



Terror has nothing to do with race or religion, Zarif says **2**



Mohsen Hashemi sole candidate for Tehran city council chairman **12**



Ando's goal against Buriram among ACL quarterfinals' spectacular goals **15**



Social reform must start with ourselves: actor Reza Kianian **16**

Lebanon seizes U.S. arms left by Nusra

ISIL members surrender to Hezbollah in Syria

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Lebanese soldiers fire artilleries in Ras Baalbek, Lebanon August 17, 2017.

Rouhani's cabinet awaiting approval

By Ali Kushi

TEHRAN — President Hassan Rouhani will be speaking to the parliament today in a last-ditch effort to persuade 290-seat parliament into casting a vote of confidence for his 17-member cabinet roster.

Rouhani handed his list of ministerial nominees to parliament three days after he was sworn in on August 5. He delayed introducing a nominee for the Science Ministry.

Nearly 24 million of 56 eligible voters cast their ballots for Rouhani, a moderate sexagenarian cleric, for a second four-year tenure.

"We do our best to announce the vote by tomorrow's midday," said Behrouz Ne'mati, the parliament's presiding board speaker, on Saturday.

The parliament began debating whether to approve Rouhani's proposed ministers on Tuesday. Rouhani said on the same day he was hoping all the picks will be granted votes of confidence.

"I'm very hopeful that all the 17 ministers receive confidence vote from the Islamic Consultative Assembly (parliament)," the president told lawmakers. **→2**

Zanganeh: Development of joint fields is main priority

ECONOMY

TEHRAN - Attraction of investment for development of the oil and gas fields that Iran shares with its neighbors will be the main priority of the Oil Ministry, Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, the proposed oil minister, told the parliament on Saturday.

Zanganeh, who was defending his four-year agenda if approved again as minister, said Iran's new model of oil contracts (known as IPC) is intended to boost production in these fields as it will also bring technology to the country and create jobs.

"We should attract \$200 billion investment in the Oil Ministry in a course of five years, of which \$120-130 billion

should be foreign investment", the proposed minister said, adding, "If so, it will create an economic flourishing and will create huge number of jobs."

Zanganeh mentioned more production of oil and gas to increase Iran's share in the global energy markets his other major program for the Oil Ministry.

He referred to completing development phases of South Pars (the huge gas field Iran shares with Qatar in the Persian Gulf), rebuilding and renovating oil installations which requires ten billions of dollars in investment, second leap in the petrochemical output, and no natural gas flaring as his next top priorities.

CHP member: Iran and Turkey won't allow division of Iraq

By Payman Yazdani

TEHRAN — Calling the Kurdish independence referendum as the eye of the next hurricane in the region, a senior member of the Peoples' Democratic Party (CHP) says Turkey and Iran won't allow any efforts to divide Iraq.

The remarks by Osman Faruk Logoğlu comes as General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, the Iranian armed forces chief of staff, made a visit to Ankara for talks with high ranking Turkish officials. During his three-day trip, which ended on Thursday, Baqeri met his Turkish counterpart General Hulusi Akar, Defense Minister Nurettin Canikli, and President Erdogan.

The talks were primarily aimed at narrow-

ing differences on the Syria crisis and coordinating policy on Iraq.

"They (Turkey and Iran) would not allow any effort that could lead to the division of Iraq," Logoglu tells the Mehr news agency.

Here is the full text of the interview:

*What is the importance of General Mohammad Hossein Baqeri, the chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces, to Turkey?

Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Baqeri's visit to Turkey at the invitation of his Turkish counterpart is highly important for at least several reasons. First, the visit is significant because of its timing. Important developments in Iraq, Syria and in the fight against terrorism are creating com-

mon security concerns and thus drawing the two neighbors closer together to consult and coordinate their policies. The importance of the visit is also attested by his reception and the length of his stay in Turkey. He is being received by President Erdoğan and is to meet with the Minister of National Defense and chief of intelligence. Finally, the symbolism of the visit: it is the first visit by an Iranian Chief of Staff to Turkey in nearly four decades. The last such visit was in 1979.

The visit once again demonstrates the ability of these two regional powers to come together when their national interests converge, despite ongoing differences over other issues. **→2**

Digging deep into human-carnivore conflicts in Iran

By Farnaz Heidari

Human-carnivore conflicts is rapidly increasing in Iran. For instance just recently a young boy who was tending his sheep was attacked by a black bear on July 10, 2017 on the outskirts of a village in Jiroft, southeastern province of Kerman.

Such problems can be prevented by setting aside wildlife areas but the biggest threat by far to wildlife and human beings is the ever-increasing lack of information.

However, there are still grounds for optimism because some scientists such as Dr. Igor Khorozyan from Göttingen University in Germany

and his colleagues in Iran are trying to apply some jaw-dropping methods, at least for the most important carnivore of Iran: the Persian leopard.

The conflict with leopards in Iran has escalated, resulting in extermination of leopards in many parts of their range. About two years ago, Dr. Khorozyan and his fellows worked on the relationship between climate, disease of domestic animals and human-carnivore conflicts which is still a new topic. The Tehran Times conducted an interview with Dr. Khorozyan.

Below is an excerpt of the interview:

■ Would you please explain why precipitation of the driest quarter has been

the main determinant of the existence of carnivores in humid tropical forests?

A: Iran does not have tropical forests and the western, most humid part of the Hyrcanian forest belongs to the subtropical humid broadleaf forest. Golestan National Park, where we keep on working, lies in the temperate zone. Answering your question, tropical species are adapted only to a narrow range of environmental conditions, including high precipitation and humid climate. More precipitation means denser vegetation where it's easier to hide and there is more shadow for successful hunting. **→12**



ARTICLE

By Hanif Ghafari
Political analyst

Fresh waves of terror attacks in Europe

The recent terror attacks in Spain and Finland have reignited security concerns in Europe. In the wake of the Paris terrorist assaults in 2015, the scope of such attacks in Europe was thought to be restricted to one or two countries.

The Brussels terrorist attacks and other sporadic ones across the continent including the recent ones, however, have unraveled what I would like to call a "security crisis."

As a case in point, the Barcelona attack indicated that security crises in Europe are persisting. The development also rendered it wrong that terrorism in the continent is delimited to a specific geography.

Meanwhile, those nations in the Schengen area are more susceptible to terror. The security crisis in the united Europe is strongly felt now and its common security policies have not only failed to shore up border security but have turned into the bloc's intelligence weakness.

Failure of European intelligence services to curb far-right and fascist groups and their support for Takfiri currents in western Asia have strengthened the extremists in the West.

Arms support for Arab dictators by European countries such as Germany, England, and France are a contributing factor, as well.

A key dimension of the fresh security crisis in Europe is its geographical scope, making it more challenging to bring terrorists under control as they are sprawling across larger territorial swathes.

That certain European countries are trying to boost Takfiri currents in western Asia as a measure to prevent the terrorists from entering Europe is a dangerous security calculus which definitely fires back.

There is need for a change in Europe's security approach at macro level toward western Asia. Backing Takfiri groups in the region and encountering them in Europe is a dual policy, whose outcome is nothing but the return of terrorism in the West.



ARTICLE

Harun Yahya
political analyst

A crucial visit to Turkey

The Iranian Chief of Staff, Major General Mohammad Baqeri, paid a crucial visit to Turkey on August 15-17 to exchange views with top officials in Turkey including President Erdogan, Defense Minister Nurettin Canikli and the Chief of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces Hulusi Akar. What makes this visit important is that it is the first visit of a Chief of Staff to Turkey since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. Additionally, the timing of the meeting is significant due to the ever-changing situation in Syria affecting the countries involved.

The scope of the meetings varied from the decision of the Northern Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to hold an independence referendum, scheduled to take place on September 25, to counter terrorism and regional security. Even though Turkey and Iran have had their ups and downs due to being on the opposite sides of the Syrian conflict, both countries and Russia took a major step at the end of 2016 at the Moscow Summit to establish a ceasefire in Syria. The nexus was persistent in its endeavors and carried out the Astana talks and made progress for the first time in the ongoing conflict. Turkey and Iran have always been conscious of their responsibilities in the security of the region and they cooperated for the well-being of the innocent Muslims inhabiting the region despite being on conflicting sides.

Regarding the planned referendum by the KRG, voters living in Northern Iraq will be asked whether they want an independent Kurdistan. Consisting of a single question, the referendum will no doubt bring with it concerns, despite the fact that the IKRG authorities claim otherwise. A similar popular vote took place in 2005, but what makes this one different is that this will be an official and binding vote. More importantly, it is perhaps the last step before the KRG formally secedes from Iraq and this will result in the fragmentation of the country. **→13**



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Bodies of fallen soldiers returned to country

Hundreds of Iranians participated in a procession held in Mashhad, north eastern Iran, for 19 Iranian servicemen killed during the Iraqi invasion of Iran in the 1980s. Bodies of the fallen soldiers had been recently excavated. The eight-year war left hundreds of thousands of soldiers and civilians dead and much more injured.

MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



Zanjan sees its first-ever woman mayor

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The first-ever woman mayor has been appointed in the mid-west Iranian city of Zanjan.

Samaneh Shaddel was appointed as mayor of District 2 of Zanjan, according to the public relations director of Zanjan Municipality, the Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

Mohammad Moradi said that Shaddel had previously served as deputy mayor of Zanjan for transportation and traffic affairs.

According to the 2016 census, Zanjan has a population of about 430 thousands.



Iran, Iraq enjoy historic, stable ties: Muqtada al-Sadr

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Muqtada al-Sadr, leader of the Iraqi Sadrist Movement and the Saraya al-Salam, has said Iran and Iraq enjoy historic and stable ties.

Muqtada al-Sadr made the remarks in a recent interview, IRNA reported on Saturday without mentioning the source.

Iraq never stands against Iran or its interests, al-Sadr was quoted as saying.

He also denied that his recent regional tour aimed at joining international lobbies, saying the trips help put an end to tensions between Iraq and its neighbors.



Over 64,000 Iranian pilgrims in Saudi Arabia

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Over 64,000 Iranian pilgrims have so far made it to Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia for Hajj ritual, according to the head of the Hajj and Pilgrimage Organization.

7,500 of them are in Medina, while about 57,000 are in Mecca, Hamid Mohammadi said on Saturday, the Young Journalists Club reported.

The Iranian pilgrims flew to Saudi Arabia aboard 198 flights, including 152 Iran Air flights and 42 Saudi flights, the report said.



Tehran police arrest 4 drug traffickers

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — The Tehran police have arrested four drug traffickers and found 70 kilograms of opium in their hideout.

The announcement was made by Brigadier General Mohammad Bakhshandeh, chief of drug police of Tehran on Saturday, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting reported on its website.

Bakhshandeh said the criminals have confessed to their crime of drug trade. He added they have been referred to judicial authorities.



'Ethnic, linguistic diversity to strengthen Iran'

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — President Hassan Rouhani's proposed minister of culture has said that ethnic and linguistic diversity will strengthen Iran.

Speaking before the Majlis on Saturday, Abbas Salehi added that diversity and decentralization of management will be high on agenda during his prospective tenure, Fars reported.

He added that he will make effort, if made minister, to improve the business environment in the arts sector and also facilitate artistic careers by streamlining related laws.



Army ground forces boosting combat preparedness

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — After creating rapid response units, the Iranian Army's ground forces have increased their combat and defensive preparedness, the Ground Forces chief Kioumars Heidari said in a meeting with Army commanders on Saturday.

Pointing to efforts to promote efficiency of units to fulfill operational needs as objectives of the ground forces, General Heidari said other components of the forces are to address regional threats by boosting combat preparedness.

Iran: U.S. threats, acts contravene paragraph 28 of JCPOA

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — Gholamali d e s k Khoshroo, Iran's ambassador to the UN, said on Friday that threats and irresponsible actions from some senior officials of the U.S. administration are against paragraph 28 of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the official name for the July 2015 nuclear deal.

The comments by Khoshroo came in response to a statement issued by the U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley on August 15 in which she claimed "Iran cannot be allowed to use the nuclear deal to hold the world hostage."

In addition to making some accusations against Iran such as support for terrorism, Nikki also said, "the nuclear deal must not become 'too big to fail'."

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani warned on Tuesday that Iran will quit the nuclear agreement "in hours" and return to the previous stage if sanctions are re-imposed on the country.

Following is the full text of Khoshroo's statement published by IRNA:

The 15th August press statement by the U.S. ambassador to the UN on Iran is devoid of any shred of truth. The rhetoric and baseless accusations against Iran contained therein represent the latest examples of a series of provocative words, outright threats and irresponsible actions



Instead of distorting the recent remarks of President Rouhani, the U.S. ambassador should heed the lessons of history and counsel some of the U.S. administration officials to avoid repeating past mistakes.

from some senior officials of the U.S. administration in demonizing Iran and undermining the JCPOA inconsistent with

the U.S. commitments under paragraph 28 of the nuclear deal.

Instead of distorting the recent remarks

Russian ambassador: Iran in full compliance with nuclear deal

By Mohammad Homaeifar

TEHRAN — Russian Ambassador to Tehran Levon Dzhagaryan has said that Iran has acted fully in compliance with its commitments under the nuclear agreement, noting that the U.S. should not complain in this regard.

"We will insist on our stance when talking with the Americans," Dzhagaryan said in an interview with ISNA, stressing that the nuclear agreement must be fully implemented.

He said Russia is deeply concerned about U.S. President Donald Trump's bashing of the nuclear deal, officially known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

"The European countries are also very concerned and oppose [such rhetoric]," the Russian diplomat said, adding, "This is not a deal between Iran and America, but rather a multilateral agreement."

"As you know, Russia has put a lot of effort into reach-

ing the JCPOA," the diplomat remarked.

Dzhagaryan also expressed the hope that China, along with U.S. allies including France, Germany, and especially Britain would persuade Washington to soften its tone on the nuclear accord.

On the recent U.S. sanctions that targeted Russia, Iran and North Korea, the diplomat said he regards all of them as "illegal".

"However, we urge North Korea not to carry out missile tests, as it will be used as a pretext by the Americans to expand their military presence in the region," he pointed out.

He also pointed to the economic benefits following the nuclear agreement, saying although he is satisfied with the level of Tehran-Moscow political ties, he cannot be content with the level of economic transactions between the two countries.

Russia has long supported the full implementation of the JCPOA and believes the full implementation of

the deal would benefit all countries, Russia's top diplomat in Iran asserted.

On Friday, the Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova reiterated her country's stance, saying the Kremlin keeps on supporting the international pact.

Talking to reporters, she invited all the other signatories to the deal to stick to it.

Russian has all the time declared its stance regarding the international deal clearly and Moscow was actively involved in conclusion of the JCPOA, she said.

Zakharova stressed that Russia played an important role in preventing the Iran nuclear issue to be drawn into a military conflict.

In certain tense conditions, she said, the U.S. would say Iran's nuclear program needed military solution.

But Russia insisted clearly on its stance on solving the nuclear issue through negotiations and it will never change its standing regarding the deal, said Zakharova.

Rouhani's cabinet awaiting approval

One or two picks may lose confidence vote

1 → Rouhani, who won the support of centrist and reformist voters, said he had chosen the cabinet on the basis of capability and after "extensive consultation and performance assessments".

He added, "I'm committed to the fulfillment of plans and upholding of the people's rights."

From among the 17 nominees, three have already served at ministerial positions more than two times and seven are novices.

Rouhani made structural, economic reforms, "daring" decision-making and moderation key themes of his parliamentary hearing on Tuesday.

"The government is resolute to bring about more structural reforms in its sec-

ond four-year term," Rouhani said in his two-hour long speech in the legislative body. "The government will decide daringly yet tactfully and with foresight."

Eight members of the outgoing cabinet have been replaced, including Economy Minister Ali Tayebnia. Ministers of foreign affairs, oil, health, and intelligence are expected to win strongest votes.

The headline choice for Rouhani's cabinet is Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran's

former UN ambassador and the incumbent foreign minister. The U.S.-educated Zarif was Tehran's chief negotiator on the nuclear deal reached in 2015.

Another big name in the list is Bijan Zanganeh, who also served under Khatami and Rafsanjani. Under his leadership Iran succeeded to regain its share of the oil market after sanctions against the country were lifted based on the July 2015 landmark nuclear deal, which went

The parliament began debating whether to approve Rouhani's proposed ministers on Tuesday. Rouhani said on the same day he was hoping all the picks will be granted votes of confidence.

