus.

Bonucci, 30, was greeted by several hundred Milan fans who had been waiting since the Italy defender said goodbye to his teammates in Turin earlier in the day and set off down the A4 motorway to reach the Lombardy capital.



An agreement between the two clubs over a fee believed to be €40 million was reportedly struck in the early hours of the morning, paving the way for one of the most unexpected transfers in recent Serie A history.

Only a few weeks ago, Juventus coach Massimiliano Allegri said that Bonucci would be the "leader of the Juventus dressing room."

That no longer seems the case, however, with Bonucci now in Milan for a medical and to discuss personal terms, which could reportedly make him Serie A's highest-paid player amid suggestions of a €7.5m annual contract.

Bonucci has won Serie A in each of the last six seasons with Juve, and also won the league title with Milan's city rivals Inter in 2006.

(Source: ESPN)

Wimbledon: Muguruza faces Venus Williams in final

Venus Williams reached her ninth Wimbledon final and first since 2009, turning in her latest display of gutsy serving to beat Johanna Konta 6-4, 6-2 on Thursday.

At 37, Williams is the oldest finalist at the All England Club since Martina Navratilova was the 1994 runner-up at that age.

She also stopped Konta's bid to become the first woman from Britain in 40 years to win Wimbledon.

Williams will be seeking her sixth Wimbledon championship and eighth Grand Slam singles trophy overall. Her most recent came in 2008, when she defeated her younger sister, Serena, for the title. A year later, she lost to Serena.

In the time since, Williams revealed that she was diagnosed with Sjogren's syndrome, which can sap energy and cause joint pain. As time went on, there were questions about whether she might retire, especially after a half-dozen first-round losses at major tournaments. But she kept on going, and lately has returned to winning.

Her resurgence began in earnest at Wimbledon a year ago, when she made it to the semifinals before losing. Then, at the Australian Open this January, Williams appeared in the final, where she lost to—yes, you guessed it—her sister.

On Saturday, the 10th-seeded American will participate in her second Grand Slam final of the season, this time against 14th-seeded Garbine Muguruza of Spain.

In Thursday's opening semifinal, Muguruza overwhelmed 87th-ranked Magdalena Rybarikova of Slovakia 6-1, 6-1 in just over an hour.

Williams' semifinal was more competitive, at least at the outset. Indeed, it was Konta who had the first chance to nose ahead, standing a point from serving from the opening set when it was 4-all and Williams was serving down 15-40.

Williams, though, has so much more experience in these circumstances, and it showed down the stretch. This was her 10th semifinal in 20 Wimbledon appearances; Konta had never been past the second round at the grass-court tournament before this year.

There was also a meaningful gap in the track records of the other semifinals, and it made a difference right away. Muguruza won 15 of the first 20 points en route to a 5-0



lead, before Rybarikova at last managed to win a solitary game, 26 minutes into the match.

That, though, was followed by another five-game run by Muguruza.

Even though Rybarikova entered having won 18 of her past 19 grass-court matches, mostly at lower-level tournaments, she suddenly looked a lot more like someone whose career record at Wimbledon before last week was 2-9.

A lot of that certainly had to do with Muguruza, who was terrific. Her serves came swiftly and at hard-to-handle angles. Her groundstrokes were flat and powerful. Her net

approaches were well-timed, her volleys on-target.

She faced only one break point, saving it. She earned 12 on Rybarikova's serve, converting five. She won the point on 19 of 25 trips to the net. And she accumulated a 22-8 edge in winners.

That earned the 23-year-old Muguruza a berth in her third career Grand Slam final, second at the All England Club. She lost to Serena Williams with the title on the line at Wimbledon in 2015, then beat her for the trophy at the French Open last year.

(Source: SI)

Europa League: Favourable qualifying draws for Milan and Everton



Serie A giants AC Milan will travel to Romanian side Universitatea Craiova in the first leg of the third round of qualifying for the Europa League.

Milan have embarked upon an ambitious close-season of spending under the ownership of Yonghong Li's Rossoneri Sport Investment Lux group and are on the brink of a significant transfer coup by signing Italy centre-back Leonardo Bonucci from Juventus.

Vincenzo Montella's side will have ambitions to go deep into Europe's secondary club competition as they look to re-establish themselves as a major force and their first hurdle comes against a Craiova team who came fifth in Romania's Liga I last term.

