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# New U.S. sanctions won't go unanswered

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## Crises cannot be settled militarily, Iran reiterates

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — On Tuesday, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Majid Takht-Ravanchi reiterated Tehran's position that crises in the Middle East region cannot be settled through military actions.

"A long lasting and effective solution can only be reached through dialogue and negotiation," Takht-Ravanchi said during a meeting with Gordan Bakota, the assistant minister of foreign and European affairs of Croatia.

Takht-Ravanchi, Iran's point man for European and American affairs, said that the future of the war-stricken countries should only be determined by the people of the countries themselves without any foreign interference.

The war in Syria has been raging in Syria for more than six years. According to the UN estimates, the war has left hundreds of thousands of people dead and displaced millions.

The Saudi-led war on Yemen, which started in March 2016, has also pushed the country to the verge of extreme starvation.

### Dangerous consequences

In his meeting with the visiting Croatian official, Takht-Ravanchi also elaborated on roots of terrorism and extremism in the region and the larger world.

The main flames of Takfiri and Wahabi terrorism which first emerged in Afghanistan has now spread to many countries in the world. It is now taking tolls in East Asia to Europe.

For his part, Bakota pointed to the status of Iran in the region and called for exchange of views in fight against terrorism and extremism.

Bakota also said terrorism has dangerous consequences for the world.

The Iranian and Croatian officials also discussed expansion of bilateral relations.

## [P]GCC is essentially finished: expert

By Javad Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — A senior expert in Arab affairs who teaches international business at George Washington University is of the view that the [Persian] Gulf Cooperation Council, which includes Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and Kuwait, is "essentially finished".

Hossein Askari tells the Tehran Times that "it will be very difficult to reconcile harmony to the [P]GCC".

Following is the text of the interview:

**■ Why has not the [P]GCC held a committee meeting, according to its manifest, to resolve the dispute between Qatar and Saudi Arabia? Isn't it the sign of weakness within the council?**

A: There is very little that is transparent in the [P]GCC. They do most things in bilateral meetings out of sight. But in this case, given the high-profile nature of the dispute, a committee meeting that was bound to fail would

not be good publicity for the [P]GCC.

**■ Regarding the [P]GCC and the reputation of some its members like Kuwait, what is your prediction of the future of the bloc?**

A: I think that it will be very difficult to reconcile harmony to the [P]GCC. In the first place, Kuwait and Oman will not back Saudi Arabia because if they do their own future as sovereign states will be threatened. They will have to follow Saudi Arabia like little puppy dogs. Second, in the case of Kuwait, it wants to slowly reform and support more political participation. It cannot join Saudi pressures

**"Iran should moderate its rhetoric and do all it can to become a strategic partner for Qatar and Kuwait."**

## Car output up 20% in 4 months yr/yr

**ECONOMY TEHRAN**

— Iranian car-makers manufactured 420,000 vehicles in the first four months of the current Iranian calendar year (March 21-July 22), a 20 percent rise year on year, the industry minister Mohammadreza Nematzadeh announced.

The country's car output had also witnessed 12.5 percent growth in the first quarter of the current year compared to the same

period last year, as 306,545 cars were manufactured in the country during the three-month period.

Nematzadeh expressed hope that the annual car output will reach 1.6 million by the end of the current calendar year (March 20, 2018), IRNA reported.

The share of Iran's auto industry in the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is projected to rise by 70 percent in the current

to move backwards. Saudi Arabia can always count on Bahrain for support, as it is has become totally dependent on Saudi Arabia and there is no going back. In the case of the UAE, there is a strong personal relation between its crown prince and Mohammad bin Salman. To my mind, the [P]GCC is essentially finished.

**■ Saudi Arabia has set some conditions for removal of anti-Qatar sanctions, which if implemented would change the nature of the political system in Qatar. Regarding this issue, how can the dispute be resolved?**

A: They will not be resolved. Both sides will be forced to say some face saving words but they will not be resolved. It will in time be papered over. Saudi Arabia will back down and Qatar will make some meaningless concessions so that the Al-Sauds can save face. All this presents a great opportunity for Iran. Iran should moderate its rhetoric and do all it can to become a strategic **→13**

## Iran Professional League new season to kick off on Thursday

**SPORTS TEHRAN** — The new season of Iran Professional League (IPL) will kick off on Thursday. In a year ahead of the 2018 World Cup, the players will go to the field to show their best to have a chance of being invited to the national team.

Regardless of some financial issues, Persepolis are well-prepared to defend their title in the new season.

Branko Ivankovic's men played several warm-up matches with Ukrainian teams in the last month.

Persepolis also won Iran's Super Cup last week, defeating Naft Tehran 3-0.

The Reds have signed Nigerian

striker Godwin Mensha and Sepahan defender Shoja Khalilzadeh in the summer transfer window.

Sepahan, the most decorated team in IPL, also are favorite to win the title for the sixth time.

Zlatko Kranjkar, who has also had a short stint with Persepolis in 2009, has returned to Isfahan to win the title once again after leading Sepahan to title in 2011-12 season.

IPL runners-up Esteghlal are also aiming to overtake arch-rivals Persepolis but the Blues have an uphill task in the new season since they have not been successful in the summer transfer window. **→15**

## EU warns U.S. it could swiftly counter new sanctions on Russia

**BRUSSELS (Reuters)** — The European Union warned on Wednesday that it was ready to act within days to counter proposed new U.S. sanctions on Russia, saying they would harm the bloc's energy security.

Sanctions legislation overwhelmingly approved by the U.S. House of Representatives on Tuesday has angered EU officials for breaking transatlantic unity in the West's response to Moscow's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 and its support for separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Brussels also fears the new sanctions will harm European firms and oil and gas

projects on which the EU is dependent.

"The U.S. bill could have unintended unilateral effects that impact the EU's energy security interests," EU chief executive Jean-Claude Juncker said in a statement issued after a meeting at which European commissioners were united in their views, according to a senior EU official.

"If our concerns are not taken into account sufficiently, we stand ready to act appropriately within a matter of days. 'America First' cannot mean that Europe's interests come last," he said, mentioning President Donald Trump's guiding slogan. **→13**

## Amnesty: Saudi regime should stop 'bloody execution spree'

Amnesty International has urged the House of Saud regime to abandon what it termed a "bloody execution spree", after reports that 14 more men are set to be executed.

The kingdom has already beheaded at least 66 people this year, the rights group said on Monday, as it decried the Saudi Arabian Supreme Court's decision to uphold death sentences against the group convicted of crimes related to their involvement in protests.

Amnesty also said it learned on Sunday that the Specialized Criminal Court (SCC) in Riyadh upheld the death sentences for 15 other men accused of spying for Iran.

In June 2016, the SCC sentenced to death the 14 men charged with crimes relating to protesting in what Amnesty says was a "grossly unfair mass trial".

They were convicted of a wide array of crimes that include bomb making, theft, robbery, participation in riots and shooting at security vehicles, among others.

Court documents showed that the men claimed they had been tortured until they confessed to the allegations.

"By confirming these sentences, Saudi Arabia's authorities have displayed their ruthless commitment to the use of the death penalty as a weapon to crush dissent and neutralize political opponents," Samah Hadid, Director of campaigns for the Middle East at Amnesty International, said in a statement.

"King Salman's signature is now all that stands between them and their execution. He must immediately quash these death sentences which are a result of sham court proceedings that brazenly flout international fair trial standards."

Amnesty added that Saudi regime authorities had executed at least 26 people over the past three and a half weeks - an average of more than one execution a day.

Meanwhile, as of Wednesday, Britain-based rights group Reprieve had obtained more than 32,000 signatures on a petition to cancel the executions. **→13**



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## Noruz-e Sayyad celebrated in Persian Gulf island

People in the Persian Gulf island of Qeshm held a celebration called Noruz-e Sayyad on July 23, 2017.

The event is marked annually concurrent with the fishing season. As per a tradition, local people believe that fish are free on this day to breed. So, people are banned from eating kinds of fish.

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Tel: **021-430 51 450**

times1979@gmail.com



MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Iran renews support for Iraqi unity

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — Iran’ deputy foreign d e s k minister has renewed Tehran’s support for Iraq’s territorial integrity and national unity.

Speaking on Tuesday, Hassan Qashqavi said that Tehran will continue to help the Iraqi nation and government in their ongoing fight against terrorist groups, Fars reported.

“Violating Iraqi sovereignty and territorial integrity is in no way acceptable and Iran believes that a united, strong and democratic Iraq is the best option for the region and the world,” Qashqavi said.



Iran Army forms 21 assault brigades

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The Iranian Army has d e s k created 21 assault brigades, Army Ground Forces Commander Brigadier General Kiomarth Heydari said on Wednesday, Mehr reported.

He said the brigades have been formed according to guidelines given to him in his appointment decree by the Supreme Leader, where the commander-in-chief insisted on “assault and mobility”.

“From now on, infantry brigades will mean little in the old sense and all brigades have become mobile and assault-oriented,” Keydari said.



Rouhani has two weeks to name ministers after inauguration

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The vice president d e s k for parliamentary affairs has said President Hassan Rouhani will have two weeks since his inauguration day to name his cabinet members to the Majlis for approval.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, Hossein-Ali Amiri said the inauguration will be held on August 5 as has already been announced, with high-ranking guests from many countries, ISNA reported.

He also said Rouhani will probably nominate his ministers according to the existing ministries, rather than based on a proposition which seeks to divide two ministries into separate ones.



Iranians to protest oppression of Palestinians, Rohingya Muslims

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The Iranian people from d e s k all walks of life plan to stage massive demonstrations in five provinces on Friday, July 28, to condemn the recent heinous crimes committed against the Palestinians and the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar.

In a statement late on Tuesday, the Islamic Dissemination Coordination Council decried recent Israeli attacks against Palestinians and said the “shameful and savage crimes” of the Zionist regime have entered a new phase.

The council also condemned the massacre of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar at the hands of racists and extremists.



IRGC: U.S. warship’s provocation in Persian Gulf neutralized

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — The IRGC announced late d e s k on Tuesday that one of its patrol ships had neutralized an act of provocation by a U.S. military ship north of the Persian Gulf.

Earlier the day, a U.S. official was quoted by media as saying warning shots were fired from a U.S. Navy vessel near an Iranian boat north of the Persian Gulf.

The IRGC said its boat paid no attention and continued with its mission and after a while the U.S. vessel left the area.



Iran Foreign Ministry forms cybercrime workgroup

**POLITICS** TEHRAN — A workgroup representing d e s k all related organizations has been formed in the legal office of Iran’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs to deal with cybercrime.

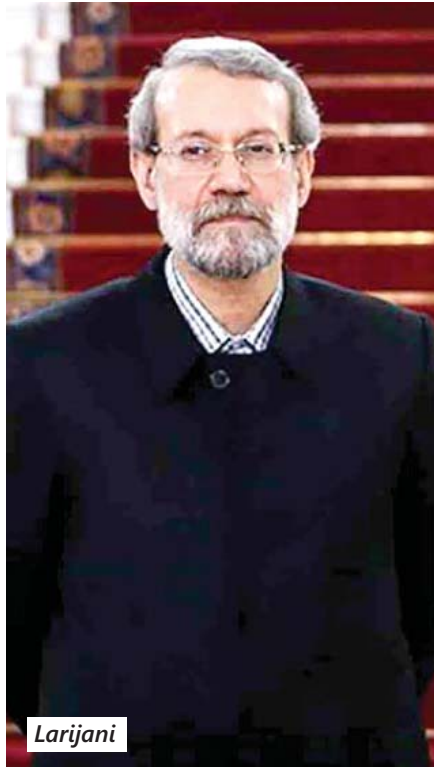
Making the announcement, Deputy Foreign Minister for Legal and International Affairs Abbas Araqchi on Wednesday said the workgroup has been formed to facilitate Iran’s cooperation with global bodies to form an international document on cybercrime, IRIB reported.

He added the workgroup will formulate the Islamic Republic’s policies on how to participate in the global fight on cybercrime.

# New U.S. sanctions won’t go unanswered



Qasemi



Larijani



Araqchi

**“The U.S. congressmen accuse Iran of destabilizing the region while their government, by invading Iraq, had a key role in creating such terrorist groups as ISIS. The increase of instability and the current extremism in this region are the results of the unconsidered and irresponsible policies of this country and its regional allies,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said.**

**its finalization and implementation, has ignored and threatened the implementation of a multilateral and international agreement that is the result of efforts made in several years,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Bahram Qassemi said.**

Qassemi noted that Washington is obligated to fulfill its commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the official name for the nuclear accord.

“A country’s domestic laws and legislations cannot be used as a pretext for governments to evade their international responsibility,” he asserted.

Since Tehran has been in full compliance with its commitments as acknowledged by the IAEA and the 5+1 group, it expects other signatories to comply with their commitments, the official stated.

He also said Iran would take reciprocal actions against the move.

Qassemi also said Iran will not compromise on its defense capability. “Nothing can prevent the Islamic Republic from pursuing and implementing the principled policy of increasing its defense capabilities.”

The Foreign Ministry spokesman also faulted the U.S. for the spread of terrorism in the region and beyond.

“The U.S. congressmen accuse Iran of destabilizing the region while their government, by invading Iraq, had a key role in creating such terrorist groups as ISIS. The increase of instability and the current extremism in this region are the results of the unconsidered and irresponsible policies of this country and its regional allies,” he explained.

**Iran will respond firmly to U.S. ‘hostile’ move**

Tehran will respond “firmly” to the move which is a “clear hostile action”, Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi said, adding “practical measures” will

be taken in this regard.

The top diplomat who was heavily involved in the talks to clinch the nuclear agreement noted that while the new sanctions are not related to the nuclear sphere, the act can negatively influence the successful implementation of the deal.

The deal requires Washington to implement the agreement with “good will” and in a “constructive atmosphere” and to avoid taking any action that prevents a successful implementation of the accord.

**“During the past six months, the new U.S. administration has certified Iran’s commitment to the JCPOA for two times as it had no other choice, because the International Atomic Energy Agency has issued seven reports which clearly confirmed that Iran has abided by the deal,” he explained.**

President Trump agreed on July 18 to recertify that Iran is complying with the nuclear agreement.

According to Reuters, Trump said on Tuesday that Tehran should adhere to the terms of the nuclear deal or else face “big, big problems”.

He told the Wall Street Journal on Tuesday he would be surprised if Iran is in compliance with the nuclear deal when recertification comes up again in three months.

“We’ll talk about the subject in 90 days but I would be surprised if they were in compliance,” he said.

Araqchi, the deputy foreign minister for legal and international affair, said Trump’s threatening words will not be materialized.

“However, we will wait and take practical measures regarding their moves.”

Trump has taken a tough stance against Iran since he took the helm at the White House on January 20. During his presidential campaigns he vowed to tear up the nuclear agreement, though

later he said it would be difficult to annual a deal backed by the UN Security Council.

In an interview with CNN’s Fareed Zakaria earlier this month, Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said “the United States has failed to implement its part of the bargain,” citing the fact that Trump “used his presence in Hamburg during the G20 meeting in order to dissuade leaders from other countries to engage in business with Iran.”

**Parliament speaker says commensurate measures underway**

Reacting to the sanctions bill, Parliament Speaker Ali Larijani pointed out that lawmakers are closely monitoring all moves by the U.S., saying Iran and will make swift decisions accordingly.

**“We have the capability to [adopt] many measures proportional to the Americans’ conduct,” Larijani told reporters on Tuesday.**

He added that the Iranian legislators would discuss U.S. moves at various committees of the parliament and would immediately examine them at the floor.

He said the legislation indicated that Washington has failed to fulfill its obligations under the landmark nuclear agreement.

The top parliamentarian said American officials wrongly assume that it will be beneficial to them if they breach the JCPOA, adding that this would be detrimental to them.

“We have good nuclear potential and can change the situation immediately,” Larijani pointed out.

On Tuesday, Larijani said Iran can “limit” the International Atomic Energy Agency’s monitoring activities of its nuclear program if Washington thinks they are not enough.

He also noted that if the deal fails, it is Washington who would suffer the greatest.

## France questions legality of U.S. sanctions against Iran, Russia

**POLITICS** TEHRAN – France’s Foreign d e s k Ministry said on Wednesday that the new U.S. sanctions against Iran, Russia and North Korea appeared at odds with international law due to their extra-territorial reach.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that French and European laws would need to be adjusted in response, adding that discussions would be necessary at European Union level because of the potential impact on European citizens and firms.

The House of Representatives voted 419-3 on Tuesday to impose new sanctions on Iran, Russia and North Korea, moving the bill one step closer to President Donald Trump’s desk. The new sanctions could affect European firms.

The bill includes sanctions against the Islamic Republic and the IRGC for allegedly supporting terrorism, an accusation Tehran vehemently denies.



**“The U.S. bill could have unintended unilateral effects that impact the EU’s energy security interests,” EU chief executive Jean-Claude Juncker said in a statement.**

It also targets North Korea for its missile tests, and aims to punish Moscow for its alleged meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and the reunification of Crimea with the Russian Federation.

The EU had warned Washington against the measure, as it would adversely affect its new energy deals with Russia.

On Wednesday, the European Union warned that it was ready to act within days to counter proposed new U.S. sanctions on Russia, saying they would harm the bloc’s energy security.

Responding to the new sanctions, the Kremlin described the move as an extremely unfriendly act and sad news for Russia-U.S. relations and their further development.

Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani also condemned the bill, and vowed to take retaliatory measures against the United States.

“We... withstand the pressure and sanctions, and will take reciprocal action,” Rouhani noted.



# Palestine envoy to UN: Al-Aqsa crisis at tipping point

The Palestinian envoy to the United Nations has told the Security Council that al-Aqsa Mosque compound crisis in East al-Quds (Jerusalem) is at a tipping point, urging the council members to help protect Palestinians and their holy sites from Israel's "reckless and destructive agenda".

Riyad Mansour warned in his speech to the Council on Tuesday that "the stoking of a religious conflict is rapidly unfolding as Israel persists its illegal actions in occupied East Jerusalem".

He accused Israel of "aggressive behavior and provocative violation" of the historic status quo at the Muslim-administered al-Aqsa Mosque compound, referring to a brief closure of the holy site after a deadly shooting there that was followed by installation of CCTV cameras and metal detectors.

"We are clearly at the tipping point," he said. "We must therefore again warn against the dangers of such provocations and incitement, and fuelling of yet another cycle of violence which will surely have far-reaching consequences."

## Prayer protests

On the ground in East al-Quds (Jerusalem), Muslim leaders urged the faithful on Tuesday to keep up their prayer protests outdoors and avoid entering the compound, even after Israel dismantled metal detectors that initially triggered the tensions.

Sheikh Najeh Bakirat, director of al-Aqsa Mosque, said on Tuesday that the move does not fulfil the demands of the Muslim worshippers as the security cameras remain.

Sheikh Raed Saleh, an al-Aqsa official, said that the Palestinians would "never accept the current status, unless everything that was added after July 14 was removed."

"The picture until this moment is not clear. They are doing it in the middle of the night, in the cover of darkness, like bats. God knows what we are going to wake up to the next morning," Saleh said.

Dozens of Muslim worshippers continued to perform prayers in the streets outside the compound on Tuesday.

Israel said it would replace the metal detectors with new security arrangements based on "advanced technology", reportedly including sophisticated cameras, but said it could take up to six months to install them.

## Dozens injured in latest al-Aqsa clashes over Israeli restrictions

Meantime, dozens of Palestinians have been injured as Israeli forces attack protesters gathered outside the main entrance to the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East al-Quds.

The latest round of violence erupted



on Tuesday as Israeli troops resorted to force in order to disperse Palestinians demonstrating against the Tel Aviv regime's restrictive measures at the compound.

According to local reports, several reporters and a young child were among those injured.

Meanwhile, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has stressed that security coordination with the Tel Aviv regime will continue to be halted despite Israel's removal of the metal detectors.

"All new Israeli measures put in place since July 14 must be removed so things can go back to normal in Jerusalem and we can resume our work regarding bilateral relations," he said.

Coordination meetings between Israeli and Palestinian officials was initially halted on Sunday over Israel's continuation of the restrictive measures.

## Israeli soldiers polluting al-Aqsa

Elsewhere, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has said that Muslims from around the globe should help protecting the al-Aqsa mosque, which Israeli soldiers are "carelessly polluting" while "easily spilling blood."

"From here I call upon all Muslims. Those who are able to should visit al-Aqsa... Those who cannot visit al-Aqsa should send aid to our brothers there," he said.

He added that the restrictive measures should be immediately removed and the former status quo be restored.

"When Israeli soldiers carelessly pollute the grounds of al-Aqsa with their combat boots by using simple issues as a pretext and then easily spill blood there, the reason [they are able to do that] is we [Muslims] have not done enough to stake our claim over Jerusalem," he added.

The occupied Palestinian territories have witnessed new tensions ever since Israeli forces introduced restrictions on the entry of Palestinian worshipers into the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in East al-Quds in August 2015.

More than 300 Palestinians have lost their lives at the hands of Israeli forces in tensions since the beginning of October 2015.

The Tel Aviv regime has tried to change the demographic makeup of al-Quds (Jerusalem) over the past decades by constructing settlements, destroying historical sites and expelling the local Palestinian population. Palestinians say the Israeli measures are aimed at paving the way for the Judaization of the city.

## Israeli settlers occupy historical building in al-Khalil

The developments follow as a large group of Israeli settlers have occupied a historical building in the West Bank city of al-Khalil (Hebron).

"Tens of Israelis entered a restricted building adjacent to the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron and security forces are currently on the spot," said an Israeli military spokeswoman on Tuesday.

Local residents said that after forcefully entering the building, the settlers proceeded to rise an Israeli flag above it. They also noted the Israeli forces had arrived at the scene, but were not approaching the occupied building.

The occupied structure is next to Ibrahim Mosque, which is believed to be the burial site of various biblical figures such as Abraham.

The Anti-settlement Israeli NGO (non-governmental organization) Peace Now has called on local authorities to evacuate the settlers, which it said were comprised of a group of 15 families.

"After their claims of ownership had been denied, the settlers have decided to take the law into their own hands and establish an illegal settlement that might ignite the region," said a statement released by the NGO.

Israeli settlers were ejected from the same building after occupying it in 2012, after failing to obtain the necessary permits to acquire it.

Israeli settlers, mostly armed, regularly commit actions such as occupying Palestinian lands or engaging in arson attacks against Palestinians and setting fire to their mosques, olive groves, and other properties.

More than half a million Israelis live in over 230 settlements built since the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and East al-Quds. Built on occupied land, the settlements are internationally condemned as illegal.

(Source: agencies)

## ECJ rules Hamas to remain on 'terror' list

The European Union's Court of Justice (ECJ) has ruled that Hamas, the Palestinian political organization, should remain in the bloc's "terror" list, referring the case back to lower court.

ECJ judges on Wednesday overruled the General Court's view of 2014 that the 28-nation bloc had insufficient evidence to maintain asset freezes and travel bans on Hamas.

That lower court found that the listing was based on media and internet reports rather than solid legal arguments.