Terror has nothing to do with race or religion, Zarif says

POLITICS **TEHRAN** — In an indirect criticism of U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said terrorism in the name of race and religion has nothing to do with neither of them.

"Quick to insult Islam but hesitant to condemn racist terror at home. Terror in name of race or religion is plain terror & represents neither," Zarif tweeted.

The remarks by Zarif came after clashes erupted between white nationalists and a group of counter-protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia. The clashes were intensified when a car plowed into a group of



CHP member: Iran and Turkey won't allow division of Iraq

1 → ■ Why did Turkey decide to construct a wall at border with Iran?

Closer cooperation along the Turkish-Iranian border has certainly been among the items discussed. Both sides agree on the need to prevent smuggling activities and terrorist infiltrations across their mutual border. Turkish authorities have already completed the paper work for the construction of the wall covering some 144 kilometers. It is reported that the wall will be similar to the one Turkey built along its border with Syria, with fortified cement blocks, lighting and a paved road alongside the wall. Iranian authorities are said to have welcomed the project.

*What is your assessment of Iran-Turkey common stance on independence referendum in the Iraqi Kurdistan region promised by Masoud Barzani?

The Kurdish referendum on 25 September is the eye of the next hurricane in the region. Turkey and Iran have already stated their objections to this step, expressing their support for the territorial integrity of Iraq. Baghdad and even some Kurdish groups oppose the referendum. The US has said "no" and the UN has declined any involvement. Whether or not Barzani will change his mind, we will have to wait and see. But even if he goes ahead and gets a "yes", it will not auto-

matically lead to a declaration of Kurdish independence on September 26. Barzani will bid his time and put the "yes" in his pocket as a trump card to be put on the table for independence at the most opportune time in the future. The positions of Turkey and Iran are crucial in this respect because both countries have Kurdish populations of their own. They would not allow any effort that could lead to the division of Iraq. General Baqeri's visit should help chart a course of coordinated action on the Kurdish issue in the region.

■ What will be the effect of the visit on the ongoing developments in Syria?

of President Rouhani, the U.S. ambassador should heed the lessons of history and counsel some of the U.S. administration officials to avoid repeating past mistakes. President Rouhani, in his remarks on 15 August, stressed that Iran lives up to its JCPOA commitments and would proportionately respond to any violation of the JCPOA by other participants. Those who attempt to revert to language of sanction and threat, are prisoners of their past delusions, and by fearmongering and antagonizing they would only deprive themselves from the benefits of peace.

The U.S. blunders and military interventions in the Middle East during the last two decades have destabilized the region and fueled violent extremism, terrorism and tensions. The hardline and parochial positions adopted by certain senior U.S. officials against Iran could further exacerbate instability in the region. Iran as a stabilizing force in the region is acting responsibly in eradicating Daesh (also known as ISIS) in Syria and Iraq and remains determined to seek a peaceful, stable, and prosperous Middle East free from extremism, terrorism, extra-regional interventions and weapons of mass destruction. Iran stands ready to continue cooperation with the regional States to achieve the shared goals and to address the existing regional challenges.

into effect in January 2016.

Also, under his management the Oil Ministry has struck contracts with the French Total and other contracts are on the way.

Despite the high-profile figures, there are doubts if the entire list gets approved. "Experience shows certain proposed ministers may not reach the quorum," said Ne'mati, adding, "I can't predict, but it is likely for one or two nominees to fall short."

Media outlets have speculated that picks for education, communication and information technology, interior ministries will not survive, citing past performance. In 2013, Rouhani's nominees for education, science and sports were turned down.

counter-protesters and killed at least one person on August 12.

Trump put part of the blame for violent clashes on those marching against the white supremacists. An act which was criticized by the U.S. closest allies including British Prime Minister Theresa May.

Surprisingly, Trump tweeted on Friday condemning "radical Islamic terrorism" and calling for "tough" position to counter it.

Trump's twitter message was referring to a terrorist attack in Barcelona, Spain, on Thursday which left 13 people and injuring more than 100.

The urgent and critical issue is Syria. The questions of Afrin, Idlib and de-escalation zones will surely be discussed in depth during General Baqeri's visit. The sides will also exchange views on the next round of the Turkey-Iran-Russia trilateral in Astana at the end of the month, a meeting that could determine some of the next landmarks in the development of the Syrian conflict. I have always argued that Turkish-Iranian cooperation is the key to the resolution of the Syrian conflict. Regional ownership is the most effective way to forestall interventions by powers outside the region. I hope General Baqeri's visit serves this purpose."

UN demands more humanitarian access to Yemen

The UN has urged all the combatants in Yemen to open the country's land, sea and air ports to civilian and commercial traffic as the specter of starvation hangs over 25 million people.

Stephen O'Brien, the UN under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs, called on Friday for unconditional humanitarian access to all parts of the country and said the airport in the capital Sanaa should be opened "immediately".

Yemen is facing the "world's worst cholera outbreak", with close to 2,000 people having died from the disease since April, more than half a million people being infected, and another 600,000 expected to contract the infection this year.

"Today, millions of people in Yemen are facing a triple tragedy: the specter of famine, the world's largest ever single-year cholera outbreak, and the daily deprivation and injustice of a brutal conflict that the world is allowing to drag on and on," O'Brien said.

"This human tragedy is deliberate and wanton - it is political and, with will and with courage which are both in short supply, it is stoppable.

"I renew my call ... to address the following points: ensure that all ports - land, sea and air - are open to civilian - including commercial - traffic."

However, Abdul Malik al-Mekhlafi, Yemen's foreign minister, demanded that the Houthis - who control the airport and large expanses of the country - transfer the facility to the government of fugitive President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi, a demand the Houthis are likely to reject.

"We have noted international appeals to open Sanaa airport," he said on Friday.

"Despite our concerns about the security threat associated with the operation of the airport by the rebel militias, we are willing to agree to opening the airport if the militias leave its management to official staff who were affiliated to the state before the coup, under the supervision of



the UN."

As well as Sanaa airport, O'Brien singled out allowing the dispatch of "desperately needed mobile cranes to Hodeidah port, which handles some 70 percent of imports into Yemen and is the closest port of entry to the majority of people who need humanitarian assistance."

He also urged member states to reach into their pockets to aid the relief effort, noting that only 39 percent of the \$2.3bn needed had so far been donated.

For his part, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, the UN special envoy to Yemen, called on the international community to push for a political solution to the more than two-year-old conflict which has killed at least 10,000 Yemenis and injured at least 44,000.

"Those who survived cholera will continue to suffer the consequences of

'political cholera' that infects Yemen and continues to obstruct the road towards peace," Ould Cheikh Ahmed said.

"Death looms for Yemenis by air, land and sea."

Meanwhile a diplomat, who asked not to be identified, told the AFP news agency that political talks remained deadlocked and concerns were growing over the risk of famine.

The suffering of Yemenis has "relentlessly intensified," O'Brien said, with 17 million who do not know where their next meal is coming from, nearly seven million at risk of famine and nearly 16 million lacking access to water or sanitation.

Since March 2015, Yemen has come under heavy airstrikes by Saudi Arabia's fighter jets as part of a brutal campaign against the Arabian Peninsula country in an attempt to crush the popular Houthi

Ansarullah movement and reinstall the former president, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, a staunch ally of Riyadh. More than 12,000 people have been killed since the onset of the invasion, and much of the country's infrastructure, including hospitals, schools and factories, has been ravaged due to the Saudi airstrikes.

The relentless aerial aggression has put well more than half of all health facilities in Yemen in a state of complete or partial shutdown. Furthermore, there are critical shortages in medical staff in over 40 percent of all districts, according to Yemen's Health Ministry.

The US and the UK have been providing the bulk of the military ordnance used by Saudi Arabia in the war. London has licensed 3.3 billion pounds worth of weapons since the beginning of the Saudi war on Yemen. (Source: agencies)

'Sides preparing for new Syria talks in Astana'

The Russian Foreign Ministry says preparations are being made by Russia, Iran, and Turkey, as well as the Syrian government and opposition, for a next round of high-level conflict resolution talks in Kazakhstan's Astana.

The ministry made the announcement in a statement published on its website on Saturday.

It said observers Jordan, the United States, and the United Nations (UN) were also involved in the preparations.

While the statement did not offer a specific date for the next round of the talks, they are expected in the last week of August, according to previous announcements.

Astana has hosted five rounds of peace talks for Syria since January. Russia, Iran, and Turkey serve as guarantor states in the peace process. The negotiations are aimed at bringing an end to the foreign-backed militancy in Syria, which began in March 2011.

The Astana talks have so far resulted in an agreement on four de-escalation zones across Syria.

The Russian Foreign Ministry statement said three of the enclaves had been created to date, in the country's sprawling central



province of Homs, in the Eastern Ghouta area of the southern Rif Dimashq Province, and a southwestern militant-controlled stretch along the border with Jordan.

■ Sixth round's agenda

The upcoming talks, the Russian ministry said, aim to facilitate the creation of the fourth zone, in the western Syrian Idlib Province, where significant concentrations of Takfiri terrorists, most notably

from al-Nusra Front, are operating.

The successful materialization of that prospect would "give civilians an opportunity to return to peaceful life" in Idlib.

■ 'Astana main platform for Syria peace'

The talks in Astana have been going on in tandem with another series of talks, held in Geneva and brokered by the UN.

When the first round of the Astana talks

was organized on an initiative by Russia, Iran, and Turkey, the Geneva talks had been stalled for months. The talks in the Kazakh capital then provided momentum for the UN-brokered talks, helping revive them.

But the Geneva talks have achieved little in comparison.

"In the course of events," the Russian Foreign Ministry said, "Astana has become the main venue for the practical efforts to stabilise the situation in Syria by promoting the steady functioning of de-escalation zones."

"Importantly, this work is producing concrete results, helping reduce tensions in Syria's domestic confrontation, increase the living standards of civilians, resolve humanitarian issues, build bridges between various groups of Syrian society and promote trust between them," it added.

The ministry concluded the statement by hoping for further cooperation on the part of the Syrian opposition.

"We hope the patriotically-minded part of the Syrian opposition will more actively join this uncompromising military, political and ideological struggle."

(Source: RT)

Cautious welcome online for Steve Bannon's exit

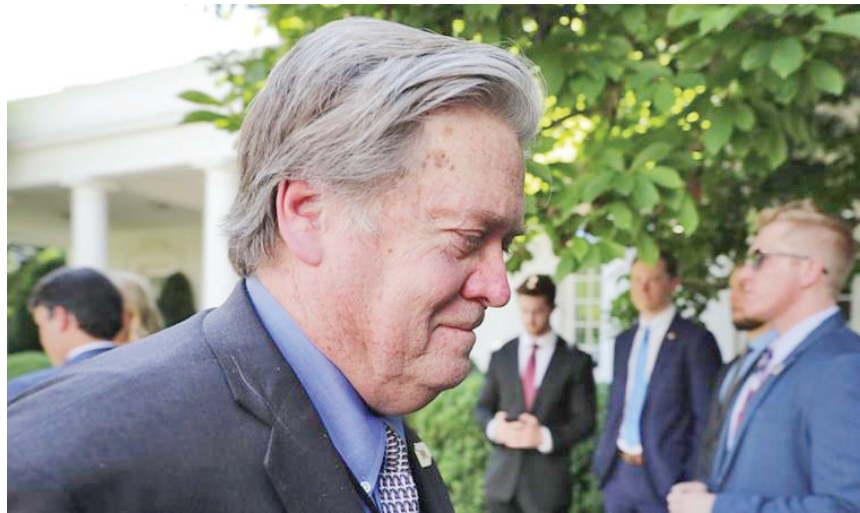
Steve Bannon's career at the White House has ended seven months after his appointment as US President Donald Trump's chief strategist.

The former banker turned editor at far-right website Breitbart was seen as a key influence on the president, having led his successful election campaign in 2016.

His comments on Muslims, anti-establishment views and his alleged ties to white supremacists made him a controversial figure across the U.S. political spectrum, including within Trump's Republican party.

As U.S. outlets reported news of his departure, many of his critics on social media celebrated. But others questioned what influence Bannon may continue to have on the president and whether being removed from the shackles of formal government would actually work to his benefit.

Senior Democrat Nancy Pelosi said the move would make little difference, as Trump himself had what she de-



scribed as a long record of racism.

"Steve Bannon's exit does not erase [Trump's] long record of lifting up racist viewpoints and advancing repulsive policies," she wrote on Twitter.

While left-leaning senator, Bernie

Sanders, said: "The problem was never just Steve Bannon. It was and always will be Donald Trump."

Several senior Trump administration figures have been forced out of the White House in recent weeks and

months, including his chief of staff, Reince Priebus; his former press secretary, Sean Spicer; and communications director Anthony Scaramucci, who was in the job just for 10 days.

However, there are doubts as to whether Bannon's departure was as involuntary as some of those dismissals.

He reportedly told the Weekly Standard that he had always intended to resign a year from his start date and return to Breitbart.

Trump has courted widespread anger in the U.S. and internationally over his response to the deadly white supremacist protests in Charlottesville, Virginia.

He blamed "both sides" for the violence and also said there were nice people on each side.

The comments spurred a renewed effort on social media to demand he distance himself from white supremacists and force out those with ties to the far right.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

Turkey slams 'arrogant' German reaction to Erdogan poll call

Turkey on Saturday lashed out at "arrogant" German reaction to comments by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan urging ethnic Turks in Germany to vote against both parties in Chancellor Angela Merkel's ruling coalition.

The latest spat between Ankara and Berlin risks propelling a months-long crisis in ties between the two NATO allies to a new level ahead of Germany's Sept. 24 general election.

Erdogan said ethnic Turks in the country should not cast their ballots for Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Social Democratic Party (SPD) of Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel or the Greens, labelling all three parties "enemies of Turkey."

Gabriel condemned Erdogan's comments as an "unprecedented act of interference" while Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said on Twitter: "We expect foreign governments to not interfere in our internal affairs."

The SPD's chancellor candidate Martin Schulz went even further, saying Erdogan had "lost all sense of proportion."

But Turkish Deputy Prime Minister Bekir Bozdag, who is also the official government spokesman, strongly defended Erdogan's comments saying they were only aimed at Turkish-origin voters in Germany.

"This was expressed very openly and clearly. But then look at these very disrespectful and very arrogant reactions that go beyond the bounds of decency," he said in televised comments.

"I want to condemn these reactions and the disrespectful language used," he added.



Bozdag accused Germany of meddling in Turkey's April 16 referendum on expanding Erdogan's powers saying the German 'government's attitude was very clear' in backing the 'No' camp.

He also reaffirmed past Turkish accusations against Germany that it was giving refuge both to wanted Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants and suspected plotters in the July 15, 2016, failed coup bid.

"Germany supports the PKK," said Bozdag. "The PKK is a terror group but Germany quite clearly gives it protection."

Analysts say that some 1.2 million people of Turkish origin will have the right to vote in the September polls as German citizens. (Source: AFP)

Eight stabbed in Russian city, police shoot man dead

Eight people were injured in a knife attack in the Siberian city of Surgut, the local office of the Russian law enforcement committee said in a statement published on its website.

"A man was moving along the main streets stabbing people," it said, adding "the attacker has been killed."

"The committee is investigating attempted murder", the spokeswoman for the committee told Reuters by phone, adding she would not comment on whether the incident was terrorism related. (Source: TASS)

Nearly 600 dead in S. Asia floods

Nearly 600 people have died and millions have been affected by monsoon floods in South Asia, officials said Saturday, as relief and rescue operations continued.

Indian authorities sought military help in two districts of northern Uttar Pradesh state after heavy rains left hundreds of villages marooned.

As many as 33 out of 75 districts in the state are reeling from floods that have left 55 people dead.

"We have sought army's help to reach out to the affected people," T P Gupta, a senior official from the state's disaster management authority, told AFP.

Nearly 100,000 people have been moved to shelters, with authorities estimating another two million have been hit by the deluge.

In India's Bihar state the death toll reached 153.

Nearly 400,000 people have sought shelter in relief camps and an estimated 10 million have been affected by one of the state's worst floods since 2008.

Anirudh Kumar, the state's top disaster management agency official, said more than 5,000 emergency workers including 2,000 soldiers were supporting relief and rescue operations.

"Nearly 1,300 shelters have been opened to accommodate the affected people," Kumar told AFP.