Everton, buoyed by the return of Wayne Rooney, are to face Ruzomberok of Slovakia or Norwegian side SK Brann.

PSV, Eredivisie champions in 2015-16, are pitted against Osijek or Luzern, while

Zenit - now under the tutelage of former Inter and Manchester City boss Roberto Mancini - will take on Trencin or Bnei Yehuda Tel-Aviv.

Marseille, like Milan former European champions eager to recapture their glory days, must get past Oostende of Belgium, while the latter's counterparts Gent must try to match their run to the round of 16 last season by conquering Altach of Austria or Belarus' Dinamo Brest.

Fenerbahce travel to Sturm Graz or Mladost Podgorica, while their rivals Galatasaray need to negotiate Swedish club Ostersunds before considering a tie with either Inter Baku or Fola Esch of Luxembourg.

LaLiga side Athletic Bilbao, continuing life under Jose Angel Ziganda after head coach Ernesto Valverde left to take charge of Barcelona, take on Dinamo Bucharest.

(Source: Soccerway)

Abdelhak Nouri in vegetative state and 'can't walk, talk or recognize family'



Ajax player Abdelhak Nouri is in a vegetative state and has virtually no chance of recovery, according to his family.

The 20-year-old collapsed on the pitch after suffering cardiac arrhythmias during a pre-season friendly against Werder Bremen last weekend.

Nouri was taken to hospital and put in an induced coma as doctors rushed to save him.

But after waking up, the youngster has now sadly suffered "serious and permanent brain damage" due to a shortage of oxygen.

And Nouri's brother has now revealed that the midfielder can't walk, talk or even recognize his family anymore, with the chance of recovery virtually nil.

Abderahim said: "He cannot walk, cannot talk, he does not recognize us, does not know who we are. He does not feel anything, he does not hear anything."

"The longer you wait, the better they

can perform some tests. Yesterday morning the doctors did another test. The base of the brain is mostly damaged and is not functioning.

"According to the doctor he can never do all that again, he will never heal. But I trust Allah. May it be like that in the end I will accept it. He is a great guy. Everybody, the whole world, is talking great things about him."

"Our religion teaches us to accept and we pray for his recovery. We are holding now to that lifeline. We believe anyway that this life is temporary and that the eternal will follow after, but year, everyone wanted to see him score some goals first."

Support for the footballer has been rife, with many people from his neighborhood setting up shop outside his house.

Even fierce rivals PSV Eindhoven got involved by spelling out a message to Nouri at their training camp.

(Source: Sun)

Lewes FC become first football club to give equal pay to both men's and women's teams

A football club has become the first to pay its women's team the same as its men's.

Lewes FC, whose men's side play in Isthmian League Division One South - the eighth tier of the English game - announced the unprecedented move as part of what they dubbed their "Equality FC" campaign.

As well as pledging to equalize the five-figure budget of its men's and women's teams, Lewes said they would provide equal resource for coaching and other staff, upgrade equipment and facilities, and invest in local grassroots to drive participation by both boys and girls.

They said they hoped to spark a change across the UK, where female footballers are paid a tiny fraction of what their male counterparts take home.

That gulf was highlighted two years ago when it emerged England men's captain Wayne Rooney earned £300,000 per week, while his female counterpart, Steph Houghton - who leads her country at the European Championship starting next week - netted £35,000 over an entire year.

Lewes's women's team plays in the FA Women's



Premier League Southern Division, the third tier of the female game in England.

Lewes said the first tranche of funding for their Equality FC campaign had been approved by their board and had established pay parity between the two teams, with the focus now shifting to raising additional funds through donors and sponsors, as well as by encouraging more people to purchase a £30 stake in the club.

Director Jacquie Agnew said: "At Lewes FC, we believe

that there should be a level playing field for women in football. By committing to paying our women's and men's teams equally, and providing equal resource for coaching, training and facilities, we hope to spark a change across the UK that will help put an end to the excuses for why such a deep pay disparity has persisted in our sport.

"Together with our owners, donors and sponsors, Lewes FC can show that equal pay can be implemented to the benefit of both women and men in sport and beyond."

Lewes women's manager John Donoghue added: "I am proud that Lewes FC has stepped up to launch the Equality FC campaign. Every day, I see the passion and commitment our players have for the game, and I am sure this is mirrored across the country in women's football."