However, the ECJ said that a decision by a competent authority was only required for an initial listing, with no such condition for subsequent retention.

In December 2014, the General Court said Hamas should be removed from the list because the EU's decision to place it on the "terror" sanctions list was not the result of an independent investigation.

The European Council, in turn, appealed that finding, believing the General Court "was wrong in its assessment of the way in which the Council relied on information in the public domain".

ECJ Advocate General Eleanor Sharpston in September joined those demanding Hamas be dropped from the "terror" list.

The EU could not "rely on facts and evidence found in press articles and information from the internet, rather than in decisions of competent authorities, to support a decision to maintain a listing", she said.

Given that "some of the reasons advanced could not justify the decision to maintain the listing", the General Court would be correct to dismiss the EU appeal when it could find no other sufficient reasons for their being listed.

Accordingly, the ECJ "should annul the measures ... on procedural grounds", Sharpston said.

Advocates general of the ECJ are regularly called on to give their view before it makes a final ruling. The court often, but not always, follows them.

The EU maintains an active sanctions policy, targeting individuals, groups and states, including several other Palestinian entities.



The EU imposed travel bans and asset freezes on Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, after the September 11, 2001, al-Qaeda attacks on New York and Washington, DC.

Hamas opposed the sanctions from the start, alluding to its democratic mandate and arguing that it has the right to conduct military operations against the Israeli occupation.

Hamas beat out the ruling Fatah party by a landslide during the 2006 legislative elections in the occupied Palestinian territory. After fighting broke out between the two factions in June 2007, Hamas eventually removed Fatah from the besieged Gaza Strip.

For the last decade, Hamas has been the de facto government of Gaza, while the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority has controlled the West Bank.

In June, Hamas presented a new political document that accepts the formation of a Palestinian state along the 1967 borders, without recognizing the statehood of Israel, and says that the conflict in Palestine is not a religious one.

While Hamas' 1988 founding charter called for the takeover of all of mandate Palestine, including present-day Israel, the new document says it will accept the 1967 borders as the basis for a Palestinian state, with Jerusalem as its capital and the return of refugees to their homes.

The 1967 borders refer to those that existed before the war in which Israel occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem), the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

(Source: agencies)

## U.S.-led air attacks, shelling kill civilians in Syria's Raqqa

International coalition air attacks and shelling by the United States-backed forces have killed at least 18 civilians in Syria's Raqqa, said a local activist group.

Writing on Twitter on Tuesday night, Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently said the attacks wounded another 50 civilians, adding that the U.S.-led coalition had carried out at least 41 air attacks in the 48 hours prior.

The activist group said that air attacks and shelling continued overnight in and around Raqqa, the city previously known as the de facto capital of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit.

The Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), an alliance of Kurdish and Arab fighters, has been working to encircle Raqqa since November in an offensive backed by the U.S.-led coalition, which is also fighting ISIL in neighboring Iraq.

The U.S.-led coalition has said that 3,000 to 4,000 ISIL terrorists are thought to be holed up in Raqqa city, where they have erected defenses against the anticipated assault.

On Tuesday, Britain-based so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that ISIL only controls less than 10 percent of the Raqqa province, which it used to control in its entirety.

The SDF controls more than two-thirds of the province, while the Syrian government and its allies have taken back some 22 percent of the territory from ISIL.

Elsewhere, Hay'et Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), an anti-government armed group formerly linked to al-Qaeda, took control of Idlib city on Sunday, strengthening its grip on the Idlib province.

Syria's foreign instigated conflict started in March 2011 with protests, but it quickly morphed into a full-scale war that has left hundreds of thousands dead and created millions of refugees.

(Source: agencies)

## EU's top court urged to dismiss refugee relocation case

An adviser of the European Union's top court has urged it to dismiss a case brought by Slovakia and Hungary challenging the obligatory relocation of asylum seekers across the bloc.

The two Eastern European states - backed by neighbor Poland - had argued that the EU's 2015 scheme to have each member state host a certain number of refugees was unlawful.

The program was designed to help ease pressure on asylum systems in Greece and Italy after mass arrivals across the Mediterranean.

But Yves Bot, the European Court of Justice's Advocate General, rejected most of the procedural arguments presented by Bratislava and Budapest, saying the resettlement scheme was "appropriate for attaining the objective which it pursues".

Europe has been grappling with the worst migration crisis since the end of World War II with an influx of people fleeing the wars in Syria and Iraq while others from Africa are seeking an escape from poverty or po-



litical persecution.

Also on Wednesday, the European Commission said it had stepped up its legal case against the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland over their efforts to block the relocation program from going into effect.

"Despite repeated calls for action ... these three countries remain in breach of their legal obligations

and have shown disregard for their commitments to Greece, Italy and other member states," the EU executive said.

In so-called "reasoned opinions", the Commission has now sent a formal request to these countries to apply EU rules, to which they have one month to respond.

Should the Commission not find the answers satisfactory, it can take the countries to court.

In 2015, more than a million refugees and migrants reached Europe by crossing the Mediterranean Sea, according to the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR.

Although arrivals by boat have decreased drastically since the European Union and Turkey reached a deal to stem the flow of refugees and migrants in March 2016, arrivals have not stopped.

The UNHCR says more than 112,000 people have reached Europe by Mediterranean so far this year, while at least 2,365 people died en route or are still missing at sea.

(Source: agencies)

## Algiers police bust terrorist group affiliated with ISIL

Algerian police have broken up an Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist cell led by a former al-Qaeda commander convicted in France more than a decade ago for planning an attempted bombing in Strasbourg, a security source said on Wednesday.

Mohamed Yacine Aknouche, 43, was once a Europe-based affiliate of Algeria's Islamic Armed Group (GIA), and was sentenced in absentia by a French court in 2004 to eight years prison, said the source, who asked not to be named.

The source told Reuters that Algerian forces captured Aknouche this week near Tipaza, a coastal city 50 km west of the capital Algiers where officials charge he had been planning to carry out attacks on security forces. It was not clear when he had returned to Algeria.

Militant attacks and bombings are rarer in Algeria since the North African country ended its decades-long 1990s war with armed extremists in which 200,000 people died.

But remnants of al-Qaeda brigades remain active and ISIL has been trying to recruit more people.

The Algerian newspaper Ennahar quoted unnamed security sources as saying the cell was based in the village of Ain Taggourait and had plotted attacks in Algiers. Aknouche's cell, it said, had trained in a nearby forest using homemade weapons.

After the 1990s war, Algeria fought several armed groups in a bloody conflict that ended when many militants accepted a truce and reconciliation deal.

There were around 35,000 active militants at the height of the conflict, but security sources say there are now between 800 to 1,000, mostly in remote mountain and border areas.

A hardcore of militants that stayed in the mountains after rejecting the peace accord belong to both Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the local branch of ISIL known as Jund Al Khilafa (Soldiers of the Caliphate). They have mostly targeted security forces in re-



mote areas with ambushes.

In 2014, Algerian Special Forces killed the leader of ISIL local branch. Security sources named him as Abdelmalek Gouri and said he was behind the kidnapping and beheading of French tourist Herve Gourdel in September 2014.

(Source: Reuters)



NEWS IN BRIEF



**Iranian products to be showcased at Eurasia Commodity Expo in China**

**ECONOMY**  
d e s k

**TEHRAN** — The 2017 (China) Eurasia Commodity and Trade Expo (EACT 2017) will be hosting Iranian exhibitors active in different areas to showcase their latest products and achievements.

Iran-China Joint Chamber of Commerce is going to be in charge of the Iranian pavilion at this year's exhibition which is going to be held 24-28 August at China Xinjiang International Exhibition Center, in Urumqi.

EACT covers a variety of commodity groups including textiles and apparel, agricultural products and food, sweets and chocolates, nuts, leather goods, tourism and cultural affairs, arts and crafts, electronics, investment, building materials and etc.



**Stock market index gains 327 points in a day**

**ECONOMY**  
d e s k

**TEHRAN** — Stock index gained 327 points to 81,509 in Iran's stock exchange market on Wednesday. Over 1 billion shares worth 3.042 trillion rials (about \$80.2 million) were dealt in the stock market.

Meanwhile, IFX, the main index of Iran's over-the-counter (OTC) market known also as Iran Fara Bourse (IFB), had no change, standing at 920 points on Wednesday.

Germany eyes Iran rubber & plastics machinery market

Iran is becoming a growing market for German plastics and rubber machinery, according to a recent report by the German Plastics and Rubber Machinery Association (VDMA).

In a statement released ahead of Iran Plast 2017, to be held on September 24-27, the VDMA said exports of machinery to Iran rose more than 14% to €20.3 million in 2016, following a steep rise of 193% the year before.

China, Germany, Italy, Turkey, South Korea were the top 10 suppliers of Plastics and Rubber Machines to Iran in 2015 and 2016.

China's exports of the mentioned items to Iran rose 15.2 percent to €149.2 million in 2016.

*(Source: european-rubber-journal.com)*

UK joins France in bidding goodbye to fossil-fuel cars by 2040

The U.K. became the latest European country to mark the end of the line for diesel and gasoline fueled cars as automakers such as Volvo race to build electric vehicles or face the consequences of getting left behind.

In London, the government said it will ban sales of the vehicles by 2040, two weeks after France announced a similar plan to reduce air pollution and become a carbon-neutral nation. For the auto industry, the end of an era for fossil-fuel powered cars poses a challenge not everyone is welcoming.

"We could undermine the U.K's successful automotive sector if we don't allow enough time for the industry to adjust," said Mike Hawes, chief executive officer of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders. "Outright bans risk undermining the current market for new cars and our sector, which supports over 800,000 jobs across the U.K," he said. "The industry instead wants a positive approach which gives consumers incentives to purchase these cars."

Daimler AG, the maker of Mercedes-Benz cars, is keen to shore up diesel, since it powers many of its lucrative sport utility vehicles and big sedans, but others are embracing the new reality. Sweden's Volvo Car Group said that by 2019 all of its cars will have an electric motor, while BMW AG will build an electric version of its iconic Mini compact car in Britain.

The global shift toward electric vehicles will create upheaval across a number of sectors, from oil majors harmed by reduced gasoline demand to spark plug and fuel injection makers whose products aren't needed by plug-in cars. In the U.K., the decision is partly brought on by stringent European Union emission rules that the country must follow even as it is set to leave the bloc.

*(Source: Bloomberg)*

UK will not accept chlorinated chicken to secure U.S. trade deal

**LONDON (Reuters)** — Britain will not accept imports of chlorinated chicken in pursuit of a trade deal with the United States after Brexit, the environment minister said on Wednesday.

The issue of chlorine-washed chicken, which is produced in the United States but not allowed in the European Union, is high-profile in Britain where many fear that a U.S. trade deal could lead to imports of food with lower safety standards.

Michael Gove, the minister for the environment, food and rural affairs, was asked in a BBC radio interview whether U.S. chlorinated chicken would be allowed in Britain as part of a future U.S. trade deal after Britain leaves the EU.

«No,» he said. «I've made it perfectly clear, and indeed this is something on which all members of the government are agreed, that we are not going to dilute our high animal welfare standards or our high environmental standards in pursuit of any trade deal.»

As a European Union member, Britain is not free to agree trade deals with any third parties, but striking a trade deal with the United States will be a top priority after Britain leaves the European bloc in March 2019.

Inflation rate stands at 7.6% in urban areas

**ECONOMY** **TEHRAN** — The Statistical Center of Iran announced that the inflation rate in the urban areas for the 12-month period ended in Tir, the fourth month of the current Iranian calendar year (June 22-July 22), hit 7.6 percent, Fars news agency reported.

The figure shows 0.2 percent rise from the third calendar month, Khordad.

The center also put the point-to-point inflation rate in the urban areas at 8.9 percent in Tir, with 0.5 percent drop from Khordad.

Also, based on the Statistical Center's report, the inflation rate in the country's rural areas stood at 8.8 percent for the 12-month period ended in Tir, with 0.3 percent increase from the figure of Khordad.

Point-to-point inflation rate in the rural areas fell by 0.8 percent to 9.7 percent in Tir.

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

China to convert all giant state companies into joint-stock firms by end 2017

**BEIJING (Reuters)** — All big Chinese companies owned by the central government will be registered as limited liability companies or joint-stock firms by the end of the year, as Beijing moves to make its state-owned giants more nimble, efficient and modern.

About 90 percent of China's state-owned firms have already completed the process, which has helped improve their governance structures and management, the cabinet said in a statement on its website on Wednesday.

It did not say whether private capital will be allowed to invest in the state giants or whether they will list shares.

Through reforms, the central government hopes to revive China's bloated and debt-ridden state-owned sector and create "bigger and stronger" conglomerates capable of competing on the global stage.

Part of the reforms will involve shutting the most uncompetitive firms. The ownership structure of some SOEs will also be modernized.

One of the biggest problems facing China, particularly the lumbering state-owned giants, is a spike in debt since the 2008 global financial crisis.

Authorities have stepped up efforts to contain debt risks over the past year, and part of those steps have involved the restructuring of state firms.

Earlier this year, People's Bank of China Governor Zhou Xiaochuan said banks will withdraw support for financially unviable firms, repeating pledges by other officials to drive "zombie" firms out of the market.

China is also pushing mixed ownership to allow private capital to invest in firms while retaining the government's presence in the companies.

The state-owned asset regulator has said "erroneous" notions like "privatization" and "denationalization" should be avoided.

Efforts will be made to strengthen the party's leadership at big state firms and to prevent the loss of state assets during restructuring, the cabinet said on Wednesday.

The party's leadership will also help protect employees' legal rights and ensure the stability of corporate reforms, the cabinet said.

One focus will also be on the formation of the board of directors at state-owned companies, the cabinet said, as part of efforts to bring it in line with current day corporate governance practices.

The board will have say in major corporate decisions, hiring and salary distribution.

Salary corridors linked to corporate profits and productivity will also be set up, according to the cabinet.

Last month, the state asset regulator said China's centrally administered SOEs will be divided into three types - industrial groups, investment firms and operating companies.

While details were sparse, the move will similarly change the way SOEs are organized.

The central government currently owns and administers 101 enterprises in sectors ranging from nuclear technology to medicine.

The SOE reforms come as the Communist Party prepares for a once-in-five-years congress in the fall.

Ahead of the congress, one of the government's priorities has been to ensure stability in the country's financial system. Further opening China's economy and markets is another focus.

China's securities regulator pledged on Wednesday to expand access to capital markets for all types of investors, while encouraging more long-term institutional participation in the financial domain.

Qatar could adopt more independent monetary policy if needed

**DUBAI (Reuters)** — Qatar could adopt a monetary policy more independent of the United States if that proves necessary to combat economic sanctions by its Persian Gulf Arab neighbors, a Qatari central banker said.

Like most Persian Gulf Arab oil exporters, Qatar pegs its currency to the U.S. dollar, putting pressure on its central bank to imitate interest rate moves by the U.S. Federal Reserve.

But last month's decision by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt to cut diplomatic and transport ties with Qatar has changed the economic environment for the country.

Asked if the central bank now needed to conduct a more independent monetary policy to deter possible capital flight, Khalid Alkhater said by phone from Qatar: "That depends on an internal assessment at the central bank."

"However, it is technically possible should the monetary authority decide to do so...such as raising the interest rate on deposits in addition to other precautionary measures."

Alkhater, an architect of Qatar's monetary policy during the 2008 global financial crisis, is currently on sabbatical leave from the central bank while doing research at Britain's University of Cambridge.

He stressed that his views did not necessarily reflect the official line of the central bank.

But if Qatar does diverge from U.S. monetary policy, it would not be doing so for the first time, he noted.

In 2008, Qatar's central bank decided not to follow an unprecedented string of rate cuts by the Fed that brought its policy rate close to zero. Instead, Qatar kept its own deposit rate much higher at 2 percent for over two years, helping to stabilize the money market and reducing double-digit inflation.

"The situations now and then are similar," Alkhater said, without elaborating on what a more independent Qatari monetary policy should look like now.

The central bank last changed monetary policy in June, raising the deposit rate by 25 basis points to 1.50 percent, after the U.S. Federal Reserve lifted rates by the same margin.

**■ Sanctions**

The dependence of Qatari banks on foreign loans and deposits may be the aspect of the economy most vulnerable to sanctions, although the country has hundreds of billions of dollars of financial reserves that could be used to support its banks.

"We do have deposits from Saudi Arabia and the UAE in the range of \$15 billion to \$20 billion with a one-year range of maturity," Alkhater said. "We do not expect it to roll over. The amount is very small and manageable."

Alkhater added: "I suggested among other measures that if the blockade countries withdraw their deposits or freeze Qatari assets, we retaliate by doing the same. The government can also increase its deposits with local banks if needed." He did not say if authorities were likely to adopt

Investor confidence and America's status as the world's economic leader are at risk under Trump

During his final term as Federal Reserve chairman, Alan Greenspan noted an impediment stifling economies in the former Soviet Union: "legal chaos, rampant criminality, and widespread corruption" reminiscent of the American Wild West.

"Market economies," Greenspan concluded, "require a rule of law"

Suddenly, the words and actions of President Donald Trump are raising questions about that principle here. After attacking the judiciary over his travel ban earlier this year and firing the FBI director investigating his campaign, the president has warned Special Counsel Robert Mueller about his inquiry, ripped his own attorney general and mused about issuing pre-emptive pardons.

There's no sign of direct economic consequences yet, but as he strains the justice system at home and upends American commitments abroad, Trump poses two kinds of risks.

One is to investor confidence in the United States. So far, booming markets have shrugged off momentary sensations, such as the disclosure that his son and campaign chairman sought information to damage Hillary Clinton from a Russian lawyer and Russian spy.

"The right trade has been to ignore political developments," said Mohamed El-Erian, chief economist for Allianz. But El-Erian warns that "a major shock" could rattle that trade.

Whether Trump himself could administer that shock — say, by firing Mueller and ending the Russia investiga-

tion altogether — would depend on how the Republican-controlled Congress reacts. Lawmakers could accept those actions, or challenge a president of their party.

The other risk is to benefits America derives from its status as the world's economic leader. Trump has already unsettled leaders of other advanced economies by casting doubt on the nation's international commitments.

The steadiness of the American political system is what has kept the dollar the world's reserve currency throughout the post World War II era and kept the U.S. the most consistent safe haven for global investment. That, in turn, has assured American businesses ready access to capital, and the federal government an entree to inexpensive financing of budget deficits.

"Most international observers I've encountered are deeply concerned by Trump's lack of interest in — or even disdain for — the 70-year-old international system that the U.S. led in creating and then adapting," said Robert Zoellick, who served both Presidents Bush in roles including deputy White House chief of staff, deputy secretary of State, and U.S. trade representative before spending five years as president of the World Bank.

Nor are such concerns limited to observers abroad. Zoellick noted that the American president "has now assaulted courts, the intelligence agencies, and the Department of Justice," among others.

"Maybe the military is safe, at least with [Defense Secretary James] Mattis," he concluded. "The core question for America-watchers abroad, and I think for Americans,



his suggestions.

Qatar could also benefit from measures adopted in the past by central banks around the world to deal with capital outflows, such as strengthening prudential regulations and guaranteeing customer deposits up to a certain limit, Alkhater said.

Despite the Qatari riyal's peg of 3.64 to the U.S. dollar, the riyal traded slightly lower between offshore banks in the weeks after the diplomatic crisis erupted, but Alkhater said this was not a worry.

"The Qatari riyal offshore markets are not that significant since supply of the riyal in these markets is very limited. They shouldn't be a source of much worry, but only to the extent that they can affect the spot market," he said. "There is no reason to make any change to the peg."

Qatar's inflation climbed to an annual 0.8 percent in June from 0.1 percent in May as the sanctions raised some import costs.

"Prices could see an increase in some of the items affected by the sanctions due to re-routing of supply lines, shipping costs, or price increases from the sources," Alkhater said.

"This is generally a cost-push inflation in the possible range of 1 percent or slightly above...There is not much room to pressure the economy through trade sanctions and the effect will be limited," he said, noting that there was little cross-border trade between Persian Gulf Arab countries.

"If the sanctions remain for an extended period, like six months or over, then it could have impacts through channels like trade, prices and confidence. But with the increase of liquefied natural gas production, overall growth is not expected to be affected by the blockade in the medium term."

is how the American system and society cope with Trump."

An erosion of that asset would open opportunities for other economic powers to take advantage. One of them is China, which aims to fill the void created by Trump's abandonment of the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

It's not clear that any other nation has the ability or willingness to embrace America's traditional role as international problem-solver of last resort on challenges including security, public health or humanitarian relief. That, in turn, could impose costs on Americans by damaging the global economy.

One near-term test will be the president's willingness and ability to work with Congress to deliver an increase in the federal debt limit later this year. Failing to do so could imperil the unique credit-worthiness the U.S. enjoys.

Congressional Republicans have displayed a reluctance to take that step, and the White House lacks a clear strategy. Trump's own budget director has asserted that the administration can prioritize debt payments in a crisis.

"The impression abroad is that the U.S. is less dependable," El-Erian said. "What you're seeing is an erosion of the trust that underpins the multilateral system."

The threats Trump has signaled to traditional notions of the rule of law represent the other side of the same coin. As new evidence emerged over the weekend about the Trump campaign's interactions with representatives of Russia, the president asserted via Twitter to his "complete power to pardon."

*(Source: cnbc)*



# Big oil bosses are learning to live with \$50 crude

Big Oil is starting to beat the crude-market slump as the industry rediscovers how to make money at lower prices.

Exxon Mobil Corp. and Royal Dutch Shell Plc are forecast to more than double second-quarter profit from a year earlier, far outstripping the 8 percent gain in benchmark Brent crude, according to analyst estimates compiled by Bloomberg. Chevron Corp. will return to profit, while France's Total SA is expected to report a third consecutive quarter of higher year-on-year earnings.

Oil majors are learning to live with \$50 crude, with most CEOs focused on remaining profitable through a downturn they expect to last until at least the end of the decade. Investors have yet to reward the producers' cost-cutting efforts -- with the energy sector the worst performer in the MSCI World Index -- but that may change as cash flows strengthen, according to Sanford C. Bernstein.

"We have to remain very disciplined about spending and not assume that the price will go up," BP Plc Chief Executive Officer Bob Dudley said this month in Istanbul. "The years of \$100 oil will turn out to be an aberration. We used to make money at \$40 oil, we used to make money at \$25 oil."

Europe's seven-biggest oil companies together generated 42 percent more cash in the second quarter than a year earlier, easily enough to cover cash dividends and capital expenditure, Bernstein analyst Oswald Clint wrote in a July 19 report.

Clint, who assumes an oil price of \$50 a barrel for this year and 2018, said over the next two to three quarters producers should generate enough cash to also phase out dividends paid as shares. Eliminating those scrip dividends would prevent a further dilution of share value and open the way for buybacks, he said.

