



**Dairy exports  
up 70% in Q1**

**4**



**Successful healthcare  
reform plan justifies  
the costs: minister**

**12**



**Iran's Pakbaz wins gold  
at World Para Athletics  
Championships**

**15**



**Iran to present "Colorful  
Dream of Silk Road"  
at Beijing book fair**

**16**

# U.S. acting with ill intention



See page 2

## Iran, Iraq insist alliance in terror fight

By Negar Asadi

**TEHRAN** — In a press release on Saturday Iran's Defense Ministry announced that Iran and Iraq are allies in the fight against terrorism.

The announcement followed after Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehqan and his Iraqi counterpart Erfan al-Hiyali held talks in Tehran on Saturday afternoon.

Al-Hiyali was visiting Iran 20 days after the Iraqi forces succeeded to wrest control of the city of Mosul which had been captured by Daesh terrorists in early 2014.

On July 3 Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi formally announced the

liberation of Mosul.

**■ Divisive moves not acceptable**

Dehqan said Iran considers security in Iraq as its own and will continue supporting the Iraqi government and people in their endeavor to establish peace and security.

Iran's defense chief also said Iraq's integrity will guarantee the interests of all Iraqi ethnic groups.

"Divisive moves in Iraq are not acceptable for the Islamic Republic of Iran," Dehqan said in an open reference to a plan by the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to hold an independence referendum in September. **→2**

## No banking hurdles facing Total deal: Zanganeh

ECONOMY

**TEHRAN** — Total desk and other consortium members will not be facing any banking problems in their gas deal recently signed with Iran, Oil Minister Bijan Namdar Zanganeh told IRNA on Saturday.

"Their payments to the contractors won't even enter Iran's financial system. So, how could they face any problems?" the minister said.

Despite the enforcement of the nuclear deal known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and world powers, some sanctions-related problems created by west-imposed sanctions are still in place and foreign banks

are cautious about cooperating with Iran.

Earlier this month, Iran signed a deal with Total and China's state-owned National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) for development of phase 11 of its South Pars gas field.

The \$4.879-billion deal was signed by National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), as the contractor of project, and a consortium of companies comprising Total, CNPC and Iran's Petropars.

The project will have a production capacity of about 56 million cubic meters per day of gas or 400,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day including condensate.

## Iran would withdraw from nuclear deal only if U.S. does it first: ex-FM

POLITICS

**TEHRAN** — Kamal desk Kharrazi, the head of Iran's Strategic Council on Foreign Relations and a foreign policy adviser to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has said that Tehran would only walk away from the nuclear deal if the U.S. administration withdrew first.

In an interview with France 24 on Friday, Kharrazi said the new U.S. sanctions levied on Iranian individuals and entities this week were "violations" of the 2015 nuclear agreement in both the "letter" and the "spirit" of the deal.

However, he emphasized that Tehran remained committed to the accord unless the U.S. walked away from the deal first.

The deal, officially titled the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was reached after hard diplomatic work by the Islamic Republic and the P5+1 group of countries, comprising the U.S., the UK, France, Russia, China, and Germany.

Under the accord, all nuclear-related sanctions on Iran were terminated, and Iran in return agreed to apply certain limits to its nuclear program and provide enhanced access to international monitors to its nuclear facilities.

Kharrazi, who was the foreign minister of Iran between 1997 to 2005, said putting pressure on international banks to not cooperate with Iran was another symbol of violation of the JCPOA.

Answering a question on Iran's missile program and its link to Washington's pressure on the country, he said, "It's our right to develop our missiles for defense purposes."

## Health ministry fully covers hemophilia, thalassemia treatment costs

SOCIETY

**TEHRAN** — All the treatment costs of around 29,000 hemophilia and thalassemia patients in Iran are fully covered by the government, a health ministry official has said.

An estimated 10,000 people with hemophilia and 19,000 with thalassemia live in Iran, and they receive support from the government, IRNA quoted Marzieh Hantooshzadeh as saying on Saturday.

While these patients with blood disorder have covered benefits, for some services they

will have a copay, she said.

"Though excluded services and patients' coinsurance are all picked up by the Ministry of Health."

As for their medicine, Hantooshzadeh explained, domestically-produced medicine are free of charge for the patients, while foreign-sourced pharmaceuticals are not covered by the insurance 100 percent.

Ever since 1997, Iran has begun a screening measure for thalassemia, giving doctors an upper hand over the disease. As a result,

last year only 180 new patients were found with that blood disorder. The number for new hemophilia patients reaches 12 each year.

Sistan and Baluchestan Province has the highest number in the blood diseases as the locals tend to get married in tribal form and without proper premarital blood screening tests.

Thalassemia is an inherited blood disorder in which the body makes an abnormal form of hemoglobin which causes severe anemia and in hemophilia the body's ability to make blood clots impairs.

## Stop playing games with the Iranian nuclear deal: LA Times

The Trump administration last week certified that Iran is complying with the international agreement placing limits on its nuclear program — but for a while it looked as if the certification wouldn't happen, the Los Angeles Times said in an editorial published on July 22.

Administration officials had distributed talking points explaining the decision and scheduled a conference call for reporters. But then President Trump balked at signing off on the recommendation of key advisors, including Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson, Secretary of Defense James Mattis and national Security Advisor H. R. McMaster.

Eventually Trump agreed to the certification, after being presented with a plan for tougher measures against Iran in other areas. The next day the Treasury Department

imposed financial sanctions on 18 additional people and entities for supporting Iran's armed services and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

But this wasn't a case of all's well that ends well. Although Trump hasn't followed through with a campaign promise to dismantle the Iranian nuclear agreement, he clearly remains deeply suspicious of the deal and even though Iran generally has complied with its terms.

By law the president must declare every 90 days whether Iran has met four conditions related to the 2015 agreement it reached with the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, Germany and the European Union. The conditions are that Iran is implementing the agreement; that it is not in "material breach" of its terms; and

that sanctions relief is appropriate.

The Trump administration has repeatedly certified that Iran has satisfied these conditions, but the cliffhanger circumstances surrounding last week's certification leave doubt about the future. On Friday, Foreign Policy magazine ominously reported that Trump this week assigned White House staffers, rather than the State Department, to make the potential case for withholding certification of Iran at the next 90-day review of the nuclear deal.

The uncertainty is bad for two reasons: It creates divisions with U.S. allies, which overwhelmingly support the nuclear agreement, and it could tempt Iran to abrogate the agreement. After all, the deal has already granted Iran much of the relief it sought from economic sanctions. **→13**

## Syria demands reparation from U.S., allies for destroying Syria infrastructure

In letters to the United Nations, Syria has demanded compensation from the United States and its "illegitimate coalition" allies for bombing civilian targets and destroying the country's infrastructure, calling for an immediate halt to such strikes.

Syria's permanent mission at the United Nations made the comments in two letters addressed to the world body's secretary-general and the UN Security Council's president, RT reported on Friday.

The Damascus government "insists that these attacks must come to an end, and that the members of this illegitimate coalition must bear the political and legal responsibility for the destruction of infrastructure in the Syrian Arab Republic, including responsibility for compensation," said the letters.

The letters also underlined that the ongoing U.S.-led airstrikes — purportedly aimed at destroying the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorists — "continue to claim the lives of hundreds of innocent Syrian civilians."

Such bombings have led to a "near-total destruction" of homes and vital infrastructure, including the "utter destruction" of oil and gas facilities, wrote the letters.

According to the report, in the letters — which were devised last week — Damascus once again insisted on the illegitimacy of the U.S.-led air campaign in Syria, emphasizing that it is being carried out in violation of international law as it lacks any form of authorization from the Syrian government.

Backing its assertions, Damascus further referred to two recent cases, where the coalition's war planes destroyed Syrian oil and gas facilities.

It pointed to the May 27 bombardment of Hasu Albu Awf village in Hasakah Province by the U.S.-led jets, saying the assaults "completely" destroyed many homes and killed at least eight civilians, "most of them children." **→13**



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## Living with nature

A shepherd leads his herd of sheep across the lower slopes of the Mount Sabalan in Ardabil Province, northwestern Iran, on July 20, 2017.

The greenish land is a heaven for animal breeding. It is home to tens of villages, tribes, and interesting stopovers for avid visitors as well.

The weather is pleasantly cool in summer but can turn somewhat nasty by year's end. While snow is possible from November, white winters are becoming shorter.



**INVITATION TO  
INTERNATIONAL TENDER**

**No.: 371974**

**KHOUZESTAN STEEL COMPANY  
INTENDS TO PURCHASE 20,000  
MT METALLURGICAL COKE**

**See page 12**



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran: We hope for Saudi cooperation on Hajj

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A Foreign Ministry official said on Saturday that Tehran hopes the Saudi Arabian government continues to cooperate on Hajj.

"We have not received any negative response so far... Cooperation within the Hajj framework is progressing positively," Hassan Qashqavi, deputy foreign minister for consular affairs, said in response to a question on how cooperative Riyadh appears on Hajj this year.

He added that Iran's consular staff will be present in Mecca, Medina, and Jeddah to offer service to Iranian pilgrims.



Expediency Council's new members to be named in weeks: secretary

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The new members of the Expediency Council will be named in the calendar month of Mordad (July 22 to August 22), the council's secretary announced on Friday.

Speaking with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, Mohsen Rezaee said the to-be members will receive their appointment letters at the same time as the head and other senior-ranking officials of the council will be introduced.

He added two cases of disagreement between Majlis and Guardian Council will be immediately put on agenda.



Iranian warships head to Russia for military games

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Two Iranian naval vessels set sail for Russia to participate in military competitions, Tasnim reported on Saturday.

The two vessels, a Peykan and a Joshan frigate, are going to make a port call at Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, as part of their itinerary before reaching Russia.

Admiral Ahmad Reza Baqeri, commander of the Navy's Caspian flotilla, said that the overseas mission would last 25 days.



Qalibaf calls for 'neo-principlism'

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The outgoing Tehran Mayor Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf has called on his fellow principlists to push for what he has called "neo-principlism".

"A serious change in the workings of the principlist current is one of the demands of the day," Qalibaf, who withdrew presidential candidacy in favor of Ebrahim Raisi in the May 19 presidential election, said in an announcement on Saturday.

"Move on the path to neo-principlism should start as soon as possible," Nasim quoted the mayor as saying.

However, Qalibaf said, the new movement should aim at preserving the revolutionary values of the Islamic Republic.



Iran, Russia set to sign deal for joint production of helicopter

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The chairman of Iran Aviation Industry Organization has announced that Tehran and Moscow are due to sign a contract to jointly design and manufacture helicopters.

"We have not yet started the phase of implementation for joint designing, yet the grounds have been paved and its contract is being finalized and (will be) inked (soon)," Amir Karim Bani Tarafi told Fars news agency on Saturday on the sidelines of MAKS-2017 air show in Moscow.



Iran seizes trespassing Saudi fishing boat in Persian Gulf

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — The IRGC Navy on Friday seized a Saudi fishing boat after it trespassed on Iran's territorial waters in the Persian Gulf, an official at the fisheries organization of Bushehr Province said on Saturday.

Ardeshir Yarahmadi said the Saudi vessel, with five Indians on board, was seized near the Farsi port in the waters off the southern province of Bushehr, Press TV reported.

# Iran, Iraq insist alliance in terror fight

**1 → International consensus needed to uproot terrorism**

Iran's defense minister also pointed to efforts being made by the U.S., the Zionist regime of Israel and their regional allies to destabilize the region, saying an international consensus is essential to eradicate terrorism.

Dehqan also described liberation of Mosul as a "great national achievement" for Iraq.

For his part, al-Hiyali praised Iran's support for Iraq in fighting terrorism.

He also highlighted the importance of expanding military cooperation between the two countries.

Al-Hiyali also lauded amity between the Iraqi people and army, saying this sense of empathy has empowered the Iraqi Army in countering the threats.

Iran provided advisory help to the Iraqi security forces in their three years of war against Daesh militants in Iraq who were mainly composed of terrorists from different countries as well as former Baathist officers loyal to Saddam Hussein.

In their first months of capturing certain Iraqi cities and villages Daesh militants committed despicable crimes against people.



Iranian Defense Minister Hossein Dehqan welcomes his Iraqi counterpart Erfan al-Hiyali.

## Iran: U.S. statement on jailed citizens is 'unacceptable' and 'meddlesome'

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — Iran on Saturday rejected a White House statement on American citizens jailed in Iran, branding it as "unacceptable and meddlesome".

"As always, the White House's statements are an instance of interference in Iran's internal affairs, and are unacceptable and rejected," Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said.

"According to judicial officials, the individuals referred to in the White House's statement are under allegations under Iran's law which needs to be investigated," Qassemi added.

The top Iranian diplomat also urged Washington to "immediately release" Iranian nationals detained in the U.S., one of whom had already died.

He did not elaborate more.

In a statement on Friday, U.S. President Donald Trump and his administration warned Iran to release and return "unjustly detained" American citizens, otherwise it should brace itself for "new and serious consequences".

"President Trump is prepared to impose new and serious consequences on Iran unless all unjustly imprisoned American citizens are released and returned," the statement said, adding that administration was "redoubling efforts to bring back all Americans unjustly detained abroad."

The statement capped a week of rhetoric against Tehran. On Tuesday, Washington slapped new economic sanctions against Iran over its ballistic missile program, claiming

Tehran's "malign activities" in the Middle East undercut any "positive contributions" coming from the 2015 nuclear accord between Iran and six world powers.

The statement mentioned Robert Levinson, Xiyue Wang and Siamak Namazi and his father Baqer.

Levinson, 68, if still alive, disappeared in 2007 from Iran's Kish Island in 2007. In 2013, a years-long investigation by the Associated Press alleged that Robinson had been engaged in an extraordinarily unusual intelligence operation on Iranian officials' corruption initiated by three unofficial CIA analysts.

The report countered a statement by the Obama administration in 2013 who rejected Levinson was in Iran on behalf of any government body, saying he went missing on "a business trip".

The last time Levinson was seen alive was in a 2010 hostage video, though it remains unclear exactly who was holding him. Iran has denied any knowledge of his whereabouts, but Obama suggested in his announcement of the prisoner swap that Iran had "agreed to deepen our coordination as we work to locate Robert Levinson."

The U.S. government has a \$5 million reward for clues leading to Robinson's safe return.

In his presidential campaign, Trump pledged to make Levinson's case a priority.

In his remarks, Qassemi said Iran has no "new clue" of what happened to Robinson after had left Iran.

## U.S. acting with ill intention

### Iran's Araqchi says U.S. seeking to sabotage nuclear deal

**POLITICS** **TEHRAN** — A top Iranian diplomat said on Friday that the new U.S. sanctions against Iran violate the nuclear deal, accusing the Trump administration of "acting with ill intention" to "sabotage" the UN-endorsed agreement.

Abbas Araqchi was in Vienna on Friday to participate in the regular meeting of the joint commission of the nuclear deal. The joint commission is tasked to monitor the implementation of the agreement.

"We talked in detail about the sanctions and the instances that the Americans had delayed in fulfilling their commitments, the instances where they violated the deal," Aljazeera quoted Araqchi as telling reporters.

The Trump administration confirmed on Tuesday that Iran had met its obligations under the deal; however, it imposed new sanctions against Iran over its missile program.

Araqchi, the deputy foreign minister for legal and international affairs, added, "We showed one by one the instances where the American side in the last year

and a half acted without good will and even acted with ill intention."

He also said that the U.S. was "trying to sabotage the situation, to threaten or scare off foreign companies to invest in Iran".

The nuclear deal, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), was signed by Iran and the U.S., Britain, France, China, Russia Germany, and the European Union on July 14, 2015. It went into effect on January 16 2016.

Under the deal Iran agreed to limit its nuclear work in return for termination of all nuclear-related economic and financial sanctions against the country.

However, the new U.S. administration and Republican-controlled Congress have taken steps to impose new sanctions against Iran which are in contrast to the spirit of the deal.

Some Iranian officials, including Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, have said the U.S. sanctions move even violate letter of the agreement.

**All parties confirm adherence to JCPOA**

Representatives from all sides of the nuclear deal gathered in Vienna to address Iran's complaints about U.S. breach of its obligations under the JCPOA.

In a statement issued by Helga Schmid, the EU's deputy political director, all parties to the nuclear deal confirmed adherence to the JCPOA.

"Noting the significance of the second anniversary of the JCPOA all participants confirmed their continued adherence to JCPOA commitments and stressed the need to ensure its full and effective implementation in a constructive atmosphere," read the statement, which was published by the EU website.

It added, "They also reviewed the status of the sanctions-lifting during which the Chair underlined the need to implement the JCPOA in good faith and in all its provisions. Information was shared confirming that, despite existing challenges, there has been a consistent trend of economic engagement as reflected by the latest announcements of major trade and investment deals."

## Iran inaugurates production line of air defense missile

**Mohammad Homaeifar**

**TEHRAN** — On Saturday Iran inaugurated the production line for a new version of an air defense missile.

The missile, dubbed Sayyad-3, is an upgrade to previous versions of the missile. Sayyad means "hunter" in Persian language.

The range of Sayyad-3 missile is 120 kilometers (some 75 miles) and is capable of hitting targets at altitudes of up to 27 kilometers (17 miles).

Defense Minister Hossein Dehqan and commander of the Army's Khatam al-Anbiya Air Defense Base Farzad Esmaili participated in the inauguration ceremony.

Addressing the ceremony, Esmaili said the missile is "a completely indigenous technology."

The missile "joins the country's integrated air defense system today," Esmaili stated.

Speaking at the ceremony, Dehqan also said the missile has been designed to counter aerial threats within medium and long ranges.

"Sayyad 3 missile has been designed based on the world's newest technologies," he remarked.

The missile can engage different types

of threats such as "radar evasive fighter planes, unmanned aerial vehicles, cruise missiles, helicopters, as well as various types of modern aircraft of high maneuvering capabilities and speed," the minister explained.

The defense minister further said Sayyad 3 missile had been fitted with combined maneuvering capability, advanced surveillance apparatuses, infrared capability, and state-of-the-art features against electronic warfare tactics.

Iran which came under a cruel invasion by the Saddam Hussein regime in the 1980s began a military self-suffi-



ciency program in 1992 and now it produces mortars to missiles and tanks to submarines.

## EU: It is necessary to ensure 'full and effective implementation' of JCPOA

Following a meeting of the nuclear deal joint commission in Vienna on Friday the European Union issued a statement insisting on the need to ensure the "full and effective implementation" of the nuclear agreement, formally called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

**Following is the text of the statement:**

A meeting of the Joint Commission of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) took place on 21 July 2017 in Vienna. This was the 6th meeting of the Joint Commission since JCPOA

Implementation Day. Under the terms of the JCPOA, the Joint Commission is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the nuclear deal.

The Joint Commission was chaired, on behalf of EU High Representative Mogherini, by EEAS Secretary General Helga Schmid and was attended by the E3+3 (China, France, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom, United States) and Iran at the level of Political Directors/Deputy Foreign Ministers.

The meeting provided the opportunity to address the implementation of the

JCPOA with regard to nuclear and sanctions related commitments. The parties welcomed the latest report from the IAEA verifying Iran's continued adherence to its nuclear-related commitments and the Chair underlined the need for continued compliance. They also discussed the nuclear aspects of the deal, including positive developments on Arak, ongoing and future civil nuclear cooperation and procurement-related matters.

They also reviewed the status of the sanctions-lifting during which the Chair underlined the need to implement the

JCPOA in good faith and in all its provisions. Information was shared confirming that, despite existing challenges, there has been a consistent trend of economic engagement as reflected by the latest announcements of major trade and investment deals.

Noting the significance of the second anniversary of the JCPOA all participants confirmed their continued adherence to JCPOA commitments and stressed the need to ensure its full and effective implementation in a constructive atmosphere.



# Tillerson calls on Saudi bloc to lift blockade on Qatar

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson urged the House of Saud regime and its allies to lift their blockade of Qatar as a sign of good faith following what he called "aggressive" efforts by Doha to address their concerns.

Tillerson made the comments alongside visiting Omani Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah at the State Department amid signs that the Qatar crisis may be easing. The House of Saud regime, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain and Egypt began imposing a blockade on gas-rich Qatar in early June.

"I hope the four countries will consider as a sign of good faith lifting this land blockade, which is really having the most ... negative effects on the Qatari people," Tillerson said. "That would be ... a good sign if the four countries would do that. And I'm hopeful they'll consider that seriously."

Oman's Leader, Sultan Qaboos bin Said, has a keen interest in seeing the dispute between rival Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (PGCC) members peacefully resolved as his country braces for a possible leadership transition. In power since 1970, the childless 76-year-old has suffered from colon cancer for several years.

Tillerson said he'd seen "positive movement" in recent days.

"The Qataris have continued to move forward ... to address many of the terrorism, terror financing, counterterrorism concerns that people have, and they have been very aggressive in implementing that agreement," he said.

A top UAE official, in one of the first conciliatory messages since the crisis erupted in June, also praised Qatari actions today. In a tweet, UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Anwar Gargash praised Qatar for showing an interest in



Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, right, shakes hands with Oman's Foreign Minister Yusuf bin Alawi bin Abdullah on Friday at the State Department in Washington.

taking action against dozens of people with alleged Qatari links that the UAE and its allies have designated as terrorists.

"The Qatari decree to amend the anti-terrorism law is a positive step to deal seriously with the 59 terrorists," Gargash tweeted.

Oman's top diplomat did not speak to the press at the brief encounter. But Oman — a benefactor of a U.S. security guarantee — wants to see the PGCC/ Qatar dispute resolved equitably, Persian Gulf experts said.

Qaboos "recently appointed somebody seen as a likely successor to take over," Sigurd Neubauer, with the Persian Gulf Arab States Institute in Washington, told Al-Monitor. "My point is that Oman looks at how the Qataris are being treated. They have an impending succession coming. Unless this thing with Qatar is nipped in the bud, Oman [fears it] could be next."