Both Bihar and Uttar Pradesh border Nepal, which was hit by floods at the weekend and where the death toll is 123. At least 20 percent of the population is affected.

Further east, at least 60 people have died in floods that hit Assam state a second time in less than four months and nearly 425,000 remain in relief camps.

Authorities in West Bengal state said the flood waters were receding after a lull in the rains, with 52 deaths reported. More than a million people have been affected.

At least 100 people have died in neighboring Bangladesh with close to 6 million affected by the floods.

Every year hundreds die in landslides and floods during the annual monsoon season that hits India's southern tip in early June and sweeps across the South Asia region for four months.

A massive landslide in India's Himachal Pradesh state swept two passenger buses off a hillside, killing 46 people on Sunday. (Source: AFP)

NEWS IN BRIEF



Intl. feed expo
kicks off in Tehran

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — The third edition of Iran's domestic international exhibition of livestock, poultry and fish foods (Iran Feed Expo 2017) kicked off at the Tehran Municipality and Specialized Exhibitions Center on Saturday.

As IRIB news reported, 75 Iranian exhibitors along with 28 foreign participants are showcasing their latest products and services in this year's event.

According to the organizers, the three-day exhibition aims to get Iranian companies, active in feed industry, acquainted with their foreign counterparts and develop mutual cooperation between the two sides.

Getting to the core of
global inflation

By Ross Finley

Stock markets have spent the year rising on bets of a resurgence in inflation, while central bankers trying to manage the global economy have spent the same time repeatedly reassuring everyone it's just around the corner.

Policymakers gathering at an annual monetary retreat in Jackson Hole, Wyoming in the coming week no doubt will be collectively pondering why the textbook rule that says low unemployment leads to labor shortages, then higher wages, and then in turn higher inflation, isn't working.

Yet the global economy is growing strongly. Apart from the risk of a stock market correction, there is no evidence of disinflationary threats like those that emanated from the financial crisis that started to smolder a decade ago.

The latest Reuters Polls of more than 500 economists covering more than 45 economies around the world showed almost no move in inflation expectations since the start of the year.

In the United States, where the Federal Reserve is raising interest rates, inflation pressures are in an extended lull, which has led to contorted arguments trying to explain it away.

Omar Sharif, senior U.S. economist at Societe Generale, in a recent note titled "All my exes", criticizes a recent tendency to search for suitably favorable core measures of inflation - stripped of, or "ex-", whatever components are holding it down.

"In short, while the core CPI undoubtedly looks better when you strip out sizable price declines, all these 'ex' measures still show a softening in the core rate that began in January," he wrote. "Moreover, as we have noted before, the transitory excuse is long past its sell-by date."

Analysts who follow the European Central Bank have been equally disappointed that after spending 2 trillion or so euros buying mostly government bonds it's only running 1.3 percent euro zone inflation, still well below the 2.0 percent ceiling. Some measures of core inflation are even lower.

Frederik Ducrozet, economist at Pictet, has taken heart from a recent trend move higher in the "super core" euro zone inflation rate, which excludes the cost of package holidays.

The trouble is, the euro is on a tear higher. That is a reflection of vastly improved economic performance by many euro zone economies this year, but as the common currency climbs, it acts as a drag on exports and tamps down imported inflation.

Flash euro zone purchasing managers' surveys in the coming week are likely to show continued strong business activity, but with tame price rises.

ECB chief Mario Draghi, who famously sent shockwaves at a speech in London one month before the Jackson Hole summit five years ago proclaiming he would do "whatever it takes" to save the euro, will not be making major policy comments. To some, that underscores how little progress there is to discuss.

"This in itself suggests that the Governing Council remains to be convinced that it should announce its QE tapering plans at its next meeting (in) September," notes Victoria Clarke, economist at Investec.

Fed Chair Janet Yellen will also speak. However, with minutes from the Federal Open Market Committee's latest deliberations showing concern about soft inflation, she is not likely to give new guidance on policy.

Indeed, arguably the biggest influence on U.S. inflation in the near term is completely out of the Fed's control.

Come September, the reality may hit that prospects for sweeping U.S. tax cuts, one of President Donald Trump's biggest election promises and the basis of a surge in business confidence since he won the White House, have stalled.

If the stock market gets a chill, the Fed may no longer be able to rely on an argument regularly touted by New York Fed Chief William Dudley that looser financial conditions justify the case for tighter monetary policy.

But the weak inflation trend is not confined to the United States, Europe and, of course Japan. With few exceptions, national statistics show inflation remains low just about everywhere.

India, forecast in the latest Reuters polls to be the world's top-performing economy this year with more than 7 percent growth, and also an economy notorious in the past for running persistently high inflation, reported inflation hit a record low of 1.54 percent in June.

The Reserve Bank of India cut interest rates into that roaring strength the same month inflation hit a record low.

South Africa, emerging from recession, is running inflation below historical averages and its central bank may cut rates again as soon as next month, and most likely by November, according to the latest Reuters poll.

Even in Brazil, which is beginning to emerge from its worst recession in about a century, inflation has crashed from more than 11 percent last year to below 4 percent, leading the central bank last month to lower its inflation target.

(Source: Reuters)

GDP growth top priority
of Industry Ministry

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Increasing the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is going to be the new industry ministry's top priority, President Rouhani's ministerial nominee for industry, mining and trade Mohammad Shariatmadari announced on Saturday.

Defending his future plans in an open session of Iranian parliament (Majlis), Shariatmadari noted: "GDP defines the country's share in global economy and our top priority will be increasing this stake."

The official went on saying, "According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s latest report following Turkey and Saudi Arabia, Iran ranks 27 among the world top economies; a situation that should be improved by GDP growth."



He further explained the role of industry in increasing GDP and creating

job opportunities saying that industry sector accounts for 22.5 percent of the

Proposed transport minister elaborates on future plans

ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Last Tuesday and on the third day of the Iranian Parliament intensive sessions to discuss the credentials and backgrounds of President Hassan Rouhani's proposed ministers, the turn came to Abbas Akhoundi, the ministerial nominee for transport and urban development to propose his future plans for the vote of confidence. However, the session did not conclude on the same day and was postponed to Saturday morning.

Addressing the parliament members on Saturday, the proposed minister classified Iranians in need of house into four groups. "First are the youths who need a



house to get married, the second are 11 million Iranians who live in rural areas and

are in the focal point of the government, the next are the 8 million ones who live in dilapidated buildings and the last are the low-income earners of the society," he said, underlining that each category is significant for the government.

Akhoundi, elsewhere, described his future plans in railway sector noting that while there are above 217,000 kilometers of roads in the country, domestic railroad network is about 13,000 kilometers.

"By 2021, the government plans to increase the volume of transported goods via railway sector by 30 percent and the number of transported passengers by 20 percent," he added.

country's GDP and also 34 percent of the total employment.

The share of industry in the country's GDP growth must be more than what currently is, the nominee noted.

Elsewhere in his remarks, Shariatmadari stated that another priority for the ministry will be completing 49,000 uncompleted projects in the country's industry and mining sectors from which 11,200 have witnessed over 60 percent of physical progress.

He also mentioned Iran's share of global trade which is 0.3 percent and said the country has potential for a lot more than this figure.

To conclude, the official emphasized that all his plans are compiled based on the country's 'Resistance Economy' with an eye on the Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2017-2021).

The probable future minister also added that to develop domestic transportation infrastructure, the country would highly rely on domestic private sector as well as foreign financial resources.

Talking about domestic aviation system and air fleet, Akhoundi underlined the important role of implementation of nuclear deal with the six world powers and said that renovation of Iran's air fleet has begun using \$33 billion in the post-sanctions era.

"There are presently about 2,230 kilometers of freeways in Iran and the figure is to be boosted up to 5,000 kilometers in future," he added.

Iran may start oil supplies to Russia within month

Iran can start deliveries to Russia under the "oil-for-goods" program within the next month, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak told reporters on Friday.

"We are finalizing the last details of regulatory documents. I think I will respond to your question within one month," Novak said confirming that sup-

plies can start by the end of that term.

Moscow and Tehran may shortly agree upon conditions for sale of 100,000 oil barrels per day by Iran for Russia, Novak

said earlier. Supplies can be either physical or swap-based, he added. Purchases will be made within the framework of the "oil-for-goods" deal. (Source: TASS)

Comprehensive
performance
management system
launched at Iran's ports



ECONOMY **TEHRAN** — Comprehensive performance management system (CPMS) was launched at the Iranian ports, IRIB news reported on Saturday.

Addressing a ceremony to launch this system at the place of Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) in Tehran, Nouredin Aliabadi, the deputy head of PMO for engineering and infrastructure development, mentioned clarification and also electronic administration to delete paper processes as some features of this system.

He said this system has been prepared and established in line with the country's Sixth Five-Year National Development Plan (2016-2021) which makes electronic administration a necessity in all executive and service processes in the country.

Also, as PMO had announced in late July, the first phase of Iran's port zones comprehensive system was launched in Imam Khomeini Port Complex in southwestern Khuzestan Province.

As reported, Jalil Eslami, the deputy head of PMO for ports and special zones affairs, said this system is aimed at boosting efficiency in ports and maritime sector in line with economic development.

He said the first phase of the system was launched to expedite and facilitate issuance of permits for activities in port zones and also prevent from commodity and foreign currency smuggling.

The system will be launched in all port zones of the country such as Shahid Rajaei Port in southern Hormozgan Province and Bushehr Port in southwestern Bushehr Province, in addition to Noshahr and Amirabad Ports in north and Astara Port in northwest of Iran.

Second Announcement



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INTERNATIONAL TENDER NO. 96-05/125

Tender Holder:
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Subject of Two-Stage Tender:
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Place of Receiving Documents:
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Type and Amount of Guarantee for Participating in Tender:
The amount of **USD 273,388** which should be in the form of extendable bank guarantee (its equivalent of rials guarantee letter with the free rate of 1.2 coefficient)

Time and Place of Delivering Priced Bid:
The sealed A, B & C packages/envelopes should be submitted within one main envelope marked with tender number no later than 15 p.m. on Saturday Sept. 23, 2017 and submitted to the Secretariat of Commission of Tenders.

Time and Place of Opening Envelopes
The date of opening envelopes A&B is at **8:30 a.m.** on **Monday Sept. 25, 2017** in the office of Vice President of IRIB Planning and Financial Resources and opening of envelope C will be after technical evaluation.
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The U.S. cannot abandon Afghanistan now

President trump's evident frustration with the U.S. mission in Afghanistan is entirely understandable. After nearly 16 years of war, the country is torn by violence and the government of President Ashraf Ghani remains weak. Taliban fighters are surging in a number of rural areas. Trump is right to ask whether a longer and deeper commitment of U.S. forces, proposed by the commanders on the ground and his national security adviser, would be wasted. He is also correct to believe there can be no strictly military victory. But when Trump weighs a long-overdue strategic plan for Afghanistan, perhaps as soon as Friday, we hope he will also see there are very real risks to conceding defeat. The United States should not abandon Afghanistan now.

Trump initially empowered Defense Secretary Jim Mattis to decide troop levels in Afghanistan and their objectives. The secretary has told Congress that the Taliban now controls or contests some 40 percent of Afghanistan, and that more U.S. troops and NATO forces would help block the militants' momentum. As an interim step, American commanders in the country requested some 3,000 to 5,000 additional U.S. troops, but Mattis delayed sending them. The deployment question has become part of a long internal policy debate in which Trump seems caught between two arguments.

Some "America first" political advisers are telling him that adding troops is just a recipe for failed nation-building. They appeal to Trump's visceral aversion to entanglements abroad, and an angry president reportedly suggested firing the current U.S. commander in Afghanistan at a recent meeting at the White House. But Trump is also hearing from the retired generals he has entrusted with key national security positions — including Mattis and White House national security adviser H.R. McMaster — that it would be a mistake to withdraw from Afghanistan completely.

He should listen to the generals. It is not an easy choice, but the goal of any strategy must be to build Afghan stability, not weaken it. Ghani's government is fractured and facing popular discontent. Afghan security forces are losing ground. A U.S. pullout would accelerate the centrifugal forces already at work. Although Afghanistan has come far over the past decade and a half, a sudden withdrawal might send it spiraling downward toward the chaos of the 1990s, when it became a sanctuary for al-Qaeda and home base for the Taliban. This time, it could become a base for the Islamic State [ISIS], as well.

Trump should chose a strategy with a clear, limited goal: shore up the Afghan government, help it gain greater legitimacy and strengthen its security forces. The point is not some kind of flashy victory but avoiding a terrible defeat. Achieving stability in Afghanistan is worth a modest commitment of U.S. troops, Special Operations forces and air power. A major surge of the size that President Barack Obama approved early in his first term is not being discussed. The point is to show the Taliban that it can't topple the central government, and coax the Taliban, if possible, toward negotiations. Maybe the Taliban will never agree, but a continued U.S. effort is preferable to Afghanistan falling apart.

(Source: The Washington Post)

The African migration tragedy in Yemen

The narrow strait that separates the Horn of Africa from the Arabian Peninsula is so treacherous it is called Bab el Mandeb — "gateway of grief." It's earned its miserable name lately as African migrants try to pass through war-torn Yemen to flee dire poverty and hunger and reach Saudi Arabia, and jobs.

To escape the authorities, a ruthless smuggler threw migrants into the sea last week, drowning more than 50. More than 30 are missing. Shockingly, migrants said the smuggler returned to Somalia to pick up more desperate people, according to Laurent de Boeck of the International Organization for Migration, which helped survivors.

Many of the migrants are teenagers from Somalia and Ethiopia, where there are few jobs and severe drought is pushing people to the verge of famine. Employment in Saudi Arabia can help their families survive, but to get it



they have to travel through Yemen — where a serious cholera epidemic is adding to misery and nearly seven million people subsist on food aid.

The breakdown of authority in Yemen has been a boon for the human traffickers. The level of desperation in Africa and changes in work-permit rules in Saudi Arabia have made legal migration more difficult. More than 55,000 migrants got to Yemen this year, following more than 111,000 who arrived last year, according to the International Organization for Migration, which is a United Nations agency.

Deaths of migrants who set off for Europe from Libya drew international attention and prompted promises of action from the European Union. More than 2,400 migrants have died or disappeared in the Mediterranean so far this year, compared with at least 114 en route to Yemen.

But the latest tragedy is testimony to a misery so great, teenagers are willing to travel through hell for a chance at a better life. Rather than cut aid to Africa, as the Trump administration has threatened to do, the administration needs to provide Africa with more help than ever.

And if Saudi Arabia allowed more Africans to travel there legally to work, it would help prevent tragedies like the one last week and put the ruthless smugglers who prey on young Africans out of business.

(Source: The NYT)

Exit Steve Bannon



Bannon's exit marks a new level of chaos in an administration that's been defined by chaos.

Pepe the Frog reptilian brain of the Trump presidency, the bomb-thrower of the far-right fringe whose rage and intolerance were egged on by Trump. But Bannon was more wily and complicated than his now-former boss.

While he smiled upon the white nationalists in their "Make America Great Again" caps, his agenda has more to do with stoking nationalist fervor against foreign trade, overseas military involvement and big-money Washington elitism than simply courting the neo-Nazi "collection of clowns" and "losers," as he called them in a wild interview with The American Prospect, a

liberal journal, this week.

While Trump drifted aimlessly away from promises of health care "insurance for everyone," middle-class tax cuts and expanded job creation, Bannon argued for maintaining a clearer bead on the needs of working-class voters who blamed an out-of-touch Washington for ills from joblessness to opioid addiction. His departure liberates him to advocate a program of "economic nationalism" that many Trump voters say they voted for.

"Devil's Bargain," a new book about the Bannon-Trump linkup that gives Trump second billing, credits Bannon as

one of the first conservatives to recognize that attacks on Hillary Clinton and the Clinton Foundation's courting of foreign leaders and wealthy elites wouldn't stick unless they resonated beyond the right-wing echo chamber, a feat he helped accomplish in 2016. Backed by this knowledge, the Breitbart megaphone and wealthy ultraconservatives, Bannon is a potentially more damaging force to both parties now. Still, good riddance, and let's hope other unqualified ideologues, like Sebastian Gorka, the Islamophobic foreign policy adviser, follow Bannon out the door.