"For female players to have the same rewards as their male counterparts for doing the same job is a fantastic leap forward for women's football. This sends a powerful signal to not only our players and our club, but to the whole UK football community that women's football deserves an equal voice and support to men's."

(Source: Telegraph)

Iran's U-23 football team to travel to Kyrgyzstan for AFC Championship qualifiers

S P O R T S The Iranian U-23 football team **d e s k** will leave Tehran for capital of Kyrgyzstan Bishkek on Saturday to take part at the qualifying stage for the 2018 AFC U-23 Championship.

Iran has been drawn in Group A along with Kyrgyzstan and Oman. Sri Lanka has previously withdrawn from the competition.

Iran will start the campaign on July 19 with a match against Kyrgyzstan at the Dolen Omurzakov Stadium in Bishkek.

A total of 16 teams will qualify to play in the final tournament, including China PR who qualified automatically as hosts.

The ten group winners and five best second-placed teams among all the groups will advance to the finals.

The qualifiers will take place from July 19 to 23, 2017 in the respective host countries which are Kyrgyz Republic, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Palestine, Myanmar, DPR Korea, Thailand and China PR.

Although directly qualified as the finals host, China PR have expressed interest to participate in the qualifying stage. Therefore, if China PR finish top of their group or finish among the five best second-placed teams, the next (sixth) second-placed team will qualify to the final stage of the competition in January, 2018.

The chart shows the group draw for the AFC U23 Championship China 2018 Qualifiers, divided into West Zone and East Zone.

WEST ZONE				
GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	GROUP E
A1 IR IRAN	B1 IRAQ	C1 QATAR	D1 UAE	E1 JORDAN
A2 OMAN	B2 SAUDI ARABIA	C2 SYRIA	D2 UZBEKISTAN	E2 TAJIKISTAN
A3 KYRGYZ REP.	B3 SAUDI ARABIA	C3 INDIA	D3 LEBANON	E3 PALESTINE
A4 SRI LANKA	B4 AFGHANISTAN	C4 TURKMENISTAN	D4 NEPAL	E4 BANGLADESH
EAST ZONE				
GROUP F	GROUP G	GROUP H	GROUP I	GROUP J
F1 AUSTRALIA	G1 DPR KOREA	H1 THAILAND	I1 KOREA REPUBLIC	J1 JAPAN
F2 MYANMAR	G2 LAOS	H2 INDONESIA	I2 VIETNAM	J2 CHINA PR
F3 SINGAPORE	G3 CHINESE TAIPEI	H3 MALAYSIA	I3 TIMOR-LESTE	J3 CAMBODIA
F4 BRUNEI DS	G4 HONG KONG	H4 MONGOLIA	I4 MACAU	J4 PHILIPPINES

Derakhshanmehr could shine at AFC U-23 Championship qualifiers

With the qualifying stage for the 2018 AFC U-23 Championship in China set to kick off on July 15, the-AFC.com highlighted 10 of the hottest prospects who could feature as 39 of the continent's teams compete for 15 places at the biennial competition, which was won by Japan in 2016.

Despite being just 18 years of age, Iran's Mehran Derakhshanmehr already boasts valuable experience at the top level, having played all six games for his club Zobahan in the group stage of the 2017 AFC Champions League.

Derakhshanmehr has been a part of Iran's youth set-up for almost three years, and was a member of the side that reached the last eight of the 2014 AFC U-16 Championship in Thailand.

The left-sided player is comfortable in both defense and midfield and, having only made his debut for Zobahan in 2016, has already established himself as a first-team regular.

With the senior team having already secured its place at the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018, Derakhshanmehr will be one of a number of Iran players looking to shine in the coming months and catch coach Carlos Queiroz's eyes.

(Source: AFC)

Brazilian defender Jairo on Sepahan's radar

Sepahan football team of Iran is set to sign a contract with the Brazilian defender Jairo Rodrigues Peixoto Filho, commonly known as Jairo.

As a youth player, Jairo played for Brazilian clubs Goiás EC and Santos. In July 2012, he joined Botev Vratsa in Bulgaria. The Brazilian defender signed a contract with Portuguese side Trofense two years later.

The 24-year-old player signed a contract with Neftchi Baku in 2015.