"The Saudis have always tried to coerce Oman to take [Riyadh's] lead, to submit to its position," Neubauer said. "It has

a chilling effect on Oman."

The Omani diplomat was also due to hold meetings at the White House on July 21st with Trump's envoy for international negotiations Jason Greenblatt on possible confidence-building steps to boost Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, Neubauer said. Oman hosts an international center for clean water research, the Middle East Desalination Research Center, which the U.S. government has seen as a potential vehicle for advancing Israeli-Arab cooperation. (Source: Al Monitor)

## Hezbollah, Syria liberate several border areas from terrorists in joint offensive

Fighters from Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement, backed by Syrian warplanes, have managed to liberate several border areas between the two countries from the clutches of the al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra/Jabhat Fateh al-Sham) Takfiri terrorist group, in an ongoing joint counter-terrorism operation.

Hezbollah fighters managed to liberate Sahl al-Raweh, Sahr al-Haweh, Wadi Dakik, Taftanaz and Wadi Zaarour Baren areas in the Juroud Arsal region on the outskirts of the Lebanese town of Arsal on Friday.

In the western Qalamoun Mountains in Syria, Hezbollah fighters also recaptured al-Burkan hill and al-Koreh Awwal, Zailil al-Haj and Harf al-Sabah areas from terrorists, with the aid of heavy artillery fire.

The whole region straddles the border between the two countries and the joint operation to liberate its militant-areas began in the early hours of Friday. According to the Lebanese resistance movement and the Syrian army, the offensive will continue until the entire region in cleansed from the presence of Takfiri terrorists.

At least 17 terrorists were killed in the operation, in which

five Hezbollah fighters also lost their lives.

Lebanese army troops have not yet taken part in the offensive despite being deployed around Arsal town and some nearby areas. Lebanese Prime Minister Saad al-Hariri had earlier said the army would participate in the liberation operation.

On Saturday, which marks the second day of the operation, Hezbollah said it liberated Wadi al-Khalil and adjacent hills in the Arsal region.

The Arsal area was hardly hit by the spillover of the Syria crisis in 2014, when militants managed to overrun the town for a brief period. Around 45,000 Syrian refugees, registered with the United Nations, live in the town, but more are believed to be living in camps in the Juroud area, although their numbers have not been confirmed.

Lebanon has often seen the infiltration of Takfiri elements from neighboring Syria into its territory, where they target the civilian population or security forces with bombings.

Assisting army forces, Hezbollah resistance fighters have so far fended off several attacks by the Jabhat Fateh

al-Sham and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) Takfiri terrorist groups. Hezbollah says its mission in Syria is aimed at preventing the spillover of the crisis into Lebanon.

### ■ Syria pounds ISIL in east Raqqah

In a separate counter-terrorism operation on Syrian soil, army fighter jets on Saturday bombed ISIL positions east of Raqqah City, the state television reported, quoting a military source.

The strikes in the town of Maadan and village of Bir al-Sabkhwai, near the provincial boundary with Dayr al-Zawr, "destroyed several bases and vehicles" belonging to the Takfiri terrorist group.

The Syrian army, backed by Russian air cover, is engaged in anti-ISIL operations in Raqqah's western countryside side, where it has made several gains against the terrorist group.

The eastern countryside of Raqqah, which was hit by Syrian fighter jets, has been the scene of a separate offensive by the United States-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an alliance dominated by Kurdish fighters. (Source: Press TV)

## Al-Aqsa: UN slams Israel killings of young Palestinians

The United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he "deeply deplores" the killings of three Palestinians - one of whom was shot by a settler - as anger boiled over increased Israeli restrictions at al-Quds (Jerusalem) al-Aqsa compound.

Guterres condemned the killings and called for an investigation early on Saturday, hours after mass protests by Palestinians around the holy site turned deadly.

He urged Israeli and Palestinian leaders to refrain from actions that could further escalate the volatile situation in al-Quds (Jerusalem) Old City, saying that religious sites should be spaces for reflection, not violence.

Citing Guterres, UN deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said the organization understands "legitimate security concerns, but on the other hand it is important that the status quo at the site be retained".

Israeli security forces violently clamped down on Friday's demonstrations, firing live ammunition, tear gas and rubber-coated bullets at crowds of Palestinians protesting against the new measures, which include the barring of Muslim men under the age of 50 from the holy site and the installation of metal detectors.

Israel tightened its grip on the compound on July 14 after two Israeli security officers were killed in an alleged attack by three Palestinians, who were themselves killed by Israeli police following the violence.

### ■ Deaths and arrests

In the first fatal incident a week later on Friday, an Israeli settler killed 18-year-old Muhammad Mahmoud Sharaf in the Ras al-Amud neighborhood in occupied East al-Quds.

A second Palestinian, 20-year-old Muhammad Hasan Abu Ghanam, was killed by



live fire during the demonstrations in al-Quds.

And Israeli forces killed a third victim, 17-year-old Muhammad Mahmoud Khalaf, in clashes in the West Bank.

According to the Red Crescent, there were 450 wounded by Israeli forces during the protests in Jerusalem and the West Bank, with at least 215 injuries caused by tear gas inhalation.

Police say a Palestinian attacker also killed three Israelis at a West Bank settlement.

The Palestinian Prisoners Club said that at least 21 Palestinians were arrested at Friday's protests in the West Bank, including at least 10 from al-Quds (Jerusalem).

Israeli media reported that four Israeli police officers were injured during the protests after Palestinians threw rocks and flares at them.

Palestinians view the Israeli measures at al-Aqsa as collective punishment for the

July 14 incident and an infringement on the status quo, which gives Muslims religious control over the compound and Jews the right to visit, but not pray there.

### ■ Excessive use of force

Several countries have condemned Israel's increased control, including Turkey, Egypt, Qatar, the House of Saud regime and Lebanon.

In a statement released on Friday night, Egypt's foreign ministry called upon the Israeli government to be rational and not "let the situation get into a dangerous swamp" that endangers attempts to revive peace talks.

The statement condemned Israel for the civilian deaths and what it described as an "excessive use of force".

Egypt warned that Israel was in danger of "fueling tension among the Palestinian people and the entire Muslim nation" by restricting religious freedom.

Qatar's Emir Tamim bin Hamad, while

making a rare public address over the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council crisis, called for unity.

"I cannot end this speech without expressing solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people, especially our people in al-Quds [Jerusalem], and denouncing the closure of the al-Aqsa Mosque," he said.

"[I hope] that what is happening in al-Quds [can] be an incentive for unity and solidarity instead of division."

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas announced the suspension of all contact with Israel "until it cancels its measures at al-Aqsa Mosque and preserves the status quo".

### ■ Israel sends more troops to West Bank amid tensions

Meantime, Tel Aviv deploys more troops to the occupied West Bank as tensions escalate between Israelis and Palestinians over the regime's imposition of restrictive measures on the entry of worshipers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in al-Quds.

The Israeli military made the announcement on Saturday, saying the decision had come after a meeting of military officials in the wake of an alleged stabbing attack a day earlier.

It declined to elaborate on the matter but said the troops were in addition to hundreds of forces already deployed to the holy site.

Three Israeli settlers were also killed in a reported stabbing attack in Neve Tzuf settlement northwest of the city of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank on Friday night.

The report came hours after at least four Palestinian people lost their lives during clashes in the occupied Palestinian lands. (Source: agencies)

## U.S.-led coalition refusing to hit al-Nusra terrorists in Syria: Russia

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov says the United States-led coalition operating in Syria and Iraq has been refusing to hit the al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra/Jabhat Fateh al-Sham) terrorist group.

"From the very beginning, the United States coalition, while fighting Daesh Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/ISIL) more or less actively (sometimes more, sometimes less), has been sparing Jabhat al-Nusra. Obviously, all facts indicate in this direction," Lavrov said in an interview with the NBC News broadcaster on Friday.

Al-Nusra Front, long acting as an affiliate of the al-Qaeda terrorist group, has recently renamed itself and claimed to have broken ranks with it.

In his interview, Lavrov expressed hope that the creation of de-escalation zones in Syria would contribute to an effective fight against al-Nusra.

The decision to establish the zones was made during peace talks between the Syrian warring parties organized by guarantor states Iran, Russia, and Turkey in the Kazakh capital of Astana in early May.

"We hope very much that these de-escalation areas agreement would resolve the problem" of fighting al-Nusra Front terrorists, Lavrov said.

He said that an agreement between Russia and the administration of former U.S. President Barack Obama on the coordination of efforts to counter terrorism had been derailed due to Washington's unwillingness to fight al-Nusra Front terrorists.



Lavrov said the key impediment to reaching a settlement in Syria was the terrorist threat in the country.

"We tried to achieve this goal by having a cessation of hostilities between the government and those who fight on the part of the patriotic opposition, so that all forces can be released free to fight terrorists," he said.

The parties to the Astana peace process have been negotiating to work out the details of the agreement on the de-escalation zones.

A next round of the talks will be held in late August.

Syria has been grappling with militancy since March 2011.

(Source: RT)

## CIA did not end Syria rebel support 'to appease Russia'

The United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) did not end its program to support rebels fighting Syrian government of President Bashar al-Assad in a bid to appease Russia, the head of the U.S. military's special operations said.

General Tony Thomas confirmed that the CIA is shutting down four-year-old operation, which armed and trained rebels, but denied the move was aimed at improving U.S. relations with Assad's ally Russia - a claim made by the Washington Post which first reported the suspension.

It was a "tough, tough decision" but "absolutely not a sop to the Russians," Thomas said at a forum in Aspen, Colorado.

"It was, I think, based on an assessment of the nature of the program, what we're trying to accomplish, the viability of it going forward," he said on Friday.

The chairman of the Russian upper house of parliament's international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, had welcomed the "long-awaited, excellent" news that the U.S. was ending the program.

"This change of affairs will, without any doubt, create additional opportunities for Russian-American collaboration in anti-terrorism in the country," Kosachev said on his Facebook page, earlier this week.

The CIA declined to comment on Thomas' comments.

Former U.S. President Barack Obama approved the rebel aid program in 2013 as various opposition groups sought external support in a foreign instigated war against the Syrian government.

Thousands of Syrian anti-government fighters were trained and armed.

But U.S. commitment remained ambiguous amid doubts in some quarters that the rebels could actually manage to depose Assad, and as attention turned to the rising power of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist group.

Support for the program further eroded last year after the rebels lost the areas they held in the Syrian city of Aleppo, under a Russian-backed government assault.

The United States President Donald Trump has said the main U.S. focus in Syria should be to eliminate ISIL, rather than opposing the Assad government.

U.S. officials said this week that some of the anti-Assad forces could be absorbed into U.S. military-supported groups fighting ISIL.

Meanwhile, a Syrian military source said Syrian warplanes carried out air strikes against ISIL in an area of countryside east of Raqqah near the provincial boundary with Deir al-Zor. Syrian state TV reported that the attacks "destroyed several bases and vehicles" belonging to the group.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said it was the first time in several weeks that the Syrian military had launched an attack in that area, which is close to where U.S.-backed anti-ISIL forces are operating. (Source: Al Jazeera)



NEWS IN BRIEF



**Indonesia to host Iranian nanotechnology exhibit**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Indonesia is going to be d e s k hosting an exhibition of Iranian nano-technology-based products in the Iranian sixth calendar month of Shahrivar (August 23- September 22), Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) of Iran reported.

Iranian companies active in the field of nanotechnology are going to showcase their latest products in this exhibition.

A meeting is also scheduled between Iranian and Indonesian entrepreneurs and businessmen to explore cooperation opportunities.



**Iran Feed Industry Association to dispatch delegation to Russia in early Aug.**

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Iran Feed Industry Association (IFIA) plans to dispatch a trade delegation to Russia from August 1 to 9 aiming for familiarity with the country's feed industry and technology.

As Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) portal reported, the delegation comprising representatives of companies and businessmen active in this industry will be visiting Saint Petersburg and Moscow to meet with their Russian counterparts and explore new ideas and technology in this area.

U.S. weighs financial sanctions to hit Venezuela's oil revenue

The United States is considering financial sanctions on Venezuela that would halt dollar payments for the country's oil, according to a senior White House official and an adviser with direct knowledge of the discussions.

The move could severely restrict the OPEC nation's crude exports and starve its socialist government of hard currency.

Sanctions prohibiting any transaction in U.S. currency by Venezuela's state-run oil firm, PDVSA, are among the toughest of various oil-related measures under discussion at the White House, the two sources told Reuters.

The administration aims to pressure socialist President Nicolas Maduro into aborting plans for a controversial new congress that critics say would cement him as a dictator.

Venezuela's oil-based economy is in the grip of a brutal recession and a local currency crash, and Maduro has faced months of anti-government unrest that has claimed the lives of about 100 people. Sanctions on dollar transactions would make it even harder for Maduro's government to secure cash for debt payments and finance imports of basic goods.

The White House declined to comment on the sanctions under consideration. PDVSA and Venezuela's Oil Ministry did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Measures on financial transactions would give President Donald Trump's administration the power to escalate pressure on Venezuela by threatening punishment of any U.S. firm doing business with PDVSA or U.S. banks processing any of its transactions in dollars.

The financial restrictions have been "raised repeatedly" in recent discussions about options for actions against Maduro's government, said the senior White House official, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The administration is also discussing a ban on U.S. oil imports from Venezuela, but no final decisions have been reached, the official said.

Sanctions on dollar transactions could be more punitive than an import ban because they would make it much more difficult for any refiner or trader to buy Venezuelan oil - not just customers in the United States.

The impact of sanctions on PDVSA would ripple across oil markets, forcing refiners to buy alternative supplies. The U.S. could use crude from its Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) to blunt the impact of any short-term supply shortage, the policy adviser told Reuters.

The United States bought 780,000 barrels per day (bpd) of Venezuelan crude and refined products in the first four months of 2017, according to the Energy Information Administration, nearly 8 percent of total imports. PDVSA is a major supplier to Valero Energy, Phillips 66, Chevron Corp and PBF Energy. (Soure: cnbc)

China will import American rice for the first time

The world's largest rice producer is hungry for more and looking to the U.S. for supplies.

China will import American rice for the first time after a new trade deal was agreed to Thursday.

"The agreement with China has been in the works for more than a decade and I'm pleased to see it finally come to fruition, especially knowing how greatly it will benefit our growers and industry," said U.S. Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue in a statement.

China produces 20 times more rice than the U.S., but it's also the world's biggest consumer. Recently it has been buying more rice abroad, spending way over \$1 billion in some years, to feed its population.

Last year, China imported about 5 million tons, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The U.S. alone couldn't satisfy that demand. America exports between 3 million and 4 million tons a year, according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

(Source: CNN)

German, French companies ready to establish chain stores in Iran

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Some d e s k big German and French companies have declared their preparedness to set up chain stores in Iran, The Head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Mojtaba Khosrotaj told IRNA on Saturday.

He said these companies and also some companies from other European countries have already submitted their suggestions in this regard which are under investigation and some of them have said that they will announce their plans from 2018.

Iranian and foreigners face no barriers and limitations in establishing chain stores in the country, the official added.

BGF Retail Co., which owns South Korea's largest convenience store chain, CU, has recently sealed a deal to open convenience stores in Iran, Press

TV reported.

The deal marks CU's first foray abroad, coming in the wake of hyper-markets and mass merchandisers from Turkey, the UAE, and Europe seeking to capitalize on a pent-up demand in the Iranian market following years of sanctions.

Also, in February, Turkish discount retailer BIM said it was exploring opportunities in Iran for possible opening of stores in a country which has largely remained closed off for years under sanctions.

Qatar's Abu Issa Holding, one of the largest retail and luxury goods firms in the Middle East, is also among a subset of Persian Gulf Arab businesses which hope to set up shop in Iran. It has said it expects to open its first store in Tehran.



Dairy exports up 70% in Q1

**ECONOMY TEHRAN** — Iran's d e s k exports of dairy products rose by 70 percent in spring 2017, which corresponds to the first quarter of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-June 21) compared to the same period last year, Deputy Agriculture Minister Hassan Rokni told IRNA on Saturday.

The country exported 300,000 tons of dairy products in spring, the official announced.

Dairy products export stood at 850,000 tons in the past Iranian calendar year (which ended on March 20), while the figure was 600,000 tons in its preceding year, Fars news agency reported in late March quoting Rokni as



saying. The official announced that Russia joined the importers of Iran's dairy products in the past year.

While putting emphasis on supporting milk producers in the country, he expressed hope for an improvement in the production and export of dairy products.

IMF: Saudi's oil GDP to fall 2% on back of OPEC cuts

The International Monetary Fund expects Saudi Arabia's oil gross domestic product (GDP) to fall by 1.9 percent this year as the OPEC leader commits to implementing the bloc's production cuts.

The oil production cuts are affecting overall real GDP growth as well, which the IMP expects to be "close to zero".

Non-oil GDP growth will hover around 1.7 percent and accelerate in the medium term as structural reforms promised in the Vision 2030 agenda began to take shape.

"Fiscal consolidation efforts are begin-

ning to bear fruit, progress with reforms to improve the business environment are gaining momentum, and a framework to increase the transparency and accountability of government is largely in place," the IMF report read.

"Effective prioritization, sequencing, and coordination of the reforms is essential, and they need to be well-communicated and equitable to gain social buy-in and ensure their success."

The success of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's Vision 2030 plan depends on profits from the Saudi Aramco



Fara Bourse in the mentioned week.

The index gained two percent since the start of Tir (June 22) until Friday and 5.1 percent since the start of current calendar year (March 21).

Meanwhile, worth of IFB registered a 0.5-percent growth since the start of Tir and 3.5 percent rise since the year start.

Shrinking dollar will be 'toast' without tax reform: Bank of America strategist

The dollar could continue to flounder and the economy could fall into recession unless Congress moves on tax-cutting legislation, said David Woo, head of global rates and foreign exchange strategy at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

"The single biggest driver of the dollar is the outlook for U.S. tax reform. If tax reform happens, it will be very bullish for the U.S. economy. It will allow the Fed to hike rates, and be extremely bullish for the dollar," he said.

Woo does see a strong chance for a tax bill. He said the recent weakness in the dollar has come as the Senate failed to pass a health-care package, which Republicans had hoped to approve ahead of tax reform. The outcome is still unclear for health care, but Wall Street remains convinced that

Congress will try to push forward on tax reform.

"If tax reform doesn't happen, the economy will be slowing and we'll be in a recession within two years. The Fed will not be hiking rates and the dollar will be toast," he said.

Woo said Fed Chair Janet Yellen highlighted how important tax reform is when she told Congress earlier this month that fiscal uncertainty was one of the biggest risks facing the economy. Traders focused on her comments about inflation in that testimony, and the dollar has sold off since then.

The greenback has also taken a hit as traders bid up the euro on expectations the European Central Bank will announce this fall that it is reducing its quantitative easing

program. The dollar this past week fell 1.8 percent against the euro zone currency, as the market responded to expectations of a hawkish ECB versus a possibly more dovish Fed. The euro is up nearly 11 percent against the dollar this year alone.

"My view is until tax reform is resolved, one way or the other, the Fed is going to be sitting on its hands," said Woo. The strategist said that there is also uncertainty around the investigation by special counsel Robert Mueller into the Trump campaign's ties to Russia. This week, reports that the scope of the investigation expanded to Trump's businesses weighed on the dollar.

"Obviously, the whole Mueller thing certainly that makes people think that tax reform is less likely to happen," said Woo.

"I'm still very, very optimistic on tax re-

counteracting the 1.2 million-barrel cut by OPEC nations. The African duo had been granted exemptions from OPEC production quotas due to the effects of long-term domestic strife on their economies.

Riyadh plans to use the profits from selling five percent of Aramco to fund the economic overhaul envisioned in its development plan. The vision includes the "Saudization" of the kingdom's workforce and a shift towards non-oil commodities and the services sector.

(Source: oilprice.com)



monopolistic industries in Russia and the lack of market competition provides fertile soil for insider dealing.

Power-for-money deals should be carefully and thoroughly dealt with, but it will not be easy to introduce market mechanisms in monopolistic industries due to the opposition of vested interest groups. To win support in election campaigns, politicians are always cautious and prudent about efforts to break monopolies. A combination of political reforms and market-oriented economic change is needed to fight corruption.

Local officials in Russia often seek bribes from Chinese investors. Small and medium-sized entrepreneurs cannot counter local officials or force relevant government departments to solve problems. Instead, some of these entrepreneurs resort to bribery, which further worsens the investment climate.

Policy uncertainty is another factor making the investment climate worse. Some local governments announce preferential policies to attract foreign investors, but after they reap profits, local authorities sometimes suddenly change policies affecting foreign investors, withdraw promised free land, or even confiscate some of the income of foreign enterprises using all kinds of tactics.

As a result, some small and medium-sized entrepreneurs only undertake one-shot deals to avoid possible losses caused by Russia's policy uncertainty, which is likely to have an impact on long-term investment flowing into Russia.

Besides, a stable labor supply is a prerequisite to develop the manufacturing industry, but it is not easy for Russia to meet this requirement. It will also be hard for Russia to develop its manufacturing industry if the nation doesn't strengthen vocational training to increase workers' professionalism. Russia may need to adjust its educational structure to focus more on vocational training and the two countries have broad potential for cooperation in this regard. China and Russia can jointly establish vocational training schools in Russia, for example.

Russia may need to make long-term efforts to improve its investment climate and the quality of service of local workers, but this doesn't necessarily mean there is no room for cooperation between the two countries in the manufacturing sector.