(Source: The NYT)

Trump is undercutting America's allies and strengthening China's hand

East Asia's diplomatic waters are troubled, and not only by new provocations from a nuclear North Korea. China is busy squeezing South Korea and Taiwan with economic sanctions and diplomatic maneuvering. Beijing is unhappy with Seoul's close military cooperation with the United States and Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen's pointed refusal to agree that China, however ruled, is "one country." South Korea, having just picked a new leader in May, is still finding its footing after a tumultuous impeachment and removal of the former president. Unfortunately, so far U.S. President Donald Trump's myopia and unpredictability are making things harder for his democratic allies in the region.

Trump is shaky on the two things South Korea wants most from the United States: a united front against North Korea and healthy bilateral trade. The U.S. president has sown doubts about his commitment to defending South Korea by repeatedly accusing the country of freeloading on U.S. military protection, including the U.S.-provided THAAD missile defense system. China must have cheered these statements; they align unexpectedly with its goal of clearing the peninsula of U.S. military influence. On North Korea's threats, Trump's bellicose tone and sometimes rash statements worry South Koreans and are obviously not coordinated with Seoul. They show the United States is not standing shoulder-to-shoulder with new Korean President Moon Jae-in, who has been speaking up to request global, peaceful defiance of Pyongyang's provocations and a dual track approach of sanctions and dialogue with the North. But China's Foreign Ministry last month criticized "certain people" who claim China must be responsible for North Korea and do more to denuclearize it, seemingly responding to Moon's comments to that effect.

Retaliatory measures

Trump is also disappointing on trade, where South Korea needs the United States as a strong partner because it's hurting from Beijing's sanctions on tourism and import. These are retaliatory measures over THAAD, which Beijing believes the United States will use to spy on China. To give just one example, the government has closed down dozens of Korea's Lotte Group malls in China, often suddenly and on flimsy premises like "fire safety." Helping South Korea get over this economic rough patch would be a great show of support from the United States, and one that could



Meanwhile, the presidents of South Korea and Taiwan are trying to ride the tiger of Trumpian uncertainty.

also push Seoul to accelerate THAAD's installation. Instead, Trump has demanded a renegotiation of the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, which is supposedly "a horrible deal."

Taiwan initially seemed to have an ally against China in President-elect Trump, but the honeymoon was short-lived. His December 2nd phone call with President Tsai made a splash in policy circles, but Trump has since reaffirmed the One China Policy, hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping, and refused a second phone call with Tsai. This last move added to the perception, already fueled by some of Trump's statements, that Taiwan is just a "bargaining chip" for the United States to trade away at its convenience.

Troubling uncertainty continues to dominate as Trump cycles through diplomatic positions. Not long after declaring President Xi his new best friend, Trump backtracked, expressing disappointment with the little Beijing has done on North Korea. Then in June his administration approved a \$1.4 billion arms deal with Taipei. But as Taiwan expert Shelley Rigger argues, Trump's unpredictability and the tension it creates in the China-Taiwan relationship leaves Taiwan worse off

Address the menace

ers seem to treat this exporter of refugees and importer of militants as if it lies in Antarctica, rather than on their doorstep?

Since 2011 Libya has been daily subjected to fighting, casualties, rebellions, counter rebellions, militant uprisings, terrorism and the total devastation of the country's infrastructure and oil wealth. Last Sunday, former Libyan Prime Minister Ali Zeidan was kidnapped by militiamen in Tripoli — for a second time. Yet just as

things seem worse than ever, the media and the world at large appears to regard the threat this poses as a low priority.

As Daesh (ISIS) loses ground and men in Syria and Iraq, it is naturally looking toward Libya, whose vast deserts and contested towns and cities can provide ample cover for militants. Already, terrorists of all shapes and sizes have begun to flood into the country, and May's deadly bombing in Manchester showed the

threat is easily exported, too.

Massacres and atrocities have been carried out in Libya under the world's eyes for years, now terrorism's shrapnel threaten its neighbors and should be considered an existential threat. It's not too late to address this menace, but it will require conflicting Libyan parties to shed their differences and nearby powers to take some initiative. The hazard lights are on, let them not be unheeded.

(Source: The Daily Star)

Who is behind the Barcelona and Cambrils attacks? Can we trust the official reports?

By Prof Michel Chossudovsky

"Three fatal incidents believed to be linked to terrorism occur over a 24-hour period and a 190-mile stretch of north-east Spain"

"Fourteen people have been confirmed killed in two attacks in Spain on Thursday. Thirteen died when a van was driven in to crowds on Las Ramblas in Barcelona, and one person was killed by a car in Cambrils, a coastal town 75 miles (120km) to the south. The horrific events appear to have begun the night before, in another town 120 miles south of Barcelona." (Guardian)

(Friday, 21.15pm local time, 15.15 ET) According to police sources, the alleged suspect driver of the van Moussa Oukabir, 17 years old (18 in some news reports) in the Las Ramblas attack was shot dead by police on Friday.

It is worth noting that two hours after the Barcelona terror attack, a suspect "was shot dead" after driving through a roadblock in Barcelona. According to police reports, he was killed by mistake: "He is now not believed to be linked to the attack."

Moussa's brother Driss Oukabir had initially been identified as a suspect when his ID was found at the scene of the Barcelona attack. Following the press reports concerning his ID, Driss went voluntarily to the police station saying that his ID had been stolen and he was not in any way involved in the attacks.

Was his brother Moussa (a suspect according to police reports) the perpetrator? Did a 17 year old have the required experience in driving a van in an allegedly carefully planned operation. (The minimum age in Spain to obtain a driver's licence for a car or a van is 18 years.)

Moussa is dead, dead men do not talk. But his brother is still alive. Will he live to tell his brother's real story?

According to the Guardian: An official with Spain's police union has backed up earlier reports that the teenager suspected of driving the van into crowds of pedestrians on Las Ramblas was shot dead by police during the shootout in Cambrils on Friday morning. Spanish media reported earlier on Friday that Moussa Oukabir, 17, was among the five men killed by officers after a second vehicle attack. Now, a union official has told AP colleagues in the Civil Guard police force confirmed to him Oukabir was killed in the Cambrils incident. Investigators believe Oukabir was behind the wheel of the van which ploughed into tourists in Barcelona's city centre on Thursday, killing at least 13 and injuring 100. (Guardian, emphasis added)

■ Timeline

The following provides a partial timeline of the Barcelona and Cambrils attacks as outlined by the Guardian. We include the Guardian quotes with relevant comments. The Guardian timeline is indented, Our questions and comments are added beneath the indented quote where applicable (QC). In some cases the evidence is not available, in other cases the timeline provides contradictory and/or misleading information.

Wednesday night, Alcanar
"An explosion at a house in the small town of Alcanar, 120 miles south of Barcelona, and the southernmost point of Catalonia, kills one person and wounds 16.

Police say the blast is the result of an accumulation of gas, but do not release further details. Most injuries occur after firefighters and police officers are caught by a second blast while investigating the initial explosion.

Senior police official Josep Lluís Trapero later says the blast was related to the van attack in Barcelona the following day, and that those in the house were attempting to "prepare an explosive device"

■ QC No evidence that this event was related to the Barcelona attack on the following day

Thursday, 5pm, Barcelona
"A white Fiat van veers off the road and into a crowd outside the Plaça de Catalunya metro station.

The driver continues down the pedestrian boulevard of Las Ramblas, a popular tourist destination, for more than 500 metres before stopping and fleeing on foot.

The smashed van is left at the foot of a mosaic by artist Joan Miró.

The attack kills 13 people and leaves

about 100 injured."

6.30pm, Vic
"In the town of Vic, 50 miles north of Barcelona, police find a second van, presumed to be a getaway vehicle.

Police say the van was hired at the same time as the Fiat used in the attack. The perpetrator of the Barcelona attack remains at large.

7pm, 'terrorist protocol'
"Catalan police confirm they are dealing with a terrorist attack. On Twitter they say they have "activated the terrorist attack protocol" for the region."

■ QC. What evidence do they have that this is a terrorist attack?

7.30pm, Sant Just Desvern
A man is killed when he attempts to drive through a police roadblock in the town of Sant Just Desvern, on the outskirts of Barcelona.

Initial reports say he died from police gunfire after running over two officers, leaving one with a broken leg. An official at the time ruled out a connection to the attack on Las Ramblas.

On Friday morning, the Catalan interior minister, Joaquim Forn, contradicts earlier reports, saying the man died of knife wounds not inflicted by police.

He says a connection to the other attacks can no longer be ruled out.

■ QC. What evidence
8pm, suspect arrested
Police confirm one suspect, Driss Oukabir, has been arrested after turning himself in.

The 28-year old Moroccan-born Spanish resident is identified from documents left at the scene. But Oukabir says his passport and ID were stolen, and that he played no part in the attack.

Oukabir is arrested in the northern Catalan town of Ripoll, 70 miles from Barcelona. He tells police he came forward after he saw his name and image being circulated in the media.

The El País newspaper says Oukabir, or someone with his ID, rented the Fiat van used in the attack.

QC: Here The Guardian report is misleading. While earlier reports by El País (August 17) stated that the alleged suspect 28-year-old Driss Oukabir, had been arrested by the Police, El Nacional (quoted by the Daily Express) reported that the suspect: "presented himself at a Catalan police station in Ripoll to deny having any involvement in this afternoon's attack. He claims his ID was stolen and used by the terrorists to rent one of the vans used for the attack. Local sources, confirmed by the town's mayor, Jordi Munell, have said that the young man, who lives in Ripoll, attended the police station to deny any involvement in the events" (Daily Express, August 17, 2017, emphasis added)

It is worth noting that the Daily Express report contradicts its own headlines which state that he was "arrested", when in fact he presented himself voluntarily at the the Ripoll police station.



The headline is a Lie.

9pm, ISIS speaks out
"Islamic State claims responsibility for the attack.

Using the group's Amaq news agency, Isis claims the perpetrators of the attack are "soldiers of the Islamic State", but this has not yet been verified. Claims of responsibility by Isis do not necessarily mean there is a direct connection between attackers and the terrorist group."

QC: ISIS was behind the attacks. It was an act of retribution against the West. The media in chorus –quoting authoritative sources– claims that the choice of Las Ramblas was "part of a strategy on the part of ISIS to target popular destinations in major cities across Europe". "We know these peo-



ple [ISIS militants] go for trophies; they go for iconic sites," said Anthony Gleeves, director of the Centre for Security and Intelligence Studies at the University of Buckingham." (CBC, August 18, 2017)

Reports state without a shred of evidence that the ISIS claimed responsibility and that the attack in Barcelona was carried out by "soldiers of the Islamic State" against "countries participating in the coalition against the ISIS in Syria and Iraq (CBC, August 18, 2017). An absurd proposition: It was the Syrian government SAA forces with the support of Russia and Iran which drove ISIS rebels out of Syria. And Russia is not the target of acts of retribution led by ISIS.

The US-led counterterrorism operation initiated by Obama in 2014 was not meant to go after the ISIS. Quite the opposite: the coalition was killing civilians while providing covert support including weapons to the ISIS.

What the media fails to acknowledge is that the ISIS is a construct of US intelligence, namely an "intelligence asset" which is supported, trained and financed covertly by Washington and its allies including Turkey and Saudi Arabia, UK, France and Israel. There is ample documentation on this issue.

The link between the intelligence services of Western governments and Al Qaeda affiliated terror organizations is crucial and cannot be denied. An understanding of who was behind the attacks must necessarily address the issue of the "State sponsorship" of terrorism.

9.30pm, second suspect arrested
A second unnamed suspect is confirmed as arrested, according to Catalonia's regional president, Carles Puigdemont.

The police official Josep Lluís Trapero says the second man was born in the Spanish territory of Melilla in northern Morocco, and was arrested in Alcanar, the site of Wednesday's house explosion.

Friday, 1am, Cambrils
Police kill four alleged terrorists, and injure one, after they carry out a second attack in the coastal town of Cambrils.



Police say the attackers drove an Audi A3 car into pedestrians, injuring six civilians and one police officer.

The Associated Press reports that police said that attackers were wearing what appeared to be explosive belts.

4am, injury toll
The injured suspect in Cambrils dies, bringing the number of dead suspects to five.

Police say one of the injured civilians is in a critical condition and is in hospital.

Catalan interior minister Joaquim Forn contradicts earlier reports about the roadblock in Sant Just Desvern. He says the man, who was the owner of the car, was not driving and was in the passenger seat. He was not killed by police but rather, was stabbed to death.

Forn said a connection to the other attacks was a possibility, and that a hunt

was under way to find the person who drove the car to the roadblock.

The injured suspect is dead. How did he die. Was he granted first aid? Was the injured suspect killed by the police?

8.30am, third arrest
Catalonian police say they have arrested a third suspect in connection with the attacks, in Ripoll, where Driss Oukabir had been arrested on Thursday.

9.45am, suspected van driver identified
Spanish police identify 18-year-old Moussa Oukabir as the suspected driver of the van used in Las Ramblas attack, according to reports in Spanish media.

Oukabir is understood to be the younger brother of Driss Oukabir, the man arrested in Ripoll on Thursday. Driss Oukabir is reported to have told police that his identity documents were stolen before they were used to rent the van.

It should be noted that Driss Oukabir went to the police station and told them he was not involved, claiming that his ID had been stolen and used by the terrorists.

Driss's younger brother Moussa is the suspected driver. What does this suggest. Did Moussa steal his brother's ID? Did Driss know, when he went to the police that his brother was involved? Or did Moussa steal his brother's ID as a means to renting the van? If Driss had known that his brother Moussa was involved, would he have gone to the police.

■ Missing ID or passport
Driss' passport was found near the attack in Barcelona.

What is important to point out is that in five previous terror attacks including Manchester, Berlin, Nice, London, New York, a passport or ID was found by the police authorities. In most cases the alleged suspect was known to the authorities.

Is there a pattern? The ID papers of the suspect are often left behind, discovered by police in the wake of a terrorist attack.

Moreover, according to government and media reports pertaining these five previous cases, the suspects were without exception linked to an Al Qaeda affiliated entity.

None of these terror suspects survived. Dead men do not talk.

In the case of Barcelona, the ID of Driss Oukabir was found at the site of the Barcelona attack. In the case of the tragic events in Manchester (May 2017), the bankcard of the alleged suicide bomber Salman Abedi was found in his pocket in the wake of the explosion.

Moussa Oukabir was killed. His brother Driss Oukabir is still alive and formally under police protection.

11.30am Overall death toll rises to 14
Police say a Spanish woman has died of injuries sustained in the Cambrils attack, taking the overall toll to 14.

12.40pm, fourth arrest
Spanish media report that a fourth person has been arrested in connection with the attacks

Friday afternoon, suspects reportedly sought

The Barcelona-based newspaper La Vanguardia reported late on Friday afternoon that the police were hunting four suspects aged 17, 18, 22, and 24. It named them as Moussa Oukabir – the suspect thought to have driven the van along Las Ramblas – Mohamed Hy-chami, Younes Abouyaqoub, and Said Aallaa. All live in or close to the Catalan town of Ripoll.

See update at top of article. These suspects were shot dead including Moussa Oukabir.

All the suspects have been killed. No testimony, no controversy, the suspects are terrorists. As in previous terror attacks in Western Europe, almost without exception, all the suspects are shot dead by police.

(Source: Global Research)

Bullying Venezuela: Trump's unvarnished threat Washington's "Dirty Politics" in Latin America

By Dr. Binoy Kampmark

Whether he holds good on it is beside the point. President Donald J. Trump's great value to US foreign policy is its lack of artifice and sophistication, a bullying force of nature that alters with the next burst of adolescent acne and the breaking of the voice. Even less than the traditional stereotype of the American behaving badly, he is ugliness without a veil, the brute promise without gloss. Truly ghastly, yet in a way, oddly refreshing.

His threats against President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela were impudent enough to garner resistance from Latin American leaders averse to Washington's heavily intrusive hand. The result of Trump's stance has been one of unifying, not dividing, the bloc.

Colombia's Juan Manuel Santos warned Vice President Mike Pence that, "The possibility of military intervention shouldn't even be considered."

Santos went even further, making the almost daring, if delusional point that "America is a continent of peace. It is the land of peace."

The vantage point from analysts in the US is that Maduro has got to go (the default position of Washington tends to be interference – the only issue amongst the scalpel holders is how the program might be implemented). This has been the position since he assumed power, enshrining a long held position that Venezuela is perfectly entitled to have any government as long as it sings the lullaby of American empire.