Total, Europe's second-biggest oil company, can cover the cash part of its dividend at \$50 oil this year, according to Bloomberg Intelligence data. Exxon and Shell covered their payout with cash from operations in the first quarter at an average price for Brent of just under \$55. BP, which didn't generate enough money to cover the payout in the three months to March, will be able to do so this year if oil is between \$50 and \$55, Chief Financial Officer Brian Gilvary said in May.

## Spending increase

Despite cutting billions of dollars of capital expenditure, the producers are now proceeding with projects they began before the downturn, including BP in the North Sea and Eni SpA in Africa. The industry is expected to increase spending "modestly" in oil and gas exploration and production projects this year after a 44 percent plunge between 2014 and 2016, the International Energy Agency said this month.



Investors are still wary. Brent crude near \$50 a barrel is about half the level of three years ago, despite OPEC's efforts to boost prices by cutting production.

The MSCI World Energy Sector Index is down 9 percent this year, with the 90 companies that make up the index together losing \$218 billion in market value, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Shares of all of the Big Five -- Exxon, Shell, Chevron, Total and BP -- are down more than 10 percent.

Industry profit in the first quarter was the best in two

years as the effects of cost cutting began to show. That gave way to the realization that OPEC's deal to curb output wasn't eliminating the global supply glut as quickly as intended by the exporters' group led by Saudi Arabia. Even an extension of the curbs until March 2018 couldn't boost prices and prevent banks including Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and BNP Paribas SA from cutting their oil-price forecasts.

The mean estimate of analysts for Exxon's 2017 profit has been cut by \$940 million in the past month, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Shell's has been reduced by almost \$591 million, Chevron's by \$360 million, Total's by \$201 million and BP's by \$409 million, according to the data.

Still, Bernstein expects cash flow growth to provide the trigger for a turnaround in the companies' fortunes.

"Big Oil is a value sector in need of a catalyst and that catalyst is scrip dividend removal and share repurchases," Clint said. "We see that occurring over the next six to nine months."

(Source: Bloomberg)

## China's demand for imported crude set to rise by 400,000 bpd in 2017

Lower domestic production and continued low oil prices will lead to China's demand for crude oil imports rising by around 400,000 bpd in 2017, according to a senior manager at Sinopec.

Chinese crude oil imports are expected to exceed 400 million tons this year, and to further rise next year, Zhang Haichao, vice president of Sinopec Group, told Reuters.

The estimate provided by Zhang means that Chinese demand for foreign crude would rise by 400,000 bpd, and for the first time ever, rising imports could make China the world's top crude oil importer on an annual basis, according to Reuters.

Chinese customs data has revealed that the world's second-largest consumer of crude oil imported 8.55 million bpd during the first half of the year, or 212 million tons in total -- a 13.8-percent annual increase. The growth in imports comes on the back of higher refinery runs after a maintenance period, as well as dwindling local crude production.

The estimates of the Sinopec executive for the increased full-year 2017 imports come despite reports that Chinese refineries are expected to shut nearly 10 percent of the coun-



try's 15.1-million-bpd refinery capacity in the third quarter—the peak demand season, as they continue to grapple with domestic surplus of gasoline and diesel.

But last month, China allowed a second batch of crude oil import quotas for independent refiners and some state-held companies for 2017, setting full-year quotas at a total of 91.73 million tons, or 1.83 million bpd.

At the beginning of this year, analysts predicted in a Platts outlook for 2017 that at an average barrel price of US\$55 this year, Chinese crude oil production would continue to drop, by around 5 percent compared to last year. Declining domestic output would raise Chinese crude oil imports in 2017 compared with 2016, analysts said.

(Source: oilprice.com)

## Indonesia open to rejoining OPEC if not forced to cut: minister

Indonesia is open to rejoining the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries as long as it is not forced to curb its own crude oil production, the nation's energy and mineral resources minister said on Tuesday.

"We would have to have a concession for not following cuts from time to time," the minister, Ignasius Jonan, said in an interview in Houston, where he is meeting with major oil producers.

Indonesia said two months ago that it was considering rejoining OPEC after it had left and rejoined several times over the years. The country, which pumps about 800,000 barrels of crude per day, would become the group's 15th member.

The membership talks come as OPEC members grapple with an oversupply of crude around the globe, brought on in part by rising production from U.S. shale regions.

Indonesia imports roughly double the amount of crude that it produces, so it is happy with the current oil price, near \$50 per barrel, Jonan said. When asked if that point of view would cause tension in an OPEC meeting, Jonan said it would "lead to more dialogue."

Jonan, who was appointed ener-



gy minister last year, is meeting with Chevron Corp, Exxon Mobil Corp, ConocoPhillips and others in Houston this week, a stop on a multi-nation tour to bolster interest in investing in Indonesia.

"This is all part of an effort to have a more open dialogue with our business partners," Jonan said.

The minister said he had a long discussion with Chevron about the company's operations in the Permian Basin, the largest U.S. oilfield.

"The production capacity keeps growing. That's significant," he said. "If shale oil production keeps going up that means U.S. imports of crude oil is going down."

Jonan also addressed a permit dispute with Freeport-McMoRan Inc, the world's largest publicly traded copper miner, over operations in Indonesia.

(Source: Reuters)

## Oil prices firm on optimism over declining stocks

Oil prices firmed on Wednesday to hold near eight-week highs hit in the previous session, on expectations of a drawdown in U.S. stocks and as a rise in shale oil production shows signs of slowing.

Brent crude futures rose 41 cents, or 0.8 percent, to \$50.61 a barrel by 0617 GMT, after rallying more than 3 percent on Tuesday.

U.S. West Texas Intermediate futures climbed 49 cents, or 1 percent, to \$48.38 a barrel.

U.S. crude stocks fell sharply last week as refineries boosted output, while gasoline inventories increased and distillate stocks decreased, data from industry group the American Petroleum Institute showed on Tuesday.

Crude inventories declined by 10.2 million barrels in the week ending July 21 to 487 million, compared with expectations for a decrease of 2.6 million barrels.

The market has been buoyed by Saudi Arabia's announcement at a meeting of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and non-OPEC producers on Monday that it would limit crude exports



to 6.6 million barrels per day (bpd) in August, down nearly 1 million bpd from a year earlier.

"This has seen expectations of further drawdown in inventories increase," ANZ said in a research note, referring to the Saudi plans.

Nigeria also agreed to join a push to rein in production by capping or cutting its output from 1.8 million

bpd once it stabilizes at that level.

However, the current uptrend in oil prices could be limited to the low \$50 per barrel region, according to Ric Spooner, chief market analyst at CMC Markets in Sydney.

"As we approach \$50 and into the low \$50s, that's a level that could attract increased U.S. shale oil production if it stays around that level," he said.

On Monday, Anadarko Petroleum Corp said it would cut its 2017 capital budget by \$300 million because of depressed oil prices, the first major U.S. oil producer to do so, after posting a larger-than-expected quarterly loss.

Oil prices have come under pressure from an oversupply of crude around the globe, brought on in part by rising production from U.S. shale regions.

Indonesia's energy minister said on Tuesday that Southeast Asia's top crude producer would be open to rejoining the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) as long as it is not forced to curb its own crude oil production.

(Source: Reuters)

## U.A.E. pledges further oil output cuts starting in September

The United Arab Emirates reiterated its commitment to the OPEC agreement on production cuts and said it would deepen its own curbs.

The Abu Dhabi National Oil Co.'s shipments of Murban, Das and Upper Zakum crudes will be 10 percent lower from September, Minister of Energy Suhail Al Mazrouei said. "The U.A.E. is committed to its share in the OPEC production cut," he said.

The move follows criticism on Monday from Saudi Minister of Energy and Industry Khalid Al-Falih of members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries who haven't fulfilled their pledged supply reductions. The U.A.E. has only implemented 54 percent of its promised 139,000 barrel-a-day cut on average, according to the International Energy Agency.

Oil slumped into a bear market last month on concerns that rising global supply was blunting the impact of the historic supply agreement last year between OPEC and allies including Russia. The group's compliance with the deal has been weakening, while output in Nigeria and Libya -- both exempt from making cuts -- has bounced back.

A meeting of oil producers in St. Petersburg, Russia, on Monday agreed to allow Libya and Nigeria to keep increasing output, but emphasized the need for other producers to follow through.

"Some countries continue to lag" in their compliance "which is a concern we must address head on," Al-Falih said after the talks. The kingdom won't act alone to balance the market and other nations should improve their implementation, he said.

The U.A.E. isn't the only major producer in OPEC to have fallen short of its commitment, with Iraq also making only half of its 210,000 barrel-a-day cut on average this year, while Venezuela has managed just 39 percent, according to the IEA data.

(Source: Bloomberg)

## S.Korea's S-Oil expects stable refining margins in H2 on robust demand

South Korea's third-largest refiner S-Oil Corp said on Wednesday that strong demand growth in Asia is expected to support refining margins in the second half of the year.

"China and India will drive regional demand growth on the back of healthy industrial activity and robust vehicle sales," the refiner, whose main shareholder is Saudi Aramco, said in an earnings statement.

S-Oil also said it expected crude oil prices to remain range-bound at current levels in the second half of the year, helping to support demand.

Asian refining margins, or the profit earned by processing a barrel of Dubai crude into products, have risen to average \$7.22 a barrel so far in July, driven by robust fuel demand. That was above an average \$6.41 a barrel in April-June.

Among products, fuel oil cracks are expected to stay firm throughout the second half, boosted by strong demand for power generation in the third quarter and tighter supplies, a senior S-Oil official said during a conference call.

A fall in supplies and growing demand for power generation pushed fuel oil profit margins to a five-year high in June, potentially prompting some refiners to ramp up their runs.

S-Oil reported a 117.3 billion won (\$104.9 million) operating profit for the three months to end-June, down 82 percent fall from a year ago and down 65 percent from the previous quarter due to a fall in crude prices and weak inventory valuation, the company said.

Oil prices have largely remained below \$50 a barrel so far this year amid a global supply glut despite OPEC's efforts to curb production to prop up prices.

A second senior S-Oil official, Ko Gwang-cheol, said the refiner has no maintenance plans for the rest of the year and will operate its plants at optimal level. South Korean and Japanese oil refiners were running their plants at near-maximum capacity on solid fuel demand.

S-Oil, which imports almost all of its crude from Saudi Arabia, ran its 669,000 barrels-per-day crude distillation units (CDU) in Ulsan, about 380 km (236 miles) southeast of Seoul, at 96.5 percent of capacity in the second quarter, up from 95 percent a year earlier.

(Source: Reuters)

## Malaysia's Petronas scraps \$29b western Canada LNG project

Malaysian oil company Petronas scrapped a proposed C\$36 billion (\$29 billion) liquefied natural gas (LNG) project in western Canada due to weak prices, in a blow to both its global ambitions and Canada's hopes of becoming a major LNG player.

Pacific NorthWest LNG in British Columbia was meant to produce 12 megatons per year and spur further development of Canada's largest shale play, but industry observers said the move was widely expected given years of delay.

"It is a good decision not to invest in this project which is expensive and risky," said Subbu Bettadapura, senior director, Asia Pacific, Frost and Sullivan. "Only question is why they took so long to come to this decision."

Analysts had been skeptical about the project's prospects given current low gas prices and constraints facing state-run Petronas, which has been cutting costs to deal with lower profits and cash flow.

The decision is the latest setback for Canada's energy industry, already bruised by international oil firms selling off around \$23 billion in Canadian energy assets this year alone.

(Source: Reuters)



## Turkey's eastward shift can be halted

By David Gardner

Western re-engagement with Ankara brings benefits for Europe and the Middle East.

While it has long been apparent that Turkey has started to slip its western moorings and turn eastward, only now is it becoming clear how instability in Turkey radiates through a region in turmoil, amplified by an EU turned inwards, and a U.S. whose policies are turned upside down by Donald Trump. Turkey's spat with Germany — Berlin lambasted the government of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and Chancellor Angela Merkel's chief-of-staff, Peter Altmaier, called Ankara's behaviour "unacceptable" after Turkish police arrested a German in a swoop on human rights activists — is escalating into a feud. But Turkey's relations with other NATO partners are just as inflammatory. The way President Trump triggered the crisis between a Saudi Arabian-led camp and Turkey's ally Qatar is one thing, putting at risk America's biggest base in the Middle East. But the U.S., and France and Britain, by relying on Syrian Kurdish militia to fight ISIS in Syria and Iraq, are jeopardizing NATO's access to Incirlik air base in southern Turkey (from which Germany has moved its contingent to Jordan after Ankara obstructed German MPs' visits). Turkish-backed rebels are already fighting the U.S.-led anti-ISIS coalition's proxies in Syria. Last week, Turkey's state news agency took the extraordinary step of revealing the position of 10 U.S. bases in Kurdish areas of northern Syria, with maps and troop numbers. Turkey entered a tactical alliance with Russia and Iran on the rebound from the Kurdish dispute with western allies. It is being pushed further into their embrace, along with Qatar. This latter dispute, ostensibly separate, cuts Turkey off from the Sunni camp Ankara has sought to lead, and could end by weakening it while courting further internal destabilization. Turkey is still working through the fallout of last summer's coup attempt, which President Erdogan and his Justice and Development party blame on a network infiltrated into the army and the state by Fethullah Gulen, leader of a shadowy Islamist cult and an erstwhile ally. Arrests have decimated the military, purged ministries, universities, schools and media, leading to more than 100,000 dismissals and 50,000 jailed. But the country is also under assault by ISIS and the insurgency of the Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK), to which the U.S.-backed Syrian Kurdish fighters are tied. What if Iran or Saudi Arabia, already warring by proxy across a region consumed by the Shia-Sunni power struggle, decide to fish in these troubled waters as well? The west at times seems resigned to losing Turkey, watching as it disappears into the Eurasian spider's web being spun by Vladimir Putin's Russia. The EU bears special responsibility. Once a strategic anchor and engine of reform for Turkey, EU members started obstructing Turkish entry a decade ago and have blown hot and cold ever since — warming to Ankara mostly when needing help, such as holding back the tides of Syrian refugees heading for Europe.

### ■ Balance of powers

President Erdogan, for his part, empowered after winning April's constitutional referendum, enabling him to rule unchecked by any balance of powers, would prefer to keep EU economic ties without bothersome political constraints and judicial oversight. That is delusional as long as the rupture with Europe (as well as NATO) is accelerating. Turkey's economy is vulnerable, especially through its dependence on cheap credit. Question marks hang over the rule of law, such as the seizure of almost 1,000 private companies after the coup, and are deterring investment. Foreign and defense policy looks increasingly improvised, connected by the single thread of Kurdish advances south of Turkey's borders emboldening the PKK inside them. As Syrian Kurds take the ISIS stronghold of Raqqa, and Iraq's self-governing Kurds hold a referendum on independence in September, Turkey may be tempted to lash out. Germany and Turkey are close to retaliating against each other through sanctions, with Berlin reviewing arms sale licenses and Ankara allegedly drawing up blacklists of German companies in Turkey. Yet the EU should still have some leverage. Both sides, with cooler heads, may see the value of defense and counter-terror co-operation, and greater EU engagement with the Kurdish problem, which Turkey sees as existential. EU entry is off the table. But Brussels should push ahead, after German elections in September, with a radical upgrade of the customs union with Turkey — the rules for which could help shore up a crumbling rule of law. If the relationship with Turkey is going to be transactional, then make the bargains worth something.

(Source: FT)

## France's efforts to tackle migrant gangs have failed

Drivers have been warned not to leave their vehicles after a trucker heading through Calais was brutally assaulted by a gang of migrants who hit him over the head with a brick when he stopped to inspect his lorry.

Last month a driver was killed after a roadblock built by migrants caused him to crash his van. If serious action is not taken more people are going to be killed or seriously injured.

The British and French governments have taken steps to try to address the problem. However, the measures introduced thus far fall a long way short of what is required to keep lorry drivers and tourists safe while using the port.

That criminal gangs continue brazenly to flout the law is proof enough that the increased police presence has not been sufficient.

Part of the difficulty law enforcement officials face is the sheer number of people they are expected to monitor.

The problems at Calais and other port towns are not going away. This will not change until the French government takes proper action to register all migrants, grant asylum to those who deserve it and deport those who do not.

The Channel ports are vital transport links that are desperately important for tourism and commerce. We have to be able to use them safely. At a time when so many holidaymakers are travelling to and from the continent this is an issue that must be addressed quickly.

(Source: express.co.uk)

# Al-Aqsa in crisis



**The only two countries that appear to be brusque and tough with Israel, at least in terms of their rhetoric, are Iran and Turkey.**

the strategic, historical, political and social considerations that are at the heart of the national interests of the Hashemite Kingdom.

Otherwise, the only two countries that appear to be brusque and tough with Israel, at least in terms of their rhetoric, are Iran and Turkey. This paradox illustrates clearly the magnitude of the enormous fragility of the current Arab situation.

So does Israel need to explore and test Arab public reactions? I think its ability to read the situation is a substitute for any such efforts. Today the Syrians are busy with a civil war that has caused near total destruction, displacement and killing on a much bigger scale than the Palestinian catastrophe. It was inflicted on them by

the Assad regime and Iran. Iraq is no different when it comes to what has become a sectarian civil war that outranks in its seriousness and importance everything beyond its borders.

This is also true of the Yemenis, Libyans and Egyptians who are not far away. Even the Arab Maghreb, which looks internally to be much better off, is suffering from an economic crisis, anxiety about the future and daily worries that keep most of the regional governments busy.

Is it any different in Saudi Arabia, where the Salafi mainstream dominates? It used to be the state that traditionally and historically supported the Palestinian cause, although its support was only moral, financial and symbolic.

It is clear that the regional considerations, linked to the [Persian] Gulf crisis, the interior developments associated with new changes, and the priority of the relationship with the Trump administration in Washington all limit the official and popular reactions to what Israel does.

### ■ Domestic conflict

Back to the starting point; perhaps Israel did not want to test the Arab situation because this situation does not need to be tested, as much as it wanted to make sure that the Arabs have reached an advanced stage of domestic conflict. What is more important than this Israeli exploration, is that it is continuing with its Judaisation plans to change the status quo in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and is moving slowly towards achieving its ambitions without expecting any symbolic or political reactions from its neighbors.

It is time for the Arabs and Palestinians to do their own exploration to see what they have become. They are no longer capable of even claiming to do anything about Israel while the Arab public are burdened with their own concerns and misfortunes, and there are historic changes in the Arab world.

Al-Aqsa in crisis, however, could turn out to be good for the Palestinians, and I believe that this is what some Israeli security officials, who opposed the latest measures imposed by Netanyahu, have realized. The standoff at the Noble Sanctuary may be the catalyst to reawaken the people across the region and return the Palestinian cause to the top of their agenda. It was almost a forgotten issue, but the Israeli Prime Minister's gift to the Palestinians may well have changed that.

(Source: middleeastmonitor.com)

## Why it's not too early to discuss grounds for Donald Trump's impeachment

By Jennifer Rubin

"Just six months after his inauguration, Americans already are split down the middle, 42 percent-42 percent, over whether President Trump should be removed from office, a new USA TODAY/iMediaEthics Poll finds.

"While no serious effort is now underway in Congress to impeach Trump, the results underscore how quickly political passions have become inflamed both for and against the outsider candidate who won last year's campaign in a surprise. A third of those surveyed say they would be upset if Trump is impeached; an equal third say they would be upset if he's not."

That's extraordinary for the speed with which we reached this widespread willingness to consider impeachment. Not only are we a mere six months into the Trump presidency, but also we have yet to see a final report from the special counsel or a congressional committee.

Impeachment isn't a matter up for popular referendum - or is it? In about 15 months, every member of the House will be up for reelection. Unless Trump is gone by then or thoroughly exonerated (both unlikely, but who knows?), that issue will be front and center in the race. It's far from nutty - or even a stretch - to discuss grounds for impeachment; indeed, when as many favor it as oppose it, impeachment becomes an entirely legitimate topic. Republicans won't be able to discredit Democrats on the grounds that they are mulling impeachment. To the contrary, Democrats will try to make Republicans

squirm by raising a series of uncomfortable questions:

\* Why isn't the GOP taking Trump's conflicts of interest, including possible emoluments clause violations, seriously?

\* Why didn't Candidate X object to the firing of former FBI director James Comey?

\* Why haven't the Republicans forced Trump to turn over his tax returns? (A large majority of voters consistently have said Trump should release them.)

\* How can we trust Republicans who have defended Trump at every turn to do the right thing if the facts show Trump committed impeachable offenses? (Even stickier, asking Republicans to specify what would be impeachable puts them in a nasty corner. Refuse to answer, and they've shown themselves to be flunkies; answer, and they bind themselves to a vote should credible facts come to light.)

\* Would Republicans move to impeach if Trump tried to pardon himself and/or family members?

\* Why didn't they demand that Jared Kushner, after his multiple meetings with Russians and failure to report them, lose his security clearance?

This will not be the only issue in the 2018 midterms, but unless Trump is gone or entirely cleared, it will be an awfully significant one. What's a Republican to do? Simple:

\* Take Trump conflicts of interest, including possible emoluments clause violations, seriously and begin hearings.

\* Make clear the objection to Comey's



**If Republicans can't commit to upholding the Constitution, throw them out of office.**

firing and warn that firing special counsel Robert Mueller would have dire consequences. (Better yet, promise to pass and rehire him under a new independent prosecutor statute.)

\* Pass legislation to require Trump to turn over his tax returns.

\* Specify what would be impeachable offenses: firing the special counsel, obstruction of justice (including directing underlings to lie and/or cover up the reason for Comey's firing), financial wrongdoing, perjury and/or misleading Congress.

\* State clearly that the GOP will move to impeach if Trump tries to pardon himself and/or family members.

\* Demand that Kushner, after his multiple meetings with Russians and failure to report them, lose his security clearance.

In short, there is no good reason - aside from blind partisan loyalty (and how has that worked out for the GOP?) - not to do these things. If the GOP doesn't, Democrats have a very strong case in arguing that Republicans have shown themselves unwilling to uphold their constitutional obligations. Put differently, if they keep defending Trump and refusing to address his misconduct head-on, they have no business being in office.

(Source: Independent)

## Britain sees Brexit's threats more clearly

It is now more than a year since the British voted to leave the European Union and nearly four months since Prime Minister Theresa May formally started the two-year clock to negotiate the divorce, and so far the only results are increasingly gloomy prognoses for Britain.

Mrs. May, her party and her standing weakened in a general election last month, has had trouble controlling feuds within her government; banks are considering leaving London; investors are wary; and a campaign to reverse course is gaining momentum. A letter in The Financial Times on Friday signed by, among others, Lord Kerr, a former ambassador to the United States and to the union, called for a halt to Brexit, saying that the "disastrous consequences" were becoming clearer by the day.

Friday also brought the news that Bank of America had chosen Dublin as its future European Union hub, joining Citigroup and others in making contingency plans for the day when London loses the "passporting" privileges under which a lender licensed in one EU state can work in all. Businesses are equally nervous that leaving the European customs union would disrupt supply chains.

With grandees in Mrs. May's Conservative Party sens-



ing vulnerability, the knives are out, with people in or close to the party denouncing one another as "pirates," "lazy as a toad" or "government morons." The infighting

**The idea of another referendum is not popular, and the result would be uncertain.**

has heightened the sense that the government lacks a coherent strategy, while making it even more difficult for it to shape one.