(Source: Sputnik)



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## Qatar crisis: Lessons to learn in the age of cyber attacks

Intrigues, espionage, and manipulation of information are not new in international affairs and, to the extent to which it revolves around the circulation of disinformation, neither is the Qatar crisis. What differentiates the ongoing crisis in Qatar from conventional international crises, however, is the means — the deployment of cyber attacks — and the risk of escalation posed by this new brand of warfare.

According to reports, the worst rift between Qatar and its closest allies for many years was precipitated by a series of cyber attacks that have since been attributed to the United Arab Emirates. The attacks targeted the Qatar News Agency (QNA) Network, Qatar's state-owned media outlet. After apparently gaining access to the network in April this year, the hackers placed a fictitious report of the Emir of Qatar airing tensions with the U.S. president and praising Iran and the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

As a tool to alienate the U.S. and Qatar's Arab neighbors, the fabrication couldn't have been better. On June 5, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the UAE and Egypt announced they were severing ties with Qatar, citing concerns that the state was engaged in the funding and support of terrorism.

Uncertainty of attribution favoring plausible deniability, the ambiguity with which existing international laws apply to cyberspace, the low entry-cost of attacks, and the inherent vulnerable nature of information systems underpin states' tendency to resort to cyber-attacks more than to other aggressive means.

Technological progress goes hand-in-hand with an ever-expanding market of tools and skills, which makes available sophisticated cyber weapons and powerful cyber capabilities to any actor (state or non-state) who may be able to afford them. This market poses serious risks to international stability, as it fosters the weaponization of cyberspace, and is likely to prompt a cyber arms race in which state actors will compete with other state and non-state actors.

Technological and economic factors indicate that cyberspace is quickly becoming a new domain for international relations. As such, it is a new arena in which states are keen to assert their authority, show their power, and prove their capabilities. This invites friction and tension that may easily escalate and jeopardize international stability and the security of our societies.

These risks are not inevitable. They can be contained by a regime of international norms delineating permissible and non-permissible state actions in cyberspace, proportionate responses to cyber-attacks, and guiding state's responses when attribution remains dubious. Notoriously, UN attempts to establish such a regime, through the UN Group of Governmental Experts, tasked with creating a "common understand" of state behavior in cyberspace, failed just a few weeks ago.

The Qatar crisis must recall the attention of political actors and civil societies of the urgent need to resume and finalize UN efforts to regulate state use of cyber-attacks. Without this regime, cyber-attacks will contribute to fuelling a cyber arms race, posing serious risks of conflict escalation, putting cyber stability under pressure, and making international stability a chimera. This is a key lesson that we should learn from the Qatar crisis. We better get it now. Before the intrigue turns into a conflict and we have to learn the lesson the hard way: facing violence, kinetic conflicts, and, ultimately, casualties.

(Source: Newsweek)

## Poland's challenge to EU values

The ruling nationalist party is on track to end the independence of the courts, forcing both Poles and the European Union to reassert equality before the law. Such a democratic principle helps unite Europe against the kind of inequality of rights that ignites war.

Poland's government, elected in 2015 with 38 percent of the vote, appears to be on a collision course with the European Union. It has begun to pass bills that usurp the independence of the courts, giving the ruling party the ability to influence cases, punish its opponents, and stay in power. The sudden moves have led tens of thousands of Poles to take to the streets in protest. They have also shocked EU leaders, who never imagined a member state would violate a core principle of the Union. In fact, the EU has few tools to punish Poland.

One of the EU's great triumphs is the spread of the idea that people should be treated equally before the law. This principle has helped Europe end a history of war rooted on the notion that ethnicity, religion, or class allows one group to be superior to the law while denying rights to others. In a twist on that theme, Poland's governing Law and Justice party claims a democratic victory alone justifies an end to judicial independence, not to mention an end to the checks and balances built into a separation of powers. The nationalist party has also tried to clip media freedom and abortion rights. Those efforts have been mostly thwarted by mass outcry.

The street protests to save judicial independence, however, may not work. The EU is now seen as the best interlocutor. It has an option to curb funding for Poland. If the EU wants to stand up for rule of law in global affairs, as well as entice new members such as Ukraine to join, it must take a hard line with Poland, the EU's sixth most populous member state.

Another possible corrective may be investors. Getting rid of judicial independence creates legal uncertainty for businesses and opens a door for cronyism and corruption. Poland's economy could see a slowdown, forcing the public to renew its faith in the courts. Then the country could restore its reputation as a model reformer among the former Soviet bloc states admitted to the EU.

The government's argument that any political party elected to office can dictate to the courts clearly runs counter to the Continent's embrace of universal values, which originate in a Christian understanding of equality before God. Individual rights are not subject to democratic whims. Courts serve a grander purpose than politics to decide fairness, based on values embedded in a constitution.

(Source: The CSM)

# Erdogan will regret alienating Merkel

By Fadi Hakura

Over the past few months, relations between Turkey and Germany have become increasingly fraught.

Angela Merkel, the normally cautious German Chancellor, is reportedly considering placing potentially devastating economic pressure on Turkey in the hope that she can cool down Turkey's increasingly confrontational President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Earlier this week, Sigmar Gabriel, Germany's foreign minister, cautioned Germans against traveling to Turkey and reviewed state guarantees of corporate investments made in Turkey.

Germany will also take steps to suspend negotiations to expand the scope of the EU-Turkey customs union and is reportedly considering putting joint arms projects on hold.

These steps from Germany come in retaliation to Turkey banning German parliamentarians from visiting troops participating in NATO operations in Syria and the detention of a German human rights activist for allegedly aiding a terror group.

Germany, meanwhile, will likely suspect that the arrest was made to provide Turkey with a bargaining chip: Turkish state media has reported that two generals thought to be involved in last year's failed coup in Turkey, are currently seeking asylum in Germany. It's not hard to imagine that Erdogan would be very keen to see this pair back in Turkey.

The deterioration of bilateral relations is a reminder to Germany and the rest of Europe that Erdogan is no fan of diplomatic niceties.

It is possible that the Turkish President has misinterpreted Merkel's desperation to secure his cooperation to stem the flow of Syrian migrants last year as a template to squeeze more money and political concessions from Europe. His strident



**By indirectly expelling German troops and threatening repeatedly to terminate the Syria migrant deal, Erdogan has weakened his negotiating hand.**

rhetoric and uncompromising stance encouraged Merkel to cough up billions in EU money to the Turkish treasury.

Yet, it may be that Erdogan has overplayed his hand with Turkey's largest trading partner and the dominant EU member state -- in which nearly 3 million Turks reside -- as the Turkish economy stagnates.

Accusing German industrial behemoths of being Gulenist supporters has forced Gabriel to advise against invest-

ing "in a country when there is no legal certainty and where companies, even entirely respectable companies, are labeled as terrorists."

### ■ Pugnacious foreign policy

Germany's unexpected move sends an unequivocal message to Turkey that it is rapidly losing leverage with its pugnacious foreign policy which seemingly has one primary purpose: to make Erdogan look strong at home. By indirectly expelling German troops and threatening re-

## McCain is one of the few who can stand up to Trump

by Edward Luce

Just after Donald Trump announced this week that he was pulling the plug on U.S.-trained Syrian moderates, America's best-known hawk accused him of "playing right into the hands of Russia". That was John McCain, former presidential nominee, and Republican senator for Arizona. The fact that McCain, 80, was in hospital having just been diagnosed with brain cancer was neither here nor there. His condemnation arrived bang on schedule. Trump's "get well" tweet, and follow-up phone call, had no discernible influence. Whether, and how soon, McCain makes it back to Washington is the crucial question. The former Navy pilot, and seven-term senator, is one of the few Republicans who could stand up to Trump. He has a record to prove it. For most of George W Bush's first term, McCain was a lonely thorn in his side. He berated Bush for allowing waterboarding and other forms of torture in the "war on terror". He allied with Democrats to pass a law restricting money's influence in politics. And he insisted on the fact of man-made global warming. None of that endeared him to the party's base. Yet he still went on to win its nomination for the 2008 election.

### ■ McCain's tenacity

McCain's tenacity, and the fact that aspiring firebrands, such as Mike Huckabee and Rick Santorum, demolished each other during the primaries, left him as the last man standing. "He's tougher than a \$2 steak," tweeted John Dingell, 91, a former Democratic congressman from Michigan and the longest serving representative in



**Senator's cancer diagnosis could rob Congress of a catalyst for president's impeachment.**

U.S. history. "He'll be back." A hidden part of Trump must be hoping otherwise. McCain stands out for having stuck to his hawkish stance on Vladimir Putin's Russia. The only realistic way Trump could be removed from office is if his party turns against him. Were that to happen, McCain would be the likeliest catalyst. In the early stages of the 2016 primaries, Trump shocked the U.S. — and triggered wildly premature predictions of his political downfall — by attacking McCain's war record. In 1968,

McCain's plane was shot down over Vietnam. He spent the next five years in the notorious "Hanoi Hilton" prison. He suffered frequent torture, an ordeal that drove later criticisms of Bush. As the son of an eponymous serving U.S. admiral, McCain was dangled the chance of early release. He refused, believing it would shame his father and upset his fellow prisoners. Almost half a century later, Trump depicted McCain's capture as a flaw. "He is not a war hero," Trump said in 2015. "I like people who weren't captured." To many people's surprise, McCain declined to hit back. He endorsed Trump's candidacy in 2016.

Many of McCain's most loyal fans were secretly relieved he lost the 2008 election to Barack Obama. "The fundamentals of the economy are strong," McCain said to near-universal derision shortly after the largest stock market fall in decades. He also lost credibility for picking Sarah Palin, Alaska's red-meat governor, as his running mate, a decision many believe unleashed the blue-collar id that culminated in Trump. There were also concerns about his temperament. Yet he never shed his dignity. At one rally, a voter said she thought Obama was an "Arab". McCain cut her off: "I have to tell you Senator Obama is a decent person and a person you don't have to be scared of as president of the United States." Although loyal to his party, McCain instinctively puts his country first. He also relishes adversity. Sceptics should ask his mother, Roberta McCain, who turned 105 this month. "John's a good boy," Mrs McCain told me during the 2008 campaign. "But he's stubborn as hell."

(Source: FT)

## The EU can't afford to ignore Europe's migrant crisis

By Naman Jain

A lot has been happening in the midst of the European migrant crisis. Most notably, the political debate between EU member states is widening on how to best handle this significantly deteriorating crisis.

Specifically, the Visegrad Group, consisting of Poland, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, have opposed Brussels' quota system on accepting refugees from war-torn areas. Criticism of the Visegrad countries, known as the V4, specifically on this ground, is unjustified, and rather than focusing on efforts to distribute thousands of migrants, Brussels must focus on helping resolve the crisis so that people are not forced to undertake this journey to Europe.

First, there is no guarantee that all migrants seeking refuge in Europe are indeed coming from war-torn regions in Syria and Iraq, and this is highlighted by the lack of documentation on hand during the current crisis. Countries might have significantly effective vetting systems but these fail to work

if documentation is unavailable or can be forged. With the risk of stating the obvious, no country desires an influx of unidentified individuals.

### ■ Huge influx of crime

Second, and most importantly, the V4 countries are correct in their decision on the grounds of ensuring safety and security for their own citizens. The migrant crisis in Europe has been correlated with a huge influx of crime. In Germany, which has accepted the largest number of migrants, this has increased by more than 50 percent since the previous year. This was manifested in the Cologne New Year's Eve sexual assault incident, where most of the perpetrators were migrants.

In parallel, Europe has witnessed some of the worst attacks of terrorism on its soil since the beginning of this crisis. While most of these attacks have been conducted by their own citizens who have either fought for or supported ISIS, some attacks have seen the involvement of foreigners who have taken advantage of the migrant crisis to enter Europe. Two of the terrorists in the November

2015 Paris attacks, who eventually blew themselves up outside the Stade de France, had entered Europe on fake Syrian passports. A year later, a Tunisian man murdered a Polish driver and drove his truck at a Christmas market in Berlin, leading to Germany's worst terror attack since the start of the crisis. In light of these events, the V4 countries have been reluctant to accept migrants. Jaroslaw Kaczynski, who heads the ruling PiS party in Poland, has asserted that security considerations are the reason for Poland's stance. And as recent events have shown, he is right.

Third, the tug-of-war between Brussels and the V4 accentuates the argument — most notably declared by recent French president Macron — that if the EU countries such as Poland are benefiting from other aspects of EU membership, then they should also adhere to the quota system. This argument fails to take into account that these countries are willing to contribute to mitigating the crisis in other ways, such as monetary assistance. Indeed, Poland has repeatedly suggested a rise

peatedly to terminate the Syria migrant deal, Erdogan has weakened his negotiating hand.

He has also raised concerns over Turkey's reliability as a NATO partner and prompted Europe to put in place contingency plans in case the deal is canceled.

It is likely, though not guaranteed, that in the short-to-medium term, Erdogan will employ fiery rhetoric to set the stage for an eventual climbdown. He still retains some pragmatism and flexibility, and seems to appreciate the importance of Germany to Turkey's economic stability.

That quality for an abrupt change of course under pressure explains, for example, Erdogan's 180-degree turn following nine months of bitter hostility with Russia.

Nevertheless, though the dispute may eventually blow over, the longer-term implications to Erdogan's credibility among European peers will not be easily repaired. They will probably be less keen to engage in a strategic dialogue with him or deepen political and economic ties with Turkey.

Whatever Erdogan's mistrust of Europe, it will always represent the main source of trade, foreign direct investment and technology flows to the Turkish economy. That reality and their geographic proximity will keep them bound together in a challenging relationship -- increasingly tilting to Turkey's disadvantage.

Only the reignition of liberalizing political, economic and social reforms and the adoption of a balanced, sober-minded foreign policy can restore Erdogan's once unbeatable reputation in Europe, the U.S. and the Middle East.

In all likelihood, however, he will attempt to further consolidate power domestically and interfere in regional disputes, contrary to Turkey's strategic interests.

(Source: CNN)

in funding to areas that are the source of the current crisis, such as Syria.

### ■ Lack of participation

Instead of engaging with the points of view of the V4 countries, Brussels continues to admonish them for their lack of participation in accepting refugees, failing to acknowledge the fact that current efforts to resolve the crisis have helped no one, and are unlikely to help no one in the long run.

EU member states are unable to help genuine refugees in Europe, being constrained by an influx of economic migrants, domestic pressure and security threats. If the migrant crisis can be stopped at the source by an appropriate increase in funding, then it can increase the pace of reconstruction in war-torn areas. Rather than blame Poland and the other V4 countries for not accepting refugees, Brussels should engage with them to forge an effective funding and financing plan to help stopping the conflict in Syria and help develop a stable and secure environment for Syrians and Iraqis in their home countries.

(Source: The National Interest)



# The tortured politics behind the Persian Gulf crisis

By Conn Hallinan

The splintering of the powerful Persian Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) into warring camps — with Qatar, supported by Turkey and Iran, on one side, and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), supported by Egypt, on the other — has less to do with disagreements over foreign policy and religion than with internal political and economic developments in the Middle East.

The ostensible rationale the GCC gave on June 4 for breaking relations with Qatar and placing the tiny country under a blockade is that Doha is aiding “terrorist” organizations. The real reasons are considerably more complex, particularly among the major players.

Middle East journalist Patrick Cockburn once described the Syrian civil war as a three-dimensional chess game with five players and no rules. In the case of the Qatar crisis, the players have doubled and abandoned the symmetry of the chessboard for go, mahjong, and bridge.

## ■ Saudi insecurities

Tensions among members of the GCC are longstanding. In the case of Qatar, they date back to 1995, when the father of the current ruler, Emir Tamim Al Thani, shoved his own father out of power. According to Simon Henderson of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, Saudi Arabia and the UAE “regarded the family coup as a dangerous precedent to Persian Gulf ruling families” and tried to organize a counter coup. The coup was exposed, however, and called off.

Riyadh is demanding that Qatar sever relations with Iran — an improbable outcome given that the two countries share a natural gas field in the Persian Gulf — and end Doha’s cozy ties to the Muslim Brotherhood. Indeed, if there’s any entity in the Middle East that the Saudis hate — and fear — more than Iran, it’s the Brotherhood. Riyadh was instrumental in the 2013 overthrow of the Brotherhood government in Egypt and has allied itself with the Israelis to marginalize Hamas, the Palestinian offshoot of the Brotherhood that dominates Gaza.

But fault lines in the GCC don’t run only between Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar. Oman, at the Persian Gulf’s mouth, has always marched to its own drummer, maintaining close ties with Saudi Arabia’s regional nemesis, Iran, and refusing to go along with Riyadh’s war against the Houthi rebels in Yemen. Kuwait has also balked at Saudi dominance of the GCC, has refused to join the blockade against Doha, and is trying to play mediator in the current crisis.

The siege of Qatar was launched shortly after Donald Trump’s visit to Saudi Arabia, when the Saudis put on a show for the U.S. president that was over the top even by the monarchy’s standards. Wooded with massive billboards and garish sword dances, Trump soaked up the Saudi’s view of the Middle East, attacked Iran as a supporter of terrorism, and apparently green-lighted the blockade of Qatar. He even tried to take credit for it.

Saudi Arabia, backed by Bahrain, Egypt, and the UAE, along with a cast of minor players, made 13 demands on Doha that it could only meet by abandoning its sovereignty. They range from the impossible (end all contacts with Iran) to the improbable (close a Turkish military base there) to the unlikely (dis-

mantle the popular and lucrative media giant, Al Jazeera). The “terrorists” Doha is accused of supporting are the Brotherhood, which the Saudis and the Egyptians consider a terrorist organization, an opinion not shared by the U.S. or the European Union.

On the surface this is about Sunni Saudi Arabia vs. Shiite Iran. But while religious differences do play an important role in recruiting and motivating some of the players, this isn’t a battle over a schism in Islam. Most importantly, it’s not about “terrorism,” since many of the countries involved are up to their elbows in supporting extremist organizations. Indeed, Saudi Arabia’s reactionary Wahhabi interpretation of Islam is the root ideology for groups like the Islamic State and al-Qaeda, and all the parties are backing a variety of extremists in Syria and Libya’s civil wars.

The attack on Qatar is part of Saudi Arabia’s aggressive new foreign policy that is being led by Crown Prince and Defense Minister Mohammed bin Salman. As Saudi Arabia’s “monarch in waiting,” Mohammed has launched a disastrous war in Yemen that’s killed more than 10,000 civilians and sparked a country-wide cholera epidemic there — and which is draining at least \$700 million a month from Saudi Arabia’s treasury. Given the depressed price for oil and a growing population — 70 percent of which is under 30 and much of it unemployed — it’s not a cost the monarchy can continue to sustain, especially with the Saudi economy falling into recession.

Underlying the Saudis’ newfound aggression is fear. First, fear that the kind of Islamic governance modeled by the Muslim Brotherhood, which has elsewhere embraced elections and the democratic process, poses a threat to the absolutism of the Persian Gulf monarchs. Fear that Iran’s nuclear pact with the U.S., the EU, and the UN is allowing Tehran to break out of its economic isolation and turn itself into a rival power center in the Middle East. And fear that anything but a united front by the GCC — led by Riyadh — will encourage the House of

## The largely Muslim nations of Malaysia and Indonesia are also maintaining relations with Qatar, and Saudi ally Morocco offered to send food to Doha. In brief, it’s not clear who’s more isolated here.

Saudi’s internal and external critics.

### ■ Who’s really isolated?

So far, the attempt to blockade Qatar has been more an annoyance than a serious threat to Doha. Turkey and Iran are pouring supplies into Qatar, and the Turks are deploying up to 1,000 troops at a base near the capital. There are also some 10,000 U.S. troops at Qatar’s Al Udeid Air Base, Washington’s largest base in the Middle East and one central to the war on the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq. Any invasion aimed at overthrowing the Qatar regime risks a clash with Turkey and the U.S.

While Egypt is part of the anti-Qatari alliance — the Egyptians are angry at Doha for not supporting Cairo’s side in the Libyan civil war, and the Egyptian regime also hates the Brotherhood — it is hardly an enthusiastic ally. Saudi Arabia keeps Egypt’s economy afloat, and so long as the Riyadh keeps writing checks, Cairo is on board. But Egypt is keeping



## Saudi Arabia’s puzzling effort to blacklist its tiny neighbor Qatar begs the question of who’s really isolated in the Persian Gulf.

the Yemen war at arm’s length — it flat out refused to contribute troops and is not comfortable with Saudi Arabia’s version of Islam. Cairo is currently in a nasty fight with its own Wahhabist-inspired extremists. Egypt also maintains diplomatic relations with Iran.

Besides the UAE, the other Saudi allies don’t count for much in this fight. Sudan will send troops — if Riyadh pays for them — but not very many. Bahrain is on board, but only because the Saudi and UAE armies are sitting on local Shiite opposition in the tiny Persian Gulf island. Yemen and Libya are part of the anti-Qatar alliance, but both are essentially failed states. And while the Maldives, another member, is a nice place to vacation, it doesn’t have a lot of weight to throw around.

On the other hand, long-time Saudi ally Pakistan has made it clear it’s not part of this blockade, nor will it break with Qatar or downgrade relations with Iran. When Riyadh asked for Pakistani troops in Yemen, the national parliament voted unanimously to have nothing to do with Riyadh’s jihad on the poorest country in the Middle East.

The largely Muslim nations of Malaysia and Indonesia are also maintain-

ing relations with Qatar, and Saudi ally Morocco offered to send food to Doha. In brief, it’s not clear who’s more isolated here.

While President Trump supports the Saudis, his Defense Department and State Department are working to resolve the crisis. U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson just finished a trip to the Persian Gulf in an effort to end the blockade, and the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee is threatening to hold up arms sales to Riyadh unless the dispute is resolved. The latter is no minor threat. Saudi Arabia would have serious difficulties carrying out the war in Yemen without U.S. weaponry.