Also, Sepahan has reportedly reached an agreement with Iraqi international striker Marwan Hussein Al-Ajeeli. His nickname is Cavani of Iraq.

(Source: Tasnim)

Iranian Junior, U-21 karate teams win Asian championships

TEHRAN — Iranian junior and U-21 karate teams claimed the title of the 16th edition of the Asian championship in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Iranian junior team won three gold medals, one silver and four bronze medals. Iran U-21 team also seized seven gold medals, three silvers and two bronze medals.

Japan came second, winning six gold medals, four silvers and six bronzes in two categories.

Kazakhstan finished in third place with six gold medals, two silvers and four bronzes.

The competitions have brought 660 karate practitioners from 27 Asian countries together in Astana, Kazakhstan.

(Source: Tasnim)

Ex-Iran midfielder Maziar Zare hangs up his boots

Former Persepolis and Iran national football team midfielder Maziar Zare announced his retirement from football.

Zare has hung up his boots at the age of 32.

He started his playing career in Malavan Bandar Anzali in 2004 and joined Persepolis four years later.

Zare was a member of Iran national U-23 football team in the 2006 Asian Games. He was called up to the senior squad in June 2007 for the West Asian Football Federation Championship.

Zare played 34 times for Team Melli and scored five goals.

He made his debut for Iran in a match vs Iraq. He played in the 2010 FIFA World Cup qualification and 2011 AFC Asian Cup qualification for Team Melli.

He also was invited in June 2011 by Carlos Queiroz to participate in the 2014 FIFA World Cup qualification.

(Source: Tasnim)

Arsenal forward Campbell out for six months

Arsenal forward Joel Campbell could be sidelined for up to six months after suffering a serious knee injury on international duty with Costa Rica.

Campbell was part of Costa Rica's squad at the Gold Cup but was injured during the team's 1-1 draw against Canada and told reporters would need surgery to repair a torn ligament.

"It is sad and difficult to have to leave the national team," Campbell said on his personal website. "I gave it everything, as I always do. Now I have to think about my recovery to come back stronger than ever."

The injury also complicates things for Arsenal, who were expected to entertain suitors for Campbell this summer after he spent last season on loan at Sporting Lisbon.

Campbell joined the Gunners in 2011 but has spent most of his time since then on loan at various clubs around Europe. He was only a regular part of Arsene Wenger's team during the 2015-16 season, when he made 30 appearances in all competitions but failed to lock down a permanent first-team role.

With his contract expiring next summer, Arsenal could now be forced to keep him on their books during his rehabilitation process before letting him leave on a free transfer.

(Source: Soccernet)

Wenger on Redmayne: 'If he was with us, we made a mistake'



Arsene Wenger doesn't remember the two-week period 12 years ago when a teenage Andrew Redmayne trialed with Arsenal.

But after watching the Sydney FC reserve goalkeeper's performance against his English Premier League side, he's got one thing clear.

"If he was with us, we made a mistake," Wenger said.

"At the end of the day I would say their goalkeeper was man of the match."

Redmayne took his game to a new level in Sydney's 2-0 loss to the Gunners on Thursday night.

The 28-year-old made a string of stellar saves, even repelling Danny Welbeck from the penalty spot, in a sign he's very much pressing for the first-choice spot Danny Vukovic left vacant. Perhaps fittingly, Redmayne delivered the finest display of his career against the very team he'd come so

close to joining.

Then 16, he trialed at Highbury for a fortnight and nearly had pen to paper when the club decided to sign a 15-year-old Wojciech Szczesny instead.

Redmayne, who remains a Gunners fan despite the let-down, could hardly believe what he was hearing when told Wenger had singled him out for praise. "I guess it's pretty exciting," Redmayne said.

"But it's always good to play well in the first game of the year, and I'm sure I can build on that and get on a roll."

Redmayne's A-League career has been something of a rollercoaster, playing hardly at all for Central Coast and Brisbane before cementing and then losing his No.1 place at both Melbourne City and, in the first half of last season, Western Sydney.

(Source: Soccernet)

Monaco's Bakayoko in London for Chelsea medical - sources



Tiemoue Bakayoko will undergo a medical on Friday after travelling to London to finalise a £40 million move from Monaco to Chelsea, sources have told ESPN FC.