Officially, Mrs. May is still seeking a clean break with the bloc, one that emphasizes full British control of immigration and the courts more than the interests of the economy. But the chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, has championed a "soft Brexit" that prioritizes the economy. Last month's election further muddled matters by revoking the Conservatives' majority in Parliament.

As negotiations progress, visions of a painless divorce and new opportunities for a "global Britain" will most likely wither further, but the infighting will not. Calls to halt Brexit will grow, but that way is also not easy. Blocking the process would be seen as a rebuff of the public will. The idea of another referendum is not popular, and the result would be uncertain.

But there is nothing undemocratic about reviewing the pros and cons of Brexit as the trade-offs become clearer. A move this fateful should not be declared off-limits to a continuing national debate. That would be undemocratic.

(Source: The NYT)



# Iraq national unity key in post-Daesh era

By Maryam Azish

As Iraq is cheering the liberation of the city of Mosul from the occupation of Daesh, Iranian officials believe that the liberation marking a turning point in the history of national unity, peace, and stability in Iraq.

This dealt a sober blow to the terror group and its supporters. The liberation of Mosul will facilitate the recapturing of other areas in the Arab nation.

On July 10, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi formally declared victory of the country's forces over the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group one day after the country's military and Popular Mobilization Forces took full control of the northern city.

"I announce from here the end and the failure and the collapse of the terrorist state of falsehood and terrorism, which the terrorist Daesh announced from Mosul," he said, adding, "It was due to the Iraqi nation's united front and sacrifice that we are now celebrating the victory over Daesh. This is the victory over darkness and terrorism," al-Abadi said.

The recapture of Mosul, located some 400 kilometers north of Baghdad, marks the effective end of Daesh in the Arab country.

The Iraqi troops retook Mosul through the support of Popular Mobilization Forces, which means that Baghdad is able to remove security threats without relying on foreign troops.

Presently, Mosul's recapture has helped Iran, Iraq and Syria to boost their anti-Daesh battle, Iran Daily wrote.

Mosul fell in June 2014, when Daesh in an attack took control of the city. Iraqi forces launched the operation to retake Mosul on October 16, 2016.

The eastern part of Mosul was recaptured from Daesh in about three months and the most populated part of the city, known as the Old City of Mosul, in the western bank of Tigris River was liberated in recent days.

## Counter-terrorism efforts



## Killing civilians in Iraq and Syria

By Edward Hunt

The ongoing effort of the United States to eradicate the Islamic State by aggressively launching airstrikes against targets that include non-combatants is causing significant harm to civilians in Iraq and Syria.

Estimates of civilian deaths from airstrikes range from the hundreds to the tens of thousands. Although the U.S. government says that it has killed 603 civilians in airstrikes since the start of military operations in 2014, the monitoring group Airwars estimates that airstrikes have killed at least 4,500 civilians, including nearly 1,000 children.

Some of the strikes have been horrific. One attack in Mosul last March killed at least 100 civilians and injured countless more. "Dozens of Iraqi civilians, some of them still alive and calling out for help, were buried for days under the rubble of their homes in western Mosul after American-led airstrikes flattened almost an entire city block," The New York Times reported.

Officials in Washington deny any wrongdoing. They insist that they are taking every precaution to protect civilians. They also argue that they are not intentionally killing civilians, despite the fact that President Trump promised during his presidential campaign to go after civilians. When it comes to terrorists, "you have to take out their families," Trump said.

Others argue that civilian deaths cannot be avoided. Lieutenant General Stephen Townsend, the commander of coalition forces, said during a press conference last March that civilian deaths result from the fog of war. "And this is why it's not a war crime to accidentally kill civilians," Townsend said, in a misinterpretation of the law.

Still, U.S. officials know that they are responsible for killing civilians in Iraq and Syria. For over the past year, at least, they have

What happened in Mosul is not an event specific to Iraq, but it has to do with the destiny of the whole region and the Islamic Ummah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah said while referring to the recapture of Mosul from Daesh terrorists, also known as ISIS.

Nasrallah recently praised Ayatollah Sayyed Ali Sistani for issuing a Fatwa calling on all Muslims to stand against terrorism.

The Lebanese senior cleric also emphasized the role of Ayatollah Sistani's call (Fatwa) to encourage the Iraqi in the fight against terrorism, as well as establishing the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), comprised of thousands of Iraqi youths for fighting Daesh.

Nasrallah also appreciated Iran for its support of the Iraqi forces to stand against invasion of the Takfiris and added that Iran's Islamic Republic Guard Corps (IRGC) officers contributed to a great extent to the victory achieved in Iraq against Daesh.

Praising the role of Sunni clerics for refuting the claims that the battle was a sectarian one, Nasrallah said that Sunni-Shia unity paved the way for defeating Daesh, and it successfully foiled plots by some media.

## Iran massive supports

Iraqi Vice President Nouri al-Maliki expressed his gratitude to Iran for its massive supports for the Arab country in the fight against Daesh terrorist group and its major role in the recent liberation of Mosul from the terrorists.

A former prime minister, offered congratulations over the full liberation of Mosul from Daesh terrorists and thanked all those nations that sided with the Iraqi people and government in the anti-terror campaign.

"Among all those who rushed to help Iraq, the Islamic Republic of Iran should be thanked first, which came to the aid of Iraq with all its might," he said, adding that Iranian advisers' blood has been shed in battlefields against terrorists like their Iraqi



## The recapture of Mosul, located some 400 kilometers north of Baghdad, marks the effective end of Daesh in the Arab country.

brothers'.

## Iraq's integrity

Talking to Ammar Hakim, the head of the National Iraqi Alliance (NIA), President Hassan Rouhani said on that Mosul liberation should reinforce Iraq's integrity, adding that Iran supports Iraqi stability and unity.

Rouhani added that in light of prudence of Iraqi officials and strengthening and integrity of all ethnic groups, happiness of the Iraqi nation over Mosul liberation should be preserved and doubled.

"With victories in Mosul and failure of terrorists, we hope that security, stability and unity in Iraq will be further strengthened; undoubtedly, such a stability and security will be in favor of relations between the two Iranian and Iraqi nations."

Noting that promotion of Tehran-Baghdad relations is the wish of both Iranian and Iraqi nations and in line with mutual interests, President Rouhani said that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always been favoring solid relations with all neighbors, especially Iraq.

President Rouhani underlined setting aside discordant issues and reinforcing pillars of unity among all ethnic groups in Iraq instead.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran supports stable, integrated and united Iraq; any move undermining unity and integrity of Iraq will not be in favor of anybody, thus unacceptable."

For sure the liberation of Mosul has special significance from technical and operational aspects, both internally and internationally.

The Mosul operation has been considerable due to using very complicated

technical and tactical methods. The city's geographical and topographical status made the operation difficult. Such conditions made Daesh's fortifications more inaccessible to Iraqi forces.

Also, the terror group used civilians as human shields which added to the difficulty of the anti-Daesh offensive, Iran Daily wrote.

The support provided to Daesh by certain states added insult to injury.

Despite such difficulties, the Iraqi Army, backed by all walks of life, continued its battle against Daesh and made great achievements.

Meanwhile, the most important and long-term result of Mosul's liberation is that regional nations are capable of dislodging terrorists without the intervention of foreign states.

Nonetheless, the liberation of the strategic city of Mosul has not ended the Daesh era. The Iraqi Army and the Popular Mobilization Forces will have to make tenacious efforts to purge the nation from terrorists. This is because the terror group will probably increase its suicide attacks after losing control of Mosul.

Irrespective of security obstacles, the Iraqi government is trying to return refugees to their homes which had been occupied by terrorists.

Since Daesh was created as a result of colonial policies pursued by the US and Israel, the terror group will continue to exist as long as it receives the support of Washington and Tel Aviv.

Iraq needs to follow up measures to preserve its national unity in the post Daesh-era. Any failure to maintain such unity might put the country in danger of being torn apart.

## US war in Syria far from over

By Stephen Lendman

Since Russia intervened in Syria at Assad's request, the tide of battle turned in favor of government and allied forces, smashing US-supported terrorists, liberating many parts of the country.

Yet conflict continues raging. Political analyst Jamal Wakeem believes long-range US rocket launchers deployed to al-Tanf in southern Syria may be used against government and allied forces, a convenient pretext used as unjustifiable justification.

Regime change remains Washington's objective, said Wakeem. It wants control over Syria, first by gaining it in northern and southern parts of the country.

"(T)he Americans are trying to block any possibility of a geographical link between Baghdad and Damascus...to marginalize Iran and (Hezbollah)...in preparation for the future strike against the Syrian Army and also against its allies," Wakeem explained, adding:

"I believe we will see a further escalation of the situation. The Americans know very well that the stability of the regime relies mainly on the stability of the capital, Damascus" – something it wants changed.

Ceasefire in southern Syria was short-lived, discussed in a previous article. On Sunday, Netanyahu said he opposes the Russian/US brokered deal, claiming it "perpetuat(es)" Iranian and Hezbollah presence in the country near Israel's border.

Tel Aviv and Washington want regime change, pro-Western puppet rule replacing Assad, Syrian sovereignty eliminated, Iran isolated.

US war plans were long ago prepared against the Islamic Republic, likely just a matter of time until they're implemented.

Netanyahu lied saying "Israel is aware of Iran's expansionist goals in Syria."

None exist – not now, earlier or likely planned.

Tehran wants regional stability, peace, not war, and the Middle East free from the threat of nuclear weapons along with America's aggressive presence.

Separately, the Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently (RBSS) web site reported "tens of thousands of civilians remain trapped inside (the) ISIS controlled" city.

US-supported terrorists posing "Syrian Democratic Forces and the" US-led coalition ignore their safety and welfare.

Residential areas are being indiscriminately terror-bombed, the same US-led aggression inflicted on Mosul.

RBSS estimates around 70,000 defenseless civilians trapped in the city. Severe shortages of food, water and medical aid created a "humanitarian disaster..."

When US-led aggression began weeks earlier, most medical professionals fled the city with other civilians, RBSS explained.

"Several private hospitals are now out of service due to the heavy shelling," the group said. "(O)nly one operating hospital remain(s) inside Raqqa city, but it is not sufficient to provide adequate health services."

"People living in neighborhoods near the front lines have been obligated by ISIS militants to abandon their houses and move towards the city center so they can be used as human shields. ISIS wishes to prevent as many civilians as possible from fleeing the city..."

Satellite images show vast destruction and "severe damage to houses, properties and infrastructure."

The battle for control of Raqqa repeats US-led devastation inflicted on Mosul – on a somewhat smaller scale, but just as harmful to city residents, victims of US imperial viciousness.

(Source: Syria Solidarity)

## Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham left without support

By Firas Samuri

Recently, Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham militants (ex Jabhat Al-Nusra) have faced serious issues with money. Inside Syria Media Center military correspondents on the ground confirm that the militants and field-commanders have not received cash allowance for more than several months. Furthermore, the jihadists don't receive money and ammunition for organizing and conducting illegal activity in Syria.

The militants are currently controlling vast territories in the eastern part of Aleppo province and the central part of Idlib. The opposing Ahrar al-Sham formations have to retreat under the pressure of Tahrir Al-Sham, suffering heavy losses and joining ISIS. Despite these facts, the condition of the former Al-Nusra front is not as good as it seems.

First of all, the units of the group are leaving the previously occupied territories and try to take under control other settlements in the region. That's why Tahrir Al-Sham has serious disagreements with Ahrar al-Sham group. The militants try to seize the resources they need, including various weapons, equipment, fuel and other resources in new territories controlled by other factions.

Yet, another proof Al-Nusra having some difficulties is the fact that the militants have to sell small arms, explosives and other military equipment. From time to time, we can see offers on different types of weapons, ranging from pistols and machine guns to TOW missile launchers and missile installations on Facebook.

In addition, seeking profit, Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham militants advanced and occupied territories in the northern part of Aleppo, where the objects of historic and cultural values are located. At present, the militants grant license to so-called "black archeologists" for the possibility of carrying out archaeological excavations there. At the same time all the found artifacts are withdrawn for further selling to the Western collectors.

Moreover, Jabhat al-Nusra established full control over Bab al Hawa checkpoint on the Syrian-Turkish border. This achievement allows terrorists to set up selling of seized property via the checkpoint. Most often, the Turkish side is a major customer of these goods.

Apparently, militant's western patrons and sponsors are beginning to realize that the financing of terrorists will no longer bring them dividends either in political or economic terms. Therefore, investing radical groups like Hayat Tahrir Al-Sham is not profitable any more as the successful steps of the Syrian Arab Army (SAA) contribute much to stability across Syria. The militants seem to be the scapegoats left to their fate.



(Source: FPIF)



# Kenya's election: What will young people vote for?

By John-Allan Namu

Fresh-faced doesn't even begin to describe Simon Muturi. He's a 24-year-old small businessman from Nyeri County, the heartland of incumbent Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta. He's also the nominated candidate for his ward, under Kenyatta's Jubilee Party. Simon, or "roho-safi" (clean-hearted) as his supporters like to call him, is not your typical candidate. He is young, has no political connections or clout to shake a stick at, and he campaigns on a bicycle. He turned his bicycle into a campaign gimmick to better identify with the ordinary voter, but also it's all he can afford.

What's even more endearing about Simon's story is that in a region where securing his party's nomination more or less means that he will be his ward's next representative, he managed to beat a field of candidates who are richer, better connected, and far more politically experienced than him to get the nomination. Double his age, and he'd still be the youngest contender.

So how did a greenhorn beat the field? Maybe his success had something to do with the fact that 50 percent of the electorate in his ward are young people between the ages of

18 and 35. Every other candidate for the seat is over 50, so his success was not a surprise when you look at it that way.

In fact, if you look at Kenya's national voter register statistics, you'll find that young voters below the age of 35 constitute 51 percent of the entire electorate. So this election, if only just, qualifies as a young persons' election. The more energetic, more exuberant half of the population now statistically has the upper hand, which matters a lot. Simon's success shows that the Kenyan youth is ready to get behind a younger candidate.

## ■ Constitutional threshold

Opinion polls released on the race so far put President Kenyatta, aged 55, ahead with 47 percent of the vote, and his closest challenger, opposition stalwart Raila Odinga, who is 72, at 42 percent. So neither candidate has enough votes to pass Kenya's constitutional threshold of 50 percent to secure a victory. According to the polls, 3 percent of registered voters are not planning to take part in the forthcoming election and 8 percent are still undecided. It is likely that these undecided voters are young people and they will be the ones determining Kenya's next president - if they eventually decide to vote for one of the main contenders.

In a country where 80 percent of the population is aged below 35, just 13 percent of those running for various offices are in that age band. That tells you something about the paternalistic politics that Kenya is struggling to break away from. Neither one of the country's main political formations even considered having a young person as part of their senior-most leadership. Young people have no stake in the country's national politics and they are rapidly losing interest.

Both main presidential candidates say that their agenda is to unlock the potential of the youth in Kenya, but every time they voice these sentiments, their statements ring hollow. Overall, what these politicians are selling is nothing more than a slapstick version of the young Kenyan's identity and needs.

According to a 2016 World Bank Report, Kenya has the highest unemployment rate among East African nations, with nearly one in every five Kenyans without a job. A majority of those without jobs are young people. At the sharp end of nearly every socio-economic problem in Kenya, you will find a young person.

During past presidential campaigns, Kenyan youth formed the willing crowd that cheered both sides as ethnic tropes were bandied about. They shouted the loudest at

campaign rallies.

Uhuru Kenyatta's base is made of smallholder farmers, who expected heavy investments in agriculture in return for their overwhelming support of Kenyatta's candidature in 2013. Yet as late as July this year, you hear their murmurs of discontent about coffee and milk prices in central Kenya. Many of these farmers are young people, either raised on farms or forced to work on them because of a lack of options. Kenyatta's promises aren't sticking quite as well with them as they used to.

In Odinga's base, his claim that he hasn't really had a chance to lead and change the lives of his people just isn't sticking either. His five-year term as prime minister, to the man on the street, was opportunity enough for Odinga to change the fortunes of his constituency. Also, theft of resources by governors in his stronghold regions, under Kenya's now five-year-old devolved system of governance, has upset a lot of his voters. He is campaigning on a "drain-the-swamp" agenda, yet Odinga hasn't checked the rapacity of some of the governors in his party who have been accused of theft. So the Kenyan youth is not entirely convinced about his potential to change the country for the better either. ➔13

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# Rich or poor? Your face might give it away

By Cody Delistraty

Throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, the English artist David Hockney painted a series of “double portraits,” two subjects depicted side by side -- of the fashion designer Ossie Clark with the textile designer Celia Birtwell; of the author Christopher Isherwood with the artist Don Bachardy; and one of his own mother and father, among others.

For nearly all of them, critics especially applauded Hockney's ability to convincingly paint faces, capturing both emotion and a sense of mysterious intimacy.

The one exception to these sympathetic, evocative depictions, however, is a painting titled “American Collectors (Fred and Marcia Weisman),” in which the Weismans’ faces are slightly blurred and blunted to appear similar to the statues behind them.

It’s not an obviously negative portrayal, exactly, but to most viewers, it seems clear that Hockney perceived his subjects as flat and dull, their faces signifying their well-bred background and high social class but also their utter lack of original artistic discernment.

The ability to convincingly and subtly depict social class through one's face alone is a rare skill -- not everyone can be David Hockney -- but the artist was also tapping into something more universal: Research suggests that the face alone might provide clues to someone's social class, especially for those who know how to look.

Generally speaking, we pick up hints on a person's socioeconomic status by looking for more obvious markers, things that are buyable or learnable -- clothes, watches, comportment, manner of speech. (Just think of the line in *The Great Gatsby* when Jay Gatsby turns to Nick to proclaim that Daisy's “voice is full of money.”) There are subtler, academically proven cues, too, like the fact that someone from a higher class tends to be more disengaged and aloof when dealing with someone from a lower one.

But a study recently published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* posits that we really don't need any of these clues to know someone's social class: The face alone can be our guide.

### ■ How rich people see the world differently

“We know that people use facial information for a lot of other things,” says lead study author Nicholas O. Rule, a psychology professor at the University of Toronto. We look at the face to make judgments on “someone's race, someone's sex, someone's age, and even more subtle things like sexual orientation, political affiliation, or religion. It seemed very logical to us, actually, that people would be able to get social class information from people by looking at their faces.”

For their experiment, Rule and co-author R. Thora Bjornsdottir, a social psychology doctoral student at the University of Toronto, recruited 81 undergraduates to look at photographs of 80 Caucasian men and 80 Caucasian women between the ages of 18 and 35. The photos were sourced from dating websites from major U.S. cities, and the researchers removed all identifying signs from the faces -- cropping them, standardizing them in height, and putting them into grayscale.

All of the faces were also free of tattoos, piercings, or other markers. Importantly, the viewers -- described in the study as “perceivers” -- were shown an equal number of faces belonging to people who made over \$150,000 a year (which the authors designated upper class) and under \$35,000 a year (which the authors designated lower class).

The perceivers were asked -- based on the photos



**Mouths were found to be the best wealth cues, although eyes were a strong indicator of income as well. What the authors eventually discovered, however, was that more significant than any specific part of the face was the apparent happiness of the face as a whole. Even the subtlest signs of positivity in a face, they concluded, were strong indicators of a higher social class.**

of faces alone -- who belonged to which group. Impressively, they were able to sort the faces into the correct categories 68 percent of the time, significantly higher than chance. “I didn't think the effects would be quite as strong, especially given how subtle the differences [in the faces] are,” Rule says. “That's the most surprising part of the study to me.”

### ■ Yes, you really do look like your name

Curious as to how the undergraduates were able to complete the task so successfully, Rule and Bjornsdottir next isolated specific facial features that might be cuing income status and conducted another test. Mouths were found to be the best wealth cues, although eyes were a strong indicator of income as well. What the authors eventually discovered, however, was that more significant than any specific part of the face was the apparent happiness of the face as a whole. Even the subtlest signs of positivity in a face, they concluded, were strong indicators of a higher social class.

“Once we figured out it was these subtle emotional expressions, it makes a lot of sense that the mouth would be showing most of that, because the mouth is what you mostly use, especially with positive emotions, like smiling,” Rule says. The perceivers were also homing in on the eyes, because eyes, too, are strong indicators of happiness -- especially as indicators of repeated past happiness. “Crow's-feet around eyes refer to contractions of their reticular oculi muscles, which are activated when someone smiles,” Rule explains.

In other words: If someone has had a generally happy life, he or she will look happy even while maintaining a supposedly “neutral” facial expression. And, while it's a broad generalization, people with higher incomes do tend to live happier and less stressful lives than those with low ones. Someone who takes the time to look at

a face will -- at a rate far better than chance -- be able to see this repeated happiness and therefore judge that person as being of a higher social class.

### ■ To live longer, be rich

To further prove this link, Rule and Bjornsdottir put photos of smiling faces in front of another group of volunteers. This time, faced with visibly happy faces rather than neutral ones, the perceivers weren't able to discern class any better than chance. Looking visibly happy, the researchers concluded, obstructs others' ability to discern your class, because it overrides the visible markers that appear in a more expressionless state.

Although these findings are interesting in their own right, their relevance to the real world is even more important.

To demonstrate the vicious cycle that these kinds of snap judgments can perpetuate, Rule and Bjornsdottir asked yet another group of participants to evaluate faces and determine which ones would be likeliest to land an accounting job. (Earlier testing had shown that accounting was seen as a job that isn't particularly low- or high-class, which meant the perceivers wouldn't base their decisions on any preconceived notions about the role itself.)

As the researchers expected, the faces belonging to wealthier people were perceived as significantly more likely to land the job.

“We might be making a biased judgment based on something as subtle as these vestigial signals in someone's face,” Rule says, “judging them on what their emotions have been like over the course of their lifetime.” It would take a pretty gifted artist to depict something like that.

(Source: CNN)

## Why feeling miserable is actually the secret to happiness

Is feeling constant joy overrated, or even possible?

By Kashmiria Gander

Happiness is overrated. Instead, try allowing yourself to be totally miserable. It might make you happier than you have ever been. Let us explain.

Browsing social media and being confronted with friends scoring dream jobs, creating perfect families and sunning themselves on beaches can create the impression that everyone else is in some unending state of euphoria. And there you are, laying on the sofa with one hand in a bag of crisps and the other holding your phone, an hour into a scrolling session.

But constant happiness is overrated. Not only is it overrated, but it's totally unachievable.

In fact, says Gina Clarke, a psychotherapist at Click for Therapy, expecting to be constantly happy is harmful. “Everybody's mood fluctuates, we all have ups and downs and a wider range of emotions,” she says, pointing towards the kids movie *Inside Out* as an analogy.

“If we expect to be constantly happy, then we judge that to feel any other emotion is wrong and therefore we internalise that we are bad if we feel sad, angry, frustrated, and so on, when in actual fact in order to feel happy, to process the difficult stuff that happens, we need to accept other emotions.”