Is this personal for Turkey’s president? No, but Erdogan is the Middle East leader who most resembles Donald Trump: He shoots from the hip and holds grudges. The difference is that he’s far smarter and better informed than the U.S. president and knows when to cut his losses.

His apology to the Russians after shooting down one of their fighter-bombers is a case in point. Erdogan first threatened Moscow with war, but eventually trotted off to St. Petersburg, hat in hand, to make nice with Russian President Vladimir Putin. And after hinting that the Americans were behind the 2016 coup, he recently met with Tillerson in Istanbul to smooth things out. Turkey recognizes that it will need Moscow and Washington to settle the war in Syria.

The Russians have been carefully neutral, consulted with Turkey and Iran, and have called on all parties to peacefully resolve their differences.

There isn’t likely to be a quick end to the Qatar crisis, because Saudi Arabia keeps doubling down on one disastrous foreign policy decision after another, including breaking up the Arab world’s only viable economic bloc. But there are developments in the region that may eventually force Riyadh to back off.

The Syrian war looks like it’s headed for a solution, although the outcome is anything but certain. The Yemen war has reached crisis proportions — the UN describes it as the number one human emergency on the globe — and pressure is growing for the U.S. and Britain to wind down their support for the Saudi-led alliance. And Iran is slowly but steadily reclaiming its role as a leading force in the Middle East and Central Asia.

There is much that could go wrong. There could be a disastrous war with Iran, currently being pushed by Saudi Arabia, Israel, and neoconservatives in the U.S. Or Russia, the U.S., and Turkey could fall out over Syria. The Middle East is an easy place to get into trouble. But if there are dangers, so too are there possibilities, and from those spring hope.

(Source: FPiF)

## The price of defiance: Why U.S., Saudi Arabia turning Kuwait against Iran

By John W. Whitehead

On Thursday, Kuwait sent a diplomatic note to Iran’s embassy stating that the office of military and cultural attaches would be closed down. The note also said that 15 Iranian diplomats, including Ambassador Alireza Enayati, would have to leave the country within 45 days, leaving only four Iranian diplomats in Kuwait.

Kuwait’s acting information minister, Sheikh Mohammad al-Mubarak al-Sabah, said in a statement that the move was taken in “accordance with diplomatic norms and in abidance with the Vienna conventions with regards to its relationship with the Islamic Republic of Iran.”

According to mass media reports, the moves were made following the conviction of the members of Al Abdali terror cell, whose Kuwaiti members were accused of alleged intelligence contacts with Iran and Hezbollah, a Lebanese Shiite militant group.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran has responded by summoning the Kuwaiti charge d’affaires. While rejecting the accusations, Iran has said that the measures taken by Kuwaiti officials are regrettable, given that the existing tensions in the region are now in a critical condition.

“We expect Kuwait to act rationally instead of responding to pressures and worsening the tensions,” Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi was quoted as saying by the Mehr news agency.

In an interview with Sputnik Iran, Sabbah Zanganeh, a political commentator, Iranian envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and former adviser to the Iranian foreign minister, said that the moves of the Kuwaiti authorities have been evidently fuelled by pressure from Saudi Arabia.

The Iranian authorities have not been informed of any details of the ongoing investigation in Kuwait and any charges which have been put forward. Neither the Iranian legal representative, now any independent Iranian experts have been allowed to study the case in more detail.

The Iranian political analyst recalled that there have already been groundless and unsubstantiated accusations made against Iran, alleging that it played a major role in liberating the territories of Kuwait from the occupation of Saddam Hussein by supporting and mobilizing hundreds of thousands of Kuwaiti residents, similar to the current accusations against Tehran.



“In due course, Saddam Hussein made a very ambitious offer to Iran to capture not only Kuwait, but the territories of other countries of the Persian Gulf. However Iran had never had a goal of the occupation of the territories of sovereign states and the destruction of the system of government of these countries,” Sabbah Zanganeh told Sputnik.

“Hence this demarche of Kuwait is baseless and is fuelled purely by the pressure of Saudi Arabia, which does not want to put up with the idea that the Arab states of the Persian Gulf such as Kuwait and Qatar, have good relations with Iran. Saudi Arabia is exerting strong pressure on the Kuwaiti authorities and its mass media,” he added.

The political commentator further explained that until recently, Kuwait has been pursuing a very reasonable and moderate foreign policy; however it has come under strong pressure from the Saudis. Where Qatar was the first target of the Saudis, now it is Kuwait’s turn. The Saudis cannot tolerate Kuwait’s key positions in the settlement of the Qatari crisis, in the negotiations of the Yemeni issue and in the issue of diplomatic correspondence with Iran on behalf of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Persian Gulf. Kuwait, unlike Qatar, is to a far lesser extent an independent state.

In a separate comment on the issue, Iranian political analyst and expert on Middle East and Iranian-Arab relations, former editor-in-chief of the Iranian news agency Mehr News, Hassan Hanizadeh told Sputnik that Kuwait will be the country to suffer from its demarche, while it will have no impact on the economic environment of Iran.

“These actions of Kuwait, aimed at decreasing diplomatic relationship with Iran, have been evidently dictated by Saudi Arabia and the US. As we remember, during his trip to the Middle East, Donald Trump had an important meeting with the leaders of six Arab states of the Persian Gulf in Riyadh. Trump demanded that these states cut their diplomatic relations with Iran or at least lower the level of their ties. Qatar is the first to be punished for disobeying this order,” he told Sputnik.

However, he further elaborated, Qatar held firm and defied pressure from Saudi Arabia and the US. Kuwait, in turn, is a sparsely populated country, compared to its neighbors, and prefers not to oppose the pressure of the US and the Saudis. The danger is that this demarche could spark tensions in the region between the Arab states and Iran even further.

For the last 30 years Iran has been maintaining good and friendly relations with Kuwait, avoiding any hostilities. Moreover, in 1990, during the attack of Saddam Hussein on Kuwait, the Iranian embassy in Kuwait sheltered over a hundred women and young ladies, wives and daughters of Kuwaiti emir and his brothers, on its territory from Hussein’s troops and then safely sent them to Iran for temporary relocation.

Unfortunately, the current Kuwaiti authorities have forgotten this and are putting forward baseless accusations against Iran under pressure from Saudi Arabia, the political analyst said.

“Kuwait will be the only one to suffer from this demarche. Iran is a large and strong country, which will easily overcome this crisis. Kuwait is not a high priority in the Iranian foreign policy and the lowering of the level of diplomatic relations between the two countries won’t have any impact on Iran,” Hassan Hanizadeh told Sputnik.



## There isn’t likely to be a quick end to the Qatar crisis, because Saudi Arabia keeps doubling down on one disastrous foreign policy decision after another, including breaking up the Arab world’s only viable economic bloc.



# Justin Trudeau masters the Trump two-step

By Jordan Michael Smith

Speaking to the National Governors Association in Providence, Rhode Island, on Friday, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivered an implicit rebuke to U.S. President Donald Trump's economic ideas. "Free trade has worked," Trudeau said. "It's working now." This was just the latest instance of Trudeau's deft handling of relations with the United States and its prickly president. Subtly criticizing President Trump's policies, while speaking respectfully of Trump personally, Trudeau has successfully met one of the primary challenges for any Canadian prime minister and vanquished what remained of his image as little more than a pretty face.

Most leaders who criticize Trump - and many who don't - are subject to vicious remarks from the president. Just ask German Chancellor Angela Merkel, whose policy on refugees Trump derided as "insane" and a "catastrophic mis-

take," or London Mayor Sadiq Khan, whom Trump called "ignorant" for opposing Trump's campaign proposal to ban Muslims from entering the United States. (Once in office, Trump modified the travel curbs to cover only certain Muslim-majority countries.)

But Trump loves Trudeau, offering good wishes on Twitter "to all of the great people of Canada and to your Prime Minister and my new found friend @JustinTrudeau." The U.S. president said at the G-20 summit that "Justin is doing a spectacular job in Canada." Trump's February address to Congress singled out Trudeau for praise.

Trudeau is having difficulties at home. His government has recently drawn criticism from the right for reportedly paying 10.5 million Canadian dollars (U.S. \$8 million) in a breach of rights settlement to a Canadian former Guantanamo Bay detainee who admitted fighting U.S. troops in Afghanistan and from the left for the stumbles

by Canada's national inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women. But he is managing well in his toughest task of all: getting along with the United States during the Trump era.

Keeping the Canada-U.S. relationship strong is the most important job of any Canadian prime minister.

Dependent on its only neighbor for trade and defense but protective of its sovereignty, independent foreign policy and distinct culture, Canada is in a difficult position. That difficulty is multiplied when America has a blustery, xenophobic, militaristic leader. And, since Canada's politics already tilt more towards the dovish, internationalist, left than the United States, it is even harder still when the Canadian prime minister hails, as Trudeau does, from the center-left Liberal party. But Trudeau is succeeding at this delicate dance, with a combination of flattery and gentle rebukes. Call it the Trudeau Two-Step.

## Two-step move

Trudeau's remarks to the U.S. governors were characteristically subtle, avoiding Trump by name but targeting nationalistic, anti-trade rhetoric. This is a classic Two-Step move: maintain independence, but use mild, measured words. Trudeau has repeatedly censured the American president, but done so without hostility. Trump's off-the-cuff tweeting presents a "new wrinkle in international diplomacy," Trudeau said in June. He declared Canada "deeply disappointed" in the decision to extract the U.S. from the Paris Agreement on climate change. The day after Trump signed an executive order banning some Muslim refugees, Trudeau tweeted, "To those fleeing persecution, terror & war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength #WelcomeToCanada." A clearer contrast to Trump could not be made. ➔13

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# AMH test to determine fertility

AMH (Anti-Mullerian Hormone), also called MIS (Mullerian Inhibiting Substance) is produced directly by the ovarian follicles. Women with lower AMH have lower antral follicular counts and produce a lower number of oocytes. AMH level testing can also be very useful for young women who want to postpone childbearing, but want to check their fertility potential before doing so.

**■ What is AMH?**  
AMH stands for Anti-Mullerian Hormone. It is also called MIS (Mullerian Inhibiting Substance). Since AMH is produced by the granulosa cells lining the ovarian follicles, AMH levels correlate with the number of antral follicles in the ovaries. It has been documented that women with lower AMH have lower antral follicular counts and produce a lower number of oocytes compared with women with higher levels.

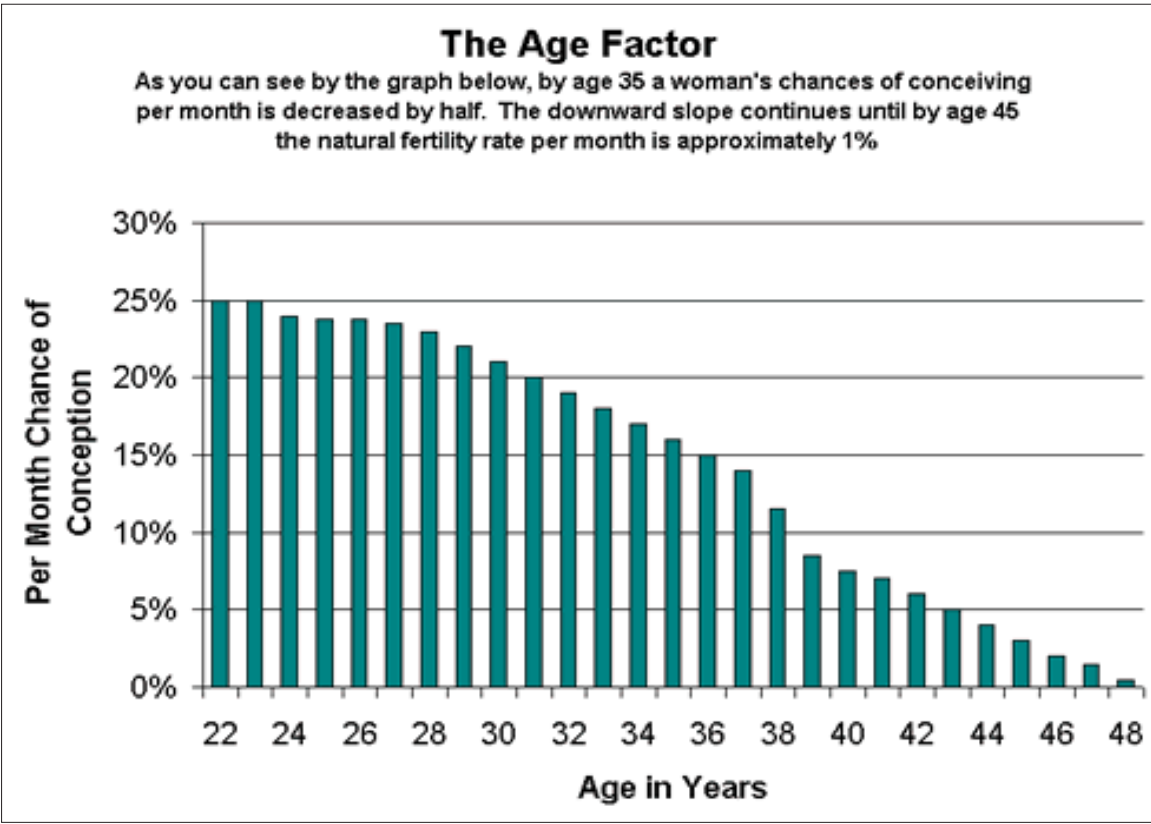
**AMH Reference ranges Interpretation:**  
AMH levels do not change significantly throughout the menstrual cycle and decrease with age. Healthy women, below 38 years old, with normal follicular status at day 3 of the menstrual cycle, have AMH levels of 2.0 - 6.8 ng/ml (14.28 - 48.55 pmol/L). High levels are found in patients with PCOD.

AMH levels do not vary with the menstrual cycle and can be measured independently of the day of the menstrual cycle.

AMH can be used for

Ovarian Fertility Potential	pmol/L	ng/mL
Optimal Fertility	28.6 - 48.5	4.0 - 6.8
Satisfactory Fertility	15.7 - 28.6	2.2 - 4.0
Low Fertility	2.2 - 15.7	0.3 - 2.2
Very Low / undetectable	0.0 - 2.2	0.0 - 0.3
High Level	> 48.5	> 6.8

- Evaluating fertility potential and ovarian response in IVF - Serum AMH levels correlate with the number of early antral follicles. This makes is useful for predicting your ovarian response in an IVF cycle. Women with low AMH levels are more likely to be poor ovarian responders.
- Measuring ovarian aging - Diminished ovarian reserve, is signaled by reduced baseline serum AMH concentrations. Women with poor ovarian reserve who have entered the oopause have low levels of AMH. However, this is a new test, and is still not easily available.
- **AMH versus FSH**  
The old standard for ovarian reserve testing was the Day 3 FSH level.  
However, the FSH level is not as reliable as the AMH level for 3 reasons.
  - The FSH level varies according to the cycle dates
  - It depends upon the estradiol level (a high estradiol level will artificially suppress a high abnormal FSH level into the normal range)
  - It varies from cycle to cycle, so is not always reliable or dependableAn AMH level is a much better marker for ovarian reserve. It is much more stable than the FSH level and does not vary from cycle to cycle. Even better, it



## An AMH level can also be very useful for young women who want to postpone childbearing and want to check their fertility.

can be measured on any day of the cycle! This is why most infertility specialists today use AMH to check ovarian reserve, rather than the old FSH level.  
One confusing thing about AMH is that there are at least 2 scales out there and innumerable clinic definitions of what is «normal» - it depends on which assay they use and which study! One scale is ng/ml and one is pmol/l. The pmol/l scale runs from 0 to about 48; the ng/ml runs from about 0-10. On the ng/ml scale, less than 2 ng/ml is considered to be low.  
An AMH level can also be very useful for young women who want to postpone childbearing and want to check their fertility. Many women these days are postponing having a baby in order to pursue a career. The good news is that while usually fertility does not decline too much until the age of 32, for some women the decision to postpone childbearing can prove to be one they bitterly regret later on. Fertility does decline as a woman grows older, and the problem is that it is not possible to predict the rate of decline for an individual woman. Most women are lulled into a false sense of security if they have regular period, because they assume that if their periods are regular, this automatically means that their egg quality if enough for them to make babies !  
(Source: drmalpani.com)

## An AMH level is a much better marker for ovarian reserve. It is much more stable than the FSH level and does not vary from cycle to cycle. Even better, it can be measured on any day of the cycle!

## Myths about the brain

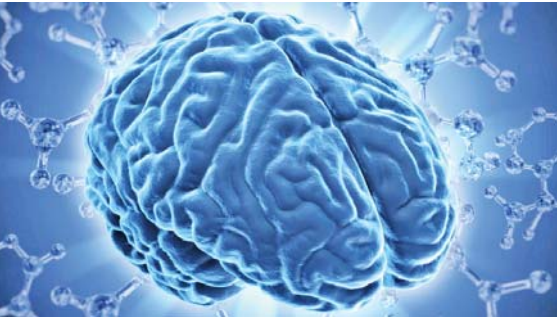
### Separating brain facts from brain fictions

By Kendra Cherry

The human brain is amazing and sometimes mysterious. While researchers are still uncovering the secrets of how the brain works, they have discovered plenty of information about what goes on inside your noggin. Unfortunately, there are still a lot of brain myths out there.

The following are just a few of the many myths about the brain:

- **Myth 1: We use ten percent of our brains**  
You've probably heard this oft-cited bit of information several times, but constant repetition does not make it any more accurate.  
People often use this popular urban legend to imply that the mind is capable of much greater things, such as dramatically increased intelligence, psychic abilities, or even telekinesis.  
Research suggests that all areas of the brain perform some type of function. If the 10 percent myth were true, brain damage would be far less likely – after all, we would only have to worry about that tiny 10 percent of our brains being injured.  
The fact is that damage to even a small area of the brain can result in profound consequences for both cognition and functioning. Brain imaging technologies have also demonstrated that the entire brain shows levels of activity, even during sleep.
- **Myth 2: Brain damage is permanent**  
The brain is fragile and can be damaged by things such as injury, stroke, or disease. This damage can result in a range of consequences, from mild disruptions in cognitive abilities to complete impairment.  
Brain damage can be devastating, but is it always permanent?  
While we often tend to think of brain injuries as lasting, a person's ability to recover from such damage depends upon the severity and the location of the injury. For example, a blow to the head during a football game might lead to a concussion.  
While this can be quite serious, most people can recover when given time to heal. A severe stroke, on the other hand, can result in dire consequences to the brain



that can very well be permanent.  
However, it is important to remember that the human brain has an impressive amount of plasticity. Even following a serious brain event, such as a stroke, the brain can often heal itself over time and form new connections.  
■ **Myth 3: People are right- or left-brained**  
Have you ever heard someone describe themselves as either left-brained or right-brained? This stems from the popular notion that people are either dominated by their right or left brain hemispheres. According to this idea, people who are "right-brained" tend to be more creative and expressive, while those who are "left-brained" tend to be more analytical and logical.  
While experts do recognize that there is lateralization of brain function (that is, certain types of tasks and thinking tend to be more associated with a particular region of the brain), no one is fully right-brained or left-brained. In fact, we tend to do better at tasks when the entire brain is utilized, even for things that are typically associated with a certain area of the brain.  
■ **Myth 4: Humans have the biggest brains**  
The human brain is quite large in proportion to body size, but another common misconception is that humans have the largest brains of any organism. How big is the human brain? How does it compare to other species?  
The average adult has a brain weighing in at about three pounds and measuring up to about 15 centimeters in length. The largest animal brain belongs to that of a sperm whale, weighing in at a whopping 18 pounds! Another large-brained animal is the elephant, with an

average brain size of around 11 pounds.  
But what about relative brain size in proportion to body size?  
Humans must certainly have the largest brains in comparison to their body size, right? Once again, this notion is also a myth. Surprisingly, one animal that holds the largest body size to brain ratios is the shrew, with a brain making up about 10 percent of its body mass.  
■ **Myth 5: Brain cells die permanently**  
Traditional wisdom has long suggested that adults only have so many brain cells and that we never form new ones. Once these cells are lost, are they gone for good?  
In recent years, experts have discovered evidence that the human adult brain does indeed form new cells throughout life, even during old age. The process of forming new brain cells is known as neurogenesis and researchers have found that it happens in at least one important region of the brain called the hippocampus.  
■ **Myth 6: Drinking alcohol kills brain cells**  
Partly related to the myth that we never grow new neurons is the idea that drinking alcohol can lead to cell death in the brain. Drink too much or too often, some people might warn, and you'll lose precious brain cells that you can never get back. We've already learned that adults do indeed get new brain cells throughout life, but could drinking alcohol really kill brain cells?  
While excessive or chronic alcohol abuse can certainly have dire health consequences, experts do not believe that drinking causes neurons to die. In fact, research has shown that even binge drinking doesn't kill neurons.  
■ **Myth 7: There are 100 billion neurons in the human brain**  
The estimate of 100 billion neurons has been repeated so often and so long that no one is completely sure where it originated. In 2009, however, one researcher decided to count neurons in adult brains and found that the number was just a bit off the mark.  
Based on this research, it appears that the human brain contains closer to 85 billion neurons. So while the often-cited number is a few billion too high, 85 billion is still nothing to sneeze at.  
(Source: verywell.com)

## Dust in your home could be making you fat

By Terry Nguyen

Grab your cleaning supplies: After reading about this new research, we guarantee the (rubber) gloves are going on.  
Researchers at Duke University have discovered a link between exposure to certain chemicals found in dust particles that could lead to increased fat buildup. Yes, your dusty home might be making you fat. Yikes!