The reality since the 1990s is that the functionaries in Washington have been concerned about the unruly, independent trajectory of Venezuelan politics. The Bolivarian revolution spearheaded by Hugo Chávez between 1999 and 2013, a socialist experiment fuelled by rising oil receipts, sent a lingering titter amongst those in the US political establishment.

The Bush administration was sufficiently stirred by Chávez's achievements as to seek his ouster in 2002. While denying a direct hand, there was no shying away from the obvious point that "democracy promotion" was the administration's velvet gloved fist that would be repeatedly used, a pretext to advance business agendas and suitable alternatives to Chavismo.

As Christopher I. Clement, a long time student of US influences (read interference) in Latin American elections explained in 2005, the effort against Chávez was purely self-defeating.

"This targeting of a democratically elected government," claimed Clement in Latin American Perspectives, "raises serious questions about the objectives and content of US policies toward Latin America."

Subsequently, WikiLeaks revealed some gold on US intentions in Venezuela with a 2006 State Department cable from then US Ambassador William Brownfield. For the eager Brownfield keen to make use of his position, US strategy towards altering the Venezuelan political landscape would entail five approaches: "strengthen democratic institutions" which had been "systematically dismantled" over the 8 years of Chávez's rule; "penetrate" the base and "divide Chavismo"; "isolate Chavez" and, predictably enough, protect "vital US business" interests.

The document is awash with calculations and not-so-hidden agendas, the dirty asides suggesting that democracy is only good if it is managed from the outside. The funding of 54 social projects through the USAID Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) gave the ambassador a cynical chance "to visit poor areas of Venezuela and demonstrate US concern for the Venezuelan people." This tactic would supposedly divide the Bolivarian efforts, and sow "confusion".

What the critics have against Trump is his near subnormal forthrightness. He is not interested in the subterfuge of US aid that chips away at a foreign government, the softly softy approach to discrediting an opponent. Rather than undermining the state using the more conventional techniques in the CIA armoury, the dissimulative practices of US Aid, or mere economic punishments through levelled sanctions, he has suggested calling in the marines.

"Threatening military action," suggests Mark L. Schneider of the America's program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, "undermines the strongest Latin American consensus in support of democracy that I have seen since the end of the Pinochet regime." [3]

But a view such as Schneider's is merely more of the same recipe, the same formula with different utensils.

US intervention in Venezuela, whatever form it takes, resembles the abusive family member who regularly violates the sanctity and solemnity of others in the inner sanctum. Things were already looking less than peachy in 1841, with the commencement of the Venezuelan Boundary Dispute gave a foretaste of the US stance in the Americas.

While the Venezuelans were perfectly clear where their post-Spanish independence boundaries lay, the British were less than observant, preferring to see Britannia's own acquisition of British Guiana from the Netherlands as borderless to the west. This contrived amorphousness brought the imperial interests of a global empire into play, a point that piqued Washington's interest. To that end, the Monroe Doctrine was born, fashioned to prevent, if not repel, European efforts to influence the Americas.

Ironically enough, the resolution of the dispute was taken as the necessary validation of the Monroe Doctrine, which was duly used to sanctify periodic, often murderous acts of intervention by the United States in the affairs of Central and South America. Keeping the meddlesome Europeans out of the Western Hemisphere was simply a prelude to entrenching the US within it: imperialism was bad, but only if practiced by foreigners. Trump has merely joined a large and not so distinguished club.

Dr. Binoy Kampmark was a Commonwealth Scholar at Selwyn College, Cambridge. He lectures at RMIT University, Melbourne.

How to roll back fanaticism

By David Brooks

We're living in an age of anxiety. The country is being transformed by complex forces like changing demographics and technological disruption. Many people live within a bewildering freedom, without institutions to trust, unattached to compelling religions and sources of meaning, uncertain about their own lives. Anxiety is not so much a fear of a specific thing but a fear of everything, an unnamable dread about the future. People will do anything to escape it.

Donald Trump is the perfect snake oil salesman for this moment. He lacks inwardness and therefore is terrified by the possibility of anxiety. He has been escaping self-scrutiny his whole life and has become a genius at the self-exculpating rationalization. He took a nation beset by uncertainty and he gave it a series of "explanations" that were simple, crude, affirming and wrong.

Trump gave people a quick pass out of anxiety. Everything could be blamed on foreigners, the idiotic elites. The problems are clear, and the answers are easy. He has loosed

a certain style of thinking. The true link between the Trump administration and those pathetic loons in Charlottesville is not just bigotry, but also conspiracy mongering.

In the White House you have pseudo-intellectuals like ousted Steve Bannon, Donald Trump's chief strategist, who think the world is secretly controlled by the "deep state." You have memos like the one written by the recently fired Rich Higgins, positing a massive worldwide conspiracy involving the A.C.L.U., the United Nations and global Marxism. The alt-right, which has emerged in support of the Trump administration, is marked by the same conspiratorial epistemology. It provides explanations for complex events that allow its followers to avoid anxiety. The leaders of the alt-right claim to possess superior understanding that pierces through the myths that blind common mortals.

The world is secretly controlled by the globalists. The Sandy Hook school shooting never happened. There's a child abuse ring run by Clintonites out of a pizzeria in Northwest D.C. All the ambiguities of life can be explained by pointing to the malevolent webs of secret power that

only you — you precious, superior few — can see and understand.

■ Globalists malevolently control society

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From here it's a short leap to those losers in Charlottesville. If the alt-right thinks the globalists secretly and malevolently control society, the neo-Nazis go back to the original version and believe that a conspiracy of Jewish bankers does. For them, tribalism is not only a way to feel some vestige of pride in their own lonely selves, it's also an explanatory tool.

The world can be a bewildering place, but not if you see it as a righteous war between whites and blacks, between straights and gays. The neo-Nazis are not the first group to discover that war is a force that can give an empty life meaning, even a race war.

The age of anxiety inevitably leads to an age of fanaticism, as people seek crude palliatives for the dizziness of freedom. I'm beginning to think the whole depressing spectacle of this moment — the Trump presidency

and beyond — is caused by a breakdown of intellectual virtue, a breakdown in America's ability to face evidence objectively, to pay due respect to reality, to deal with complex and unpleasant truths. The intellectual virtues may seem elitist, but once a country tolerates dishonesty, incuriosity and intellectual laziness, then everything else falls apart.

The temptation is simply to blast the neo-Nazis, the alt-right, the Trumpkins and the rest for being bigoted, vicious and hate-filled. And some of that is necessary. The boundaries of common decency have to be defined.

But throughout history the wiser minds have understood that anger and moral posturing are not a good antidote to rage and fanaticism. Competing vitriols only build on each other.

■ Modesty solution to fanaticism

In fact, the most powerful answer to fanaticism is modesty. Modesty is an epistemology directly opposed to the conspiracy mongering mind-set. It means having the courage to understand that the world is too complicated to fit into one political belief system. ➔13

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Is coconut oil healthy?

By Lisa Drayer

According to a recent survey, 72% of Americans think coconut oil is a healthy food.

But despite popular health claims about coconut oil, a report from the American Heart Association recently advised against its use, stating that it increases LDL cholesterol (a cause of cardiovascular disease) and has no known offsetting effects.

"There are many claims being made about coconut oil being wonderful for lots of different things, but we really don't have any evidence of long-term health benefits," said Dr. Walter C. Willett, professor of epidemiology and nutrition at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

How exactly, then, does coconut oil rank among oils?

"Coconut oil is somewhere in the middle of the spectrum in terms of types of fats. It's probably better than partially hydrogenated oils (which are) high in trans fats but not as good as the more unsaturated plant oils that have proven health benefits, like olive and canola oil," Willett said.

"It's probably not quite as 'bad' as butter but not as good as extra virgin olive oil," agreed Kevin Klatt, a molecular nutrition researcher at Cornell University who is studying the metabolic effects of coconut oil.

Klatt cautions that we should not develop too strong of an opinion about coconut oil without more data. "But at the same time, you have to be evidence-based ... and (currently), the evidence reflects benefits for olive oil, fish, nuts and seeds -- so that should be the focus in the diet."

What's in coconut oil?

Coconut oil is extracted from the meat of the fruit. It contains mostly saturated fat, which is also found in large quantities in butter and red meat. Like other saturated fats, coconut oil increases LDL cholesterol, the "bad" cholesterol associated with increased risk of heart disease. In fact, coconut oil has more saturated fat and raises LDL more than butter, according to Willett.

But coconut oil does a particularly nice job of raising HDL, the "good" cholesterol, especially when replacing carbohydrates in the diet. This may be due to its high content of a fatty acid known as lauric acid.

"Coconut oil is half lauric acid, which is a little bit unique," Klatt said, as the acid seems to raise HDL more than other saturated fats and is rarely found in such high amounts in foods.

Still, though the increase in HDL seen with consumption of coconut oil



Some research suggests that coconut oil may be helpful in reducing belly fat, at least in the short term.

may offset some of the disease risk, it's still not as good as consuming unsaturated oils, which not only raise HDL but lower LDL, according to Willett.

Complicating matters is the fact that we still don't know for sure what exactly a high HDL translates to in terms of health risk. "There's been debate about the role of HDL," Willett cautioned. "Partly because there are many forms of HDL which have different health consequences ... which has made the water murky."

For example, there are different forms of HDL that do different things. One role is to help take LDL cholesterol out of the bloodstream. "But some forms of HDL don't do that," Willett said, "so we don't know for sure that higher HDL is better."

And while it's true that an elevated LDL level is only a risk factor for heart disease and doesn't always translate to heart attacks, it's still cause for concern. "High LDL is a risk factor, but it strongly predicts negative health events," Willett said.

There is extremely preliminary evidence that the increase in LDL may not be as pronounced if one consumes extra virgin coconut oil instead of refined coconut oil, according to Klatt.

For example, polyphenols present in unrefined oils may help to blunt the effects on LDL. But "the effects of extra virgin compared to refined coconut oil and other common oils require further study," he cautioned.

Coconut oil and weight loss

Some research suggests that coconut oil may be helpful in reducing belly fat, at least in the short term. One study found that coconut oil was associated with reduced waist circumference (belly fat) compared with soybean oil. Participants also consumed a lot more fiber, followed a low-calorie diet and walked for about an hour each day.

"Even if coconut oil does help reduce belly fat, it doesn't necessarily outweigh the concern about its effect on lipids, specifically LDL," Klatt said.

Other research has touted benefits such as increased metabolism, reduced appetite or improved cognitive function associated with fats known as MCTs, or medium chain triglycerides, which are present in coconut oil.

"You can't infer from ... studies what coconut oil will and will not do. We need better controlled trials," Klatt said. "Right now, the internet is jumping the gun and going way beyond the evidence."

Coco-calories

Like other oils, coconut oil is calorie-dense, which means consuming large amounts without reducing other calorie sources can lead to weight gain. Just one tablespoon has 120 calories, about the same as a large apple or four cups of air-popped popcorn.

"Oil is a really easy way to increase the energy density of a food. Things like almonds have a lot of fat, but it's easier to overeat pure oil than overeat pure almonds," Klatt said.

In small amounts, however, coconut oil can have a place in one's diet.

"It's not that you have to absolutely avoid coconut oil but rather limit coconut oil to where you really need that special flavor, like for Thai food or for baking a special dessert," Willett said.

"If you love using butter and need a hard fat, coconut oil may be a better choice and is certainly fine to consume occasionally, when a recipe calls for it," Klatt added.

But for day-to-day use, vegetable oils such as olive, canola or soybean oil, along with nuts and seeds, should be your primary fats. "These have better effects on blood cholesterol and long-term studies showing reduced risk of heart disease," Willett said.

(Source: CNN)

Recently discovered protein controls appetite and body fat composition

NPGL, a recently discovered protein involved in brain signaling, has been found to increase fat storage by the body – even when on a low-calorie diet.

In addition, NPGL was shown to increase appetite in response to high caloric food intake, suggesting that perhaps we shouldn't feel so guilty about gorging on junk food from time to time.

This latest discovery by Hiroshima University's Professor Kazuyoshi Ukena, along with collaborators from Japan and UC Berkeley, adds to our understanding of how the brain regulates energy usage and feeding habits – the control mechanisms of which are not yet fully understood.

For most of our evolutionary history, the brain did a seemingly good job of regulating body fat composition, accumulating fat essential for survival during times of famine. Unfortunately, in our modern age of extreme food abundance, overeating is a common occurrence – often leading to obesity.

With the brain still operating in evolutionary survival mode, this latest study, revealing NPGL as a brain chemical that regulates hunger and fat storage in mammals, has broad clinical and societal implications for the study and treatment of obesity and its associated diseases.

Professor Ukena, who first discovered NPGL in chickens – which he observed grew larger irrespective of diet, has also documented the protein in mice and humans. He carried out his latest study by observing how rats respond to increased exposure to the same brain chemical.

Initial observations found that NPGL was present in high concentrations in a specific part of the rat's hypothalamus, the brain's control center for appetite and metabolism, suggesting involvement in bodily energy regulation.

With this in mind, the researchers then carried out experiments on rats fed on two distinct diets for



NPGL was shown to increase appetite in response to high caloric food intake.

six weeks. One diet was highly caloric – high in fat and sugar. The other diet contained only sufficient calories required for healthy survival. A virus was then prepared that would cause NPGL secreting cells to increase production in the hypothalamus of both sets of rats.

High-calorie diet

In rats fed the high-calorie diet, body mass, and the proportion of the body composed of fatty tissue, both markedly increased. Interestingly, food intake greatly increased despite animals having an overabundance of calories. In regular-calorie fed rats in which NPGL production was induced, animals did not increase overall body mass and only moderately increased food consumption. However,

body fat composition, as with the high calorie diet, increased significantly!

Conversely, when the rats on the high-calorie diet were exposed to an antibody that inhibited NPGL synthesis, the proportion of fatty tissues in the body decreased, further demonstrating a critical role for NPGL in regulating body fat composition. In these rats, food intake and overall body mass remained unchanged.

NPGL levels were also seen to increase and decrease proportionally with blood insulin levels, suggesting that this blood sugar/energy storing hormone harmonizes with the NPGL system to store fat during times of plenty and limit fat production when times are lean.

Survival mode

With the brain still operating in evolutionary survival mode, this latest study, revealing NPGL as a brain chemical that regulates hunger and fat storage in mammals, has broad clinical and societal implications for the study and treatment of obesity and its associated diseases. NeuroscienceNews.com image is credited to Kazuyoshi Ukena.

Taken together, these findings reveal an intricate neurochemical system where signals from the brain and other tissues combine to monitor the body's energetic status and adjust feeding and metabolism accordingly.

As dysregulated energy balance can result in obesity and lead to serious health problems such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease, it is vital that we gain an understanding of the mechanisms that regulate body fat makeup and appetite.

This latest research into NPGL has greatly increased our understanding and should guide scientists in finding ways to assist the evolutionary-survivalist human body to adapt to a calorie-intense 21st century environment.

(Source: neurosciencenews.com)

Are stem cells the link between bacteria and cancer?

Gastric carcinoma is one of the most common causes of cancer-related deaths, primarily because most patients present at an advanced stage of the disease.

The main cause of this cancer is the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori*, which chronically infects around half of all humans. However, unlike tumor viruses, bacteria do not deposit transforming genes in their host cells and how they are able to cause cancer has so far remained a mystery.

An interdisciplinary research team at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin in collaboration with researchers in Stanford, California, has now discovered that the bacterium sends stem cell renewal in the stomach into overdrive – and stem cell turnover has been suspected by many scientists to play a role in the development of cancer.

By showing that the stomach contains two different stem cell types, which respond differently to the same driver signal, they have uncovered a new mechanism of tissue plasticity. It allows tuning tissue renewal in response to bacterial infection.

Certain viruses

While it has long been recognized that certain viruses can cause cancer by inserting oncogenes into the host cell DNA, the fact that some bacteria can also cause cancer has been slower to emerge and much harder to prove.

While it is now clear that most cases of stomach cancer are linked to chronic infections with *H. pylori*, the mechanism remains unknown.

Thomas F. Meyer and his colleagues at the Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology in Berlin have spent many years investigating this bacterium and the changes it induces in the cells of the stomach epithelium.

In particular, they were puzzled how malignancy could be induced in an environment in which cells are rapidly replaced. They suspected that the answer might lie in the stem cells found at the bottom of the glands that line the inside of the stomach, which continually replace the remaining cells from the bottom up – and which are the only long-lived cells in the stomach.