And if, as studies suggest, half of workers in the UK would rather be in a different job; some 60 per cent of people report being in an unhappy relationship; and social media is making us unsatisfied, it's unlikely that everyone around you is as happy as they seem. And you might hope that we're not all doomed to endure these feelings for the rest of our lives.



That's why experiencing sadness or discomfort can be useful. Take running: every second of pain is being invested into a healthier body and better mental health.

“Feeling sad or uncomfortable is similar to standing on a broken leg and feeling pain,” explains Clarke. “When we feel sad or uncomfortable it is our mind's way of telling us that we are out of balance, that emotionally we are in pain and we need time to heal. With a broken leg we ask for help, see a specialist. If we did this when we felt sad or uncomfortable it would help us to process and heal. The first step is acknowledgement and then assessment - do I need to leave the situation, ask for help, talk with a friend, seek professional support?”

**If we expect to be constantly happy, then we judge that to feel any other emotion is wrong and therefore we internalise that we are bad if we feel sad, angry, frustrated, and so on, when in actual fact in order to feel happy, to process the difficult stuff that happens, we need to accept other emotions.**

When feelings of sadness and worthlessness are all-consuming, it is vital to visit a doctor and assess your mental health, as these can be symptoms of depression or other serious conditions. But dreading going into work but feeling happy in other aspects of life, or the odd pang of sadness can be a catalyst for trying to unpick what is causing these feelings.

“From what I've seen, and I've worked with a lot of clients, a valuable key to contentment and or fulfilment is acceptance. Acceptance of ourselves, acceptance of what's happening in our lives, acceptance of those around us,” says psychotherapist Hilda Burke. “On the other hand, wishing things were other than what they are is a sure fire way of making ourselves unhappy as it keeps us in a stuck place in our heads where we are imagining how life could be better another way, with another partner, in another job and as such we're inevitably missing what's just under our noses and failing to appreciate that good things that are there.”

“This is where self-reflection is key,” says Clarke. “If we feel unhappy in the moment we should ask ourselves why, what's going on, and assess our emotions over time. Some people write it down, journal, some talk with others, some just note then feelings.”

“Once you get to the root causes of how you feel, it becomes much easier to change your mood,” chimes Phillip Adcock, psychologist and author of *Master Your Brain*. “I recommend playing the why, why, why game. In it, you ask yourself why you feel unhappy, and why is that, and why is that really. Keep going until you get to the root cause of your unhappiness.”

In the long term, then unhappiness might just be the key to happiness.

(Source: *livedaily.com*)

## Minute of exercise a day could prevent osteoporosis, finds study

By Rachel Hosie

Many people think that getting fit means devoting your life to the gym and slogging it out for hours. And unsurprisingly, that can be pretty off-putting.

But increasingly we're realising that short workouts can be much more effective than long ones, if you just know what to do.

It turns out that just a minute's exercise a day can have a hugely beneficial impact on your health.

According to a study by the Universities of Exeter and Leicester, women who do 60-120 seconds of high-intensity weight-bearing exercise a day have four per cent better bone density than those who do less than a minute.

Women who exercise for over two minutes have even stronger bones, with density six per cent higher than those who do under a minute.

After the age of 30, people tend to lose more bone mass than they gain, and the higher your bone density, the lower your likelihood of developing osteoporosis.

You're also less likely to have bone fractures in old age.

The study was conducted on over 2,500 female participants, and it's women who are most at risk of osteoporosis, with bone density declining significantly after the menopause.

According to the International



Osteoporosis Foundation, a tenth of women aged 60 are affected by osteoporosis, and this rises to two-thirds of women aged 90.

What's more, one in three women over the age of 50 and one in five men of the same age will suffer from osteoporotic fractures.

But further research needs to be done to work out how best one should undertake exercise in order to improve bone density the most.

“We don't yet know whether it's better to accumulate this small amount of exercise in bits throughout each day or all at once, and also whether a slightly longer bout of exercise on one or two days per week is just as good as one to

two minutes a day,” said lead author Dr Victoria Stiles.

“But there's a clear link between this kind of high-intensity, weight-bearing exercise and better bone health in women.”

To reach their conclusions, the researchers asked their participants to wear activity monitors for a week and then compared this data to measurements of their bone health.

The activity data was broken down into single seconds to understand how people move in their daily lives.

“We wanted to make every second count in our analysis, because short snippets of high-intensity activity are more beneficial to bone health than

longer, continuous periods,” Stiles said.

“We were careful not to ignore short bursts of activity throughout the day.”

Many people, although not consciously exercising, engage in non-exercise activity thermogenesis - or NEAT - over the course of the day, and this can be enough to improve your health.

If you want to increase your bone health, start with simply trying to walk more, and from there you can incorporate short bouts of running too.

There are limitations to the study's findings though.

“Because this is a cross-sectional study - which assesses data taken from a subset of the population at a particular point in time - we can't be sure whether the high-intensity physical activity led to better bone health, or whether those with better bone health do more of this exercise,” Stiles clarified.

“However, it seems likely that just one to two minutes of running a day is good for bone health.”

It's not the first study to suggest you can drastically improve your health with just a minute's exercise either: earlier this year, researchers from McMaster University found that 60 seconds of intense exercise broken up into 20 second blasts as part of a ten-minute workout can be as effective as a 45 minute endurance workout.

No more telling yourself you just don't have the time to keep fit then.

(Source: *The Independent*)



## Tehran exhibit features handmade tribal rugs

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — An exhibition of exquisite handmade carpets and pictorial rugs crafted by Iranian nomads is currently underway at the Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex in northern Tehran.



An Iranian nomad weaves a rug in an undated photo.

The event features some 1,700 rugs and carpets, kilims and gabbah carpets along with roughly 900 pictorial rugs depicting landscapes, calligraphic designs and portrays, IRIB reported on Tuesday.

Weavers from Shiraz, Sirjan, Qom, Bandar-e Torkaman, Tabriz, Ardakan, Kashan and Shahr-e Kord amongst other countrywide tribespeople are showcasing their works within 60 stalls.

A selection of leading brand owners of nomadic floor coverings are also attending the exhibit that wraps up on Friday.

## Valentia Island in bid for UNESCO status

The Irish government is to push for Valentia Island to be given UNESCO World Heritage status because of its contribution to world telecommunication.

The island is located off County Kerry, in the south west of Ireland.

A transatlantic cable was laid from Valentia to Heart's Content in Newfoundland, Canada, 151 years ago.

The laying of the cable has been described as an extraordinary achievement in its time.

Linked to the mainland both by a ferry and by a bridge, the island faces out towards the rock face of Skellig Michael, once a home to monks that now features in Star War movies.

### ■ 'Putting a man on the moon'

Leonard Hobbs, chairman of the Valentia Transatlantic Cable Foundation said laying the cable was "equivalent to putting a man on the moon - that's the level of what they achieved"

It is understood that the 1,686 nautical mile project combined English technology, American commerce and Irish science.

The first successful cable was sent by Queen Victoria to American President James Buchanan, informing him of a peace treaty between Austria and Prussia.

Many people see this development as the beginnings of the world becoming a smaller place.

"Sometimes something happens that propels globalization to heights that no one could ever have conceived," said Yale University's Professor Jeffrey Garten on a recent visit to Valentia Island. (Source: BBC)

## ROUND THE GLOBE Island of Mozambique

The Island of Mozambique is a calcareous coral reef situated 4 km from the mainland coast in the entrance to the Mossuril Bay of the Indian Ocean in Nampula Province of the Republic of Mozambique. A bridge built in the 1960s joins the island to the mainland. The island forms an archipelago with two small uninhabited islands, the Islands of Goa and Sena to the east.

The island communities are intimately associated with the history of navigation in the Indian Ocean as the island played a unique role in intercontinental trading links from the 10th century. Its international history importance relates to the development and establishment of Portuguese maritime routes between Western Europe and the Indian subcontinent.



Museum of Sacred Art on Mozambique Island

A UNESCO World Heritage site, the Island of Mozambique has two different types of dwellings and urban systems. The stone and lime town of Swahili, Arab and European influences in the north half, and the macuti town (city of roofed palm leaves) of traditional African architecture in the south.

The incredible architectural unity of the island derives from the uninterrupted use of the same building techniques with the same materials and the same decorative principles. The island's patrimony also includes its oldest extant fortress (St. Sebastian, 1558-1620), other defensive buildings and numerous religious buildings (including many from the 16th century).

(Source: UNESCO)

# Tourism needs more private sector investment: CHTHO chief

**TOURISM TEHRAN** — Iran's tourism body is counting on the private sector to invest more in the country's hospitality sector, encouraging it to take up the slack as moves to cede state-run tourism affairs to privately-owned entrepreneurs and entities are underway.

Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Director Zahra Ahmadipour on Monday called for greater role of the private sector to jumpstart tourism in the country that will result in creating jobs and generating revenues, CHTN reported.

"Tourism will be flourishing through the [comprehensive] involvement of the private sector, not the government," Ahmadipour said in an address to a provincial assembly during her visit to Kordestan province.

"The private sector should handle the [tourism and hospitality] affairs, while government bodies should only act as facilitators and oversee the implementation of [their] regulations," she added.

"The growth and prosperity of the tourism industry is a principle," she stressed, adding that the private sector has played a 'good' role in the growth and development of the sector and it needs backing from the government.

Elsewhere in her remarks, Ahmadipour highlighted the need for more cooperation between the two sectors saying: "Identifying problems and finding solutions to them requires public and private sectors to boost partnerships and remain committed



An interior view of Malek al-Tojjar boutique hotel that has been repurposed from a historic mansion in Yazd, central Iran.

to the existing rules to overcome the problems, and if there is a legal malfunction, it should be addressed."

The sum of private investments in restoration of cultural heritage structures have witnessed a staggering 449% rise over the past four years compared to

the previous records, IRNA reported earlier in May.

The report added that some 833 billion rials (about \$21 million) have been channeled into the restoration projects of historical relics since incumbent President Hassan Rouhani

assumed office in 2013.

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

## Sadabad complex to host ancient Amurdad celebration

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — The Sadabad Cultural-Historical Complex in Tehran will hold ancient Amurdad celebration that its philosophy accentuates protecting nature and the environment.

The plantation, irrigation and guardianship of lily flowers will be the focal point of the celebration which will be held on Friday, IRIB reported on July 23.

The deeply-rooted-in-time Zoroastrian festivity marks plant creation and is originally

observed on 7th day of the 5th month of the Iranian calendar year.

Iran Ecotourism House in close collaboration with a cultural heritage society is organizing the event in order to familiarize children and adolescents with such ancient events.

The Sadabad complex embraces a series of non-connected historical building set in massive grounds, some of which turned to house museums showcasing a wide range of royal families' memorabilia.

## In defense of being a tourist

ability to take tons of time off from work. If you're going to Paris for the first time, and you aren't sure when and if you can come back, damn right you should visit the Eiffel Tower if you want to.

Yes, Iceland's Blue Lagoon is full of tourists -- and it's also one of the world's best ways to re-energize yourself after a red-eye flight. The Great Wall of China? Yep. Pretty great.

Want to stay in a hotel instead of a rented apartment because it makes you feel safer in an unfamiliar place, or because you don't want to spend your hard-earned vacation making your own bed? That's OK.

### ■ Why pass for a local?

The truth is, many "do it like a local" exhortations come out of classist ideas about who should be "allowed" to travel and why.

If you're the kind of person who can afford a trip to Paris every year, then sure you'll want to experience the city comme une Parisienne the second or third time around. Once you have the chance to get to know a destination, it's easier to explore new neighborhoods or find stuff further off the usual visitor's radar.

And passing for a local is, in itself, kind of a fraught idea.

If you're a different race or ethnicity than most of the people around you, you'll probably stick out whether you know the proper way to drink coffee or not. If you don't speak the local language and can't get to know the residents, people may not care how far you went out of your way to avoid major tourist attractions.

Simply being a tourist isn't a bad thing. Every group has bad apples, and "I'm not a tourist" is how some people say "I am being respectful of cultural customs," "I'm not afraid to take public transit," or "I'm trying a new food instead of relying on what I already know and like."

Take me, for example: I've lived in New York City for more than a decade, so I qualify as a local. But my own days are more likely to contain Netflix marathons, long subway commutes and ordering takeout than they are visiting a world-class art museum.

The truth is that I'd feel sorry for anyone who came to Manhattan and thought that my "experience it like a local" was a fun or novel way to experience the city. It's often not until friends visit me from out of town that I can really enjoy walking the Brooklyn Bridge or trying a buzzy new restaurant

-- experiencing my own city like a tourist is a much more fun experience than doing it like any local other than a very, very privileged one.

### ■ Go your own way

The bottom line: If you have a bucket list and really want to visit some of the most famous, most beloved and most photographed sites in the world, you should be able to do it without anyone making you feel bad about yourself. And that's part of what we believe in here at CNN Travel. Your time is valuable to you, which means it's also valuable to us.

If you want to go to the Eiffel Tower, we won't judge you for it -- but we will tell you the best time of day to go, how to skip the line and where to stand for the perfect Instagram photo.

Travel is extremely personal, and no one trip fits all. If you want to stay at a five-star hotel, that's cool. If you want to stay in a 10-to-a-room hostel, that's cool, too. If you want to take a street art tour in a lesser-known neighborhood or eat at a restaurant that's famous for being featured in a TV show or movie -- you can totally do both.

(Source: UNESCO)



## Ebrahim Khan marketplace restored to former glory

**HERITAGE TEHRAN** — Bazaar-e Ebrahim Khan, a historical marketplace in downtown Kerman, southern Iran, underwent a thoroughly restoration project, CHTN reported on Monday.

Facades of the shops as well as damaged tilework and stucco designs of their passageways were fully restored to their original forms in a project carried out by the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization.

Bazaar-e Ebrahim Khan and its adjacent traditional bathhouse of the same name (Hamam-e Ebrahim Khan) are amongst key tourist destinations in Kerman, the ensemble dates back to the Qajar era (1789-1925).

Foreign tourist arrivals to Kerman province has raised five times in number over the past four years, the provincial tourism department announced in April.

Kerman is world-famous for its long history and strong cultural heritage. It is bounded by the provinces of Fars on the west, Yazd on the north, South Khorasan on the northeast, Sistan-Baluchestan on the east, and Hormozgan on the south.





# Hywind: The world's first floating wind farm is awesome

It's wild and wet off the coast of Scotland – but today this is proving to be the perfect testbed for the world's first floating wind farm.

The Peterhead wind farm, known as Hywind, is being built in partnership with Norway's Statoil and Abu Dhabi firm Masdar.

It's going to power 20,000 British homes.

If successful, floating wind farms like this could prove to be a revolutionary new energy source. But why do we need buoyant turbines? How do they work? And why are they awesome?

### ■ Abundance of wind energy

There's an abundance of wind energy around the UK that has previously been 'out of reach' because the seabed is too deep to build rooted structures on.

Floating wind farms however, can make use of this natural energy source as they can operate in water up to a kilometer deep.

Scotland's floating turbines have weighted bases filled with iron ore to stop them keeling over, and are secured in place with thick tethers which moor them to the seafloor below.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, these 11,500



tons turbines aren't built on site, but towed into place by tug boat trawlers.

Each is guided by underwater, remote-controlled submarines to help it steer clear of hazards.

Hywind's first giant turbine has already

been dragged into position, while four more turbines are patiently waiting for glory in a Norwegian fjord.

By the end of July, all will have been transported to water 15 miles (25km) off Peterhead, Aberdeenshire.

**Renewable energy is great for the environment, but it's also important that it's efficient.**

Renewable energy is great for the environment, but it's also important that it's efficient. Statoil says that Hywind's new floating turbines will easily equal output from conventional designs, and could well surpass them in energy output.

### ■ Wind turbines

While they're not cheap to construct (and Hywind's £190m cost was subsidized by taxpayers), wind turbines will only become more affordable.

Already, the price of traditional bottom-standing offshore farms has fallen by 32% since 2012 – four years ahead of the government's expected target.

Experts predict further price drops, driving the cost of offshore wind even lower than new nuclear power.

One of the few downsides to offshore windfarms is the risk they place to seabirds.

While RSPB Scotland does support the idea floating wind farms, the wildlife charity has voiced concern that too many offshore turbines in the area have already been approved.

If floating wind farms are going to be the next big thing, we need to work with conservationists to ensure the pros always outweigh the cons.

(Source: thememo.com)

## How fear alone can cause animal extinction

Fear alone may contribute to the extinction of animal populations according to a recent study. When scientists from McGill University and the University of Guelph exposed fruit flies to the scent of a praying mantis, a known predator, they found that the risk of extinction increased up to seven fold.

The increased risk of extinction occurred because at small population sizes, as the flies spent more time being vigilant and less time eating, populations that declined could not quickly rebound.

"It has been something of a mystery why predators are so important in animal extinctions," says Kyle Elliott, an assistant professor in McGill University's Dept. of Natural Resource Sciences and the first author of a recent study on the subject published in the Proceedings of the Royal Society B. "As prey populations decline, predators should simply switch to other prey."

### ■ Population decline

However, if, as we showed, the scent is sufficient to continue population decline, then even if the predators move on to other prey, and their scent disappears, this is unimportant for the survival of the population that is at risk whose numbers and reproductive ability have been critically affected by the passing smell of death.

It's a finding that sheds light on a long-standing biological conundrum related to population size and extinction, known as the Allee effect, after Walter Clyde Allee, the man who first described the phenomenon.

Typically, animal populations show what is called "density-dependence". This means that as a population increases, competition for food and mates increases, and reproductive success and survival decline. One might assume that the reverse would also hold true.

That is, that the smallest populations would have the highest vital (or growth) rates and would quickly rebound from declines in population.

### ■ The puzzling phenomenon

However, paradoxically, in some cases exactly the opposite happens and small populations have the lowest vital rates. This puzzling phenomenon is one aspect of what is known as the Allee effect.

By looking at fruit flies, rather than social animals, the researchers believe that they have gained a greater understanding of the role that fear may play in the decline and extinctions of various populations.

"When scientists set out to look for the causes of the Allee effect in the past, they have tended to focus on intrinsic parameters, such as the difficulty finding a mate, inbreeding or social dysfunction in small populations,"



explains Elliott.

"Examples with predators were limited to social animals, such as meerkats, where small groups spend more time being vigilant and consequently are more likely to go extinct. We show that the same principles are true even in species such as fruit flies that are not in tightly-knit groups. Fear caused flies to spend less time eating, more time being vigilant, have less sex, and produce fewer offspring."

(Source: eurekalert.org)

## Space shuttle junk gives shape to Lockheed Martin's new habitat prototype

Lockheed Martin's new concept shows that even old space junk can be recycled for future missions.

One of the first things astronauts will need when they head to Mars is a safe and comfortable place to live. Today's spacecraft have tight quarters — sufficient for short trips but not so practical when the journey nears nine months one way.

But six companies are on the case, commissioned by NASA to develop living quarters for its astronauts in its Next Space Technologies for Exploration Partnerships (NextSTEP).

Lockheed Martin recently showed off a habitat concept it is developing for the agency. A prototype of the cislunar habitat, which the company calls Deep Space Gateway, will be made of repurposed space shuttle and will soon be developed as a prototype at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

### ■ Unique challenges

"It is easy to take things for granted when you are living at home, but the recently selected astronauts will face unique challenges," Bill Pratt, Lockheed

Martin NextSTEP program manager, said in a statement.

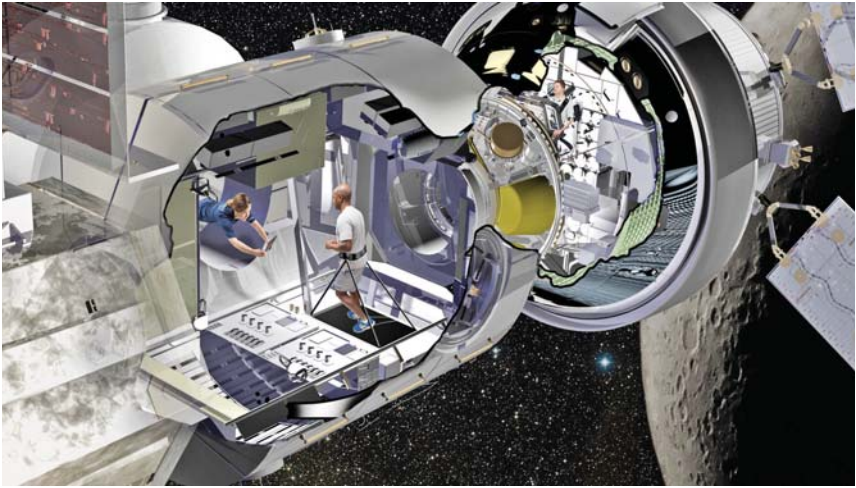
"Something as simple as calling your family is completely different when you are outside of low Earth orbit. While building this habitat, we have to operate in a different mindset that's more akin to long trips to Mars to ensure we keep them safe, healthy and productive."

The Deep Space Gateway will combine old elements with new, extending Lockheed Martin's Phase I concept to Phase II, which will use mixed reality and rapid prototyping to explore the concept further over the next 18 months.

The company will focus on refurbishing the Donatello Multi-Purpose Logistics Module, which was used to bring cargo to the International Space Station.

### ■ Earth orbit exploration

"We are excited to work with NASA to repurpose a historic piece of flight hardware, originally designed for low Earth orbit exploration, to play a role in humanity's push into deep space," Pratt said. "Making use of existing capabilities will be a guiding philosophy for Lockheed Martin to minimize development time and



meet NASA's affordability goals."

Despite being designed with a human crew in mind, the spacecraft will be equipped to function autonomously, as it will be left uninhabited for months on end as the crew explores the Red Planet.

"Because the Deep Space Gateway would be uninhabited for several months

at a time, it has to be rugged, reliable and have the robotic capabilities to operate autonomously. Essentially it is a robotic spacecraft that is well-suited for humans when Orion is present," Pratt said. "Lockheed Martin's experience building autonomous planetary spacecraft plays a large role in making that possible."

(Source: Digital Trends)

## Researchers suggest new reason for fear of bubbles

Some people are so afraid of snakes or spiders that the sight of these creatures makes their hearts race, their breathing speed up and their palms sweat. But other people have similarly uncontrollable reactions to seeing clusters of bubbles. Their skin begins to crawl, they become nauseated and they may even throw up.

Why clusters of bubbles — or circles or holes — that pose no threat can elicit such strong feelings of disgust has been discussed since the condition, called tryphobia (which means "fear of holes" in Greek), was first documented in 2013. Some scientists have suggested that the extreme reaction to round shapes occurs because they resemble spots or circles found on poisonous animals, including snakes and the blue-ringed octopus.

But now, new research suggests that the intense anxiety is likely linked to fears of parasites and infectious diseases. Diseases, including smallpox and measles, as well as parasites, like mites and ticks, produce patterns on the skin that look like clusters of round shapes.