According to the study, which was published in the journal Environmental Science & Technology, house dust that contains endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) can disrupt metabolic hormones and cause the body's cells to store more fat.  
These man-made EDCs are chemicals that can be found in everyday household items like electronics, cosmetics, flame-retardant coatings on furniture and food additives and packaging.  
Previous research has shown that frequent exposure to EDCs increases the risk of health conditions like breast cancer in women, prostate cancer in men and developmental delays and hyperactivity in children.  
Are you cleaning yet? Hold on, there's more!  
This new study is the first in analyzing the role EDCs play in influencing fatty cell production. To study the effects and prevalence in house dust, researchers surveyed and collected dust from 11 North Carolina homes and extracted 44 different contaminants. They then tested these on cells extracted from mice to determine the possible effects on fat buildup in the human body.  
The findings revealed that EDCs present in dust trigger a buildup of triglyceride fat in the body. Triglycerides are the most common type of fat in the human body, and having high levels of them can lead to an increased risk of heart disease or diabetes.  
"This suggests that the mixture of these chemicals in house dust is promoting the accumulation of triglycerides and fat cells," said Dr. Heather Stapleton, one of the Duke University researchers on the study.  
Out of the 11 houses surveyed, seven houses' dust samples triggered the cells to increase fat reserves, while in nine houses, the chemicals in the dust led to more precursor fat cells. "Only one of 11 dust samples appeared completely inactive," the research stated, which means there is a very high chance that these chemicals exist in an indoor environment.  
(Source: livestrong.com)

## Defend yourself from diverticulitis

Adequate fiber can protect against this painful colon condition.  
About half of Americans ages 60 to 80 have diverticulosis, a condition in which pea-sized pouches, called diverticula, bulge outward from the colon. After age 80, almost everyone has it.  
Most of the time the pouches don't cause any problems, but if the diverticula become inflamed or infected, the result is diverticulitis, which produces symptoms like fever, nausea, vomiting, and pain or tenderness in the lower abdomen. It's unclear why this happens, but it's generally thought that the pouches become infected after stool or bacteria get caught in them.  
"As men age, they tend to have more difficulty with bowel movements, so they need to be more attentive to their digestive health," says Dr. Joel Goldberg, assistant professor of surgery at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital. "Being mindful of your normal bowel patterns and how they vary can help you recognize when something is wrong, so you can seek medical attention."  
■ **Doctor diagnosis**  
Your doctor should confirm the presence of diverticulitis with a CT scan because the symptoms can mimic other conditions, including inflammatory bowel disease or stomach flu. Episodes can last a few hours to several days and recur at regular intervals or after a long period.  
Besides the physical problems, diverticulitis can cause emotional issues. A 2015 study in Quality of Life Research found that people with the condition often have feelings of fear, anxiety, and depression.

- **The role of antibiotics**  
Antibiotics used to be the first-line treatment even for mild episodes, but the new thinking is that not all diverticulitis should be treated this way. "If there is no fever, the preferred treatment is to manage minor attacks with rest, plenty of liquids, and non-narcotic pain medications," says Dr. Goldberg.  
Antibiotics are now used only for people who have severe pain, fever, and an elevated white blood cell count, as well as those who develop an abscess (a swollen area of tissue that contains pus) or a perforation (when bowel contents spill into the abdominal cavity).  
Surgery to remove the affected part of the colon is sometimes necessary if an infection becomes persistent or severe, or if someone has multiple recurrent attacks.  
You can help prevent diverticulosis by drinking plenty of fluids and eating a high-fiber diet. Studies have suggested an association between low-fiber diets and diverticulosis, since the condition is less common in places like Asia and Africa, where people eat diets high in vegetable fiber compared with the typically low-fiber diets in America and Great Britain.  
Fiber helps to soften the stool so it can pass easily through the intestines. If the stool is too hard, constipation can occur. Straining to pass hard stool puts pressure on your colon, which may cause weak spots to bulge out.  
(Source: health.harvard.edu)



## TRAVELOGUE

### Trekking through mountains of Iran more beautiful than beautiful

By Dan MacCarthy

The wild rhubarb was simply delicious. High in the Alborz Mountains overlooking the Caspian Sea in Iran, our hiking guide Ali gathers armfuls of the knobby stalks and peels them for us. This was for the starter which we would later consume.

This veteran of the Iran/Iraq war in the 1980s, has a keen eye for flora and a forager's eye for our evening meal. A bit later when we have crossed the last of the day's glaciers we descend into a lush valley to the hamlet of Avatar.



A couple of small children playing cowboys and Indians rush out to greet us.

Their parents give us a huge welcome and straight away we are welcomed into their house and offered the sweetest tea imaginable. Squatting on his elaborate rug against a whitewashed interior, the grandfather of the family gives us a toothy grin as if to say "you crossed the mountains, welcome to my home".

Meanwhile, Ali has taken from his rucksack, like a conjuror, a mouthwatering array of wild mushrooms.

He cleans, slices and skewers them and adds peppers and succulent tomatoes in seconds and roasts them over an open fire. Our party of five Irish trekkers agree that not only are they the best mushrooms we have ever tasted but among the best meals we have ever had.

This is not a food article masquerading as a travel article. A pity, because we had several other heavenly food adventures. Later, we settle down for the night, three to a room, on a heavily carpeted floor on mattresses. Many Iranians don't used beds at all. It is considered healthier to rest on a thin mattress.

This is day two of a four-day trek in the Alborz organized by Farzin Malaki who is the owner of the mountain lodge Khoone Geli — our destination on the Caspian Sea.

To get to the mountains we had taken a two-hour train trip to the city of Qazvin from Tehran where a soldier examined our visas. Straightaway, our tour guide for a tour of Assassins Valley arrives.

Hossein Farhady is a trendy exemplar of modern Iran. Fluent in English and other languages, he talks easily about life in the country. We start driving into the mountains on excellent roads and immediately cleave through mountain passes and onto a towering canyon where eagles dare. We visit a meadow nestled under the mountains where a contented lizard surveys his kingdom of rose, poppy and vetch.

The highlight of this tour is Alamut Castle in Assassins Valley which has a commanding view of the valley below and from where the eponymous assassins sallied forth to send Persian Empire soldiers to meet their maker.

History sweeps on and the poor assassins themselves were later engulfed by the Mongol hordes. Then Hossein and his co-driver Sojrab, a national weightlifting champion, kindly drop us to the start of our trek: Garmaroud.

Having been deposited to the town of Garmaroud with its striking gold-looking mosque (it's actually brass), we are welcomed straight away by a young girl who wants to know where we're from. Once informed, she tells us "I love Ireland".

OK, OK, everyone gets to hear that about their country, but it was still nice. We then meet our war veteran Ali, dressed immaculately in khaki, who leads us through winding streets to our home for the night. A delicious dinner of rice and stew follows, washed down with water and tea — no alcohol of course.

Next morning we set off on out trek which will take us to around 2,800m.

Last month the mountains still had a covering of snow on high ground and with several glaciers filling gullies it has the appearance of the Alps.

We cross a wooden footbridge over a small river and soon are climbing through lush foliage. Left and right are huge bushes of dill, while poplars tower overhead. Ali indicates a mush of green on the path — bear excrement. We move swiftly along.

Soon we arrive at a col where we break for lunch and the magnificence of the Alborz Mountains is spread before us in all its grandeur. Peter from Sligo is suitably impressed and delivers a Wordsworth verse: "Earth has not anything to show more fair/ Dull would he be of soul who could pass by/ A sight so touching in its majesty".

We move on silently. A snake is coiled in the arms of a juniper.

We cross a mighty river and onwards to the village of Dineh Roud where mainly elderly people live. We receive an enormous welcome with huge smiles and vigorous handshakes.

Next morning we press on to Avatar. The next day we descend into a beautiful valley and climb an old trading trail where we encounter several goat herders and people walking between the villages.

As we arrive in our next village of Pichebon a Kurdish family rush out to meet us and invite us to their picnic — tea and cake all round. We stay in the mayor's house and have a very interesting evening learning about Iranian customs.

The next and last day of the trek is more beautiful than beautiful. The ancient caravanserai of Salaj Anbar at 3,300m was once the trading nexus between the Caspian Sea and the hinterland south of the Alborz. Now, its windows look out empty on the past.

We descend to the village through a staggeringly pretty wild-flower vista with multicolored butterflies flitting about.

That evening we meet Farzin at his lodge at Khoone Geli, Tonekabon. His home is festooned with artwork and rugs and the man himself greets us warmly.

A superb meal is served to us on his verandah in an orange grove. Having flown south to explore some cities we embark on our final tour to the desert.

Having overnighted in the city of Yazd with its baking heat and delightful citizenry, we meet our guide Massoud Jaladat who loads us into his 4x4 and drives us into the desert. (Source: Irish Examiner)

# Under tourists' eyes: Yazd Water Museum

**HERITAGE** TEHRAN — The historical city of Yazd in central Iran is famous for its qanats. Yazd Water Museum, one of the best of its kind, is devoted to the brave men who built such underground aqueducts in the past.

Located in a restored mansion with a visible qanat running underneath, the museum offers its visitors a fascinating glimpse into the hidden world of qanats through a series of photographs, exhibits and architectural drawings.

The museum charts nearly 2000 years of unique irrigation structure that has been in operation, yet describes the drilling of mother wells and associated underground water networks stretched to the ancient city.

The concept of Persian Qanat was registered on UNESCO World Heritage list in 2016. According to the UN cultural organization, the qanats provide exceptional testimony to cultural traditions and civilizations in desert areas with an arid climate.

Throughout the arid regions of Iran, agricultural and permanent settlements are supported by the ancient qanat system of tapping alluvial aquifers at the heads of valleys and conducting the water along underground tunnels by gravity, often over many kilometers.

Here is a select of comments that visitors to the museum have posted to TripAdvisor, one of the most popular travel websites in the world:

#### ■ "Fascinating"

We enjoyed our trip to the museum. Found it to be very informative giving us a fascinating insight into the history of water in Yazd. It is delightfully set in an old merchant's house and has a 'genuine' quality unlike some of the hotel exhibits attempting to offer views of their qanats. (Vivien W. From Australia; visited June 2017)

#### ■ "Give this one a go!"

My heart sank when the guide insisted on us visiting this museum. But I'm glad we did.



A view of the Yazd Water Museum with one of its life-sized wax effigies in the foreground.

It was fascinating. There were very few visitors to the charming building, built around a beautiful garden. But the exhibits would interest almost anyone, not just hydraulic engineers, illustrating how a place like Yazd, in the middle of a desert, can not only support human habitation but also lush gardens. (Alexandra B. from New Zealand; visited May 2017)

#### ■ "Water in the desert"

source of life and for a city you need a lot of it. It's interesting to see how they brought

the water from the mountain to the city.

Not the newest museum but still good to visit when you're interested in such things. (Graido from Switzerland; visited May 2017)

#### ■ "Look at the pictures"

This is a fascinating museum which chronicles the tunneling of the qanats which supply water to Yazd. The conditions of the workers elicits a feeling of admiration. Give yourself enough time to sit and enjoy the gardens! (Romford from United Kingdom; visited April 2017)

#### ■ "Very interesting"

It's a very interesting museum where you can learn a lot about water harvesting, transport and management in the desert environment of Yazd. Highly recommended. (Nuno B. from Portugal; visited May 2016)

Elier this month, the historical structure of Yazd was made a United Nations World Heritage site. The oasis city is wedged between the northern Dasht-e Kavir and southern Dasht-e Lut on a flat plain ringed by mountains.

## Iranian tourism firms to attend French fair in Sept.

**TOURISM** TEHRAN — A total of 14 Iranian tourism-associated businesses are scheduled to showcase handicrafts, traditions, and tourism potentials of the country at the 39th IFTM Top Resa, which will be held in Paris from Sept. 26 to 29.

Iran will also hold variety of live performances, exhibits, meetings, and workshops on handicrafts at hall number 1 of the exhibit, IRNA reported on Wednesday.

The Touring & Automobile Club of the Islamic Republic of Iran (TACI) under the

auspices of the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization is tasked to run the country's pavilion which will cover some 100 square meters.

"The Iran pavilion's area will be increased by 100 percent to 99 square meters thanks to significant welcome of participants last year," IRNA quoted TACI Director Ebadreza Eslami as saying.

Founded in 1978, the event is estimated to attract over 30,000 professional visitors from more than 1,600 brands at its vast venue, the Paris Expo Porte de Versailles.



## U.S. to ban citizens from travel to North Korea, tour operators say

Two travel companies that operate tours to North Korea have said the U.S. government will soon ban its citizens from travelling to the North.

It follows the death of Otto Warmbier, a U.S. student who was arrested and sentenced to 15 years of hard labor while visiting North Korea. He was released in June in a coma and died in hospital in

Cincinnati days after being medically evacuated.

Koryo Tours said on Friday the ban would be announced on 27 July and would go into effect 30 days later. It did not say how long the ban would last.

Another tour operator, Young Pioneer Tours, said in a tweet that it had also been informed of the ban,

citing the same date.

Young Pioneer Tours was the agency that took Warmbier to North Korea.

His parents, Fred and Cindy Warmbier, said his death was a result of "the awful torturous mistreatment our son received at the hands of the North Koreans".

Warmbier was arrested at Pyongyang airport in January 2016 for al-

legedly taking a propaganda poster from his hotel room, where he had been staying as part of an organized tour.

The University of Virginia student wept at his sentencing, saying: "I have made the worst mistake of my life." The trial reportedly lasted less than an hour.

(Source: The Guardian)

## Persepolis and its mesmerizing bas-relief carvings

**TOURISM** Photo depicts a stone staircase dominated by magnificent bas-relief carvings at Persepolis, a UNESCO World Heritage site in southern Iran, July 15, 2017.

The topmost bas-relief depicting a lion attacking a bull is a recurrent theme among Persepolis sculptures. Persepolis was the ceremonial capital of Achaemenid Empire (550 –330 BC).

Open to interpretation, this mythological scene is widely believed to point at the time of vernal equinox as the lion is a symbol of the summer sun that defeats the bull which can be referred to as the winter's rain.

One of the great wonders of the ancient world, Persepolis bears unique witness to ancient Iranian architecture, urban planning, construction technology, and arts. It also embodies a grand idea that was conceived by Darius the Great who, in 520 BC, inherited the responsibility for ruling the world's first known empire founded by his predecessor, Cyrus the Great.





# Immunized cows produce anti-HIV antibodies

Cows injected with a protein that mimics HIV's envelope make broadly neutralizing antibodies that inhibit multiple strains of the virus.

Scientists have long sought an HIV vaccine that would elicit the production of broadly neutralizing antibodies, which are thought to be key to stopping a wide range of viral strains. But this turns out to be a difficult task; only about 20 percent of HIV-infected individuals produce such antibodies.

According to a study published on July 20 in *Nature*, cows may be up for the job.

In the last few years, researchers have discovered that broadly neutralizing antibodies against HIV tended to be large, unruly proteins.

## ■ Cows' antibodies

Alongside this finding, other scientists happened to find that cows' antibodies tended to be similarly large and unruly.

"It was an alignment of the stars, where we had veterinarians, cow antibody scientists, and HIV scientists all talking and came up with this ... relatively simple question to test," Devin Sok, director for antibody discovery and development at the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative,



tells *STAT News*.

Sure enough, immunizing four cows with a protein that mimics the HIV envelope, Sok and his colleagues were able to elicit the production of the broadly neu-

tralizing antibodies they were after.

Antibodies isolated from blood samples drawn from the cows in the first two months following immunization proved effective at blocking numerous HIV

strains from infecting cells in vitro.

"I was shocked," Sok tells *TIME*. "It was really crazy and very exciting. The responses developed very quickly—between one to two months—which is well beyond what we anticipated."

## ■ Cellular engineering

With a little cellular engineering, the cow-made antibodies could one day be used for short-term protection or to treat HIV-infected individuals.

It would be ideal to generate a vaccine to elicit the production of broadly neutralizing antibodies in people — a task that has yet to be achieved, John Mascola, director of vaccine research at National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), which helped fund the study, tells *STAT*.

The "study ... doesn't tell us how to make a vaccine for HIV in people," he says, "but it does tell us how the virus evades the human immune response."

Anthony Fauci, director of NIAID, agrees. The "kind of insight we get from studying this is an understanding of the mechanisms whereby the cows' immune system is capable of creating these antibodies," Fauci tells *TIME*.

(Source: *The Scientist*)

**With a little cellular engineering, the cow-made antibodies could one day be used for short-term protection or to treat HIV-infected individuals.**

## An experiment in Zurich brings us nearer to a black hole's mysteries

The equations that describe the universe at the smallest and largest scales — how the tiniest elementary particles dance, how the space-time of the cosmos bends — predicted a slight incongruity, a tiny unbalancing in the numbers of certain particles under certain circumstances.

But physicists have yet to observe this phenomenon, with the unwieldy name of mixed axial-gravitational anomaly, and confirm the prediction. The imbalance is negligible except when the warping of space-time is extreme — like next to a black hole or the moment after the Big Bang.

It turns out there was somewhere else to look, and it was much closer. An international team of scientists discovered this anomaly in a tabletop apparatus in Zurich examining the properties of a tiny metallic ribbon.

"There was no way to test this effect until now," said Johannes Gooth, a scientist at IBM Research in Zurich who is the lead author of a paper published on Wednesday by the journal *Nature*.

## ■ Black holes

The IBM experiment did not involve black holes, or even gravity. Instead, it took advantage of a class of exotic materials known as Weyl semimetals named for a German scientist, Hermann Weyl, whose equation first

gave rise to the possibility of such materials.

A solid Weyl semimetal crystal was first created a couple of years ago, enabling the IBM study.

The motion of electrons inside a ribbon of a semimetal is governed by essentially the same space-time-warping equations as the original mixed axial-gravitational anomaly.

The advance could have practical uses in electronics, similar to how the invention of the transistor led to computer chips.

Welcome to the place of no return — a region in space where the gravitational pull is so strong that not even light can escape it. This is a black hole.

"This could be opening the door to something new," said Bernd Gotsmann, an IBM physicist and a co-author of the *Nature* paper, who said the company was investigating how the anomaly could be exploited for generating electricity out of waste heat and for other uses.

## ■ Gravitational anomaly

The gravitational anomaly popped out from equations that describe how particles called pions moving at close to the speed of light could decay into gravitons, the fundamental particles that carry the force of gravity.

But under Einstein's theory of general relativity, the curving of space-time can tip the balance to allow this decay to occur.



A pion consists of two smaller pieces: a quark, a building block of protons and neutrons, and an antiquark, the antimatter equivalent of a quark.

Many elementary particles, including quarks and antiquarks, can be thought of as darts that are spinning as they fly through space. They can spin clockwise or they can spin counterclockwise.

(Source: *The NYT*)

## Scientists discover "angel particle" that is its own antiparticle

Every fundamental particle in the universe has an antiparticle, which has the same mass but the opposite charge. If a particle should ever meet its antiparticle, the two would annihilate each other in a flash of energy. But it's long been theorized that there's an exception to the rule, with certain particles that are actually their own antiparticles.

Now, scientists from Stanford and the University of California have found the first strong evidence for this type of particle, which they dub the "angel particle."

The theory dates back to 1937, when physicist Ettore Majorana highlighted a gap in the fermion family of particles.

Protons, electrons, neutrons, neutrinos and quarks are all fermions, and all have corresponding antiparticles, but according to Majorana's calculations, there should be particles that are their own antiparticles.

Since they have no charge, neutrons and neutrinos were the best candidates to be these Majorana fermions, but antineutrons have since been discovered. There's still a big question mark hanging over neutrinos though, and experiments are currently underway to determine if they are in fact their own antiparticle. However, the difficulty of the experiments means an answer is still more than a decade away.

## ■ Quite natural particles

In the meantime, the most likely way to find Majorana fermions is by looking for "quasiparticles." As the name suggests, these aren't quite natural particles, but they arise out of the collective behavior of electrons and have certain properties of particles. If that's hard to visualize, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* explains the concept like bubbles in a drink: bubbles also arise out of the "collective behavior" of the chemicals in the drink, and although they aren't really independent objects, bubbles do have measurable properties like objects, including size, shape, etc.

In the same way, quasiparticles might

not occur outside of very specific conditions, but they can be considered to be Majorana fermions if they exhibit all the right properties. Now Stanford and UC researchers say they've found a "smoking gun" signature that points to the presence of these hypothetical fermions.

"Our team predicted exactly where to find the Majorana fermion and what to look for as its 'smoking gun' experimental signature," says Shoucheng Zhang, one of the senior authors of the research paper. "This discovery concludes one of the most intensive searches in fundamental physics, which spanned exactly 80 years."

(Source: *New Atlas*)

## SARMAD Abarkhoh 500,000-Ton Rolling Mill Goes on Stream in Yazd Province

A 500,000-ton rolling mill was inaugurated in Abarkhoh, Yazd Province yesterday in the presence of minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Eng. Ne'matzadeh and a number of provincial officials.

Minister of Industry, Mine and Trade Eng. Ne'matzadeh was the first speaker in the inaugural ceremony of this industrial and production unit and said: "Industry is the driving force for the development of country."

Setting up an industrial and production unit in disadvantaged and less developed area will bring about entrance of technology, generate employment opportunities and also help improve growth and development, he said, adding: "Earlier, the country was exporting more than 20 million iron ore due to the lack of complementary units in steel industry of the country but presently, we have managed to export this mineral to abroad with creating value added through manufacturing and constructing steel units such as SARMAD 500,000-ton rolling mill."

He expressed his thanks to the investors of this industrial and production unit especially Chadormalu



Mining & Industrial Company which holds 65 percent stocks of this industrial complex and said: "It is hoped that some obstacles and problems facing investors of industrial and production sector will be resolved as soon as possible."

Chief Executive of SARMAD Abarkhoh Iron and Steel Industrial Company Eng. Samandarian was the next speaker who said: "This industrial and production

units was launched in March 2013 by Chadormalu Mining & Industrial Company and Mines and Metals Development Investment Company as joint venture (JV) with the aim of producing and meeting some demands of country to steel products."