Michael Sigal, a clinical scientist of the Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin, who joined the Max Planck team, overturned the established dogma to show that *H. pylori* not only infects the surface cells, which are about to be sloughed off, but that some of the bacteria manage to invade deep into the glands and reach the stem cell compartment. They have now found that these stem cells do indeed respond to the infection by increasing their division – producing more cells and leading to the characteristic thickening of the mucosa observed in affected patients.

They used different transgenic mice to trace cells expressing particular genes, as well as all their daughter cells.

The results, published in *Nature* indicate that the stomach glands contain two different stem cell populations. Both respond to a signalling molecule called Wnt, which maintains stem cell turnover in many adult tissues.

Myofibroblast cells

Crucially, they discovered that myofibroblast cells in the connective tissue layer directly underneath the glands produce a second stem cell driver signal, R-spondin, to which the two stem cell populations responded differently.

It is this signal, which turned out to control the response to *H. pylori*: Following infection, the signal is ramped up, silencing the more slowly cycling stem cell population and putting the faster cycling stem cell population into overdrive.

These findings substantiate the rising awareness that chronic bacterial infections are strong promoters of cancer. "Our findings show that an infectious bacterium can increase stem cell turnover," says Sigal. "Since *H. pylori* causes life-long infections, the constant increase in stem cell divisions may be enough to explain the increased risk of carcinogenesis observed," and Meyer adds: "Our new findings shed light on the intriguing ways through which chronic bacterial infections disturb tissue function and provide invaluable clues on how bacteria, in general, may increase the risk of cancer."

(Source: EurekAlert)

Tooth types

There are four different tooth types in the mouth.

Incisors: The incisors at the front of the mouth have a sharp biting surface and are used for cutting or shearing food into small chewable pieces. There are eight incisors in both primary and permanent dentitions.

Canines: The canines are situated at the 'corners' of the dental arches. They have a sharp, pointed biting surface. Their function is to grip and tear food. There are four canine teeth in both primary and permanent dentitions.

Premolars: The premolars, unlike the incisors and canines, have a flat biting surface. Their function is to tear and crush food. They are unique to the permanent dentition which has eight premolars.

Molars: The molars are the largest of the teeth. They have a large flat biting surface. The function of the molars is to chew, crush and grind food. There are eight molars in the primary dentition and twelve in the permanent dentition.

Key Points

- There are 20 primary teeth
- Lower incisors are usually the first teeth to erupt at about 6 months. All 20 primary teeth are usually in the mouth by about 2 years
- There are 32 permanent teeth including 4 wisdom teeth
- The first permanent teeth to erupt (usually at about 6 years) are the 4 first permanent molars behind the last primary teeth. Incisors erupt between 7 and 8 years.

(Source: dentalhealth.ie)

Iranian artisans promote skills at Budapest festival

HERITAGE d e s k **TEHRAN** — A number of Iranian craftspeople are showcasing their skills at the 31st Festival of Folk Arts, which started on August 17 on open air courts of the Buda Palace, Budapest.

Hungarian Ambassador to Tehran Janos Kovacs as well as his Iranian counterpart Gholam-Ali Rajabi Yazdi attended the opening ceremony of the four-day event, IRNA reported on Friday.



An aerial view depicts people visiting the 31st Festival of Folk Arts in Budapest.

The artisans, natives of Shiraz, are turning the spotlight on wood carving and marquetry expertise as embroidery is the dominant theme for the 2017 edition.

Craftspeople from nine other countries including Mongolia, China and Tajikistan along with their Hungarian fellows are showcasing works within some 100 stalls.

Over the past couple of years, dozens of Iranian handicrafts have been honored with the UNESCO Seal of Excellence. In 2010, a total of 65 crafts on various themes including enamel, tile, metalwork, leatherwork, wood carving received the privilege.

Thailand's July tourist arrivals up 4.8% y/y

BANGKOK (Reuters) — International tourist arrivals in Thailand rose 4.8 percent in July from a year earlier, led by visitors from China, Malaysia, Laos, Korea and India, the tourism and sports ministry said on Friday.

Foreign arrivals stood at 3.1 million in July, the ministry said in a statement. For the seven-month period, arrivals were 20.4 million, up 4.47 percent.

The government expects about 35 million tourists this year. Tourism accounts for 12 percent of Thailand's economy, and has been a rare bright spot for Southeast Asia's second-largest economy, whose growth still lags its peers.

Stone tools discovered in Vietnam reveal site of 'major' ancient trade network

Researchers have discovered a vast trading network which operated in Vietnam from around 4,500 years ago until 3,000 years ago.

A number of settlements along the Mekong Delta region of Southern Vietnam were part of a sophisticated scheme where large amounts of items were manufactured and circulated over hundreds of kilometers.

The team analyzed a collection of stone items found at a site in Southern Vietnam, including a sandstone grinding tool used axe heads and other objects from stone that came from another site - suggesting that people were importing. (Source: [dailymail.co.uk](#))



ROUND THE GLOBE

Vilnius historic center

Political center of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the 13th to the end of the 18th century, Vilnius has had a profound influence on the cultural and architectural development of much of Eastern Europe.

Despite invasions and partial destruction, it has preserved an impressive complex of Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and classical buildings as well as its medieval layout and natural setting. They constitute a townscape of great diversity and yet at the same time demonstrating an overarching harmony.

The Vilnius historic center began its history on the glacial hills that had been intermittently occupied from the Neolithic period; a wooden castle was built around 1000 CE to fortify Gedimino Hill, at the confluence of the Neris and Vilnia rivers. The settlement did not develop as a town until the 13th century, during the struggles of the Baltic peoples against their German invaders.



A view of the Vilnius Cathedral in Vilnius, Lithuania

By 1323, when the first written reference to Vilnia occurred, it was the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. At this time, some brick structures had apparently been erected on a small island formed when the Vilnia changed its course. By the 15th century, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, with its capital Vilnius, had become the largest country in Europe, stretching from the Baltic Sea in the North to the Black Sea in the South.

(Source: UNESCO)

Iran considers rustic charm to buttress tourism sector

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — Iran seeks to make the best use of its rich rural landscape as an approach to promote its budding tourism sector with pinpointing over 5000 villages with considerable tourism potentials across the large country.

"We have identified more than five thousand villages that have tourism capacities, 1000 of which have historical backgrounds and over 2000 boast their distinct kinds of arts and handicraft productions," Seyyed Abolfazl Razavi, the vice president for rural development and deprived areas, said on Thursday.

"In the current Iranian year (started on March 21, 2017), we are concentrating on 1,000 villages with the highest tourism potentials based on an agreement reached between the department of rural development and deprived areas and Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization," Razavi explained, according to ISNA.

Rural or farm tourism is not a new concept in the country, as for many years it has offered urban Iranians and foreign tourists to get a taste of rustic life.

Visitors can live with a nomad or rural family or enjoy an independent stays and assist with day-to-day village activities, while learning about rustic routines, agriculture, wildlife, traditional art and culture.

Moreover, the expansion of ecotourism contributes to regional development and lessens irregular migration from rural areas to major cities.

Due to a very diverse natural setting, Iran offers a lively and interesting envi-



An undated photo shows foreign travelers at Tavasolian eco-lodge in Natanz, Isfahan province.

ronment to the natural loving travelers. It embraces temperate forests in the north

with relatively high humidity and rainfall, deserts and salt lakes in the central parts,

towering mountain ranges and picks, as well as glaciers and coastal areas.

Tourist flow from U.S. to Iran not slowed down

TOURISM d e s k **TEHRAN** — The tourist flow from the U.S. to Iran has not been slowed down as its year-on-year rate shows no decrease in the stream, says the chief executive of the Iranian Tour Operators Association.

"U.S. tourist arrivals to Iran have not come to a halt and the number of inbound tourists from the U.S. during the current Iranian year (which started March 21, 2017) shows no reduction in comparison to that of the same period last year," ISNA quoted Ebrahim Pourfaraj as saying on Friday.

He ruled out recent allegations by the U.S. State Department that claims Iran denies to grant visas to American nationals, saying, "The Iranian Foreign Ministry has maintained its previous procedure towards [applicant] American citizens despite all the threats and counteractions that the U.S. government has taken."

Last Tuesday, the U.S. State Department issued a travel warning, advising



An undated picture released by irandoostan.com shows Western travelers posing for a photo near Chehel Sotoun, a Safavid-era pavilion in Isfahan, central Iran.

American and dual-national citizens about traveling to Iran of potential risks for being arrested or detained.

Pourfaraj asserted there is no restric-

tions for American travelers to visit the country. "Though the procedure of issuing visas is becoming more time-consuming, it does not mean that there is

more stringency or a negative response towards American citizens."

"The Foreign Ministry has responded to all [visa] requests after receiving documents and completing formal process. Besides, so far no negative reports have been received from any tourism agencies in that regard," he explained.

Following a landmark nuclear deal clinched between Iran and world powers in 2015, which resulted in the lifting of some economic sanctions, Iran now finds itself back on travel brochures and is scrambling to up its standards to cater to the demands of potential foreign travelers. Many tour operators say the demand has been so acute that they are racing to add new departures and selling them in record time.

Iran hosts some of the world's oldest cultural monuments, including 22 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and its varied terrain ranges from desert locales to ski resorts.

Britain receives record number of foreign visitors in second quarter 2017

LONDON (Reuters) — Britain received a record number of foreign visitors in the second quarter of 2017, and the number of Britons making trips abroad reached an all-time high for the time of year, official figures showed on Friday.

Some 10.75 million foreigners visited Britain for tourism or other purposes between April and June, 8 percent more than during 2016 and the most for any calendar quarter since records began in 1980, the Office for National Statistics said.

Britons made 19.09 million overseas trips during the same period, 1 percent more than in 2016 and an all-time high for the time of year, though less than in the

peak July-September period which covers schools' summer holidays.

Sterling's fall against the U.S. dollar and the euro since June 2016's vote to leave the European Union has made Britain a cheaper place for foreign visitors.

There was a 20 percent increase in tourism - which accounts for just under half of visits - while business trips fell by 4 percent and those to see family and friends were little changed.

An ONS statistician said there was no evidence in the data that militant attacks in London and Manchester earlier in the year had deterred visitors.

Visits from North America were 29 percent higher

than in 2016 at 1.47 million, though the number of visitors from Europe was up a much more modest 3 percent at 7.73 million.

Howard Archer, an economist for consultants EY ITEM Club, said North American visits had been "clearly buoyed" by the pound's weakness against the dollar.

British tourism promotion agency VisitBritain said it had revised up its forecasts for visitor numbers this year, and that flight bookings pointed to a 9 percent rise in visitors for the July-September period.

"This continued growth demonstrates the industry's increasing importance as a key driver of economic growth," VisitBritain's director, Patricia Yates, said.

New ways to find and book the perfect vacation rental

Many travelers have grown accustomed to finding vacation rentals by going directly to sites like Airbnb, HomeAway and VRBO. But these days you can find and book a rental halfway around the world in ways you may not have considered, or even know about: on traditional hotel and airfare booking websites like Expedia and Hotels.com, through the hotel review (and now booking) site TripAdvisor or even in Google search.

Let's begin with Google search. If you've used it lately to find a hotel, you may have been given the option to filter those results for vacation rentals. In July, Skift, a travel news and analysis site, reported that Google was testing a vacation-rental filter and, indeed, you'll find that it's available in certain cities.

Here's how it works: Type something like "hotels in Paris, France" in the search bar. That will pull up a Google map and a list of hotels and prices. (You can filter for your specific travel dates if you like.) Under the map is a drop-down menu that says "Accommodation type." This allows you to select "any" or "vacation rentals." If you select vacation

rentals, you'll be shown a list of options and prices, and the map will change to show only rentals.

To book one, Google directs you to a travel website like Booking.com or Hotels.com, or provides the contact information for the rental property owner or management company. Sometimes it will give a link to a website, where you can browse photos and read about the amenities, as you would for a hotel room. In certain instances, Google displayed more than a half-dozen sites where the rental listing could be booked. For example, a property in Rome was available for booking on sites including Hotels.com, Orbitz.com, Priceline.com, Travelocity.com, Agoda.com, Booking.com, Expedia.com and Hotwire.com. (Yes, classic hotel and airfare sites also allow users to book rental properties. More on that in a moment.)

One benefit of trying the Google tool is that you can see the same rental across multiple sites and compare prices as you would a hotel room. (Rates often vary insignificantly across sites, which means you can choose a site based on other factors like a generous

cancellation policy.) And that brings us to the notion of vacation-rental search engines, which allow you to browse properties from multiple rental websites like HomeAway and VRBO in one place. While these search engines have been around for years, many travelers are unfamiliar with them. They don't necessarily have the same name recognition as a site like Kayak (which also now allows users to search for rentals).

Tripping.com is an example of a rental-search engine. With more than 10 million properties, it bills itself as the largest search engine for rentals and has properties from rental sites, including HomeAway, VRBO, TripAdvisor and Booking.com. That can make property comparison easier than jumping between rental sites.

Another aggregator, AlltheRooms.com, has, as the name suggests, a wide variety of accommodation types. Among them are rental properties from numerous websites, including Airbnb, FlipKey, Expedia and Priceline.

Booking.com, a competitor owned by the Priceline Group, has a hyperlink on its home page that allows users to filter for rentals. To

stay competitive, companies like Priceline are beefing up their rental property inventory, which means searches through these sites should become even more comprehensive in the future. (You can also browse RedAwning.com, which supplies vacation rentals to the likes of Booking.com, HomeAway and Airbnb.)

Another place to look for a rental is TripAdvisor. Long considered the go-to hotel review site, this was where travelers went to vent or find out if a hotel was clean, quiet or worth the splurge. In recent years, TripAdvisor has been reminding travelers that they can also use the site to book the places they read about — and those places include vacation rentals. They can be booked through TripAdvisor in more than 200 countries, and include destinations like Key West, Fla., and New York City. You can search for all kinds of properties — houses, condos, villas, cabins and cottages — and sort results by things such as review rating and price. A recent search for rentals in London turned up more than 7,000 apartments.

(Source: The New York Times)

New self-healing rubber could mean the end of the road for flat tires

Self-healing rubber material could be used to create puncture-proof tires, and more.

If the world is free of flat tires a couple decades from now, you may have researchers from the Harvard John A. Paulson School of Engineering and Applied Sciences to thank for it. That's because they've developed a new type of rubber that, in addition to being as tough as existing rubber, has the added benefit of being able to self-heal in the event that it gets a puncture.

"We have made a new type of rubber with an exceptional combination of toughness and self-healing ability," Li-heng Cai, a postdoctoral fellow in applied physics, told Digital Trends. "We did so by developing a new way to mix two intrinsically immiscible bonds, reversible and covalent bonds, in a dry rubber."

■ Conventional methods

"Unlike conventional methods relying on co-solvents to promote mixing, we use molecules to physically tie these two types of bonds together, such that they are forced to mix at the molecular level."

This enables a dry rubber that contains both reversible hydrogen bonds



and permanent covalent crosslinks.

The reversible bonds break and reform to enable self-healing ability, where-

as the covalent bonds maintain the material integrity under large deformation. Consequently, the rubber is not only very

tough as natural rubber, but also can self-heal upon damage."

While this isn't the first example of a self-healing material we've come across, the research is significant due to the challenge of engineering self-healing properties in dry materials, such as rubber.

■ Unpuncturable tires

Unpuncturable tires alone would be a good enough application to justify the new material's creation, but Cai said that there are also other potential uses the new form of rubber could be applied to.

These include damping materials, materials for stretchable electronics, and -- because the material is additionally transparent -- protective coatings for optical devices and electronics.

"Next we want to make this material 3D printable, such that we can harness 3D-printing technologies to transform the material into more complex architectures with more functions," Cai continued.

"Harvard's Office of Technology Development has filed a patent application for the technology, and is actively seeking commercialization opportunities."

(Source: Digital Trends)

Unpuncturable tires alone would be a good enough application to justify the new material's creation.

Research reveals how physical exercise protects the heart

Regular exercise is considered an important form of treatment for heart failure, a condition in which the heart is unable to pump enough blood to meet the body's needs.

The benefits of exercise range from prevention of cachexia - severe loss of weight and muscle mass - and control of arterial blood pressure to improved cardiac function, postponing a degenerative process that causes progressive heart cell death. About 70% of heart failure patients die from the condition within five years.