### ■ Main threats to humans

"Pathogens and parasites have been one of the main threats to humans and animals during their evolutionary history," said Tom Kupfer, a postgraduate researcher in psychology at the University of Kent in England. Avoiding them reduces the chance of getting sick, he told Live Science.

"It's fairly well recognized that the most significant adaption humans have for disease avoidance is the emotion disgust," Kupfer said.

To investigate whether the disgust reaction in people with tryphobia was a "disease avoidance" tactic, Kupfer and his co-author An Trong Dinh Le, who was a PhD candidate in psychology at the University of Essex at the time of the research, set up an experiment that involved tapping two Facebook support groups for people who describe themselves as having tryphobia.

The researchers recruited 300 people from the Facebook groups and 300 university students who did not have tryphobia. Both groups were shown a total 32 images.

### ■ Harmless items

Eight other photos contained disease-irrelevant images of harmless items that had clusters of circles, including drilled holes in a brick wall and a lotus flower seed pod. The other 16 photos had no holes, bumps or circular patterns at all.

Kupfer said he and Le predicted that both groups would find the disease-relevant images unpleasant but that only the people with tryphobia would also find the disease-irrelevant photos unpleasant. The researchers also predicted that most of the people would express feeling disgusted, not fearful.

The researchers reported that when the people with tryphobia looked at images with clusters of holes or bubbles, they said things like, the "primary feeling is one of inexplicable and extreme revulsion," and "I feel disturbed in general and contaminated."

(Source: Live Science)

## Sweat could fuel next generation of wearable sensors

A research team out of the University of California at San Diego led by Joseph Wang has created a sweat-powered radio that was able to run for two days on perspiration. Researchers used a soft, flexible skin patch just a few centimeters across that contains enzymes that replace the precious metals traditionally used in batteries.

The technology could potentially be used in wearable activity or health trackers, researchers say. The patch produces enough current to power a light-emitting diode or a Bluetooth radio.

Getting enough power from a biofuel cell to make it a viable fuel source has long proved elusive, but this latest innovation can extract 10 times more power than previous versions. "We're now getting really impressive power levels," Wang told New Scientist. "If you were out for a run, you would be able to power a mobile device."

Wang and his colleagues used the lactate found in sweat to power the cells. The amount of lactate or lactic acid found in sweat is also related to how efficiently a person's muscles are functioning.

The "most exciting application is wearable sensors that can monitor health conditions," Mirella Di Lorenzo at the University of Bath in England told New Scientist. "Then sweat could generate enough power for a Bluetooth connection so that the results could be read straight from a smartphone."

Another potential application is glucose monitoring, which would allow diabetics to ditch needles or blood samples, since levels of glucose in sweat are related to its concentration in the blood.

(Source: ModernHealthcare)

## Greenland is changing color because of global warming

The growth of dark algae on the Greenland ice sheet may cause it melt "faster and faster", scientists have warned.



Warmer weather has caused algae to appear on the sheet's surface, changing the very complexion of the country's landscape.

Unlike white ice, dark algae absorbs the sun's heat, accelerating the melting process.

Scientists, who have begun a new five-year research project, called Black and Bloom, to investigate the trend, admit they are "very worried" by the problem.

The Greenland ice sheet, which is up to 3km thick and spans 1.71 million km<sup>2</sup>, would raise sea levels by seven meters if it all melted.

Professor Martyn Tranter of Bristol University, who is leading the project, told the BBC: "People are very worried about the possibility that the ice sheet might be melting faster and faster in the future."

"We suspect that in a warming climate these dark algae will grow over larger and larger parts of the Greenland ice sheet and it might well be that they will cause more melting and an acceleration of sea level rise."

"Our project is trying to understand just how much melting might occur."

Content is currently unavailable.

Dr. Joe Cook, a glacial microbiologist at Sheffield University, described Greenland as a "living landscape"

(Source: Yahoo News UK)

## Measured soil moisture improves wildfire prediction

Despite the known connection between soil moisture and wildfire danger, measured soil moisture is conspicuously absent from the list of variables commonly used in wildfire danger assessments. Instead, assessments enlist the help of the decades-old Keetch-Byram Drought index (KBDI), a soil moisture surrogate calculated from precipitation and estimated evapotranspiration.

In the absence of measured soil moisture data, the reliance upon KBDI as a surrogate to assess wildfire danger is understandable. But is the continued reliance on KBDI justified when high quality soil moisture data are available?

According to recent work published in Soil Science Society of America Journal, the answer is no. Researchers in Oklahoma compared the relationships of measured soil moisture, as fraction of available water capacity (FAW), and KBDI with wildfire occurrence statewide and found that FAW consistently outperformed KBDI.

Soil moisture conditions conducive to large growing-season wildfires were more narrowly defined by FAW, regression models based on FAW correctly classified days with large fires at a higher rate, and FAW provided earlier warning of extreme wildfire potential.

Based on these findings, the authors call for the replacement of KBDI with FAW in growing-season wildfire danger assessments in Oklahoma and regions with similar climate and vegetation types.

(Source: EurekAlert)



## L.A. man accused of smuggling king cobras in potato chip cans

A Los Angeles man was arrested on Tuesday after federal prosecutors said he arranged to smuggle into the United States three live, highly venomous king cobra snakes hidden in potato chip canisters.

Rodrigo Franco, 34, was charged with illegally importing merchandise into the country in connection with a parcel from Hong Kong that was intercepted by U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents on March 2 containing the 2-foot (0.61 meter)-long snakes concealed inside the canisters.

Three albino Chinese soft-shelled turtles were also found in the package, prosecutors said, adding that Franco on that same day mailed a box to Hong Kong with six protected turtles inside.

According to a criminal complaint filed in the case, Franco admitted during an interview with authorities that he had previously received a total of 20 king cobras in two prior shipments but that all of those snakes had died in transit.

He faces a maximum of 20 years in prison if convicted, although federal sentencing guidelines typically call for less time behind bars.

According to the National Geographic website, the king cobra, also known as *Ophiophagus hannah*, is the longest venomous snake, reaching up to 18 feet (5.5 meters) in length. When confronted, king cobras can raise up to one-third of their bodies off the ground, flare out their hoods and emit a “bone-chilling” hiss before attacking.

(Source: Reuters)

## Live healthy, live longer!

Making just a few changes in your lifestyle can help you live longer.

A recent study found that four bad behaviors—smoking, drinking too much alcohol, not exercising, and not eating enough fruits and veggies—can hustle you into an early grave, and, in effect, age you by as many as 12 years.

Fortunately, you can do something to correct these and other unhealthy behaviors. Adopt the following nine habits to keep your body looking and feeling young.

### ■ Don't overeat

If you want to live to 100, leaving a little bit of food on your plate may be a good idea. Author Dan Buettner, who studies longevity around the world, found that the oldest Japanese people stop eating when they are feeling only about 80% full.

St. Louis University researchers have confirmed that eating less helps you age slower; in a 2008 study they found that limiting calories lowered production of T3, a thyroid hormone that slows metabolism—and speeds up the aging process.

### ■ Turn off the TV

Too much time in front of the boob tube can take a serious toll on your health. In fact, a 2010 study found that people who watched four or more hours a day were 46% more likely to die from any cause than people who watched less than two hours a day.

Even cutting back a little can help; each additional hour you watch increases your overall risk of dying by 11% and dying from heart disease by 18%.

### ■ Stay out of the sun

Avoiding too much sun can head off skin cancer, and it can also keep you looking young by preventing wrinkles, fine lines, and saggy skin.

It's never too early—or too late—to add sunscreen to your daily skin-care regimen (look for an SPF of 30 or higher). And don't focus only on your face. Sun damage spots and splotches on your chest and neck will also make you appear older.

### ■ Reach out

Research shows that you're at greater risk of heart disease without a strong network of friends and family. Loneliness can cause inflammation, and in otherwise healthy people it can be just as dangerous as having high cholesterol or even smoking.

Loneliness seems to pose the greatest risk for elderly people, who are also prone to depression.

(Source: The Telegraph)

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Daily Life - Text Me

A: Why didn't you **text** me last night?

B: What? I sent you three or four messages!

A: I didn't get any of them. I was waiting for you to text me the address of where the party was and I never got your message.

B: Why didn't you just call? I hate sending SMS messages.

A: Well, because I didn't have any **credit** on my phone. I **used it all up** this month.

B: I thought you had an **unlimited** SMS plan?

A: I do, but if I don't have any credit in my phone, it won't let me call or send messages.

B: **No wonder** you didn't get my texts!

### ■ Key Vocabulary

**text**: act of sending a text message via a mobile phone

**SMS**: abbreviation for Short Message Service

**credit**: amount of money that you have available to make call

**use it up**: to completely finish or extinguish something

**unlimited**: without limits or restrictions

**no wonder**: not surprisingly

### ■ Supplementary Vocabulary

**voicemail**: A service that allows you to leave a recorded message

**calling card**: a prepaid card that allows you to make international phone calls

**pay as you go**: credit purchased in advance in order to make phone calls on a mobile phone

**coverage**: the area that the mobile phone operator covers or allows for making phone calls

**drop a call**: to lose connection of a call

(Source: irlangue.com)

# 6,000 motorcyclists apply for traffic permits in Tehran

**SOCIETY** **TEHRAN** – Over 6,000 **d e s k** motorcyclists have registered for getting permits to enter restricted traffic zones in Tehran over the past three days.

Tehran Municipality has called on motorcyclists who want to enter limited traffic zones to put in their requests on the municipality's website from July 23 to August 6.

"According to latest studies, 32 percent of air pollution is caused by motorcycles in Tehran and carburetor motorcycles produce four to five times more pollution than a standard car. However there has so far been no limitations for motorcyclists in the city," the head of Tehran Municipality's traffic permits office Mostafa Qanbarnejad told ISNA on Wednesday.

The motorcycles should be at least eight years old, he said, adding that owners should obtain duty labels and inspection decals before applying to register their specifications.

However, hybrid motorcycles do not need any permissions for entering limited traffic zones, he concluded.

Traffic permit is needed for cars to enter restricted zones in central Tehran between 06:30 to 17:00 from Saturday to Wednesday and from 6:30 to 13:00 on Thursday.

Regular cars must pay \$8 per day to obtain a traffic permit for entering the restricted zones.

Recently, the Tehran Municipality has expanded the restricted zones to cover further areas in all directions from the city center.



## Actually, we can buy happiness!



Conversely, the vacationer is hardly spurning physical goods. Some she's renting, like a hotel room or a plane seat, while others, like food and drink, she's buying – but either way, her experience is dependent on objects. The overarching truth here, as Sam Harris explains in his book “Waking Up”, is that everything we do is ultimately a way to manipulate our conscious experience. Nobody in history bought anything for any reason other than how it made them feel – whether the experience they were seeking was that of not feeling painfully hungry, or

of owning a Fabergé egg.

The reason this matters, in practical terms, is that it helps us see the car-buyer's true problem: not that he's prioritizing O objects over experience, but that he's pursuing the wrong kind of experience. He wants to receive a predictable, consistent daily dose of pleasure from owning a car. But that's not how pleasure works: if the holidaymaker ends up happier, it'll be because she got to enjoy anticipating the trip, experiencing it, then consigning it to memory, where it can be burnished until it's perfect (or, if it went terribly, turned into an anecdote that's even more fun). If our shallow materialist were to use his vehicle to pursue unpredictable, sociable and one-off experiences – like, say, a road trip with friends – he'd stand just as much chance of happiness.

As if to confirm all this, another recent study concludes that it's psychologically far easier to declutter your home if you first take a photo of anything to which you're emotionally attached. People are readier to part with such items when they know they can trigger the same old feelings by consulting the picture later. Which raises the question: what if they'd saved their cash and just collected a bunch of photos to begin with?

(Source: theguardian.com)

## Helicopter or lawnmower? Modern parenting styles

When many middle-aged people think back to their childhood, they remember roaming the streets with their friends during long, hot summers. Our parents threw us out the door in the morning and instructed us not to come back until dinnertime. Often in charge of younger siblings, we strayed further than we should have, got into trouble and, by the end of the summer, had a collection of triumphs, scars and memories for life.

But surely, such memories are just nostalgia? The bit about the sun always shining probably is. Yet one thing is certain – the level of parental involvement and supervision in the 1970s was not a fraction of what is expected today.

So what impact do increasing levels of parental involvement have on children? Let's take a look at the evidence.

A recent survey of children aged eight to 12 found that indoor play is now the norm, a third have never splashed in a puddle and the distance that children are allowed to play from home has shrunk by 90 per cent since 1970.

Parenting hasn't only changed in terms of what is considered safe for children.

Parents now worry more about the impact of their parenting on their children, feeling pressured to provide a stream of stimulating activities in a way that would have once seemed absurd.

This has led to the emergence of two types of related parenting styles: the “helicopter” and the “lawnmower”.

Helicopter parents, as the name suggests, spend a lot of time hovering. They always stay close to their children, ready to swoop in and direct, help or protect (usually before it is needed). Lawnmower parents are one step ahead of their children, smoothing their path and making sure nothing gets in their way. Common tactics of both include interfering significantly with their grown-up children's lives, such as complaining to employers when their children don't get a job.

But does enabling a childhood free from stress really help them in the long term? And what happens when children never have to get themselves out of tricky situations?

As with anything, there is a middle ground. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that providing children with



opportunities and support helps them to gain experiences, confidence and networks that they wouldn't be offered in more adverse settings. But there is an important line between supporting children and wrapping them in gold-plated cotton wool.

Allowing children the freedom to take appropriate risks through outdoor play is essential for their development. Risky play does not mean placing children in grave danger, but instead allowing them to be children – climbing, jumping from heights and hanging

upside down are good examples. Risky play allows children to test limits and solve problems. And, yes, this includes learning what happens when they overstretch themselves and fall.

But what about the abduction risk? Won't children who are allowed outside unsupervised be kidnapped? Highly unlikely. Despite headlines suggesting otherwise, the risk of child abduction has not increased from approximately a 0.0005 per cent chance since data was first collected in the 1970s. And children are actually far more likely to be abducted by someone they know (even a parent) than the feared stranger lurking in the shadows.

Aside from risk, constantly intervening and providing opportunities for children is not good for their development. We may have forgotten it in our hot, hazy memories, but it is normal – and beneficial – for children to be bored. Boredom enhances creativity and problem solving, whereas constant input dulls imagination – even if that includes creative classes.

(Source: The Independent)

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ← → ج

### Young boy mauled in bear attack

TEHRAN – A 15-year-old boy was seriously injured by a black bear on Friday on the outskirts of a village in Jiroft, southeastern Iran.

The boy was tending his sheep when he was attacked by an Asiatic black bear, IRNA quoted the head of Jiroft Department of Environment, Mohammad Kamali, as saying.

The boy stoned the bear and the animal scratched him across the head and face, Kamali explained.

“We believe that the bear may have been a mother who had a cub with her,” he added.

The boy is hospitalized at the Imam Khomeini Hospital in Jiroft and he is in good condition, he said.

## ENGLISH PROVERB

### What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over

■ **Explanation:** If a person doesn't know about something, it cannot hurt them.

■ **For example:** Robbie cracked his mother's favorite vase and simply turned the cracked side toward the wall. “What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over,” he thought.

## PHRASAL VERB

### Wrap round

■ **Meaning:** Cover with clothing, usually to keep warm

■ **For example:** He wrapped the cloth round his fingers to keep warm.

## ENGLISH IDIOM

### Walk into lion's den

■ **Explanation:** If you walk into the lion's den, you find yourself in a difficult situation in which you have to face unfriendly or aggressive people.

■ **For example:** After the failure of the negotiations, he had to walk into the lion's den and face the media.



# Qatar: New terror list, a ‘disappointing surprise’

Qatar has described a new blacklist released by the House of Saud regime and its allies as a “disappointing surprise”, saying it was doing all it could to fight extremism.

Sheikh Saif bin Ahmed Al Thani, Qatar’s communications director, said the decision by the four Arab states to add 18 groups and individuals allegedly linked to Doha to their “terrorist” list has no basis in fact.

“It comes as a disappointing surprise that the blockading countries are still pursuing this story as part of their smear campaign against Qatar,” he said in a statement on Wednesday.

The move by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt and Bahrain on Tuesday came despite mounting international pressure to compromise in their weeks-old boycott of their fellow United States ally.

The new names include nine entities in Yemen and Libya, and add to a previous blacklist of 59 individuals and 12 groups issued by the four states last month.

Sheikh Saif said: “This latest list provides further evidence that the blockading countries are not committed to the fight against terrorism.”

“All individuals with links to terrorism in Qatar have been prosecuted. We encourage the blockading countries to spend less time on drafting these fabricated lists and more time on implementing measures to counter the threat of extremism in their own countries.”

He added that Qatar constantly reviews its anti-terror laws to “remain on the front foot in the fight against extremism and terror financing.”

The House of Saud regime and its allies have been boycotting Qatar since June 5 in the region’s worst diplomatic crisis in years.

Accusing Qatar of financing terrorism, they sealed the emirate’s only land border, ordered its citizens to leave and closed their airspace and waters to Qatari flights and shipping.

They want Qatar to cut back ties with Iran, close down a Turkish military base in Qatar and shut the Al Jazeera TV chan-



nel, which they view as critical of their governments.

Qatar has dismissed the demands as a violation of its sovereignty and has received significant support from its ally Turkey.

The U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who last week spent four days in the region trying to broker a settlement of the crisis, has voiced satisfaction with Qatar’s efforts to address any suspicion of terror funding.

But after talks with European Union diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini on Tuesday, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry warned that the four governments would accept no compromise in their dispute with Qatar.

“We cannot compromise with any form of terrorism, we cannot compromise or enter into any form of negotiations,” Shoukry told a news conference.

In Tuesday’s statement, the four countries accused Qatari, Kuwaiti and Yemeni nationals of helping to raise funds for al-Qaeda fighters.

Their blacklist now include three Yemeni charities, three Libyan media outlets, two armed groups and a religious foundation, some of which are already subject to U.S. sanctions.

■ **Saudi-led bloc of states undermining mediation efforts: Qatar FM**

Meantime, Qatar’s foreign minister, who is on a visit to the U.S., says the “negative behavior” of the Saudi regime-led

bloc of blockaders is undermining the mediation efforts aimed at settling the unprecedented diplomatic crisis gripping the Persian Gulf region.

In an interview with Qatari broadcaster Al Jazeera late on Tuesday, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani reiterated that Doha was open to dialog on issues of concern, but that its international affairs would not be up for negotiations.

“We see there is a negative behavior aimed at influencing the mediation, either through statements or through (media) leaks which they launch at critical moments,” the top diplomat added.

He said his visit to Washington is part of the U.S.-Kuwait efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the row between Doha and the Saudi regime-led bloc boycotting his country.

Sheikh Mohammed noted that his trip is also “aimed at informing politicians, senators and MPs in the United States about the negative impacts of this crisis on the region.”

Since the outbreak of the crisis, he said, the U.S. has demanded “the rapid lifting of the unjust siege against Qatar ... but the contradictory statements of” the blockaders have “prevented” this from happening.

The Qatari minister’s comments came after the quartet of Arab states unveiled a new terrorist blacklist of 18 entities and individuals, six of them from Yemen, over

having suspected “direct or indirect” ties with Qatari authorities.

In another development on Wednesday, the Qatari Compensation Claims Committee, which is tasked with pursuing compensation for damages stemming from the siege on the country, said it had received 2,945 individual cases from the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC).

Ahmed bin Hassan Al-Hammadi, the Qatari Foreign Ministry secretary general and member of the claims committee, told Al Jazeera that the body had received about 100-160 complaints and 60 calls a day.

The committee looks into the difficulties faced by Qatari citizens, traders and government institutions as a result of the blockade.

■ **Qatar, U.S., Turkey set to hold joint drills**

Separately, Qatari Minister of State for Defense Affairs Khalid bin Mohammad al-Attiyah announced that his country’s military is in the final stages of preparations for joint exercises with the U.S. and Turkish forces.

“The drills involving the three nations [Qatar, the U.S. and Turkey] will start in the shortest time,” Attiyah told RT Arabic.

He also hailed the “special strategic relationship” between Qatar and Turkey, adding that the 2015 military agreement between the two states “can’t be annulled only because some countries decided to announce a blockade of Qatar.”

The Qatari defense minister further described Doha’s relations with Washington as “friendly and firm.”

Touching on the demands from the Saudi regime-led bloc, Attiyah stressed that the removal of the siege on Qatar was a pre-requisite for dialogue between the conflicting sides.

If the House of Saud regime and its allies “stall lifting the blockade, Qatar will have to resort to means available to it internationally, should we find that this blockade violates international law. Therefore, Qatar will be forced to opt for international procedures to legally lift the blockade,” he pointed out.

(Source: agencies)



Minority Shia Muslims have long complained of marginalization and discrimination in the Sunni-ruled kingdom, and demand political and economic reforms.

(Source: agencies)

## Amnesty: Saudi regime should stop ‘bloody execution spree’

➔ ■ **Utterly shocking**

Earlier this month, Reprieve lambasted the House of Saud regime for upholding a death sentence for 23-year-old Munir Adam, a partially deaf and blind man who was allegedly tortured into a confession.

Police are accused of torturing Adam, who was arrested during protests in 2012, until he lost all hearing in one ear, despite medical records proving his disabilities.

The group called on the United States President Donald Trump, who visited Saudi Arabia in May, to intervene on Adam’s behalf.

“Munir’s case is utterly shocking - the White House should be appalled that our Saudi allies tortured a disabled protester until he lost his hearing then sentenced him to death on the basis of a forced ‘confession’,” Maya

Foa, director of Reprieve, said in a statement at the time.

Foa went on to accuse Trump of having “emboldened the kingdom to continue the torture and execution of protesters”.

On July 11, Saudi regime authorities executed four Shia Muslim men convicted on charges of “terrorism” for alleged attacks against police and participating in protest-related violence against security forces.

On January 2, 2016, the kingdom executed 47 prisoners convicted of various offences, among them prominent religious leader Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, who had led protests against the government.

Nimr’s execution prompted demonstrations in Saudi Arabia’s Eastern Province and other countries of the Middle East.

The House of Saud regime has one of the world’s highest rates of execution.

## EU warns U.S. it could swiftly counter new sanctions on Russia

➔ ■

European Commission officials say the bloc could use EU regulations allowing it to prevent the application of extraterritorial measures by the United States; demand a U.S. promise to exclude EU energy companies; or impose outright bans on doing business with certain U.S. companies. In addition, the EU could file a complaint at the World Trade Organization.

However, most measures taken by Brussels would require approval from all 28 EU member governments, which could expose potential differences in individual nations’ relations with Moscow and Washington.

Despite changes to the U.S. bill that took into account some EU concerns, Brussels said the legislation could still hinder upkeep of the gas pipeline network in Russia that feeds into Ukraine and supplies over a quarter of EU needs. The EU says it could also hamper projects

crucial to its energy diversification goals, such as the Baltic Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) project.

The sanctions target the disputed Nord Stream 2 project for a new pipeline running from Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea, bypassing traditional transit routes through Ukraine.