Benefited from the most experienced and expert manpower, this industrial and production unit managed to launch this giant project in one of the most central parts of Iran's vast plateau, he said, adding: "Presently, the industrial and production unit has managed to generate employment opportunities for both native and nonnative manpower."

As large as 150 ha, SARMAD Abarkhoh Iron and Steel Production Complex has been launched with the aim of construction of rolling mill with the annual production capacity of 500,000 tons different types of round bar and also steel mfg. plant with the annual production capacity of 600,000 tons steel ingot, he maintained.

Relying upon the assistance of the Almighty God, this industrial and production unit can materialize relevant objectives in the country, he ended.

## Climate change is killing Africa's wild dogs, causing pups to starve

A new study highlighting the devastating consequences of climate change on African wild dogs finds a correlation between high temperatures and extinction.

Scientists from the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), the African Wildlife Conservation Fund and Botswana Predator Conservation Trust carried out concurrent studies in Botswana, Kenya and Zimbabwe, monitoring a total of 73 packs to research correlations between weather conditions and the mammals' hunting activity and reproduction.

The research findings, published in the peer-reviewed *Journal of Animal Ecology*, suggest high temperatures reduce hunting activity, as well as the number of pups being born and surviving each year.

"When most people think about wildlife in a changing climate, they think of polar bears clinging to melting ice, but even species who have adapted to tropical weather are being impacted by the changes to their environment," said professor Rosie Woodroffe of the ZSL's Institute of Zoology, the study's lead author, in a press release.

A young African wild dog, also called *Lycan pictus*, is pictured on August 25, 2014, at the Bioparco di Roma (Rome's zoo). Fewer than 700 packs remain in the wild, and their survival is increasingly threatened by climate change.

The spotted carnivores, which are considered to be successful predators because of their high kill rate, are natives to sub-Saharan Africa. They are already listed as an endangered species, with fewer than 700 packs currently remaining in the wild.

(Source: *Newsweek*)

## NASA scientists hope to learn about Earth's energy

August is the first of its kind in the country since 1972 and is shaping up to be quite the event. People are planning to travel to the states where the total eclipse will be visible. But in addition to a unique experience for viewers, the eclipse will also offer researchers unique insight into the Earth's energy.

NASA scientists are hoping to learn about how Earth absorbs energy and how clouds, one of the most unpredictable variables in computer models, can change the amount of energy that reaches the Earth's surface. In a release Thursday, NASA said that the inspiration for the study came from a thick cloud that blocked sunlight in Boulder, Colorado in 1998.

The observations NASA researchers will make before, during and after the eclipse will come from instruments on the ground as well as satellites. All of those observations will then be used in a three dimensional radiative transfer computer model. The hope is that these observations used in a 3-D model will lead to better estimates of Earth's energy input and output.

(Source: *IBT*)

## Ultrathin device harvests electricity from human motion

Imagine slipping into a jacket, shirt or skirt that powers your cell phone, fitness tracker and other personal electronic devices as you walk, wave and even when you are sitting.

A new, ultrathin energy harvesting system developed at Vanderbilt University's Nanomaterials and Energy Devices Laboratory has the potential to do just that. Based on battery technology and made from layers of black phosphorus that are only a few atoms thick, the new device generates small amounts of electricity when it is bent or pressed even at the extremely low frequencies characteristic of human motion.



"In the future, I expect that we will all become charging depots for our personal devices by pulling energy directly from our motions and the environment," said Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering Cary Pint, who directed the research.

The new energy harvesting system is described in a paper titled "Ultralow Frequency Electrochemical Mechanical Strain Energy Harvester using 2D Black Phosphorus Nanosheets" published Jun.21 online by the journal *ACS Energy Letters*.

"This is timely and exciting research given the growth of wearable devices such as exoskeletons and smart clothing, which could potentially benefit from Dr. Pint's advances in materials and energy harvesting," observed Karl Zelik, assistant professor of mechanical and biomedical engineering at Vanderbilt, an expert on the biomechanics of locomotion who did not participate in the device's development.

Currently, there is a tremendous amount of research These include mechanical devices designed to extract energy from vibrations and deformations; thermal devices aimed at pulling energy from temperature variations; radiant energy devices that capture energy from light, radio waves and other forms of radiation; and, electrochemical devices that tap biochemical reactions.

The "materials are atomically thin and small enough to be impregnated into textiles without affecting the fabric's look or feel and it can extract energy from movements that are slower than 10 Hertz -- 10 cycles per second -- over the whole low-frequency window of movements corresponding to human motion."

(Source: *EurekaAlert*)

## Intl. Investors Agree to Continued Growth in Gold Price Unanimously

The latest survey of KITCO News shows that economic experts and international investors will give a nod to a continued ascending growth of gold price in next week, Public Relations Dept. of Iran Mercantile Exchange (IME) reported.

Economic experts are of the opinion that

tensions related to U.S. President Donald J. Trump will exert high pressure on U.S. dollar value, the issue of which will cause an increased gold price in coming days.

Of total 18 senior economic experts, 13 of whom i.e. 72 percent predicted that gold price will experience a con-

siderable price hike in coming days, the report added.

It should be noted that 974 people participated in KITCO online survey, 567 of whom predicted that gold price will record a considerable price hike.

It seems that the continued down-

ward trend of U.S. dollar in coming days may further increase the gold prices.

The two-day meeting of U.S. Fed Reserve will be held in next week but it seems unlikely that interest rate will increase in this meeting, the Public Relations Dept. of IME ended.



## Simple, daily practices for living a happy life

As Annie Dillard writes in her book “The Writing Life”, “how we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives.” There’s no short-cut to a happy life, but there are simple things we can do to help us get there.

“We have a choice in our lives, in our behavior, and in our thoughts, as to what we want to focus on and what type of people we want to be,” host of The One You Feed podcast Eric Zimmer told Business Insider.

### ■ Meditate

Even if it’s just for two or three minutes a day, a daily meditation practice helps you be more present, focused, and empathetic, Zimmer said. Meditation can also help you understand how your mind works and avoid mental autopilot.

“Happiness is predicated on being aware,” he said. “It’s important to start training that muscle.”

If you’re a beginner, try sitting in a quiet space for a few minutes at the same time every day. Be attentive to only what is happening in that moment, concentrating on the breath. When a thought comes up, return to the breath.

Sitting meditation is also not the only way to be mindful. Zimmer said you can try other activities, like running or even cleaning up, as meditation as long as you practice being in the moment.

### ■ Set phone alarms to fight zombie scrolling

Twitter, Facebook, and Tumblr feeds are designed to get us to keep scrolling. YouTube and Netflix’s autoplay features are engineered to get us to keep bingeing.

“We have a natural desire to distract ourselves with our phones, which is not always a bad thing, but you should be consuming something you care about,” Zimmer said. “The more we are conscious about how we spend our time and do things that matter to us, the more content we will be.”

We can actually use our phones to avoid mindless Internet use. If you only want to use Facebook for 10 minutes, set an alarm. When it goes off, log off immediately.

You can also set random check-ins during the day, and then ask yourself these three questions: Where am I? What am I doing? Is what I’m doing important to me?

### ■ Play the alphabet game to derail negative thoughts

If you notice you have a lot of negative thoughts, Zimmer recommends trying the alphabet game.

Start with A, naming something you appreciate that starts with that letter. Then move to B, and do the same until you get to Z.

It’s a great strategy to get yourself out of unhealthy thought patterns, Zimmer said.

“It brings your brain back and can be more effective than just positive thinking. The puzzle aspect helps gratitude stick more,” he said.

(Source: The Independent)

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Driving Sales

A: All right, people. We’re holding this meeting today because we’ve got to do something about our sales, and we need to do it NOW! I want **concrete solutions**. How do you intend to **drive sales**? Roger?

B: Well, in fact, we’re the most expensive in the market, so maybe we need to lower our prices to match the **competitors**?

A: Lower our prices? Not very creative. It’ll never **fly with** Swan. What kind of thinking is that? Geez. Anybody else have a better plan? Natalie?

C: Um, perhaps, um, a sales **promotion**. Maybe a **two-for-one** offer, or something like that!

A: What? That’s the same thing. Bad idea. Really bad idea. Dammit people come on! Think! The CEO will **be here any minute**.

D: Do we have any ideas yet?

C: Yes Mr. Swan, we were kind of **considering** a two-for-one offer to get more **competitive**.

D: A two-for-one promotion? Hmm. I kind of like the sound of that. It sounds like something we should consider.

A: Yeah, exactly. Just what I was thinking! In fact, that’s a **brilliant** idea! I’m glad we thought of that. Very creative.

### ■ Key vocabulary

**concrete solutions**: a real or specific solution to a problem

**drive sales**: increase sales

**in the market**: in the industry

**to match the competitors**: be the as good as or better than others companies in the same industry

**competitor**: a person, team, company etc. that is competing with another

**will never fly**: will not work, will not be approved

**promotion**: something done to make people aware of a product

**two for one**: two items for the price of one item

**be here any minute**: will arrive very soon

**to consider**: thinking about

**competitive**: as good as or better than others of the same type

**brilliant**: excellent

### ■ Supplementary vocabulary

**win sales**: make sales successfully

**sales strategy**: plans for a company’s sales activities

**sales cycle**: the process a customer goes though when deciding to buy a product

**to outsell**: to sell more than others

**customer loyalty**: when a customer buys the same brand over and over

(Source: irlanguage.com)

lifestyle.tehrantimes@gmail.com

# Successful healthcare reform plan justifies the costs: minister

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — The **d e s k** healthcare reform plan’s success justifies the expenses arising from its implementation, Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi told the Persian language Sharq newspaper in an interview published on Saturday.

The healthcare reform plan, aiming at decreasing the out-of-pocket expenses for the patients, promoting natural birth, and supporting underprivileged patients suffering from rare or incurable diseases, was launched in the country in May 2014.

The plan has since faced a barrage of harsh criticism for being futile and inefficient with regard to the resources diverted into implementing it.

“The overall costs of the healthcare reform plan’s implementation amount to some 120 trillion rials (nearly \$3 billion) since the day it was launched which for one, along with its many other achievements, resulted in health insurance coverage for 11 million people [living in underprivileged areas],” Qazizadeh-Hashemi highlighted.

The minister went on to say that “Now compare it to the amount of money spent on self-sufficiency in production



of wheat which values at 150 trillion rials (nearly \$3.75 billion) per annum; half the money would do for importing wheat into the country.”

## WHO endorses Iran’s complete mortality data

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — The World Health **d e s k** Organization has endorsed Iran’s reliable completeness in classification of the leading causes of death, IRNA news agency reported on Saturday.

In a letter to the Iranian Health Minister Hassan Qazizadeh-Hashemi, Margaret Chan, the Director-General of WHO, has suggested that Iran presents an excellent model for other countries in classification of causes of death.

Chan further explained that the long-term and step-by-step strategy of collecting mortality data have mobilized Iran in delivering care, preventing diseases



and improving nation’s general health. The WHO senior official also advised other countries to follow the same path to make progress in health sector.

Iran’s mortality data, endorsed by WHO, is pertaining to the 20 leading causes of deaths by age and sex recorded over the last Iranian calendar year 1394 (March 2015-March 2016).

The figures reveal that cardiovascular diseases with 44.13 percent, cancer with 15.9 percent, unintentional injuries with 8.66 percent, respiratory diseases with 6.99 percent, and endocrine and metabolic diseases with 5.92 percent accounts for the leading causes of the diseases over the past year.

## Tehran to host International Olympiad in Informatics

**SOCIETY TEHRAN** — Tehran will play host to the 29th International Olympiad in Informatics (IOI 2017) from July 28 to August 4.

The IOI is an annual international competition for high school students from various invited countries, accompanied by social and cultural programmers. This year some 300 students from 85 countries from around the world will participate in the event.

According to the IOI official website, the original idea of initiating the IOI was proposed to the 24th general conference of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) by the Bulgarian delegate Professor Sendov in October 1987. This plan was included into the fifth main program of UNESCO for the biennium 1988–1989. In May 1989, UNESCO initiated and sponsored the first IOI, which was held in Pravetz, Bulgaria.

Each participating country is represented by a team



of up to four contestants. The competition will take place during two competition days both of which are directly preceded and followed by a non-competition day. During the competition each contestant must work independently on a desk with an appropriate computer, access to the competition procedures (translated if required), writing instrument and paper.

According to the IOI regulations, the main objectives to be accomplished by the IOI include discovering, encouraging, bringing together, challenging, and giving recognition to young people who are exceptionally talented in the field of informatics.

It additionally aims at fostering friendly international relationships among computer scientists and informatics educators, bringing the discipline of informatics to the attention of young people, and promoting the organization of informatics competitions for students at schools for secondary education.

## No dye: Cancer patients’ gray hair darkened on immune drugs

**CHICAGO (AP)** — Cancer patients’ gray hair unexpectedly turned youthfully dark while taking novel drugs, and it has doctors scratching their heads.

Chemotherapy is notorious for making hair fall out, but the 14 patients involved were all being treated with new immunotherapy drugs that work differently and have different side effects. A Spanish study suggests that may include restoring hair pigment, at least in patients with lung cancer.

With the first patient, “we thought it could be an isolated case,” said Dr. Noelia Rivera, a dermatologist at Autonomous University of Barcelona.

But she said the research team found the same thing when they asked other patients for photos from before treatment.

The 14 cases were among 52 lung cancer patients being followed to see whether they developed bad side effects from the drugs — Keytruda, Opdivo and Tecentriq.

While most patients did not have a color change, the 14 cases suggest it’s not an isolated finding. In 13 patients, hair turned darkish brown or black. In one patient, it turned black in patches.

In another odd twist, the same drugs have been linked previously with hair losing color in patients with another cancer, melanoma.


All but one of the 14 patients in the Spanish study had at least stable disease and responded better to treatment than other patients, suggesting that hair darkening might be an indication that the drugs are working, the researchers said.

Rivera said they are continuing the study to search for an explanation and to see if the cases are just a fluke.

Dr. June Robinson, a Northwestern University research professor in dermatology, said the results deserve a deeper look but cautioned that it’s way too soon to suggest that they might lead to new treatments for gray hair.

First Announcement

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# Sheikh Tamim: Any talks must respect Qatar sovereignty

Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani has said that his country is ready for dialogue to resolve a diplomatic crisis with a House of Saud regime-led group, but stressed that any solution to the crisis must respect his country's sovereignty.

"We are open to dialogue to resolve the outstanding problems [so long as Qatar's] sovereignty is respected," Al Thani said in a televised address, his first since Saudi regime, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Egypt cut ties with the Persian Gulf tiny state.

Qatar has been targeted by the unprecedented campaign, Al Thani said, adding that he valued Kuwait's mediation and the support of the United States, Turkey and Germany for their efforts to resolve the crisis.

The emir thanked Turkey for "putting into force quickly a cooperation agreement signed between us and meeting our basic needs".

"It is clear that the campaign against us was preplanned. We took a test and passed it," Al Thani said.

The emir hailed the solidarity and resolve that Qataris have shown in the face of the crisis, and said it would make his country, which will host football's World Cup in 2022, even more resilient.

"People are amazed to see Qatari people maintaining a high level of morale despite the unprecedented smearing campaign," Al Thani said.

"It was a true ethical trial. Our people have passed the test with colors, and we have held steadfast to our principles and



traditions even in the time of trials, simple for the reason that we respect ourselves."

"I call on all of you to continue to hold on to that."

The House of Saud regime, Bahrain, UAE and Egypt have imposed sanctions on Qatar, accusing it of financing "extremist" groups and allying with Iran, allegations that Doha denies.

In his address, the emir stressed that Qatar was fighting "terrorism" not to please others, but because it believes in that mission.

"Qatar is fighting terrorism, relentlessly and without compromises, and there is international recognition of Qatar's role

in this regard," he said.

The U.S. and other Western countries have dispatched senior envoys to the region to press both sides to resolve the dispute.

The crisis was precipitated after Qatar's News Agency, the country's state media, was hacked to post a false statement from the emir purportedly critical of the U.S. foreign policy.

Al Thani said the four countries tried to undermine Qatar's foreign policy, and muzzle freedom of expression.

"The perpetrators have undermined our sovereignty and independence by fabricating false statements to mislead inter-

national public opinion," the emir said.

Qatar's Ministry of Interior on July 20 said the cyber-attacks originated in the UAE.

The Saudi regime-led sanctions include closing Qatar's only land border, refusing Qatar access to their airspace and ordering their citizens back from Qatar. The measures have disrupted the import of food and other items and caused foreign banks to scale back business with Qatar.

Initially, the Saudi regime-led bloc issued a tough 13-point list of demands needed to resolve the crisis, including shutting down news outlets including Al Jazeera, cutting ties with Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, limiting ties with Iran and expelling Turkish troops stationed in the country.

Qatar refused to bow to the demands within a 10-day deadline, and the anti-Qatar bloc has begun to shift its focus toward six principles on combatting "extremism and terrorism".

The speech comes a day after Qatar's ruler issued a decree setting new rules for defining "terrorism", freezing funding and "terrorism financing", and established national "terrorism" lists.

Earlier in the day, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the U.S. was satisfied with Qatar's efforts to address concerns about "terror financing" and "counterterrorism".

He urged Qatar's neighbors to lift a land blockade as a "sign of good faith".

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Saudi Arabia: Bin Nayef 'addicted to cocaine'

A source close to the Saudi regime court has alleged that the country's former crown prince, who was ousted last month and was replaced by the king's favorite son, is addicted to morphine and cocaine.

The summary removal of the then-crown prince Mohammed bin Nayef raised eyebrows at home and abroad. Some observers have said the incident amounted to a palace "coup".

In the absence of any official explanation, reports emerged of anonymous sources purporting that bin Nayef, who lost the position to Mohammed bin Salman by royal fiat on June 21, had drug problems. Initially, the Saudi sources alleged morphine abuse, which they said Nayef used to relieve pain from a shrapnel he received during a botched attack against him in 2009.

But on Friday, another source close to the Saudi court seemed to further stretch that narrative.

Nayef was dismissed due to morphine and cocaine addiction, the source told Reuters, anonymously.

"MbN has a lot of respect among us as a crown prince and as interior minister but there are higher interests for the state, which are more important than social position or status," the source said, referring to Nayef with an abbreviation of his name.

But sources close to the former crown prince have seemed to imply that the allegations of addiction are not true, and that a behind-the-scenes power struggle

had been at play.

Reuters said that bin Salman had been using his relationship with his king father "to reorder the top jobs in the political, oil, security, security and intelligence sectors, often without the knowledge" of bin Nayef.

The House of Saud regime's ailing 81-year-old King Salman has been reportedly suffering from partial dementia and is said to be contemplating an abdication in favor of his son.

Since his ouster, bin Nayef has reportedly been under house arrest. He has seen his security guards changed and has not been allowed to receive visitors except close family members, according to sources close to him.

One such source said earlier that bin Nayef had wanted to take his family to Switzerland or Britain, but the king and his son had decided that he had to stay. "He wasn't given any choice," the source said.

Accounts emerged recently that bin Nayef had been pressured overnight to end his claim to the throne, which he did under duress. He later appeared in footage pledging allegiance to the new crown prince.

Bin Nayef was also relieved of his duties as interior minister.

Speaking to Reuters, sources said that bin Nayef had been "usurped" by the "often impulsive" Mohammed bin Salman, saying he had not expected to be removed in such a manner.



Bin Nayef reportedly believed that bin Salman had "made a number of policy blunders, such as his handling of the Yemen conflict and cutting financial benefits to civil servants."

As the House of Saud regime's defense minister, bin Salman is believed to have been largely responsible for the disastrous invasion of Yemen, where high civilian casualties and a cholera epidemic have raised international alarm.

(Source: Press TV)

## Hawaii prepares for 'unlikely' North Korea missile threat

The United States state of Hawaii is preparing the public for a possible ballistic missile strike from North Korea.

The state's Emergency Management Agency said on Friday that it would launch an education program for the public in November.

The agency will begin monthly tests of an "attack-warning" siren.

The wailing siren will be tested on the first working day of each month, after a test of an "attention-alert" steady tone siren with which residents are already familiar.

Informational brochures, along with TV, radio and internet announcements

will help educate the public about the new siren sound and provide preparedness guidance. "If they're not educated, they could actually be frightened by it," agency Executive Director Toby Clairmont said of needing several months to introduce the new siren.

Because it would take a missile 15 minutes — maybe 20 minutes — to arrive, the instructions to the public are simple: "Get inside, stay inside and stay tuned," said Vern Miyagi, agency administrator. "You will not have time to pick up your family and go to a shelter and all that kind of stuff ... It has to be automatic."

He stressed that his agency is simply trying to stay ahead of a "very unlikely" scenario, but it's a possibility that Hawaii can't ignore.

Hawaii is an important strategic outpost for the U.S. military. The island of Oahu is home to the U.S. Pacific Command, the military's headquarters for the Asia-Pacific region. It also hosts dozens of Navy ships at Pearl Harbor and is a key base for the Air Force, Army and Marine Corps.

Hawaii residents, who already face hazards including from tsunami and hurricanes, are familiar with disaster prepar-

edness. Because it's currently hurricane season, residents should already have an emergency kit that includes 14-days of food and water.

"It also works for this type of scenario," said Lt. Col. Charles Anthony, spokesman for the Hawaii State Department of Defense.

The state of Hawaii is the first state in the U.S. to plan the missile preparedness program following North Korea's 4th of July announcement that it had developed an intercontinental ballistic missile capable of reaching the U.S.

(Source: agencies)

## Son of Afghan Taliban leader dies carrying out suicide attack

The son of Taliban terrorist outfit's Leader Mullah Haibatullah Akhundzada died carrying out a suicide attack in the province of Helmand in southern Afghanistan, one of the insurgent movement's main spokesmen said.