The 22-year-old's move to Stamford Bridge has been delayed for several weeks by the protracted nature of the talks between the two clubs, coupled with a lingering knee injury that has delayed his medical, but he is now set to be confirmed as Chelsea's third signing of the summer.

Antonio Conte had identified Bakayoko as a top target after watching him play a key role in Monaco's spectacular Ligue 1 triumph and run to the Champions League semifinals last season, and Chelsea's need for midfield reinforcements is more urgent after selling Nathaniel Chalobah to Watford for £5 million on Thursday.

Nemanja Matic has been training

alone at Cobham and may also be allowed to leave this summer, though a proposed £40m move to Manchester United looks less likely after Romelu Lukaku's move to Old Trafford soured the relations between the two clubs.

Bakayoko posted a short Instagram video of his journey on the Eurostar to London on Thursday evening and another on Friday morning of him standing outside what appears to be the Chelsea Harbour hotel as he prepared to go to Cobham to finalise his transfer.

Conte will be relieved to secure the signing of Bakayoko after a frustrating few weeks in the transfer market that has so far seen Willy Caballero and Antonio Rudiger become the only other senior arrivals at Stamford Bridge, while top attacking target and former player Lukaku instead signed for United.

(Source: ESPN)

Iran holds conference on "Integrity in Teaching Methodology of Coaching Course"

The major conference on "Integrity in Teaching Methodology of Coaching Course" was held between July 13 and 14 at the National Olympic Academy of Iran.

This conference from 9am to 6pm for both days started with Deputy Minister of Youth & Sport of Iran Mohammad Reza Davarzani delivering a speech on Thursday.

Mr. Ziyaei, Vice-president of the Islamic Republic of Iran Volleyball Federation (IRIVF), Ms. Fariba Sadeghi, Vice-president of Women Department of IRIVF, IRIVF Secretary-General Dr. Mahmoud Afshardoust, Dr. Nader Shavandi, Head of Research & Education Committee of IRIVF and Secretary Mr. Javad Mehran also attended the meeting, while participating in this two-day conference are 140 volleyball instructors from different parts of Iran.

This conference, held by the Research and Education



Committee of IRIVF, was aimed at creating integrity in teaching methodology as major changes were made

in the syllabus and the assessment process of coaching course. The second session will be on Friday, July 14, 2017.

President Davarzani found that education is the foundation of reaching the important goals IRIVF set to develop volleyball and said: "Education must be in the way to change behavior and attitude in the coaches. Changes must occur in all age groups both at club and national levels."

He added: "Teaching must not occur only in terms of technique but also mentality." He asked all the instructors to stay updated, be a good learner-researcher and said: "No one can claim no further teaching is needed. If it is claimed so, then there is no hope for further success. Any investment in education is useful and it is surely never in vain".

(Source: asianvolleyball)

Soccer: Japan international Honda signs for Mexican club Pachuca

Japan attacking midfielder Keisuke Honda has joined Mexican side Pachuca, the CONCACAF Champions League holders announced on Friday, two months after leaving AC Milan as a free agent.

"I have just signed for Pachuca and I'm very happy," Honda said in Spanish in a video on the club's Twitter feed.

The club did not disclose the details of his contract.

Honda, 31, has 86 caps for Japan, scoring 36 goals, and is the only Japanese player to score in two separate World Cups, netting in the 2010 and 2014 tournaments.

He joined Milan in January 2014 for a reported 20 million euro (\$22.8 million) fee from CSKA Moscow but could not halt the decline of the Italian giants, who finished outside the top five in each of his four seasons at the San Siro.

He admitted after his last game, a 2-1 defeat at Cagliari for which he was named club captain, that his time at Milan had been a disappointment.

He said: "Unfortunately, I could not play in the number 10 role as often as I would have liked but I never gave up and did the best I could. I approached every game and training session with all my passion."

(Source: Reuters)



INTERNATIONAL DAILY
www.tehrantimes.com

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Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807
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



"Gaze" at Locarno festival

TEHRAN — Iranian director Farnush Samadi's short film "Gaze" will go on screen at the 70th Locarno Film Festival, which will be held in the Swiss city from August 2 to 12.

The film is about a woman who is faced with a dilemma after noticing something about a young man on a bus on her way back home.

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Painting

Saless Gallery is displaying a collection of paintings by Kaveh Afaq in an exhibition entitled "A Color for All Seasons".