A study by the University of São Paulo (USP) in Brazil, published recently in the journal Autophagy, helps to elucidate part of the mechanism whereby aerobic exercise protects the sick heart.

■ Dysfunctional mitochondria

"Basically, we discovered that aerobic training facilitates the removal of dysfunctional mitochondria from heart cells," said Julio Cesar Batista Ferreira, a professor at the Biomedical Science Institute (ICB-USP) and principal investigator for the project which was supported by the São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP).

Mitochondria are the organelles in charge of providing energy to cells. The "removal of dysfunctional mitochondria increases the supply of ATP [adenosine

triphosphate, the molecule that stores energy for the cell] and reduces the production of toxic molecules, such as oxygen free radicals and reactive aldehydes, an excess of which damages the cell structure," he added.

According to Ferreira, the long-term aim of the research is to identify intracellular targets that can be modulated by drugs to produce at least some of the cardiac benefits obtained by means of physical exercise.

"Evidently, we don't aim to create an exercise pill, which would be impossible because exercise acts at many levels and throughout the organism, but it might be feasible for a drug to mimic or maximize the positive effect of physical activity on the heart," Ferreira said.

The investigation is being conducted as part of the master's and PhD research of Juliane Cruz Campos, with scholarships from FAPESP and supervision by Ferreira.

■ Aerobic training

In a previous study, published in PLOS ONE, the group showed through experiments with rats that aerobic training reactivates the proteasome, an intracellular complex responsible for cleansing cells of damaged proteins.

The results also showed that proteasome activity in the heart of a patient with heart failure decreases by



more than 50% and that, as a result, highly reactive proteins build up in the cytoplasm, where they interact with other structures and cause heart cell death.

In the recently published article, which was featured on the journal's cover, the group showed that exercise also regulates the activity of another cellular cleansing mechanism, known as autophagy, the discovery of which led Japanese scientist Yoshinori Ohsumi to win the 2016 Nobel Prize in Medicine.

(Source: EurekAlert)

Yellowstone supervolcano could power electric cars of the future

Electric cars and smartphones of the future could be powered by supervolcanoes like Yellowstone after scientists discovered that ancient deposits within them contain huge reservoirs of lithium — a chemical element used to make lithium-ore batteries, supplies of which are increasingly dwindling.

Lithium, a soft white metal first discovered in 1817 by Johan August Arfvedson, has become widely used in manufacturing, most importantly in the production of rechargeable batteries for phones, laptops, cameras and vehicles. It has also been used in psychiatric treatments and to produce nuclear weapons.

Most of the world's lithium currently comes from Australia and Chile, generally being extracted from brines, pegmatites (igneous rock) and sedimentary rocks. But it is a finite resource, and with car manufacturers and technology companies increasingly looking to create battery-powered devices, lithium is becoming an ever-more precious metal, with demand outstripping supply.

■ Source of lithium

In a study published in the journal Nature Communications, researchers from Stanford University and the U.S. Geological Survey have found a new potential source for lithium — within America's supervolcanoes.

These volcanoes are capable of producing huge eruptions, about 1,000 times bigger than average. Along with the famous Yellowstone caldera, there are three other supervolcanoes in the U.S., Crater Lake, Long Valley and Valles Caldera.

When these volcanoes erupt, they collapse into huge basin-like formations known as calderas. These depressions often fill with water to become lakes, with the ash and pumice ejected during the eruption spread across the caldera in ancient deposits.

In the study, the team looked to supervolcanoes as a potential source of lithium because of the lithium enriched magmas that formed them. Over thousands of years, lithium leaks out of the volcanic deposits, accumulating in the caldera lake, eventually becoming concentrated in a clay.

■ Concentrations of magma

The team looked at samples taken from the High Rock caldera complex in Nevada, Sierra la Primavera, Mexico, Pantelleria in the Strait of Sicily, Yellowstone, and Hideaway Park in Colorado. By comparing concentrations of magmas formed in these various tectonic settings, they were able to show how supervolcanoes have the potential to



host huge amounts of lithium-rich clay deposit.

"If you have a lot of magma erupting, it doesn't have to have as much lithium in it to produce something that is worthy of economic interest as we previously thought," study co-author Gail Mahood said in a statement. "You don't need extraordinarily high concentrations of lithium in the magma to form lithium deposits and reserves."

Having a supply of lithium available could prove hugely useful in the coming decades — it could meet the rising demand for the metal and to "diversify the global lithium supply chain," the team wrote.

"We're going to have to use electric vehicles and large storage batteries to decrease our carbon footprint," Mahood said.

(Source: Newsweek)

German, French, Iranian firms sign MoU on electric auto parts

Germany's Bosch, France's Valeo, and Iran's Ezam Auto Parts Group have signed a memorandum of cooperation to produce electric parts for automobiles.

According to the agreement, Bosch will provide Ezam the technology and production lines for oxygen sensor, electric gas pedal and electric throttle sensors, as well as the ECU (electronic control unit).

Also, Valeo will provide Ezam with the technology and equipment to produce ignition coils as well as starts and alternators.

The deals will enable Ezam to provide for the needs of 3 million cars per year in terms of the mentioned parts.

The deals are of high importance because they enable Ezam Group to provide for a greener auto industry in Iran by helping fuel efficiency.

Ezam Automotive Parts Group consists of 12 large



manufacturing companies. Ezam Group has been active in auto parts industry since 1993. The group member companies are located in Tehran, West Azerbaijan, Guilan, Alborz and Isfahan provinces while the head-

quarter of the holding, registered as Ezam Automotive Parts Group is located in Tehran.

Obtaining reliable licenses and establishing technical cooperation with latest technologies from world's recognized brands such as Mando, Mahle, Bosch, Valeo and ... are some of the Ezam Group's achievements during the past two decades along with manufacturing high quality essential parts which has proven its high capabilities in support for the country's automotive industry.

There are about 1,200 local auto parts suppliers in Iran. Nonetheless, international carmakers say that their efforts aimed at launching new JVs were slowed by the obligation to produce 40 percent of the required car parts in the Islamic Republic, claiming that Iranians lack the capabilities of high quality spare parts production in the country.

NASA tracking three-mile-wide asteroid that will pass earth in September

On September 1, an asteroid almost three miles wide will safely fly by Earth. The asteroid is one of the biggest near-Earth objects (NEOs) currently being tracked by NASA, and will be the largest to pass us at a relatively close distance since the space agency began monitoring them 20 years ago.

The asteroid, named Florence (after Florence Nightingale), is 2.7 miles wide and will fly by our planet at a distance of 4.4 million miles. The last time it came closer to Earth was 1890, and the next time it will come anywhere near us will be 2500.

"While many known asteroids have passed by closer to Earth than Florence will ... all of those were estimated to be smaller," Paul Chodas, manager of NASA's Center for Near-Earth Object Studies, said in a statement.

"Florence is the largest asteroid to pass by our planet this close since the NASA program to detect and track near-Earth asteroids began."

Florence is so large, it should be visible through small telescopes at the end of August and the start of September. During that time, it will appear to move through the Piscis Austrinus, Capricornus, Aquarius and Delphinus. It was first detected in 1981 by American astronomer Schelte Bus, who was working at the Siding Spring Observatory in Australia. It is classified as "potentially hazardous" by the Minor Planet Center.

When it makes its close approach in the coming weeks, it will be a strong target for ground-based radar observations, allowing scientists to study the asteroid up close. NASA is currently planning to use the Goldstone Solar System Radar in California and the National Science Foundation's Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico to study Florence. The team expects to discover the real size of the asteroid and surface details up to a distance of around 30 feet.

(Source: Newsweek)

Climate change a risk to survival of long-lived Norway spruce

The Swiss, who are more aware of climate change than the average Briton because of their disappearing glaciers and snow cover, are also worried about their trees, particularly the Norway spruce.

The Norway spruce is the mainstay of the Swiss forestry industry but is in danger of dying out this century because of warmer temperatures.

This spruce is common in Britain, best known perhaps as the classic Christmas tree, but also as a favored habitat for the red squirrel. What the Swiss have discovered is that an increase in temperature and summer droughts expected this century is likely to kill off most of this spruce in their country.

Another important tree to the Swiss, the European beech, is also vulnerable to extra warmth and heat. Trees can adapt to climate change but in both these species there is about a 100-year time lapse between generations, so with rapid climate change there is not enough time for adaptations.

The Swiss are advocating taking seeds of spruce or beech from warmer valley bottoms and planting them higher up the mountains, or importing specimens of these trees from other countries where over centuries they have adapted to warmer drier conditions.

(Source: The Guardian)

3D-printable robot arm is a sign language interpreter

A team from the University of Antwerp is developing a robotic sign language interpreter. The first version of the robot hand, named Project Aslan, is mostly 3D-printed and can translate text into fingerspelling gestures, but the team's ultimate goal is to build a two-armed robot with an expressive face, to convey the full complexity of sign language.

Gestures were programmed into Aslan by way of an electronic glove. Future versions of Project Aslan will be able to translate speech into sign language, and ideally, into more complex versions of the language. Project Aslan was a collaboration between the University of Antwerp and 3D Hubs. The researchers are currently working on a two-armed version of Project Aslan, as well as giving the system more of a body and even an expressive face.

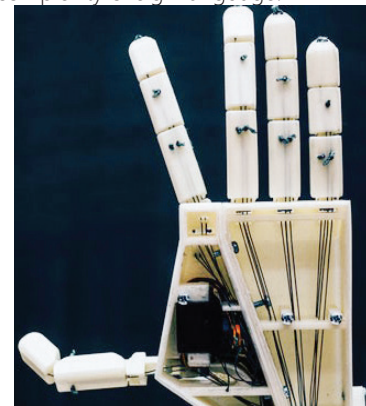
There have been a number of technological attempts to bridge the gap between the hearing and deaf communities, including smart gloves and tablet-like devices that translate gestures into text or audio, and even a full size signing robot from Toshiba.

Project Aslan (which stands for "Antwerp's Sign Language Actuating Node") is designed to translate text or spoken words into sign language. In its current form, the Aslan arm is connected to a computer which is, in turn, connected to a network.

Users can connect to the local network and send text messages to Aslan, and the hand will start frantically signing.

Currently, it uses an alphabet system called fingerspelling, where each individual letter is communicated through a separate gesture.

The robot hand is made up of 25 plastic parts 3D-printed from an entry-level desktop printer, plus 16 servo motors, three motor controllers, an Arduino Due microcomputer and a few other electronic components.



August 19: World Humanitarian Day

"Every year on World Humanitarian Day, we shine a spotlight on the millions of civilians around the world whose lives have been caught up in conflict. On this day we also take a moment to honour the brave health and aid workers who are targeted or obstructed as they set out to help people in need, and pay tribute to the government employees, members of civil society and representatives of international organizations and agencies who risk their lives to provide humanitarian aid and protection."— UN Secretary-General, António Guterres



World Humanitarian Day (WHD) is held every year on 19 August to pay tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service, and to rally support for people affected by crises around the world.

■ 2017 WHD campaign: #NotATarget

Around the world, conflict is exacting a massive toll on people's lives. Trapped in wars that are not of their making, millions of civilians are forced to hide or run for their lives. Children are taken out of school, families are displaced from their homes, and communities are torn apart, while the world is not doing enough to stop their suffering. At the same time, health and aid workers – who risk their lives to care for people affected by violence – are increasingly being targeted.

For WHD 2017, humanitarian partners are coming together to reaffirm that civilians caught in conflict are #NotATarget. Through a global online campaign featuring an innovative partnership with Facebook Live, together with events held around the world, we will raise our voices to advocate for those most vulnerable in war zones, and demand that world leaders do everything their power to protect civilians in conflict.

This campaign follows on the UN Secretary-General's report on protection of civilians, which was launched earlier this year. Laying out his 'path to protection', the Secretary-General calls for enhanced respect for international humanitarian and human rights law, and protection of civilians, including humanitarian and medical workers as well as civilian infrastructure.

■ Background

On 19 August 2003, a terrorist attack hit the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, killing 22 people. Among those who lost their lives was Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN's top representative in Iraq.

Five years later, the General Assembly adopted a resolution designating 19 August as World Humanitarian Day. Every year since then, the humanitarian community has organized global campaigns to commemorate WHD, advocating for the safety and security of humanitarian aid workers, and for the survival, well-being and dignity of people affected by crises.

(Source: un.org)

LEARN ENGLISH

New Guy in Town III

A: Please **make yourselves at home**. Let me take your coats. Dinner is almost ready; I hope you brought your **appetite**.
B: Your house is lovely, Armand! Very interesting decor...very... **Gothic**.

C: I think it's amazing! You have such good taste, Armand. I'm thinking of re-decorating my house; maybe you could give me a few **pointers**?

A: It would be my pleasure. Please **have a seat**. Can I offer you something to drink?

C: We would love some!

A: Here you are. A very special drink brought directly from my home country. It has a unique ingredient which gives it a pleasant **aroma** and **superior flavor**.

C: Mmm... It's delicious!

B: It's a bit **bitter** for my taste... almost tastes like... like...

C: Ellen! Ellen! Are you okay?

A: Did she **pass out**?

C: Yeah...

A: I hope that you didn't poison her drink too much! You'll ruin our meal!

■ Key vocabulary

make yourselves at home: get comfortable and feel like you are in your own home
appetite: a desire for food

gothic: of or in the style of architecture prevalent in western Europe in the 12th–16th centuries (and revived in the mid-18th to early 20th centuries), characterized by pointed arches, rib vaults, and flying buttresses, together with large windows and elaborate tracery

pointer: tips, advice, hints

have a seat: sit down, take a seat

aroma: the way something smells

superior: of very good quality

flavor: the way something tastes

good taste: refers to liking nice things

bitter: opposite of sweet

pass out: faint, loss consciousness

■ Supplementary vocabulary

sweet: containing a lot of sugar

spike: to add alcohol or drugs to (food or drink)

sour: having an acid taste that is like the taste of a lemon

exclusive: only allowing in people from a high social class

(Source: irlanguage.com)

Have an idea? Be in touch!

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Mohsen Hashemi sole candidate for Tehran city council chairman

SOCIETY **TEHRAN** — As it had been agreed in the last informal session of the new Tehran city council on Wednesday, Mohsen Hashemi remains the sole candidate for the post of chairman in the council.

The new council, the fifth of its kind, has not formally convened yet and as per a statement issued by the Interior Ministry the inaugural session of the council will take place on August 23.

With Morteza Alviri, the interim chairman of the council, and Ahmad Masjed-Jamei withdrawing their candidacy, Hashemi is the sole candidate for the post.

In addition to the new chairmen, Mohammad Ali Najafi, the final candidate for the post of Tehran mayor, will be formally elected at the first session of the council which is said to fall on Wednesday.

“The new mayor of Tehran would



be different from the former one and relatively speaking would largely rely on the city council,” Hashemi said during the session.

“The city council is a valuable pillar of a city to interact with other organizations,” he added.

Hashemi had earlier suggested that

Digging deep into human-carnivore conflicts in Iran

1 → By definition, the driest quarter (e.g. summer) has minimum precipitation and least optimal vegetation conditions, so it is the most limiting factor for the survival of tropical carnivores. However, leopards are successful hunters well-adapted to live in different habitats, from semi-deserts to forests, due to their phenomenal ability to hide and stalk. For this reason, leopards depend more on their prey than on vegetation.

Q: What is the relation between bioclimatic factors and some specific livestock diseases?

A: All conflict villages near Golestan are located in the western sector of the park where humid Hyrcanian forests grow. We originally thought that these conflicts might be related to the forests because they provide excellent opportunities for leopards to hide and attack livestock from ambush. But during the questionnaire surveys, we found out that six villages located in Golestan forests do not have conflicts at all, so the cause of conflicts is probably something different, not forests. Our research has shown that livestock diseases, most commonly hoof infections, are common in humid conditions and so higher humidity leads to more diseases and morbid livestock become more vulnerable to leopard attacks. Sick individuals are very likely to straggle, or stay behind other livestock, and thus fall victim to leopards. Of course, we are at the very beginning of this investigation and much more research effort is essential to study the behavior of attacked livestock and attacking leopards, such as whether leopards select morbid livestock individuals or they take them randomly from morbid stock, and if diseases can be transferred from livestock and dogs to leopards.