Abdur Rahman, 23, also known as Hafiz Khalid, died driving a vehicle laden with explosives into an Afghan military base in the town of Gereshk, north of the provincial capital Lashkar Gah, Qari Yousaf Ahmadi, the Taliban's main spokesman for southern Afghanistan, said.

He said Abdur Rahman had been a madrassa student but had wanted to carry out a suicide attack. "He succeeded in his mission last Thursday," he said.

Taliban terrorists drove three captured Humvee vehicles into checkpoints during heavy fighting around Gereshk on Thursday.

One senior Taliban member, close to Haibatullah's family, said Abdur Rahman had enrolled as a suicide bomber before his father became leader of the Taliban last year and had insisted on continuing after his father took office.

Mullah Haibatullah took over leadership of the Taliban after his predecessor, Mullah Akhtar Mohammad Mansour died in a United States drone strike in Pakistan in May, 2016.

"Before this, a number of close relatives and family members of previous supreme leaders had conducted suicide bombings but Sheikh Haibatullah has become the first supreme leader whose son sacrificed his life," the senior Taliban member said.

A government official said security authorities were investigating the incident and could not confirm that Mullah Haibatullah's son had been killed.

The incident in Gereshk came as fighting in Helmand, source of most of Afghanistan's opium crop, has intensified in recent days following the end of the harvest season.

(Source: Reuters)

## Stop playing games with the Iranian nuclear deal: LA Times

As a candidate Trump denounced the nuclear agreement as "the worst deal ever negotiated." As president, he has complained that Iran was "not living up to the spirit of the agreement." What he means by that isn't clear, but State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said this week that "Iran's other malign activities are serving to undercut

whatever positive contributions to regional and international peace and security were intended to emerge" from the nuclear deal.

It's true that some — including, perhaps, President Obama — hoped that the agreement would mark the beginning of Iran's rapprochement with the West. That clearly hasn't happened. But

the agreement itself was never conditioned on Iran's good behavior in other areas. And the country's "malign activities" — whether they be testing ballistic missiles or supporting groups like Hezbollah — aren't prohibited by the nuclear pact. They can, however, be addressed separately. Last month the Senate approved legislation that would increase

sanctions against Iran for recent ballistic missile tests. (The same legislation contains sanctions against Russia, which has slowed its progress through the House.)

It's time for Trump to stop playing games with U.S. support for the nuclear agreement. So long as Iran complies with the terms, the U.S. should live up to its obligations.

## Syria demands reparation from U.S., allies for destroying Syria infrastructure

Such attacks, along with U.S. and European Union-imposed economic restrictions on Syria, "are impeding the maintenance of those economic facilities and jeopardizing the prospects for development and reconstruction" in the nation, the letters added.

The development came as the U.S.-led coalition announced on Friday that it destroyed a number of oil and gas facilities in various parts of Syria, claiming that they belonged to the ISIL terrorist group.

The so-called Operation Inherent Resolve confirmed a total of 603 civilian deaths by the coalition's air campaign in Syria and Iraq this month.

However, the figure is much lower than those provided by monitoring groups.

Airwars reported this week that it tracked "more than 700 likely civilian deaths" in Syria's Raqqah Province alone — even before the battle for liberating the city began in June.

(Source: SANA)

## Justin Trudeau masters the Trump two-step

Trudeau has avoided confrontation even when Trump has attacked Canada. After Trump called Canada's trade policies a "disgrace," Trudeau responded with almost a parody of Canadian politeness, cautiously saying he would defend Canada's interests: "The way to do that is to make arguments in a respectful fashion, based on facts, and work constructively and collaboratively with our neighbors." Trudeau has been swift to compliment the U.S. president, commending Trump's listening skills, open-mindedness, and authenticity. He has even reached out to Ivanka Trump, the president's daughter, taking her to a Broadway play - a play about Canadians helping Americans after 9/11.

Trump is historically unpopular in Canada, bringing down America's reputation to unprecedented low levels. A poll recently cited by Newsweek had only 9 percent of Canadians saying they have a very favorable view of the United States. One of Trudeau's opponents, Tom Mulcair, who leads the left-wing New Democratic Party, has called Trump a fascist and demanded Trudeau "stand up" and "denounce" the American president.

So why isn't Trudeau using Canada's stellar international reputation to lead the world's anti-Trump forces?

### ■ Power imbalance in relationship

Well, Canada is dependent on the United States, in ways few other nations are. About 75 percent of Canadian exports go to the U.S. If Trump closed down the Canadian border, it would mean an instant weakening of the Canadian economy. (It would also harm the U.S. economy, of course, but not nearly as much. Only 18.3 percent of the U.S.'s exports are to Canada.) Canadian leaders are well aware of the power imbalance in the relationship. "We don't have the luxury that the Germans have of an ocean between us," a former Canadian diplomat told the New York Times. "And we don't have a Plan B."

Although Canadians' distaste for Trump is strong, this is hardly the first time an American president has been strongly disliked. George W. Bush was almost as hated as Trump is. Jean Chrétien, like Trudeau, a Liberal who was prime minister during Bush's presidency, had to navigate similarly choppy waters in Canada-U.S. relations during this period. Chrétien kept Canada out of the Iraq War, even while avoiding public antagonism with Bush.

Pierre Trudeau, father of Justin, was despised by Richard Nixon, who called him, a "son of a b\*\*ch ... an egghead ... a\*\*hole." That led to Trudeau's response, famous in Canada: "I've been called worse things by better people." But Nixon's resentment of Trudeau didn't stop the Canadian prime minister from calling the president during Watergate to offer private support.

Sweet-talking an embattled Republican president while maintaining Canadian independence is a dance the younger Trudeau now seems to be mastering.

(Source: Reuters)

## The price of defiance: Why US, Saudi Arabia turning Kuwait against Iran

He explained that there are no deep trade-economic relations between the two states, only political and cultural. Hence the demarche won't have any impact on the economy of Iran.

Commenting on the conviction of the members of the Al Abdali terror cell, and the accusation of the members in espionage on behalf of Iran, Hassan Hanizadeh noted that Iran would not spend any resources attempting to glean intelligence from Kuwait, hence all the accusations are illogical and unreasonable.

"Kuwait is not the type of country for Iran to spend its intelligence resources on. It has neither a strong army nor any objects of infrastructure, such as a nuclear power plant, for example. It is not of any particular value to Iranian intelligence services. Hence, any accusations of espionage are absurd and unreasonable," he told Sputnik.

The political analyst said that scenario, which has got the name of "Al Abdali process" had been planned beforehand by the Americans and the Saudis. One of its aims is to clear the way for the breakup of ties between Iran and the member states of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Persian Gulf.

Among other possible reasons of the Kuwaiti demarche, Hassan Hanizadeh suggested that it could be the discontent of the fast growing Shia Muslim population of the country. The Shia Muslim community makes over 40% of the total population of the country. And the Kuwaiti authorities don't want them to set their eyes on Iran. Thus they are trying to lessen Iran's influence on their country, he concluded.

(Source: RT)



## Arsenal 0-3 Chelsea: Batshuayi brilliance downs Gunners

Chelsea laid down a marker for the season ahead with a convincing 3-0 friendly win over Arsenal at the Bird's Nest Stadium in Beijing.

Goals from Willian and a couple from Michy Batshuayi gave Antonio Conte's side the victory, reflecting their dominance over Arsenal with Arsene Wenger's men failing to make any sort of impression on the match.



Alexandre Lacazette led the line for the Gunners, with Wenger's side concluding their pre-season tour of the Far East before next month's Community Shield clash against the same opposition on August 6.

Chelsea still have two friendlies in Singapore to play before that date at Wembley. The French striker was denied any kind of service, though, with Chelsea showing their superiority, particularly in the first half.

The Blues added a third just minutes after the restart, with Batshuayi netting the goal of the game, striking home from the edge of the box after a rapid counter attack.

Arsene Wenger's side conclude their pre-season preparations with matches against Benfica on July 29 and Sevilla a day later at the Emirates. Arsenal begin their season against Chelsea in the Community Shield match on August 6.

(Source: Eurosport)

## Manchester City 'agree deal for Monaco's Benjamin Mendy'

Manchester City have agreed a fee for Monaco full-back Benjamin Mendy, according to reports.

The France international looks set to join Pep Guardiola's side in a deal worth £51 million, which would surpass the £50m fee City paid for Kyle Walker, making him the Premier League's most expensive defender.

The 23-year-old will reportedly fly out to Los Angeles to join up with City for their pre-season tour of the USA.

City were one of several Premier League sides interested in signing the Monaco defender, with their rivals Manchester United and champions Chelsea also keen.

Mendy hinted that he would be heading to England earlier this month when he took to Instagram, posting a photo of himself in a pair of Union Jack shorts, with the caption "see you soon."

<https://www.instagram.com/p/BWagIXBglXY/?taken-by=benmendy23&hl=en>

Guardiola had a bid of £44.5m rejected by the Ligue 1 side earlier this week, with Monaco believing that he was worth more than Walker, who made the switch to the Etihad from Tottenham last week.

It now appears that the City boss has persuaded the French champions to sell one of their most-coveted stars with a bid of £51m. Mendy would be City's fifth signing of the summer.

(Sourcer: Eurosport UK)

## Bayern Munich 0-4 AC Milan: Ancelotti's side battered as Bonucci makes debut

AC Milan stunned Bayern Munich with a commanding 4-0 victory in the International Champions Cup on Saturday.

First goals for the club from Franck Kessie and Hakan Calhanoglu, either side of a double from young striker Patrick Cutrone, gave Vincenzo Montella's side the win in Shenzhen against a disjointed Bayern side.

Rossoneri fans were also treated to debuts for Leonardo Bonucci, who came on in the second half for his first appearance since completing a shock transfer from Juventus, as well as fellow star signing Andre Silva.

Milan's 3-1 loss to Borussia Dortmund led to supporters calling for further reinforcements to the squad during an already hectic transfer window, but Saturday's clash started in far more encouraging fashion.

Kessie opened the scoring with 14 minutes played, the midfielder reacting quickest to prod in Ricardo Rodriguez's deflected cross after good interplay between the full-back and M'Baye Niang.

Eleven minutes later, Milan doubled their lead. Bayern's dreadful defending from a Rodriguez free-kick allowed Cutrone to ghost in unmarked and head beyond Christian Fruchtl from 12 yards.

Matters got worse for Bayern before the break as Juan Bernat hobbled off after falling awkwardly, before Robert Lewandowski sent a volley narrowly wide and then failed to connect from point-blank range after a dazzling run from Franck Ribery.

Moments later, Milan made it 3-0 in style. Niang started a counter-attack from his own half, exchanged passes with Cutrone and released Giacomo Bonaventura into the area down the left, the midfielder crossing for Cutrone to tap home his second.

The Bundesliga champions were looking resigned to their loss and Calhanoglu took full advantage with five minutes left to play, the Turkey international collecting Gustavo Gomez's pass, drifting infield from the left and blasting low past Fruchtl before a single Bayern challenge had been attempted.

(Source: Soccerway)

# Pele's son returns to prison

The son of Brazil great Pele has returned to prison after his appeal against a sentence on drug trafficking and money laundering charges was rejected.

Edinho, a former Santos goalkeeper, handed himself in to police on Friday after a Brazilian court ordered his return to prison.

His solicitor said they would take their appeal to the Supreme Court following the latest failed attempt to quash the conviction.

"As he always did, Edson showed up when the arrest warrant was issued," Eugenio Malavasi was quoted as saying by A Tribuna.

In quotes reported by UOL, he said: "We're discussing the sentences and interposing extraordinary appeals.

"I obtained two injunctions at the High Court of Justice and the appeals have been rejected, but there are still appeals with the Supreme Federal Court and Superior Court of Justice."

Edinho was first arrested in 2005 but he has always denied any wrongdoing and appealed against the charges. He was given a custodial sentence of 33 years in 2014 but that was later reduced to 12 years and 10 months.

The 46-year-old returned to prison to serve his sentence in February but was released in March as he continued his appeal process.

Speaking at the time, he insisted that the case against him is based purely on his association with other suspects.

"The frustration is huge because I'm being accused of money laundering, but I've never done that. There's no proof in this process of that," he said, as quoted by Globo.

"The argument is related to my friendship with the



other accused. I have never denied that but I have never laundered money. The argument for conviction is simply friendship. It's difficult to accept and to go through everything I've gone through for more than 15 years.

"I'm ashamed, I regret my carelessness, but I did not

commit a crime. I'm strong. I'm going to overcome this."

Three-time World Cup-winner Pele stated his confidence that the case would collapse back in 2006, insisting "there is not a shred of evidence against my son".

(Source: Four Four Two)

## Nemanja Matic to Man Utd: Roman Abramovich sanctions £50m move

CHELSEA have given the green light for Nemanja Matic to join Manchester United this summer.

Nemanja Matic has been linked with a move to Manchester United all summer but Chelsea were reluctant to let him join their rivals.

The Serbia international is said to be keen to leave Stamford Bridge following the arrival of Tiemoue Bakayoko from Monaco.

Fearing for his game time this season, the 28-year-

old has been pushing for a reunion with Jose Mourinho at Old Trafford.

And according to The Sun, the Blues have now okayed the deal and will allow the midfielder to pursue a move to United.

The report says Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich intervened and gave the green light for Matic to depart.

Abramovich is said to have given his blessing to the move as a reward for helping the club win the title twice in the last three seasons.

## Bolt breaks 10 seconds for first time this season in Monaco win



Usain Bolt ran under 10 seconds for the first time this year as he narrowly won the 100 meters at the Monaco Diamond League meeting on Friday.

The eight-times Olympic sprinting champion was slow out of the blocks, just as he was in his last race in Ostrava last month, and never managed to put a big gap between him and the field.

He won in 9.95 seconds, three hundredths of a second ahead of American Isiah Young. South Africa's Akani Simbine was third in 10.02.

Before the meeting, the Jamaican went to Germany to have treatment for back issues that have troubled him for years. It was his last outing before next month's world championships in London where he will race in the 100 meters and 4x100m relay.

"It was good, I'm going into right direction, still a lot of work to do," said Bolt, who is scheduled to retire after the world championships.

"I'm always here for the fans, and of course I will miss the vibe around the

track. Mixed emotions always -- happy for my career, sad that it is ending. Sub 10 is always good. It was an exciting race, lots of energy."

Olympic and world champion Wayde van Niekerk won a titanic battle against Botswana's Isaac Makwala to take the 400 meters.

The South African, also the world record holder in the event, made a lightning start, then Makwala recovered to lead coming off the final bend before Van Niekerk powered down the final straight to win in 43.73 seconds.

Makwala's time of 43.84 was a personal best. Van Niekerk's fellow South African, Caster Semenya, won a dramatic women's 800 meters in a season's best and meeting record time of 1:55.27.

The Olympic champion snatched the win in the last few meters ahead of Burundi's Francine Niyonsaba and Aje Wilson, who both set national records. The trio had been neck and neck down the final straight.

(Source: Reuters)

## Yao not pursuing purchase of Rockets



At some point the Houston Rockets will be under new ownership but former center Yao Ming will not be involved.

On Friday, the Hall of Fame center ended speculation that he could be involved with a group looking to purchase the team by issuing a statement through China's Xinhua news agency.

"I have no time to consider anything else (including buying the Houston Rockets)," Yao said.

Since retiring from the Rockets in 2011, Yao has been involved with the China Basketball Association, initially as an owner of his hometown Shanghai Sharks. He was elected Thursday as the chairman of the company that runs the league and was named league president in February.

Yao was the first overall pick by the Rockets in 2002. He was an eight-time All-Star and averaged 19 points and 9.2 rebounds in 486 career regular-season games during a nine-year career that was plagued by foot injuries and ankle injuries.

He was elected to the Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016 in the same class as Shaquille O'Neal and Allen Iverson.

Yao's statement occurred after longtime owner Leslie Alexander announced Monday he was putting the Rockets up for sale.

The 73-year-old Alexander bought the franchise for \$85 million in 1993. Forbes valued the franchise in February at \$1.65 billion -- eighth-most valuable in the league -- with revenue of \$244 million.

Alexander had immediate success as an owner as the Rockets won NBA titles over the New York Knicks in 1994 and the Orlando Magic in 1995 behind the play of Hakeem Olajuwon.

Alexander put CEO Tad Brown in charge to "oversee the sales process with the league office, supported by my management team."

Brown made the announcement during Monday's news conference at Toyota Center. He said Alexander told him "it can wear on you after so many decades."

(Source: AP)

## Neymar reportedly 'agrees terms' with PSG ahead of world-record €222m transfer

Neymar has reportedly agreed terms on a contract with Paris Saint-Germain after he informed them of his wish to join them from Barcelona.

Sources close to PSG are alleged to have told ESPN that the Brazilian superstar has held discussions with the club's Qatari owners and sporting director Antero Henrique over a move to the Parc de Princes.

PSG will now press ahead with activating Neymar's astronomical €222m release clause in his Barcelona contract, though question marks remain over how they will go about funding his transfer fee.

Speculation over a move to the Ligue 1 giants has increased exponentially over the past week as media reports across Europe hit that Neymar's time at Barca could be drawing to a close.

Le Parisien claimed that Neymar had already told his La Blaugrana team-mates that he wanted to leave the Nou Camp to complete a lucrative switch to France this summer.

Neymar and his father are already said to have agree



to a four-year contract worth €30m a year after tax with PSG's hierarchy, and his deal will also include a massive signing-on fee to boot.

As well as that humongous salary package, Neymar will benefit from the club's ties to Oryx Qatar Sports Investments' other business opportunities both in France

and across the globe - deals which would further boost Neymar's coffers.

However, PSG's chances of financing a deal to bring him to the French capital now rest on their ability to stump up the extortionate amount of money to release Neymar from his Barcelona contract.

The club apparently have a transfer kitty worth €220m and, whilst this falls within UEFA's Financial Fair Plays rules, is still short of Neymar's release clause fee.

PSG have run the rule over selling a number of fringe players such as Hatem Ben Arfa and Grzegorz Krychowiak to fund their move for the ex-Santos starlet, while another possibility could be the utilization of a third party agreement.

Barcelona boss Ernesto Valverde has stated that he has not yet talked to Neymar about rumors of a possible transfer away, before adding that he could "absolutely" count on his player to remain professional ahead of the new season.

(Source: SI)



# Saman Pakbaz wins gold at World Para Athletics Championships

**S P O R T S** Saman Pakbaz from Iran won a gold medal in the men's shot put F12 after at the penultimate day of the World Para Athletics Championships London 2017 on Saturday.

He threw a season's best 15.82m as he finished ahead of the two men that joined him on the podium in Doha and Rio, Ukrainian Roman Danyliuk (15.61m) and Spain's Kim Lopez Gonzalez (15.44m).

"I have been thinking about becoming the world champion in this event every day. If you want to be the champion, you have to think this way. I was wondering how it would feel in London," said Pakbaz.

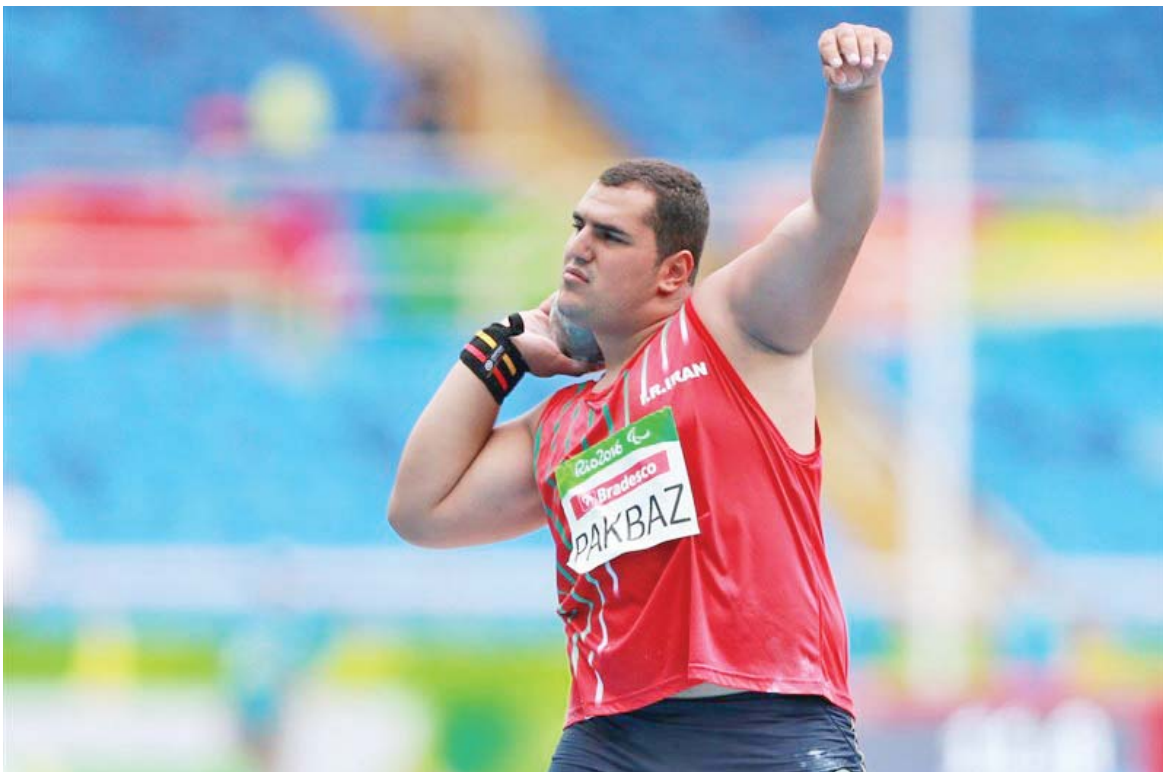
"I am a bit upset I did not manage to show longer throws because it was very important to me. The weather was not a problem today. Standing on the podium, I will mainly think of the tomorrow's discus throw competition. I hope I will be able to show a good result there," the thrower added.