The exhibit will be running until July 25 at the gallery that can be found at 148 Karim Khan Ave.

A collection of paintings by Siavash Riahi and Ana Naeimi is on display in an exhibition at Farda Gallery.

The exhibit named "Our Colorful Imaginations" will run until July 20 at the gallery located at 2 Araabi Alley, Hosseini St., off Karim Khan Ave.

An exhibition of paintings by Parsa Mostaqim is currently underway at Homa Gallery.

The exhibition titled "Asthenia" will continue until July 25 at the gallery located at No. 8, Fourth Alley, Sanai St., Karim Khan Ave.

Paintings by Mohammad Babakui are on display in an exhibition at Arte Gallery.

The exhibition named "Animal Farm" runs until July 23 at the gallery located on Molla Sadra St. near Vanak Square.

An exhibition of paintings by Sahel Esmaili, Mahtab Izad-Dust, Alireza Radef, Ahsan Rostami, Zahra Samadi, Sara Kalbasi and several other artists is underway at Hepta Gallery.

The exhibit titled "Observer of the World" runs until July 19 at the gallery located at 3 Nikushahr Dead End, Iranshahr St., Karim Khan Ave.

Sa Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Shahla Moazzezi.

The exhibit named "The Feature of Poetry" will run until July 23 at the gallery located at No. 134, 8th Bustan Alley, Pasdaran St.

Photo

Photos by Amin Talachian are currently on display in an exhibition at O Gallery.

The exhibit will be underway until July 25 at the gallery that can be found at 44 Khosro Alley, off Ostad Nejatollahi St.

Old cinemas find new life in Lebanon as cultural hubs

TRIPOLI, Lebanon (Reuters) — With paint peeling from the ceiling and crumbling plasterwork, renovating an abandoned picture house in the northern Lebanese town of Tripoli is more than a dream for Qassem Istanbouli.

The 31-year-old has reopened three such cinemas, two in his home city of Tyre in southern Lebanon, and another in Nabatiyeh, and has transformed them into hubs for film, art and theater.

"When I embarked on this journey, I felt I shared this dream with people in my city who are eager to have a cultural life restored," said Istanbouli, who shows films by directors such as Woody Allen, Pedro Almodovar, David Lynch and Lars Von Trier.

Istanbouli, who was born in Tyre and studied fine arts and directing at the Lebanese University, initially relied on a bank loan and donations from the public for his projects but now gets financial support from the Lebanese ministry of culture, a Dutch NGO and the United Nations force in Lebanon.

Vietnamese troupe to perform water-puppet shows in Iran

TEHRAN — A troupe from Vietnam is planning to stage performances of a water-puppet show, one of the most popular tourist attractions of the country, during a tour of Iran, the Persian service of IRNA reported on Thursday.

"Water-puppet has its roots in farmers' lives and represents the ancient civilization of the country," Dang Huu Phuoc, the second secretary of the Embassy of Vietnam, said in a press conference.

The puppet show that dates back to the 11th century is a traditional entertainment, which Vietnamese farmers put on after their rice harvest, he added.

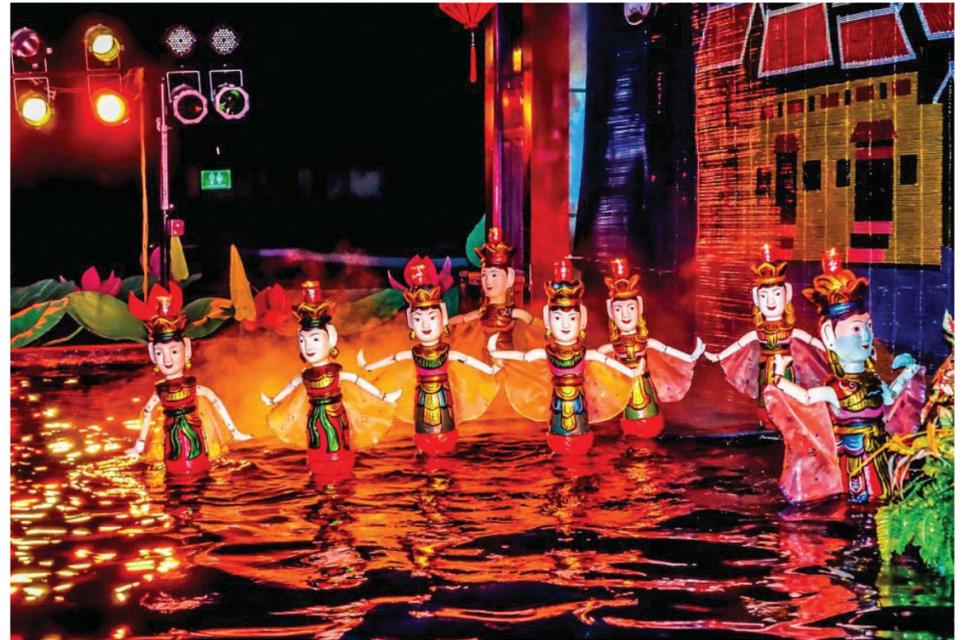
The puppets are made out of wood and then lacquered. The shows are performed in a waist-deep pool. Large bamboo poles support the puppets from under the water and is used to control them by the puppeteers who themselves are normally hidden behind a screen.