A list prepared by the EU executive, seen by Reuters, shows eight projects including those involving oil majors Anglo-Dutch Shell, BP and Italy’s Eni that risk falling foul of the U.S. measures.

Voicing frustration at the fraying in the joint Western approach to Moscow, Juncker said “close coordination among allies” was key to ensuring sanctions are effective.

The EU, the Commission said, is raising its concerns via “all diplomatic channels”.

It was unclear how quickly the U.S. bill would reach the White House for Trump

to sign into law or veto. The bill amounts to a rebuke of Trump by requiring him to obtain lawmakers’ permission before easing any sanctions on Moscow.

Rejecting the legislation - which would potentially stymie his wish for improved relations with Moscow - would carry a risk that his veto could be overridden by lawmakers.

■ **Industry concerns**

In response to Russia’s annexation of Crimea and role in the pro-Russian insurgency in eastern Ukraine, the EU imposed curbs on business with Russian energy, defense and financial sectors in July 2014, and these will remain in place until January 2018.

But European energy industry sources voiced alarm at the potentially wide-ranging damage of the new U.S. measures.

“This is pretty tough,” one industry source told Reuters. “We are working with EU officials to see what safeguards

can be anticipated to protect our investment and give us certainty.”

Among the European firms involved in Nord Stream 2 are German oil and gas group Wintershall, German energy trading firm Uniper, Anglo-Dutch Royal Dutch Shell, Austria’s OMV and France’s Engie.

But EU officials warn the legislation would also hit plans for the LNG plant on the Gulf of Finland in the Baltic Sea, in which Shell is partnering with Gazprom.

The EU document indicated the sanctions might jeopardize Eni’s 50 percent stake in the Jepp Stream pipeline from Russia to Turkey as well as the CPC pipeline, carrying Kazakh oil to the Black Sea, in which European groups BG Overseas Holdings, Shell and Eni are involved.

It further warns that BP would be forced to halt some activities with Russian energy major Rosneft.

## HRW: French police routinely abuse Calais refugees

French police routinely abuse refugees and migrants in the port town of Calais, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said in a new report, accusing authorities of turning a blind eye to police misconduct.

Wednesday’s report - titled Like Living in Hell - accuses the police and riot squads of regularly using pepper spray on asylum seekers, including children, who do not pose a threat, such as while they are sleeping.

Officers have also confiscated or pepper sprayed asylum seekers’ food, water, sleeping bags, blankets and clothes, the report added, saying that the conduct violates international standards of policing.

“It is reprehensible for police to use pepper spray on children and adults who are asleep or peacefully going about their day,” said Benedicte Jeannerod, HRW’s France director.

“When police destroy or take migrants’ blankets, shoes, or food, they demean their profession as well as harm people whose rights they’ve sworn to uphold.”

French authorities have denied the accusations in the report, which relied on interviews with 61 people.

For more than a decade France’s northern coast has been a magnet for refugees and migrants trying to reach Britain.

In October last year, authorities dismantled the “Jungle”, Calais’ decrepit makeshift camp where thousands lived in the hope of climbing aboard trucks or trains to get across the English Channel.

(Source: agencies)

## [P]GCC is essentially finished: expert

➔ partner for Qatar and Kuwait. Both Qatar and Kuwait will be much more likely to warm up to Iran if Iran is seen as a moderating influence by the United States and Europe.

■ **Is there possibility of a Saudi-engineered coup in Qatar if Doha insists on its policies?**

A: I am sure that Saudi Arabia has tried or will try to overthrow the ruler of Qatar in a bloodless coup. But it will not be easy. In fact, I think that a coup would be much more likely in Saudi Arabia. What the king has done has threatened the stability of the Al-Saud clan. Maybe some of the princes are planning such a takeover on Riyadh.

■ **In the first days of the Qatar row, Trump backed the Saudi claim that Doha supports terrorism, however Washington changed the tact and adopted a mediatory approach. What were the reasons for changing the attitude?**

A: I think that this was mainly due to Trump tweeting and saying things that he knows very little about. He talked and his advisors had to carefully correct him. As you know, the U.S. needs the base in Qatar and cannot risk losing Qatar. So for now, they will not call them sponsors of terrorism. But sadly, the naming of terrorism has lost its value as the U.S. uses this label for its purpose as opposed to a careful analysis that would be supported by the rest of the world.

## Kenya’s election: What will young people vote for?

➔ ■

■ **Mobilizing young supporters**

In short, neither candidate has the mojo they had in past elections to mobilize their young supporters effectively. Odinga doesn’t represent the brand of change that he did in 2007, which energized the youth back then. Kenyatta doesn’t have the ICC cases hanging over him as he did in 2013, something that he (very cleverly) used to extract the sympathy of older voters, and the rebelliousness of younger voters against what was seen as foreign interference in Kenya’s local politics. But even this didn’t prove to be enough for young voters to feel enthusiastic about supporting him.

The Kenyan youth may be losing interest in national politics, but that is not the case with local politics - and both presidential candidates are partially responsible for this.

In 2010, Odinga as prime minister, and Kenyatta as deputy prime minister, both campaigned hard for the passing of a new constitution, which ushered in a devolved system of governance. Kenya was run from Nairobi in the past, but now it is run in 47 counties, each with the budget and the political structures to manage its own affairs.

The fact that politics is hyper-local now means that Kenyans have a reason to vote in local elections, in spite of their collective disappointment with the old-hat politics at the national level. Contests at the county level have all the passion that the national race seems to have lost, if not all the promise of change that young voters yearn for.

Twenty-four-year-old Simon’s ambition, if he does indeed become his ward’s representative, is to become the governor in his county one day, not the president. It is because he sees very clearly that county-level politics has a real impact on his life that national politics never really did. Roads now exist where there were none, there’s more money at the local level and crucially for people such as Simon, the barriers to entry for local politics are far lower than those for national politics.

That’s why presidential candidates, whose meddling in local affairs to marshal support for themselves was once a given, are now facing open resistance to the idea of imposing their chosen candidates on the public.

Fundamentally, the differences between Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga are so indistinguishable for young people that they may decide not to vote for either of them. The challenge for either political side is to energize young voters who see in this election a future that looks just like their past -- one in which they were forgotten.

(Source: Aljazeera.com)

At least 26 Afghan soldiers have been killed and 13 wounded in a Taliban attack on a military base in Kandahar province, according to the defense ministry, in the latest blow to struggling security forces.

The attack happened late on Tuesday in Karzali area of Khakrez district.

At least 21 other people went missing and seven were kidnapped, General Dawlat Waziri, defense ministry spokesman, told Al Jazeera.

“Afghan soldiers resisted the attack and the fight is now over, they [Taliban fighters] were unable to take over the base,” he said, adding that more than 80 fighters were also killed in the counterattack.

However, the Taliban claimed to have killed at least 70 soldiers and to have seized a number of army vehicles, equipment, machinery and weapons.

The Taliban has carried out increasingly complex attacks against security forces so far in 2017.

In April, more than 140 soldiers were believed to have been killed on a base outside the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif, one of the deadliest ever Taliban attacks on a military installation.

A month earlier, gunmen disguised as doctors stormed Kabul’s Sardar Daud Khan Hospital - the country’s largest military hospital - and killed dozens.

According to the United States watchdog SIGAR, casualties among Afghan security forces soared by 35 percent in 2016, with 6,800 soldiers and police killed.

■ **Taliban advances**

Over the weekend, the Taliban overran two district centers - Taywara and Kohistan - in northern and central Afghanistan.

There has been a surge in fighting in several north-

ern and southern Afghan provinces in recent days, including in Helmand in the south.

There, amid the fighting, a U.S. air raid on Friday killed at least 16 Afghan police officers in friendly fire.

Afghan troops and police are battling largely alone on the ground against anti-government forces, after U.S.-led foreign forces withdrew from most combat operations in December 2014.

The United States is actively considering sending more troops to Afghanistan and U.S. commanders there have requested thousands of extra soldiers on the ground.

The U.S. contingent now numbers about 8,400, and there are another 5,000 from NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies, a far cry from the U.S. presence of more than 100,000 six years ago. They mainly serve as trainers and advisers.

(Source: agencies)



## USA break mixed 4x100m medley world-record

BUDAPEST: The United States broke the world-record for the mixed 4x100m medley relay at the world aquatic championships in Wednesday's heats.

The US quartet of Ryan Murphy, Kevin Cordes, Kelsei Worrell and Mallory Comerford clocked 3mins 40.28secs to break the previous record of 3:41.71 set by Great Britain two years ago in Kazan.

This is only the second world championships were the mixed 4x100m medley relay has been added to the schedule.

The record is in danger of falling again in Wednesday night's final with Australia, Great Britain and Canada all qualifying behind the USA.

This is the sixth time a world record has been broken at these world championships.

Britain's Adam Peaty lowered his own 50m breaststroke record twice on Tuesday and it could fall again in Wednesday night's final.

(Source: AFP)

## Barcelona 'agree terms' with Liverpool star Philippe Coutinho

Barcelona have reportedly agreed terms with Philippe Coutinho — but still need to convince Liverpool to sell.

Reds boss Jurgen Klopp insists the Brazilian midfielder, 25, remains a major part of his plans for the coming season and has no interest in parting company with him.



But Barcelona officials have met with Coutinho's representatives in England and it is believed all that remains is to agree a fee with the Merseysiders.

According to Spanish outlet Sport, radio station RAC1 claim the terms of Coutinho's contract have been finalised as Barca edge closer to landing their long-term target.

Coutinho, who joined the Reds from Inter for £8.5million in January 2013, signed a new contract earlier this year.

Liverpool believe they will keep hold of their star man unless he attempts to force an exit from Anfield.

However, it is widely believed a rumoured offer of around £90million may tempt them to do business.

Klopp's squad are preparing for a trio of friendlies in Germany against Hertha Berlin, Bayern Munich and either Atletico Madrid or Napoli.

(Source: Mirror)

## Novak Djokovic will not play for the rest of 2017

Novak Djokovic has ruled himself of all competitive tennis for the rest of the year.

The Serbian former world No 1 has been struggling with an elbow injury for several weeks and had already declared his intention to sit out the US Open.

But that break from tennis will now stretch beyond the autumn. Djokovic's doctor said on Monday that the 30-year-old could require three months' rest for his elbow problem.

He was forced to retire during his Wimbledon quarter-final against Tomas Berdych.

'He will have to rest for six to 12 weeks, and then we are going to see,' said Milinkovic, who added that Djokovic had been to Toronto for specialist advice.

'The symptoms are calming down. Now with various procedures it can affect his recovery. Surgery is the last option.'

Djokovic's announcement comes exactly one year to the day since Roger Federer confirmed he would sit out several months to undergo 'extensive rehabilitation'.

The Swiss legend returned this year in stunning style, winning both the Australian Open and Wimbledon.

Djokovic will be hoping his prolonged break has the same effect.

(Source: Independent)

## Russian hockey forward Zaripov suspended for doping in KHL

MOSCOW (Reuters) — Russian forward Danis Zaripov, a three-time world champion who played at the 2010 Olympics, has been suspended for two years after failing a doping test last season in the Kontinental Hockey League, the KHL said on Tuesday.

A statement on KHL's website said the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) had suspended Zaripov until May 22, 2019, after one of his samples contained banned stimulants plus substances prohibited as diuretics and masking agents.

Zaripov's suspension is a rare case of a doping ban among high-profile Russian national ice hockey players and came as the country says it has taken measures to curb the use of performance-enhancing drugs in sport.

The 36-year-old Zaripov, who had 16 goals and 29 assists in 56 games with runners-up Metallurg Magnitogorsk last season, told Reuters he would appeal against the suspension. "I'm shocked," Zaripov said. "There's nothing else to say."

The Russian government this month adopted a sweeping plan aimed at curbing doping, while President Vladimir Putin barred dopers and their coaches from receiving Kremlin grants.

Russia's athletics federation and Paralympic committee remain suspended over reports of widespread doping.

The KHL said the 377 doping tests conducted last season were administered with the help of the IIHF and the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), plus the Doping Free Sport Unit of SportAccord, the umbrella organization for international sports federations.

# Why Real Madrid will break the bank for £160m Mbappe?

It remains one of the biggest regrets from Real Madrid president Florentino Perez's time at the club that he did not sign Neymar when he had the chance.

Madrid gave the player a medical in 2011 but Barcelona barged in front paying his father a preferential contract and promising much, much more. Real were priced out of the deal. For once someone else played a cleverer game.

Neymar represented a huge gamble as a spindly 19-year-old at Santos, but as he now wavers on the brink of becoming the first player to break the £100million barrier the risk Barcelona took was worth it. He became the player everyone thought he might.

Kylian Mbappe is also a gamble. He has only played 49 games for Monaco and he is 18 years old, but Madrid did not want to be looking back at this summer in six years time wondering what could have been, as Mbappe lifts the Ballon d'Or.

It is one of the unwritten rules at Spain's biggest club that the best player in the world should play for them. It's why they have broken the world transfer record five times for Luis Figo in 2000, Zinedine Zidane in 2001, Kaka and then Cristiano Ronaldo in 2009, and Gareth Bale in 2013.

There was a slightly grotesque montage of Mbappe's face on the inside pages of Marca on Wednesday made of purple 500 euros bills. He will cost the earth but Madrid will pay the money to get their man.

You can wince at the eye-watering sums and recoil somewhat at the arrogance with which they pursue the best players in the world but you also have to admire the way they stay ahead of the rest of the field, despite the fact that the fan ownership prevents them ever having a billionaire sugar daddy buying the club and pumping money into it.

They have carved-up the domestic television money pot in their disproportionate favour over the years but they have still had to compete with clubs owned by private entities for whom money is not an issue. They have had to lead the way commercially getting the most lucrative deals with the most willing sponsors, and they have done that by having the best players.

It's not true that David Beckham paid for himself in shirt sales, but it is true that Real Madrid squeezed far more



money out of a range of global sponsors during those years because they had Beckham and because they took him around the world every summer on pre-season tours.

Perez will already thinking about the shiny new adverts at the club's huge Adidas superstore next to the ground with Mbappe's image on them, and the summer tour of 2018 with the French international back from his first World Cup.

Having the best players in the world has a flip side. There are times when it becomes an obstacle to signing the next best thing. Barcelona have admitted to having trouble in the past finding a fourth striker because any player coming in knows he is never going to play ahead of Neymar, Luis Suarez and Lionel Messi.

Madrid face the same dilemma with Mbappe. If he is

effectively replacing Alvaro Morata in the Madrid squad well then that does not bode well for his career. Only Pepe and James Rodriguez got fewer minutes than Morata last season and that is why he forced his way out this summer so that he could become first choice at Chelsea.

Mbappe, well-advised by his parents, Wilfried and Fayza, told Madrid earlier this summer that he did not want to join them because he thought he could end up on the bench damaging his career in the process.

Both Zidane and Perez are understood to have spoken to the player and convinced him that a plan in which Madrid would sign him now and let him stay in France for another year would work.

(Source: Daily Mail)

## Russian athletes going to world championships as neutrals will be paid by state



Russia told athletes set to compete as neutrals at next month's world championships that they will be paid by the state despite not officially representing their country.

Nineteen Russian athletes were on Monday entered into the competition being hosted from Aug. 4-13 in London.

Russian Sports Minister Pavel Kolobkov said athletes who compete at the championships will not miss out financially.

"Salaries and bonuses will be kept in spite of the neutral flag," TASS news agency quoted Kolobkov as telling Russian track and field athletes at a training facility outside Moscow.

Russia's athletics federation remains suspended over a 2015 World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) report which alleged state-sponsored doping in the sport, something the Kremlin denies.

However, the world governing body, the IAAF, has so far cleared 47 Russian athletes to compete internationally this year under the neutral flag after they demonstrated that their training environment met its anti-doping standards.

The International Association of Athletics Federations told Reuters in an e-mail on

Tuesday that all athletes, including neutrals, "have the opportunity to earn money in athletics so long as those payments do not breach the integrity rules of the sport."

"Specifically there is over \$7 million prize money on offer to all athletes competing at the London World Championships," the IAAF said.

Yelena Orlova, a Russian athletics federation official, told R-Sport news agency on Monday that it had entered 19 athletes to compete at the competition as neutrals.

The list included hurdler Sergey Shubenkov, who will defend his world title in the 110-metre hurdles, and world champion high jumper Maria Lasitskene, whose personal best of 2.06 meters is three centimeters off the world record set in 1987.

Russian athletes competing as neutrals will not be allowed to wear their country's colors and the Russian national anthem will not be played if they win an event, according to IAAF rules.

The IAAF told Reuters it could not confirm any entry information for the world championships until the ranking process was completed.

(Source: Reuters)

## Conor McGregor hits back at Mike Tyson: 'Money is mine'



Conor McGregor has responded to Mike Tyson's claim that Floyd Mayweather will 'kill him' in their upcoming mega-fight and warned his critics they will soon 'eat their words' for doubting him.

The UFC star will make his professional boxing debut against the former five-weight world champion in Las Vegas on August 26.

He is the heavy underdog, given Mayweather is unbeaten in 49 professional fights, and former heavyweight king Tyson recently claimed: 'McGregor is going to get killed in boxing... (he) put his dumb ass in a position where he's gonna get knocked out.'

But the Irishman, who is expected to pocket a purse of £62m for his first boxing fight, responded to Tyson's comments by comparing himself to 'Iron' Mike's former promoter, the legendary Don King.

'That's nice Mike, but you're looking at the new Don King here, son. Money is mine,' he said.

The MMA superstar is currently midway through a gruelling training camp ahead of the Las Vegas showdown. He has been sparring with the likes of Paulie Malignaggi, the former two-weight

world champion who criticised him for 'disrespecting boxing'.

And McGregor has reiterated his warning that he will prove wrong those who doubt his ability to upset the odds against Mayweather.

"You are all going to eat your words for the rest of your days, while I eat lobster for the rest of mine," he wrote on Instagram.

Despite McGregor's inexperience inside the ropes, the August 26 clash is expected to be one of the richest in combat sports history.

The build-up was ramped up by a four-day, four-city publicity tour earlier this month, which was marred by accusations of racism and homophobia.

And McGregor further goaded his opponent by wearing the jersey of NBA star CJ Watson.

Mayweather served 90 days in jail in 2012 for assaulting his former partner and mother of his three children Josie Harris.

It was messages from former Golden State Warriors player Watson to Harris that allegedly prompted Mayweather to attack her in 2010.

(Source: Sun)

## Ibrahimovic immortalized on 1,000 kroner note as Swedish football legend appears in artwork

It is barely overstating the matter to say Zlatan Ibrahimovic has attained living legend status in Sweden - he is the country's top scorer and is being immortalized in a statue outside the national stadium.

Now, the striker has his face on currency after being represented on the 1,000 kroner note by a Swedish artist.

The former Manchester United, Barcelona and Juventus striker seemed impressed with the piece, made by photographer Bingo Rimer.

Ibrahimovic posed with a blown up version of the note on Instagram, captioned 'You have Benjamin Franklin and you have me' referring to the statesman whose likeness adorns the \$100 in the US.

Unfortunately for his fans, the note is not official Swedish currency and is not available - meaning you cannot



make a payment with a wad of Zlatans.

It is unlike the official stamps released by Sweden in 2014, with five special edition pieces released of the forward in the yellow of the national team.

However the famously self-confident forward will be pleased with Rimer's choice of note, with 1,000 kroner - roughly equivalent to £120 - the largest denomination available in Swedish currency.

Rimer posted further pictures of his art to social media, including a large canvas of the note, featuring a head shot of Zlatan with a smaller version of the player celebrating a goal.

The striker is currently without a club, after suffering a serious knee injury towards the end of a successful season with United.

(Source: Daily Mail)



# Iran earn third successive win at Asian Volleyball Championship

**S P O R T S** Iran beat Chinese Taipei in straight d e s k sets (25-23, 25-22, 25-14) in Pool B of the 19th Asian Men's Volleyball Championship opener on Tuesday.

The Iranian U-23 volleyball team started the competition with a 3-0 win over Iraq on Monday and defeated Pakistan 3-0 on Tuesday.

Iran, headed by Juan Cichello, will play China on Thursday.

The 16 teams have been split into four-team pools for the First Round. In the Second Round, the top two teams from each pool advance to the Winners Bracket, Pools E and F. While the bottom two teams advance to the Losers Bracket, Pools G and H. The results of the First Round carry into the Second Round. The Knockout Round starts after two Second Round matches. Winner Bracket teams will play for 1st through 8th. With the Losers Bracket, the top two teams in Pools G and H will play for 9th through 12th, and the bottom two teams play for 13th through 16th.

Indonesia as the hosts have been placed in Pool A with Kazakhstan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

The FIVB highest ranked Asian team and 2015 tournament 2nd place team, Iran, are in Pool B with Chinese Taipei, Iraq and Pakistan.

Defending 2015 Champions, Japan are in Pool C with South Korea, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

2018 World Championship Qualifier Australia will be in Pool D with China, Hong Kong and Thailand.



Photo by: Parviz Pourtaherian  
volleyball.ir

## Iran Professional League new season to kick off on Thursday

**1 →** Last season's third-placed Tractor Sazi will start the new season under guidance of former Persepolis coach Yahya Golmohammadi after parting company with Amir Ghalenoei.

The Iran Professional League is a professional football league competition for clubs at the highest level of the Iranian football league system.

It was founded in 1970 as the Takht Jamshid Cup, but the current format was adopted in 2001. Contested by 16 teams, it is ranked by the Asian Football Confederation as the 2nd best league in Asia and the best league in Western Asia.

The Persian Gulf Pro League is the top tier of an extensive pyramid-like structure, above the Azadegan League (or 1st Division), the 2nd division, the 3rd Di-



vision and the lower local leagues. Since the league's creation in 2001, seven different teams have become league champions.

The first week's matches are as follow:

**Thursday:**

- Siah Jamegan – Zob Ahan
- Esteghlal Khuzestan – Tractor Sazi
- Naft Tehran – Sepidrood Rasht
- Persepolis – Foolad

**Friday:**

- Gostaresh Foolad – Pars Jonoubi Jam
- Sepahan – Saipa
- Paykan Padideh
- Sanat Naft – Esteghlal

## Alireza Afzal: Time to put Giti Pasand on the international map

Ho Chi Minh City: Since its inception in 2010, the AFC Futsal Club Championship title has exchanged hands between Iranian teams on three occasions.

Yet for all its dominance, such is the combative nature of the domestic competition that no team has ever emerged as a front runner for club supremacy, unlike their fellow heavyweights, Japan, who have seen Nagoya Oceans monopolise with all three of the East Asian nation's titles.

While the central focus will be on Thursday's quarter-final opponents Bank of Beirut, Giti Pasand head coach Alireza Afzal is already casting his sights on the final.

The 43-year-old - who guided his side to their solitary Asian club title in 2012 -

believes this year's competition presents a golden opportunity to solidify Giti Pasand's position as the undisputed kings of Iranian club futsal.

"Yes, Iranian teams are very strong, but no one has won this competition twice. We want to win this competition and when we do, we will be the best. We will achieve something no one in IR Iran has done.