Pakbaz's compatriot Siamak Saleh Farajzadeh seized the silver medal in the men's discus F34 with a throw of 35.02m.

Yanzhang Wang (37.16m) took China's gold medal tally up to 23 and Tunisian Mohamed Ali Krid (34.35m) claimed bronze.

The World Para Athletics Championships will run through July 23 in London.

More than 1,150 athletes from 90 countries are competing in 202 medal events.



## Coutinho stars as Liverpool win Asia Trophy

Mohamed Salah scored and Philippe Coutinho put in a man-of-the-match display to help Liverpool lift the Premier League Asia Trophy after a 2-1 victory over Leicester City on Saturday.

Coutinho showed no signs of distraction after Liverpool rejected an approach from Barcelona earlier this week by scoring a wonderful match-winning goal, as well as claiming an assist at the Hong Kong Stadium.

In a 55-minute outing, the Brazil international played a perfectly-executed through ball for Mohamed Salah's 20th-minute equaliser after Islam Slimani's opener, before netting the winner with a trademark strike moments before half-time.

The friendly was the end of Liverpool's hectic six-day

Asia tour, which has featured disrupted training sessions and plenty of commercial obligations.

This was their fourth friendly of the summer, while just Leicester's second, and Jurgen Klopp's team looked much the sharper side in the opening exchanges, with Coutinho leading the assault from a central-midfield position.

But for all that pressure, Leicester went ahead in the 11th minute when Slimani headed in at the back post from Marc Albrighton's cross.

Coutinho, however, would help draw Liverpool level nine minutes later, playing an exquisite lofted ball right into the path of Salah, who headed past Kasper Schmeichel for his second goal in preseason since join-

ing from Roma.

Coutinho's second game-changing moment came in the 44th minute when he advanced towards the Leicester defence just outside the penalty area and then sent an effort beyond the reach of Schmeichel and into the far corner.

The 25-year-old was replaced by Ben Woodburn shortly into the second half as Klopp, once again, gave all of his outfield players a workout.

Liverpool now immediately board a plane for the 14-hour journey back to Merseyside before they head off to Germany for a training camp and three warm-up matches in a few days' time.

(Source: Soccer.net)

## Persepolis crowned Super Cup champion



**S P O R T S** Persepolis football team defeated Naft Tehran 3-0 to win Iran's Super Cup on Friday.

In the match held at the Azadi Stadium, Ali Alipour gave the Reds a lead in the 17th minute.

Mosen Mosalman extended Persepolis's lead in the 65th minute with a long-range shot.

With six minutes left, Farshad Ahmadzadeh scored the third goal from the penalty spot.

The Iranian Super Cup is an Irani-

an association football trophy awarded to the winners of a match between the Persian Gulf Professional League's season champions and the winners of the Hazfi Cup. It is similar to numerous other Super Cup tournaments held in other countries.

The match was held in 2005 when Hazfi Cup champions Saba Battery defeated league champions Foolad 4-0.

Zob Ahan won the second Super Cup, beating 2015-16 Persian Gulf Professional League winners Esteghlal Khuzestan 4-2 after extra time.

## Persepolis plays a modern football: Branko Ivankovic



**S P O R T S** Persepolis coach Branko Ivankovic says that they played a modern football in the match against Naft Tehran Friday night.

Persepolis defeated Naft Tehran 3-0 in Iran's Super Cup in Tehran's Azadi Stadium.

"Our responsible in football is to earn the most wins. The league's curtain-raiser was very worthy for us and I am happy we started the new season with a trophy. I hope we will win more trophies," Ivankovic said.

"We played a modern football against Naft Tehran and created so many scoring chances. We are not fully prepared yet but I think we have enough time to get ready for the match against Al-Ahli," the Croat added.

"I believe in my players as we showed several good performances in the AFC Champions League. Persepolis were drawn in the toughest group but could advance to the next stage," the Persepolis coach concluded.

## Giti Pasand seal quarter-final berth with classy win

Sanaye Giti Pasand clinched their spot in the quarter-finals of the AFC Futsal Club Championship Vietnam 2017 after easily seeing off Shenzhen Nanjing 7-0 in their Group C opener, thus ending the Chinese side's campaign.

The Iranian side's victory also paved the path for Shriker Osaka's first-ever appearance in the quarter-finals.

Both sides began the match eager to establish an early grip, moving the ball with fluidity and pace. Well aware of the stakes after having lost their opening tie 5-1 to Shriker Osaka, it was Shenzhen who were applying the early pressure, but Giti Pasand's confidence grew as the match progressed, creating the first chance when Abolghasem Orouji nutmeg Zhuang Jianfa to set free Ali Asghar but the forward scuffed his shot at the decisive moment.

The attempt would mark a spell of almost total dominance by the Iranians, as Shenzhen struggled to find their footing for most of the match. The Iranians netted their opening goal inside the first six minutes courtesy of Mohammad Zarei whose right-foot effort drove through the legs of goalkeeper Cheng Yingqiang.

Seconds later, Giti Pasand doubled their lead when Asghar directed a dipping effort just after the half-way line. Asghar would feature again in Giti Pasand's third just a minute later, stealing the ball from Zeng Liang before setting neatly for Ahmad Esmailpour.



Giti Pasand continued their high-pressing tempo, grabbing their fourth in the 14th minute after threading together three immaculate passes beginning with goalkeeper Sepehr Mohammadi to Esmailpour to Asghar before Mohammad Keshavarz clipped the ball past Cheng.

The second-half began with the Iranians maintaining their ruthlessness in hot pursuit of their fifth and duly delivered as Esmailpour guided the ball into an empty net after Mehrdad Jaberidori did well to lunge and intercept bravely from Brazilian Paulo Henrique Dos Santos.

Two minutes later, Esmailpour - the FIFA Futsal World Cup Colombia 2016 Bronze Ball Winner - grabbed his hat-trick, finishing clinically from the right after a string of Iranian exchanges from both ends of Shenzhen's semi-circle.

Giti Pasand added their sixth three minutes from the

end after Saeid Ahmad Abbasi reacted quickly from his initial attempt which rocked the crossbar. Seconds later, Jaberidori made it seven with a sublime first touch intercept from his own half.

Despite being outplayed, Shenzhen had one final chance for a consolation in the closing stages when Huang Tao drove a thundering effort but Sepehr Mohammadi's quick reflexes ensured a clean sheet for the 2012 champions.

Giti Pasand's victory sets up a scintillating contest for Group C supremacy against Shriker Osaka on Monday.

**Barth Felix Rodrigues (Shenzhen Nanling Head Coach)**

"We tried our best here and there are many lessons for us to take from this experience. In the end, we didn't have the luck in some cases, but we must also remember that we were drawn in a very difficult group with teams from two of Asia's best futsal nations."

**Alireza Afzal (Sanaye Giti Pasand Isfahan Head Coach)**

"I am happy with the score line but make no mistake, it was a hard game. Shenzhen knew they had nothing to lose and you could see that they played much better today than they did in their first game against the Japanese team. But my players were patient and I am pleased with our performance. Our passing, our off-the-ball movement, and our finishing were sharp and good."

(Photos: AFC)

## Vahid Hashemian appointed Hamburger SV U17 assistant

**S P O R T S** Former Iran and Persepolis striker Vahid Hashemian has been named as assistant coach of Hamburger SV U17 on Saturday.

Hashemian was a member of Hamburger SV between 1999 to 2001.

He has already coached German football teams Halstenbek-Rellingen and Niendorfer TSV.

Hashemian, commonly known as "Helicopter", has played in VfL Bochum as well as German giant Bayern Munich.

Hashemian, who has played 50 matches for the Iran national football team and scored 15 goals, was a member of Iranian giant Persepolis from 2010 to 2012.

## Iranians clinch four more medals at 2017 Summer Deaflympics

Iranian Paralympian athletes have got four more medals, including one silver, at the 23rd edition of Summer Deaflympics in Turkey.

On Friday, Iranian Greco-Roman wrestler Abouzar Rabi-zadeh Hafshejani lost to his Russian opponent Eduard Shirazanov 1-3 in the final bout of the 80-kilogram weight division at Kavak Sports Hall in Turkey's northern and major Black Sea port city of Samsun, and got the silver medal.

Iranian athlete Akbar Saberi prevailed over his Kyrgyz rival Aram Janikovich Akopian 6-1 in the repêchage round of men's 98-kilogram weight category, and claimed a bronze medal.

In the third-place bout of 59-kilogram weight class, Iran's Alireza Daneshvar defeated Panayot Dimitrov from Bulgaria 5-2 and took the bronze.

Separately, Iranian judoka Mehrdad Seidi prevailed over his Brazilian rival Cleiton Batista Silva with an ippon in the bronze medal contest of men's minus 98-kilogram class.

Earlier on Thursday, Iranian judo practitioner Mehrdad Bodaghi had defeated Rustem Nazmutdinov, a contestant from Russia, with an ippon in the third-place challenge of men's minus 60-kilogram category, and won a bronze medal.

The 2017 Summer Deaflympics, officially known as the 23rd edition of Summer Deaflympics, opened in Samsun, Turkey, on July 18 and will finish on July 30, 2017. A total of 3,148 athletes from 97 countries are competing in 21 sports at the international multi-sport event.

Dozens of Iranian athletes are in action across 13 sports. They are vying for top honors in athletics, beach volleyball, bowling, football, freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling, judo, karate, shooting, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo and volleyball.

(Source: Press TV)

## Iran B beat Chinese Taipei Blue at William Jones Cup

Iran B basketball team defeated Chinese Taipei Blue on Saturday at the penultimate day of the 39th edition of the William Jones Cup.

The Iranian team beat the team from the host 70-66 at the Taipei Peace International Basketball Hall in Taipei.

Iran B have lost to Atletas All-Star Lithuania, South Korea, Team Canada 150 and Iraq and defeated Chinese Taipei White, India, Japan U-24 and Chinese Taipei Blue so far.

Iran B will face the Philippines next on Sunday in the Day 9 of the tournament.

The R. William Jones Cup, also known as the Jones Cup, is an international basketball tournament held annually since 1977 in Taipei, Taiwan.

It was named in honor of basketball promoter Renato William Jones, who was one of the founders of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA). Like the Olympics and the FIBA Basketball World Cup, it has both men's and women's versions.

Iran has won the William Jones Cup five times.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Iran already looking into training camp locations in Russia for 2018 FIFA World Cup

Iran National Football Team Manager, Carlos Queiroz, has sent his assistants to Russia to choose the team's camp location during the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Nearly one year ahead of the start of the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia, Queiroz is seeking to select and sign a contract on the squad's camp location.

According to a Farsi report by the Khabar Online News Agency, this is something that has always been of great importance for the world's leading teams.

For example, during the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, the Germans built a camp for themselves that was the most equipped. However, after the end of the games they gave it to Brazil.

Iran was training at Corinthians Club Camp during that time. The camp was sought by two other countries as well.

Of course, in the previous World Cup games Iran did not qualify very soon, but this time Team Meli was the third squad making its way to the World Cup. That's why Queiroz has sent his two assistants to Russia to see the options and seal a contract on the camp location for the national team.

This means Iran's Football Federation will have to give an advance payment to the Russian Football Federation soon.

In fact, the Iranian national team head coach wants to choose the camp location before the other teams qualify. In this way, Queiroz may have more options to choose from and can take the best.

(Source: IFPNews)



# 100 Works, 100 Artists fetches over \$33,000 on opening day

**A R T TEHRAN** — The 25th d e s k edition of the 100 Works, 100 Artists exhibition, offering an impressive range of paintings, sculptures and calligraphy, grossed 1.25 billion rials (over \$33,000) by selling 35 pieces on opening day.

Most of the items sold on the first day were created by young and novice artists, Lili Golestan, director of Tehran's Golestan Gallery, said in a press release published on Saturday.

Works by 257 artists have been put on display, with each artist displaying one work, while the two most expensive works each on sale at 900 billion rials (about \$24,000) belong to Aidin Aghdashlu and Faramarz Pilaram.

Some rarely seen works by Nasser Ovissi, Farah Osuli, Parviz Kalantari and Iran Darrudi are among the highlights of the exhibit.

The other highlights are works by prominent sculptors such as Jazeh Tabatabai and Reza Qarehbaghi offered at reasonable prices.

One of the walls in the gallery is dedicated to works by artists from other cities especially the city of Isfahan.

The exhibit will be running until August 16. The gallery can be found at 34 Kamasai St. in the Darus neighborhood.



Art aficionados visit the 100 Works, 100 Artists exhibit at Tehran's Golestan Gallery on July 21, 2017.

(Honaronline/Mojtaba Arabzadeh)

## Iran to present “Colorful Dream of Silk Road” at Beijing book fair

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — Iran, the d e s k guest of honor at the Beijing International Book Fair, will be attending the fair with the motto “Iran, the Colorful Dream of Silk Road”, the Iran Cultural Fairs Institute (ICFI) announced on Saturday.

Eight publishers, three universities, five cultural institutes and three literary agencies are among the participants at the fair running from August 23 to 27, ICFI director Amir-Masud Shahramnia said in a press release published on Saturday.

A collection of Chinese translations of Iranian books introducing art and culture of the country will be put on display in Iran's pavilion at the fair, he added.

A number of other programs have



also been arranged on the sidelines, including film screenings, live music concerts, literary meetings and naqqali, which is a style of storytelling dedicated to Shahnameh epic stories.

A pavilion covering an area of 500-square meters has been dedicated to Iran at the Beijing fair.

## “Confederate” writers defend modern U.S. slavery show as scary but real

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — The creators of the new television drama “Confederate”, set in an imaginary world where slavery still exists in the United States, defended their vision after the concept provoked outrage on social media this week.

“This is scary, for all of us ... It is a pretty terrifying prospect getting into it. We knew it would be and now it's come true,” David Benioff, one of the executive producers of

“Confederate”, told pop culture website Vulture on Thursday.

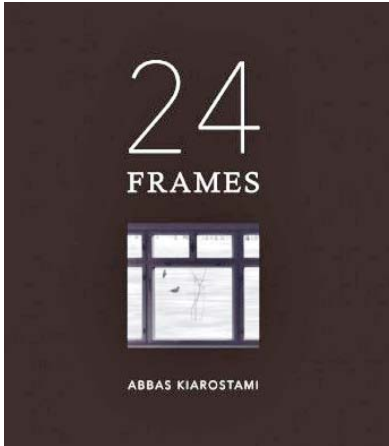
Benioff and Dan Weiss, the creators of the hugely successful medieval fantasy series “Game of Thrones”, announced earlier this week that their next TV project would be “Confederate” - set in an alternative reality where slavery is still legal, southern U.S. states have seceded and the country is on the brink of a third civil war.

The show is still in the early stages of development for

premium cable channel HBO, but the premise provoked a backlash on social and pop culture media as offensive and inappropriate coming from two white men.

Daily Beast writer Ira Madison III wrote that the show “sounds stupid as hell.”

“Give me the confidence of white showrunners telling HBO they wanna write slavery fanfic,” tweeted Pilot Viruet, a journalist with Vice.com.



held in the Argentinian city from July 24 to August 2.

## Tehran to host sport filmfest in October

**A R T TEHRAN** — The 11th d e s k edition of the Tehran International FICTS Festival, a sport filmfest, will be held in the Iranian capital from October 16 to 18, the organizers announced on Saturday.

The Federation Internationale Cinema Television Sportifs (FICTS) is the organizer of the event, which is a part of the World FICTS Challenge that runs in 16 countries around the world.

The Iranian edition of the festival will be held in collaboration with Iran's National Olympic and Paralympic Committee, Iran's Ministry of Sport and Youth, IRIB and the Tehran Municipality.

Winners in each category, including feature films, short films, documentaries,



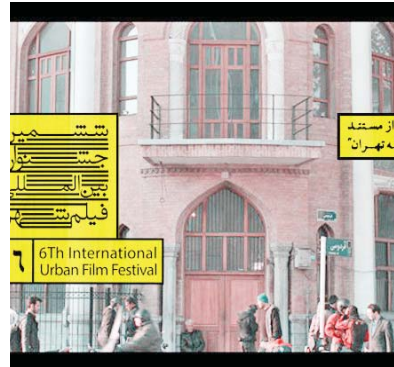
animations and TV shows, will be admitted to the Milano International FICTS Fest, which is scheduled to be held as the final phase of the World FICTS Challenge from November 15 to 20.

## Urban filmfest to premiere docs on Tehran

**A R T TEHRAN** — Nine d e s k documentaries on Tehran will premiere in a special section at the 6th International Urban Film Festival, the organizers announced on Saturday.

Among the documentary films are “Kiblah” by Babak Behdad, “In Tehran Style” by Hadi Afarideh, “The Land of the Forgotten” by Shahram Mirab-Aqdam, “The Story of Tehran Water” by Fakhreddin Seyyedi and “Tehran Is Still the Capital of Iran” by Shahruz Tavakkol.

The films have been produced in a project titled “Tehran Gallery” initiated by the Tasvire Shahr Institute, a cultural organization affiliated with



the Tehran Municipality.

The festival will be held at Tehran's Mellat Cinema Complex from July 31 to August 5.

## Nolan’s “Dunkirk” builds suspense of war without the gore

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — For the filmmaker who re-imagined Batman as “The Dark Knight” and explored deep space in “Interstellar”, the story of British troops trapped on a French beach during World War Two may seem like an unlikely draw.

But the events of May 1940 that Christopher Nolan explores in “Dunkirk” is a “very suspenseful, thrilling tale that isn't necessarily one that fits in exactly and neatly into films that you've seen before,” the British director told Reuters.

“Dunkirk”, out in theaters on Friday, recounts the evacuation by civilians and military of some 400,000 British and Allied soldiers stranded on the desolate French beach of Dunkirk, across the English Channel port of Dover.

Unlike other war films that detail the violence of battle, Nolan opted to minimize the bloodshed and create “a different kind of suspense rather than gore and horror, because that causes people to avert their eyes.”

“There have been many brilliant films that show



Actor Kenneth Branagh arrives for the world premiere of “Dunkirk” in London, Britain, July 13, 2017.

(Reuters/Peter Nicholls)

blood and gore and all kinds of repulsive aspects of war”, Nolan said. “We wanted to give people a rather different experience of what the intensity might be.”

To achieve that effect, Nolan cuts between three

perspectives - the battle in the skies, the armada of civilians sailing across the Channel in small boats, and the stranded soldiers desperately trying to escape.

Critics have given rave reviews to “Dunkirk”. Todd McCarthy of The Hollywood Reporter called it an “impressionist masterpiece”, while Chris Nashawaty of Entertainment Weekly said the film “is visceral, big-budget filmmaking that can be called Art”.

The restrained violence of “Dunkirk” is not the only difference Nolan brings to the traditional war film.

Rather than focus on the stories of individuals, like Steven Spielberg's 1998 World War Two epic “Saving Private Ryan”, or Mel Gibson's 2016 film “Hacksaw Ridge”, Nolan said he wanted “Dunkirk” to convey communal heroism rather than individual acts.

While the film stars big names like Kenneth Branagh, Tom Hardy and Mark Rylance, Nolan held open casting calls to find young new faces, led by 20-year-old newcomer Fionn Whitehead as Tommy, a scrappy, traumatized soldier fighting to survive.

## Bazaar of Art receives over 10,000 submissions

**A R T TEHRAN** — The 2nd edition of Iran's d e s k Bazaar of Art has received over 10,000 submissions from about 1700 artists, the organizers announced on Saturday.



A committee composed of art experts Jamshid Haqiqatshenas, Ali Shirazi and Abdorrahim Siahkarzadeh will choose the artworks for the showcase during next week.

Organized by the Institute for Promotion of Contemporary Visual Art, the bazaar offers a variety of artworks at low prices, in an effort to add artworks to people's shopping lists.

The Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran will host the event running from August 14 to 20.

## Iran to organize Imam Reza (AS) Intl. Festival in 77 countries

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iran plans to organize the d e s k 15th edition of the Imam Reza (AS) International Festival simultaneously in 31 Iranian provinces and 77 countries around the world for ten days.



The festival will open on Tuesday, which is the birthday of Hazrat Masumeh (SA), the sister of Imam Reza (AS).

A vast array of art and cultural programs including film screenings, theater performances, book fairs, exhibitions of artworks and seminars has been arranged for the event.

The festival will come to an end on August 4 that marks the birthday of

Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### Iranian envoy, Japan Writers' Association director meet

**CULTURE TEHRAN** — The president of the Japan d e s k Writers' Association, Hiroshi Sakagami, and the Iranian cultural attaché in Tokyo, Farhad Palizdar, have met in the Japanese capital.

The expansion of cultural relations was discussed at the meeting, Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) announced in a press release published on Saturday.

Since 2006, Sakagami has been the president of the Japan Writers' Association.

## Jane Austen takes pride of place on Britain's new plastic tenner

**WINCHESTER, England (Reuters)** — The Bank of England unveiled its first plastic 10 pound note on Tuesday, which features 19th century British novelist Jane Austen and will be available to the public from September.

The central bank has printed an initial run of a billion of the new notes, which are known in Britain as «tenners», after last year's launch of a five pound note made from a polymer film that the BoE said is more durable and harder to forge.

Tuesday marks the 200th anniversary of Austen's death. The writer was buried in Winchester Cathedral in 1817 and completed many of her best-known works such as «Pride and Prejudice» and «Emma» in the nearby village of Chawton.

«Ten pounds would have meant a lot to Jane Austen, about the same as 1,000 pounds (\$1,300) would mean to us today,» BoE Governor Mark Carney said at the launch of the new note in Winchester.