As a result, the puppets appear to be moving over the water. When the rice fields would flood, the villagers would entertain each other using this form of puppet play.

Dang said that the shows are essentially based on movement and music, so spectators do not need a translator.

The troupe will give three performances in Tehran on July 18, 20 and 30. The central Iranian city of Isfahan will host the group on July 21.

They will move to southern Iran to stage another performance in Shiraz. Performances have also been arranged in Kerman, Yazd and Kashan for July 25, 26 and 28 respectively.



A scene from a water-puppet show in Vietnam

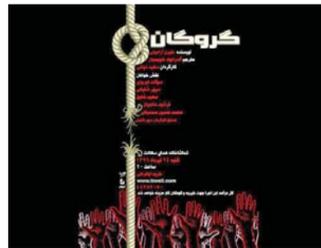
"The Hostage" to raise funds for child laborers in Tehran

TEHRAN — Saeid Dowlati will direct a reading performance of Christian Iranian playwright Khoren Aramouni's play "The Hostage" in Tehran on Saturday to raise funds for child laborers in the metropolis.

The performance will take place at the Homa-e Sadat Film institute, the organizers announced in a press release on Friday.

"The Hostage" focuses on a couple disillusioned by the country's governance to the point of despair and violence.

The play has been translated from Armenian into Persian by Andranik Khechumyan.



"A poster for 'The Hostage'"

It will be performed by a cast composed of Sogand Firuzi, Sepehr Shafiei, Saeid Shayeq, Farshid Hajian and Mohammad-Hossein Samadiani.

Photos of Iranian art elites on display at Nakhchivan exhibit

TEHRAN — An exhibition of 65 black and white photos of contemporary art elites and cultural personalities from Iran's Azarbaijan region is currently underway in Nakhchivan.

The showcase opened at the Bahruz Kangarli Exhibition Hall in the landlocked exclave of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Wednesday.

A number of Iranian and foreign diplomats, Azerbaijani officials and members of the Artists Union of Nakhchivan attended an opening ceremony.

The photos are from a collection by Pasha Hadian. Among the art elites and cultural personalities featured are composer Farhad Fakhreddini, filmmakers



Tahmineh Milani and Seifollah Samadian, actor Reza Naji and cultural scholar Jaleh Amuzgar. The exhibition will come to an end on Saturday.

Veteran filmmakers honored at Directors' Guild Celebration

TEHRAN — Veteran filmmakers Sirus Alvand, Abolhassan Davudi, Saman Moqaddam and Kiumars Purahmad were honored for their lifetime achievements during the Directors' Guild Celebration at Tehran's Mellat Cinema Complex on Wednesday.

The ceremony was attended by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Reza Salehi-Amiri and a large number of cineastes.

Alvand received his award from Masud Kimiai, director of the acclaimed movie "Qeysar".

In his acceptance speech Alvand said that if Kimiai had not made "Qeysar", he would probably not be a filmmaker today.

"Kimiai divided the cinema into before and after him, and I am happy he is present here and handed me this award," Alvand said.

"I have four precious days in my life: my birthday, my wedding day, the day I was honored beside great filmmakers and today," Alvand remarked.