"Everyone in IR Iran knows Giti Pasand. All of Asia knows us. Now it is time to put Giti Pasand on the international map. We want to show the world who we are and what we are about," stressed a confident Afzal.

If recent form is anything to go by, the Iranians have certainly proven their calibre, making light of Shenzhen Nanjing with an

emphatic 7-0 victory before battling to a 3-2 win over Japan's Shriker Osaka for a perfect record in the group stages.

Bank of Beirut head coach Dejan Dedovic, meanwhile, is more than happy to live with the underdog label, saying while the Lebanon side have every intention to progress to the last four, the pressure is on the Iranians to deliver.

"Giti Pasand, you could say, are the best team in the competition. In the history of this competition, I don't believe a team from Lebanon has ever beaten a team from IR Iran so the pressure is on them, not on us.

"But, believe me, the team that has nothing to lose can be the most dangerous team in the competition, and that to me, is one of

our biggest advantages. We have to be patient tomorrow, and rely on teamwork, which is another strong point we have in this team.

"We have watched all their games, and while I agree that they have many strengths, their biggest threat comes from individual players. Hassanzadeh and Esmailpour are two key players for them.

"If you look at their games so far, especially against the Japanese side, they do not play as a team. Primarily, they depend heavily on good individuals."

"Compared to us, there is nobody here bigger than the team. Everyone has a role to play and I believe our teamwork and patient approach could spring a surprise."

(Source: AFC)

## Memory of glorious 2012 Paralympic Games endures

The Paralympic movement came home for London 2012 and the memory of that glorious Games endures.

Speaking during the World Para Athletics Championships at the London Stadium last week, International Paralympic Committee president Sir Philip Craven reflected on the wonder of the Paralympics in his home nation.

Craven told Press Association Sport: "Five years, where's it gone? It's wonderful to be back.

"There's such a soft spot in people's hearts for what took place here in 2012.

"We knew it was going to be very good, but I was amazed and blown away.

"It was the greatest atmosphere I've ever experienced.

It confirmed everything from Beijing and took it to the next level.

"That space rocket that had taken off in Beijing was just now going outside of the solar system."

Craven, the IPC president for 16 years, praised the leadership of the London 2012 organising committee - Lord Sebastian Coe, Paul Deighton and Keith Mills - for creating a truly parallel Games.

The public flocked to the Paralympics. Those who had been caught up in London 2012 fever and missed out on experiencing the Olympics themselves went to the Paralympics.

There were 2.8 million tickets sold. And the spectators were astounded by what they saw.

Athletes performing to the best of their abilities; their impairments irrelevant as sporting competition took over.

Craven, a five-time Paralympian in wheelchair basketball, had never seen anything like the moment the 19-year-old Jonnie Peacock stepped forwards prior to the T44 100 metres final.

The amputee sprinter, in his first Games in arguably the blue riband event, called for quiet from the 80,000 crowd - and then claimed gold.

"I don't think you've ever seen anybody ask for quiet before the start of a 100m final. What an amazing moment," Craven said.

(Source: dailymail)

## Hamilton can equal pole record, take F1 lead in Hungary

**BUDAPEST (Reuters)** — If all goes to plan for Lewis Hamilton in Hungary this weekend, the Mercedes driver will equal one of Michael Schumacher's all-time records and head into Formula One's summer break as sole leader of the championship.

Hamilton remains a long way off Schumacher's record 91 race wins but Saturday's qualifying at the Hungaroring could see him equal the great German's hitherto unmatched 68 pole positions.

A 58th career win for the Briton, and sixth at the circuit outside Budapest, on Sunday would send the triple world champion off on vacation with at least a six-point advantage over Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel.

Four-times champion Vettel has led since winning the Australian season-opener in March, jointly with Hamilton after China, but the German arrives in Hungary only a point clear after 10 of 20 races.

Hamilton, beaten by now-retired team mate Nico Rosberg to the 2016 title, but winner in Hungary, has not led the cham-

pionship on his own since last September but has the momentum after a crushing home victory at Silverstone.

"There's lots more things that can come up in the future but I think the team's really energised," he said after winning from a career 67th pole position, adding that Mercedes had "absorbed all the energy" from the fans at Silverstone.

"So I hope we can take that into the next races."

Mercedes are 55 points clear of Ferrari in the constructors' standings but team boss Toto Wolff was wary of suggesting the champions were the favorites again rather than being the 'underdogs' he had talked of after Monaco.

"The moment you say that, you go to the next race and are slapped in the face," the Austrian told reporters.

"It is tricky. Our car is not always easy to set up and we have become much better at doing so in a great team effort.

"But I'd like to see Budapest and how

the car works on a low speed, high temperature track and then maybe have a more complete picture."

■ **Minimize Mistakes**

With 250 points still to be won in the drivers' championship, Wolff said it was too early to pick a favorite.

The key, he said, was to extract every inch of performance and minimize mistakes, mindful that Russia and Monaco had not worked out for Hamilton despite every expectation of success.

"With these new regulations it's not set in stone that it works like it has done in the past," said Wolff.

"Going into the summer break with a lead is nice. But there was a very famous Austrian skier who was always sector world champion but never won the championship.

"So I'd like to have the gap (lead) before the holiday, but it doesn't mean anything for the world championship."

For Vettel, Hungary is a chance to rebuild his advantage at a track that also holds good



recent memories -- in 2015 the Ferrari driver won after Hamilton lost on pole.

Finnish team mate Kimi Raikkonen, for whom Budapest is almost a home race, and compatriot Valtteri Bottas in the Mercedes will also be strong contenders, as will Red Bull's Max Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo.

"I love that track and it has always been a good one forme," said Ricciardo, who won in 2014. "We've got lots more grip this year so it'll be a bit more fun."

## Lazio move closer to signing Sardar Azmoun

Italian Lazio football club are moving closer to a deal for Rubin Kazan's Iranian striker Sardar Azmoun.

Both Sky Sport Italia and Sportitalia are confident an agreement will be reached at around €18m after an initial €15m plus bonuses was rejected.

The signing of the contract would make Azmoun the most expensive football player in Iran's history.

However, Italian sources suggest this message was premature, although negotiations are progressing well.

The 22-year-old has been in Russia since January 2013, playing for Rubin Kazan and Rostov.

Last season Azmoun scored 12 goals with three assists in 41 competitive games for Rostov.

(Source: Sky Sports)

## Mehdizadeh wins silver at 2017 World Games

Iranian Karate fighter Amir Mehdizadeh seized a silver medal at the 2017 World Games in Wrocław, Poland on Tuesday.

Firdosi Farzaliyev from the Azerbaijan Republic prevailed in the men's 60kg category after he overcame Mehdizadeh in the final.

Bronze went to Spaniard Matias Gomez Garcia after he beat Brazilian Douglas Brose.

Iran's speed climber Reza Alipour won the country's first gold medal in The World Games history on Sunday.

The World Games, first held in 1981, are an international multi-sport event, meant for sports, or disciplines or events within a sport, that are not contested in the Olympic Games.

(Source: Tasnim)

## Siamnd Rahman meets Japanese children in Tokyo

The world's strongest Paralympian met Japanese children at the Nippon Foundation Paralympic Support Center.

Siamand Rahman lifted 280kg in the center and answered the questions of Japanese kids about how he feels about lifting such heavy weights.

The Nippon Foundation was established in 2015 with the objective to ensure the success of the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games, and promote Paralympic sports.

The organizers are aiming to raise awareness of Paralympic sports in Japan by inviting the well-known Paralympians.

Rahman became the first powerlifter to break the 300kg barrier by lifting 310kg at Rio 2016.

(Source: paralympic.ir)



## Iran's Asghari swims into Guinness Book of World Records

Iranian female swimmer Elham Sadat Asghari has managed to swim her way into the Guinness Book of World Records.

The 36-year-old Iranian sportswoman recently completed the challenge of swimming handcuffed for more than three hours non-stop in the Persian Gulf waters off the coast of the southwestern port city of Bushehr, located 1,050 kilometers (652 miles) south of the capital Tehran.

She received her Guinness World Record Certificate during a ceremony in Tehran a few days ago.

"I went through a great deal of trouble and difficulties to establish this record. Patriotism and my friends' unswerving support, however, encouraged me to be the first Iranian woman to secure a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records," Asghari told IRNA news agency on Tuesday.

The Iranian female swimmer added that she is fully prepared to set five new records, but needs sponsors.

The Iranian Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs recognized Asghari's 12-kilometer swim for her usage of the full-body swimming outfit in 2008.

The ministry, however, refused to approve her alleged 20-kilometers swimming record in the Caspian Sea in northern Iran in June 2013.

"What she has done is a personal act without coordinating with the Iran Amateur Swimming Federation (IASF) and the Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs," Reza Habibi, a member of the technical committee at IASF, said at the time.

He added that the Fédération Internationale de Natation (FINA) only acknowledges swims of 5, 10, 15 and 25 kilometers.

(Source: PressTV)





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www.tehrantimes.com

■ Managing Director: Ali Asgari

■ Editor-in-Chief: Hassan Lasjerdi

» Editorial Dept.: Fax: (+98 21) 88808214 — 88808895  
editor@tehrantimes.com

» Switchboard Operator: Tel: (+98 21) 43051000

» Advertisements Dept.: Telefax: (+98 21) 43051450

» Public Relations Office: Tel: (+98 21) 88805807

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Mashhad, Karbala to host festival on Imam Reza (AS) and Arbaeen rituals

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — The Iranian city of Mashhad and the Iraqi city of Karbala will host the first edition of the Path of Love International Festival of Film and Photo on Imam Reza (AS), the eighth Imam of the Shia Muslims, and the Arbaeen rituals in October.



A poster for the Path of Love International Festival of Film and Photo

The festival will be running from October 23 to 27, the organizers announced on Wednesday.

Interested applicants can submit their works in different fields such as features, short films, documentaries, screenplays, TV series and photos to [www.masireeshgh.com](http://www.masireeshgh.com).

Mashhad is the Capital of Islamic Culture for 2017 as well as home to the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS), and Karbala is home to the holy shrine of Imam Hussein (AS).

A large number of pilgrims head to Karbala during Arbaeen, which marks the end of the 40-day mourning period following the martyrdom of Imam Hussain (AS) and his companions on Ashura, the 10th of Muharram when Imam Hussein (AS) and his companions were martyred.

The festival will provide a facility for the artists to help create works, which promote the ritual and the culture of sacrifice.

Stories of survival, women to highlight Toronto film festival

**TORONTO (Reuters)** — Stories of survival in turbulent times, including David Gordon Green's world premiere of "Stronger" about a victim of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, are among the highlights in store at this year's Toronto International Film Festival.

Angelina Jolie's "First They Killed My Father" set in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge and horror mystery "Mother!" by Darren Aronofsky, starring Jennifer Lawrence and Javier Bardem, were also among the films announced on Tuesday in the first look at the festival's lineup for 2017.

Audiences can also catch social satire "Downsizing", directed by Alexander Payne and starring Matt Damon, and George Clooney-directed crime-comedy "Suburbicon." Guillermo del Toro's fantastical "The Shape of Water" will also screen.

The Toronto event, which kicks off Sept. 7, has become one of the world's largest film festivals, known for debuting critically acclaimed films that have later won Academy Awards for best picture.

"Stronger" stars Jake Gyllenhaal as Jeff Bauman, who lost both his legs during the Boston Marathon, and Tatiana Maslany as his girlfriend.

"It's a moment of incredible transformation, disruption, change, challenge, so I think you'll see that reflected in the films we're showing," said Piers Handling, chief executive and director of the film festival, now in its 42nd year.

"One of the ideas that struck me is the whole notion of survival," he said about the films announced so far. "It seems to be a topic that a lot of people are thinking about."

Hany Abu-Assad's "The Mountain Between Us", starring Idris Elba and Kate Winslet, is about two strangers stranded on a mountain after surviving a plane crash.

Jennifer Baichwal and Nicholas de Pencier's "Long Time Running" is a documentary about Canadian rock band The Tragically Hips' 2016 tour as frontman Gord Downie battles terminal brain cancer.

Organizers did not announce which film will kick off the 10-day festival, but said the world premiere of "C'est La Vie!" by Olivier Nakache and Eric Toledano, the duo behind "The Intouchables", will close.

Women will also grab the festival spotlight, with Haifaa Al Mansour's "Mary Shelley" and Angela Robinson's "Professor Marston & the Wonder Women" both having their world premiere in Toronto.

"We don't program for themes, but as you begin to step back ... and you look at the films that you've chosen, some things begin to emerge," Cameron Bailey, the festival's artistic director, said in an interview.

Green film festival receives over 2000 submissions for visual art section

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Over 2000 works have been submitted to the visual art section of the 6th edition of the International Green Film Festival, the organizers announced on Wednesday.

The works are from Artists from Iran, China, the U.S., Mexico, Turkey, Italy, Germany, Poland, South Korea, Russia, Ecuador and dozens of other countries.

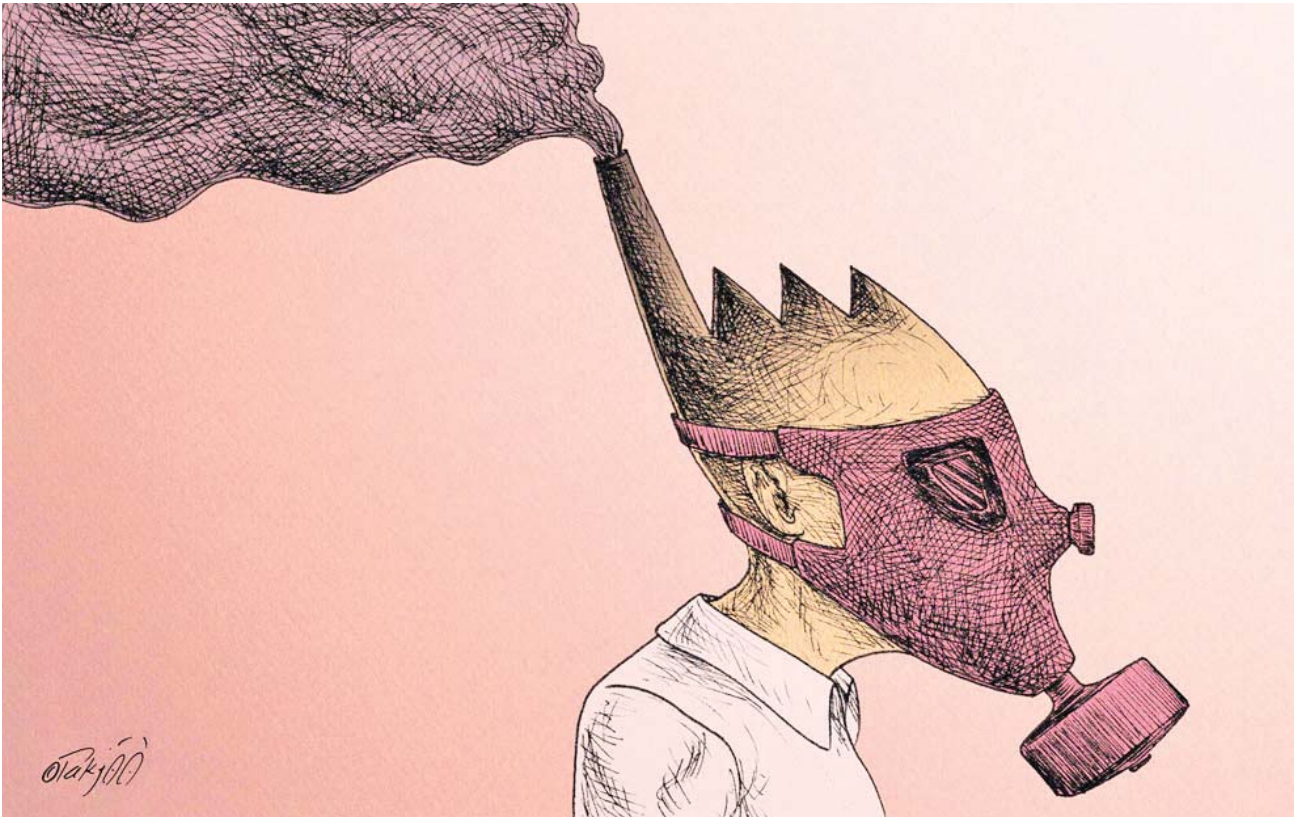
The festival is Iran's sole environmental event on motion pictures, which also regards other media on its sidelines.

The 6th edition of the festival will be held in Tehran and several other Iranian cities from September 9 to 15.

This year's festival has put its spotlight on movies promoting green economy, secretary of the festival Farhad Tohidi said earlier in February.

The festival also plans to highlight sustainable tourism this year in line with UN World Tourism Organization's decision to name 2017 as the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

Topics such as clean energy and sustainable cities have been taken into consideration in selecting movies for the festival, which was



A cartoon by Javad Takji

first scheduled to be held in July. However, the Department of Environment, the main organizer of the event, postponed it until September due to the allegedly unpredictable intense heat in Iran.

Cinema Verite to screen doc on cartoonist Kambiz Derambakhsh

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — "Paper Cinema", a documentary about Kambiz Derambakhsh, a cartoonist famous for his quick and simple cartoons, will go on screen at 11th Cinema Verite, Iran's major international festival for documentary cinema, in December.

The documentary directed by Javad Atashbari chronicles the artistic life of Derambakhsh, the public relations office of the festival announced in a press release published on Wednesday.

"The lines that give meaning, the lines that make one laugh, the lines that show us life and freedom, 60 years works of Kambiz Derambakhsh and his art," reads part of the

statement written about the doc.

The festival will be running in Tehran from December 10 to 17, 2017.

Known for his talent to find obscure themes for his creations, Derambakhsh, has worked as a cartoonist, a graphic designer and an illustrator for over 50 years.

Derambakhsh has won many awards at international competitions including the grand prize of Istanbul competition in 1990, the grand prize at Japan's Yomiuri Shimbun competition in 1998 and the grand prize of a Polish anti-war caricature contest in 2002.

The 75-year-old cartoonist has showcased his works in many exhibitions around the world.

Tehran museum to showcase photos of veteran Iranian writers

**A R T d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Portraits of 110 veteran Iranian writers will be put on display in an exhibition at the Palestine Contemporary Museum of Art in Tehran next week.

The exhibition, which will open on Saturday, will be organized in collaboration with the Book City Institute that published the photos in a book titled "Eternal Memento" on July 4, the institute announced in a press release on Wednesday.

"The book was published to commemorate the eternal figures who have had great influence on Iran's cultural arena," the institute stated.

The book also carries a brief biography for each writer.

The exhibition will run until August 2



A poster for the unveiling ceremony of the book "Eternal Memento" at the museum located at 74 Mozaffar St. off of Taleqani Ave.

The Book City Institute also plans to publish a similar book for the younger generation of Iranian writers in the near future.

Tehran organization honors poet Simindokht Vahidi

**CULTURE d e s k** **TEHRAN** — Simindokht Vahidi, an influential poet who won fame after the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, was honored for her lifetime achievements during a special ceremony at the Owj Media Organization in Tehran on Tuesday.

The ceremony was attended by Academy of Persian Language and Literature director Gholam-Ali Haddad-Adel, and several other cultural officials.

Speaking at the ceremony, Haddad-Adel thanked the organizers who arranged such a ceremony in honor of the lady whose poetry enjoys such delicate beauty that is hardly seen in works by male poets.

He said that Vahidi was a great help in the early days of the revolution during which there was an immense need for cultural programs on radio and TV.

Poet Farbia Yusefi, also attending the ceremony, called Vahidi the poet who has always given a chance to the youth.



Simindokht Vahidi attends a ceremony held at the Owj Media Organization in Tehran on July 25, 2017 to honor the poet for her lifetime achievements.

"The love of Imam Khomeini (the founder of the Islamic Revolution) and religious commitments were

other reasons for the poets to get together in the Art Bureau in the early days of the revolution and Ms. Vahidi was always present at those meetings," poet Hossein Esrafil said.

Born in 1933 in Jahrom, Fars Province, Simindokht Vahidi wrote her first book "Bereaved Tulips" at the age of 25.

She continued her cooperation after the Islamic Revolution in 1979 with Iran's radio and the Art Bureau.

She was also chief editor of the cultural monthly "Kowsar". The poet used to recite poetry for the soldiers during the war while she was visiting the war-stricken cities or the frontlines.

Vahidi has been honored with the Cultural Lady of the Year Award at the third edition of the Tahereh Saffarzadeh Literary Award.

Vahidi received the award for her research, cultural and academic activities and her collections of poetry and books on the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war in 2015.

Frank Sinatra's fourth wife Barbara dies at age 90

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Barbara Sinatra, the fourth wife of singer Frank Sinatra, died on Tuesday at the age of 90, her representative said.

John Thoresen, director of the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center in Rancho Mirage, California, said in a statement that Sinatra died of natural causes, surrounded by her family and friends at her home in the desert city.

Born Barbara Blakely, she was a former model and Las Vegas showgirl who married the famed singer and actor in 1976. She had been married to him for 22 years when he died of a heart attack in 1998. She had previously been married to Zeppo Marx, the youngest of the Marx Brothers comedy team.

It was the longest of Frank Sinatra's marriages, which included unions with actresses Ava Gardner and Mia Farrow, and teenage



Music legend Frank Sinatra, joined by his wife Barbara, cuts an oversize 80th birthday cake during a ceremony in his honor, at a New York hotel in New York City, U.S. on November 30, 1995. (Reuters/Mark Cardwell)

sweetheart Nancy Barbato.

Frank and Barbara Sinatra founded the Barbara Sinatra Children's Center in Rancho Mirage, near Palm Springs, in 1986. The center counsels physically, and emotionally abused children.

"Simpsons" creator heads to Netflix with adult comedy

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — "The Simpsons" creator Matt Groening is swapping Springfield for a medieval kingdom in a new animated adult comedy series called "Disenchantment" for Netflix, the streaming platform said on Tuesday.

"Disenchantment" will follow a princess named Bean, voiced by "Broad City" actress Abbi Jacobson, her friend Elfo (Nat Faxon) and her demon Luci (Eric Andre) in the crumbling kingdom of Dreamland, Netflix said.

The series, which will debut ten episodes starting in 2018, will include creatures such as ogres, harpies, trolls and "lots of human fools."

"Disenchantment will be about life and death, love, and how to keep laughing in a world full of suffering and idiots, despite what the elders and wizards and other jerks tell you," Groening said in a statement.

It is a world away from Groening's family comedy following the many adventures of "The Simpsons" - donut-loving patriarch Homer, housewife Marge, rebellious Bart,



Matt Groening (C), creator of The Simpsons, poses with characters from the show (L-R) Homer, Bart, Lisa and Marge at the 20th anniversary party for the television series at Barker hangar in Santa Monica, California October 18, 2009. (Reuters/Mario Anzuoni)

prodigy Lisa and baby Maggie.

"The Simpsons" is the longest-running animated series on U.S. television, having just concluded its 28th season this year during which it celebrated its 600th episode. The series will continue into a 30th season.