From left, Abolhassan Davudi, Sirus Alvand, Narges Abyar, Kiumars Purahmad and Saman Moqaddam hold their awards at the 7th Directors' Guild Celebration at Tehran's Mellat Cinema Complex on July 12, 2017.

The organizers also celebrated Davudi's 62nd birthday after he received his award from his colleague, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad.

"Many times the honoring ceremonies

are held when people are retiring. When I was informed of the honoring ceremony, I thought I might be joining the retired group," he said in his acceptance speech.

"I have been busy with my new pro-

ject over the past month and I arrived at the ceremony in haste, but I didn't know friends would show such great kindness towards me," he added.

Moqaddam was the third honoree. Addressing the minister, Moqaddam expressed his hope that no film would face a ban.

Purahmad, the last filmmaker to receive his award from Kianush Ayyari, also asked the cultural officials to help stop the producers from spending huge sums of money on worthless superstars.

Due to their high rates of pay, Iranian cinema has been paralyzed, he said.

The guild also handed several awards to other filmmakers besides its annual awards.

Narges Abyar, the director of the award-winning drama "Track 143", received an award as a promising filmmaker at the celebration.

"I think Abyar has proved that she is a clever filmmaker with a bright future," the director of the guild, Mohammad Bozorgnia, said.

"Westworld", "SNL" lead 2017 Emmy list packed with new TV shows

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Sci-fi drama "Westworld" and satirical sketch show "Saturday Night Live" led Emmy award nominations on Thursday with 22 apiece in a list stuffed with new contenders that reflected a booming era for television.

With reigning Emmy champ "Game of Thrones" ineligible this year for the highest honors in television after it moved its seventh season to this summer, the door opened to five new shows vying for the top prize of best drama series.

The crowded race includes British royal series "The Crown" and supernatural mystery "Stranger Things", both on Netflix; Hulu's breakout dystopian women's series "The Handmaid's Tale" starring best actress nominee Elisabeth Moss; and NBC's emotional family drama "This Is Us."

Peter Morgan, creator of "The Crown", said he was "chuffed, thrilled, proud, honored!" at the show's 13 nominations.

Television Academy Chairman Hayma Washington noted the "explosive growth" in television, where more than 400 scripted shows vie for attention across streaming, cable and broadcast networks.

"The creativity and excellence in presenting great storytelling and characters across a multitude of ever-expanding entertainment platforms is staggering," Washington said in a statement.

The nomination for "This Is Us", which also received



A poster for "Saturday Night Live" (SNL)

acting nods for stars Milo Ventimiglia, Sterling K. Brown and Chrissy Metz, make the show the first from one of the four leading U.S. broadcast networks to enter the Emmy drama series contest since CBS's "The Good Wife" in 2011.

"For our show to even be in a general conversation with these other stellar programs - it's beyond our wildest dreams," said Dan Fogelman, creator of "This Is Us".

Among networks, HBO again had the highest overall tally, with 111 nods, mostly because of multiple nominations for crime drama "The Night Of" and female-driven murder mystery "Big Little Lies".

"When we started on this journey, we never thought the series would connect on such a big way world-

wide," said "Big Little Lies" star Nicole Kidman, who was among four actresses on the limited series to get Emmy nominations.

Perennial Emmy favorite "Saturday Night Live", which has been on a ratings roll with its parodies of U.S. President Donald Trump and key figures in his administration, earned nods for Alec Baldwin, Melissa McCarthy, Kate McKinnon, Leslie Jones and Vanessa Bayer as well as a best variety sketch series nomination.

Talk show hosts Stephen Colbert, Samantha Bee and John Oliver, who also have mercilessly skewered Trump and his policies, won nominations in the variety show category.

The comedy series race features more familiar faces, with two-time Emmy-winning political satire "Veep" nominated again. Millennial hip-hop show "Atlanta", family racial comedy "black-ish", "Modern Family", "Master of None", "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt" and tech comedy "Silicon Valley" round out the competition.

First-time Emmy nominees included Oscar-winning actor Robert De Niro for his role as disgraced financier Bernard Madoff in "The Wizard of Lies", 13-year-old newcomer Millie Bobby Brown for "Stranger Things" and Britain's Claire Foy for her portrayal of a young Queen Elizabeth II in "The Crown".

The Emmy awards will be presented at a ceremony hosted by Stephen Colbert in Los Angeles on Sept. 17.