■ **Which diseases were considered in your survey as an indicator and why?**

A: We did not study diseases directly. We just found that villages which receive less attention from veterinarian services lose more livestock. Veterinarian services are responsible for vaccinating, treating and diagnosing diseases in livestock. So, we have hypothesized that if veterinarian services do not come to villages or come seldom, then more livestock become morbid and are more likely to be killed by leopards. Yet, we do not know which diseases are primarily responsible for this, but the first candidate is the hoof infection caused by *Fusobacterium necrophorum*. Infected animals might be killed by leopards because they cannot move fast and keep up with the herd. Again, this is just the first step in the investigation of relationships between diseases and conflicts. A special veterinarian research is essential to develop this study.

■ **Is your method reliable to predict the probability of dangerous disease occurrences?**

A: We did not develop a new approach to link diseases



Dr. Igor Khorozyan

and human-leopard conflicts. We just applied common statistical and computer modeling techniques to local data in the Golestan NP area villages and found out the relationship. Such a study can be conducted also in other villages in Iran which have significant conflict between humans and carnivores (wolves, leopards, bears, etc.). Not only diseases, but many other factors can cause conflicts. Situations can be different from site to site.

■ **Weak prey are more desirable for carnivores but in some cases leopards kill healthy and young prey, even in cattle. Why?**

A: Carnivores prefer to take prey that is easily available and profitable (giving more food and energy). That is why larger carnivores, like male leopards, may take cattle. Preferences of individual leopards can play a significant role in this, but scientists know very little about this phenomenon. For example, some leopards can be very skilled in preying on dogs while the others like to prey on sheep or calves.

■ **Why some leopards kill a large number of livestock at once?**

A: This is called “surplus killing”, when a carnivore kills several livestock individuals in a single attack. This phenomenon is quite rare in leopards, but much more common in wolves, lions and snow leopards. Snow leopard is a different species living in high mountains of Central Asia, which does not live in Iran. Surplus killing occurs usually in corrals when livestock panic from a carnivore's attack and start running without purpose in a closed space. All this awakens the carnivore's hunting instinct. Less often, several livestock individuals can be killed by a group of mother and grown-up cubs, which

the expansion of mass public transit fleet can help resolve the problem of choking air pollution and traffic congestion in metropolis of Tehran.

He further pointed out that the urban railway system should increase to four times its current capacity.

Hashemi, the eldest son of the late Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who received the highest number of votes in the May 19 city council election was seriously considered as the next mayor, but he withdrew candidacy due to intra-council concerns.

He served as CEO of Tehran Metro for 13 years, from 1998 until 2011. He competed for the post of mayor in 2013, but lost to Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf by one vote.

The pro-reform Hope list succeeded to win all the 21 council seats in Tehran in the election, concurrent with the presidential polls.

demand much more food. Lions hunt in groups and also may kill multiple individuals.

■ **Do you think the increasing rate of aridification in Golestan National Park and decreased number of wild prey will increase the number of human-leopards conflicts in the future?**

A: The pattern is opposite – aridification will decrease the occurrence of conflicts. In Golestan, like in many other regions of the world, conflicts are confined to humid areas or seasons. For this reason, increasing air temperatures and declining precipitation will move depredation down. On the other hand, it is possible that in extreme cases some carnivores may learn to kill livestock around limited waterholes and thus increase depredation under arid conditions.

■ **How can these conflicts be managed? In other words, what is the responsibility of the Department of Environment (DOE) and other organizations? How can they be of any help?**

A: International experience shows that the best way to cope with conflicts is to combine efforts of the government, scientists, non-governmental organizations and local people. The government alone cannot solve the problem if local people stand against it. The main problem in Golestan is that villagers do not have sufficient lands to graze their livestock, that is why they are forced to take livestock inside the national park and thus to violate the protection regime. It would be better for local people to keep livestock near their villages, where carnivores usually do not attack, but they do not have large enough pastures.

Compensation of economic losses does not solve the problem of conflicts, because villagers receive money but do not improve their practices to minimize losses. It is of key importance for the DOE to limit poaching of wild prey species, especially ungulates, which are the main prey for leopards. If leopards have sufficient prey inside the park, they will not kill as much livestock as they do it now. The DOE should also improve its current methods used to count and regularly monitor ungulates in the park. The utilized method should be scientifically reliable, standardized and applicable to all ungulate species. A serious flaw is that park rangers do not accurately record wild boars, which are the main prey for leopards.

On the other hand, villagers should pay more attention to protecting their livestock from carnivores. A great majority of livestock is killed by leopards during daytime grazing, since during the night time they are safely locked in corrals in villages.

→13

ENGLISH IN USE

LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

A ↔ ع

Iran to expand centers for emergency social services

Iran's Welfare Organization is set to launch new centers for emergency social services in 140 cities with a population of 50,000 or more in the next Iranian calendar year, starting on March 21, 2017.

Currently emergency social services centers are operating in 197 cities which would react to cases of child abuse, suicidal behaviors, street children, domestic abuse, family violence, etc., IRIB quoted Habibollah Masoudi-Farid, an official with the welfare organization, as saying.

Emergency social services came into operation since 1999 in Iran, Masoudi-Farid said, adding that new social services centers were set up in 20 cities over the current Iranian calendar year.

Mentioning the inclusion of emergency social services in the sixth five-year development plan he highlighted that budget for setting up new centers in 140 cities will be approved by the administration and Majlis (Iranian parliament).

ENGLISH PROVERB

A word to the wise is enough

■ **Explanation:** someone who is wise heeds a warning or a piece of advice, even if it is very brief

■ **For example:** I heard about a terrible traffic jam on the news, so I'm avoiding the highway. A word to the wise is enough!

PHRASAL VERB

Divvy something up

■ **Meaning:** to share something between several people

■ **For example:** We can divvy up the profits between us.

ENGLISH IDIOM

Bent out of shape

■ **Explanation:** to become annoyed or upset about something that is usually not that important or cannot be avoided

■ **For example:** Don't get bent out of shape if you're delayed. We'll wait for you.

Lebanon seizes U.S. arms left by Nusra

The Lebanese military has launched an offensive against ISIL (Daesh) terrorists in eastern Lebanese territory along the border with Syria.

Lebanese army chief General Joseph Aoun announced the start of the operation, dubbed Jaroud Dawn, on Saturday.

A Lebanese security source also said that the army was now targeting Daesh positions close to the village of Ras Baalbek in eastern Lebanon with rockets, artillery, and helicopter gunfire.

The military campaign began with an attack on the terrorists' positions in the Western Qalamoun Jaroud region from the north, south, and east.

In a televised news conference later on Saturday, a spokesman for the Lebanese army, Brigadier General Ali Qansowa, said that the military operations would continue until Daesh terrorists were expelled from Lebanese territory.

"Victory is 100 percent assured in offensive, no matter how long it takes and no matter the cost," he added.

"It's the most difficult battle so far waged by the Lebanese army against terrorist groups," he said, citing the nature of the terrain and enemy tactics.

He estimated that the Lebanese military was facing 600 Daesh terrorists.

Separately on Saturday, the Hezbollah resistance movement said that it had started a joint operation with the Syrian army inside Syrian territory, according to al-Manar TV station.

■ 'Daesh terrorists surrendering'
Meanwhile, Hezbollah's media bureau reported later on Saturday that



Daesh terrorists had started laying down their arms and surrendering themselves to the resistance movement and the Syrian army in Zamrani crossing in Syria's Qalamoun region.

In recent years, terrorists have infiltrated into Lebanon's border areas from inside Syria.

Some 400 Daesh terrorists are holed up in areas on the Lebanese side of the frontier, while hundreds more are on the Syrian side, according to Lebanon's Interior Minister Nohad Machnouk.

Last month, Hezbollah concluded a joint counter-terrorism campaign with the Syrian army at Lebanon's highlands of Aarsal.

The militants of the al-Nusra Front group, recently renaming itself Fateh al-Sham, withdrew from Aarsal following a series of consecutive defeats that forced them to agree to a ceasefire deal.

■ Lebanon finds U.S. made arms left by Nusra terrorists

In another development, Lebanese army has discovered a weapons cache left behind by defeated militants from the Jabhat Fateh al-Sham terror group, formerly known as al-Nusra Front, in the northeast of the country.

The Lebanese National News Agency (NNA), citing an unnamed official from Lebanon's General Directorate of General Security, reported on Friday

that a patrol of the intelligence agency had found an ammunition and missile cache in Wadi Hamid Valley east of the border town of Aarsal, without providing further details.

However, Reuters quoted an unnamed security source as saying on Friday that the cache contained at least a surface-to air missile (SAM) and a number of U.S.-made TOW anti-tank missiles as well as plenty of other types of shells and rockets.

On July 29, commanders of Lebanon's Hezbollah resistance movement said the group had successfully concluded a week-long military offensive against al-Nusra on the outskirts of Aarsal and the adjacent town of Flita in Syria, seizing land in the rugged, mountainous area and killing about 150 terrorists.

In August 2014, the al-Nusra and Daesh Takfiri terrorist groups overran Lebanon's northeastern border town of Aarsal, killing a number of Lebanese forces. They took 30 soldiers hostage, most of whom have been released.

Since then, Hezbollah and the Lebanese military have been defending Lebanon on the country's northeastern border.

Friday's development come as the Lebanese army has been targeting Daesh hideouts along the Syrian border over the past several days, regaining more areas from the terror group. It also comes after Syria accused the U.S. and the UK of supplying chemical weapons to terrorists in the country.

(Source: agencies)

Donald Trump is 'just six Senate votes from impeachment'

Donald Trump is just six Senate votes from impeachment, according to an analyst at a prominent independent think-tank.

Support for the President among Republican Senators has waned to the extent that Trump is likely to only hang onto his seat by six votes, according to Elaine Kamarck of the Washington-based research group The Brookings Institution.

Ms. Kamarck, who is director of the Centre for Effective Public Management, said 12 Republican Senators had "no fear of the President" and had indicated they could vote against him in a vote.

Among the Senators likely to rebel was John McCain, who delivered the killer blow to Trump's replacement for Obamacare, Kamarck said in an article on the think-tank's website.

The U.S. constitution allows Congress to remove a president before they have completed their term if enough members vote to say they committed "treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors".

An article of impeachment must get a majority vote in the House of Representatives before reaching the Senate. Once there, at least two-thirds of senators must find the President guilty for him to be removed.

Kamarck said that 12 rebellious Republican Senators combined with 48 Democrats "who have shown no inclination to work with this President" meant Trump was six votes away from a Senate conviction.

Three presidents have been subjected to impeachment proceedings in the past. Andrew Johnson in 1898 and Bill Clinton in 1998 and 1999 were impeached but acquitted, while Richard Nixon resigned in 1974 to avoid impeachment.

Meanwhile, Senator Bob Corker, unleashing one of the most pointed attacks from a Republican official on President Donald Trump, said the president had not yet shown the "stability and competence" the United States needs, nor an understanding of the nation's character.

"The president has not yet been able to demonstrate the stability, nor some of the competence, that he needs to demonstrate in order to be successful," Corker, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations, told reporters after an event in Tennessee.

"He also recently has not demonstrated that he understands the character of this nation," Corker said. A video of his remarks was posted on Facebook by a Tennessee-based reporter.

(Source: Yahoo News)

Finnish police investigating stabbing spree as terror crime

Finnish police are investigating Friday's knife attacks that killed two and wounded eight in the city of Turku as terrorism-related crimes, they said on Saturday.

The suspect arrested on Friday was an 18-year-old Moroccan, police said, adding that the two people killed were Finns and an Italian and two Swedish citizens were among the injured.

The attacks shocked the Nordic country where violent crime is relatively rare and which has been named as the world's safest place to visit by the World Economic Forum.

Following the attacks on Friday, police shot the suspected attacker in the leg and arrested him.

"Due to information received during the night, the Turku stabbings are now being investigated as murders with terrorist intent," the National Bureau of Investigation said in a statement.

Security was reinforced nationwide with increased patrols and more surveillance in case more people were involved.

"First thing we heard was a young woman, screaming like crazy. I thought it's just kids having fun ... but then people started to move around and I saw a man with a knife in his hand, stabbing a woman," said Laura Laine, who was sitting in a cafe during one of the attacks.

"Then a person ran towards us shouting 'he has a knife', and everybody from the terrace ran inside. Next, a woman came in to the cafe. She was crying hysterically, down on her knees, saying someone's neck has been slashed open."

The police arrested a number of people during the night as part of their investigation.

Local media said the police raided an apartment in the eastern Turku suburb of Varissuo, which is home to a large immigrant population and located about 7 kilometers from the market square where the attack took place.

The arrested suspect had been in Finland for only a short time before the attack, Helsingin Sanomat newspaper reported.

Four of the wounded were still in hospital, three of them in intensive care, while the other injured persons would be sent home on Saturday, the hospital said.

Flags were at half mast on Saturday across the Nordic country whose Security Intelligence Service (SIS) raised the terrorism threat level in June to 'elevated' from 'low', saying it had become aware of terrorism-related plans in Finland.

Leaders of Turku's Iraqi and Syrian

community condemned the attacks and said they would hold a rally of solidarity in the city's main square. An anti-immigration group was planning a demonstration in Helsinki.

The SIS has said anti-immigration groups have been on the rise in the country after it received about 32,500 asylum seekers during the migration crisis in 2015.

"Terrorists want to pit people against each other. We will not let this happen. Finnish society will not be defeated by fear or hatred," Interior Minister Paula Risikko said on Twitter.

On Thursday, a suspected militant drove a van into crowds in Barcelona, Spain, killing 13 people and wounding scores of others.

(Source: Reuters)

A crucial visit to Turkey

organizations. One of the important outcomes of the meeting with Major General Baqeri is that Iran and Turkey agreed to exchange military intelligence in the fight against this terrorist organization, which has caused the deaths of 40,000 people in Turkey since 1977. A few days prior to the meetings with Iran's top military official, the construction of a wall - expected to be 144 km long - started along the Iran-Turkey border. The reason for erecting this wall is to secure the border from the violent operations of the PKK/PJAK. These terrorists not only perpetrate bloody actions, but are also intervening in the trade between the two countries by either preventing it or slowing it down.

In the Syria conflict, all eyes are on Idlib province, since it has become home to several jihadist groups. The armed group of Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), which is dominated by a former al-Qaeda affiliate, took control of the city as rival rebel group Ahrar Al-Sham withdrew; HTS and Ahrar al-Sham were once allies and fought alongside each other to capture most of Idlib province from Syrian government forces in 2015. Following the U.S. Rakka operation, Idlib is considered the next move. Since Idlib is a threat to all of Syria and the neighboring countries, it is probable that Iran and Turkey will join forces to protect themselves from jihadist groups infiltrating their borders following a possible maneuver.

The Russian chief of staff's announcement of a visit to Turkey in a few days time is considered to strengthen the cooperation of Iran and Turkey, which will play a significant role in ending the conflict in Syria. Many analysts interpret Turkey's approach to Iran and Russia as a shift from the Western allies and from NATO. However, Iran has been our brother country for centuries and we share a border, unchanged for more than 300 years. Iran was on our side during the night of the bloody coup attempt and Foreign Minister Javad Zarif followed up the situation with his Turkish counterpart till the morning. The Russian president also showed his support immediately, while the Western allies were indifferent and did not even denounce the attempt until it had failed. Turkey will always remember their loyalty at such a time of hardship.

It is crucial to form an alliance of Turkey, Iran and Russia to cease the conflict that resulted the deaths of hundreds of thousands of civilians. Such a union will make a great contribution to help restructure the warzones and bring stability to the region after the area is cleared from the fighting. These three countries will gain great benefits from this bond and this will influence other countries to step up and make every effort for the security of the region.

Qatar says worried about pilgrims' safety in Saudi Arabia

Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani says his country is concerned about the safety of its citizens in Saudi Arabia during the annual Hajj pilgrimage after Riyadh's move to reopen its border with Doha.

Speaking at a news conference during his visit to Norway, Thani said Saudi authorities have not yet responded to queries from Qatar's Ministry of Islamic Affairs regarding the security of Qatari citizens during the Hajj rituals.

"The level of tension between the two nations, the language and the tone of the Saudi media spreading hatred against Qatari people represents a great concern for us," he said.

"Those people crossing the border right now are under the responsibility of the Saudi authorities for their security and safety," the foreign minister added.

He noted that "more than 100" Qatari pilgrims had crossed since the reopening of border on Thursday.

Qatar has welcomed Saudi Arabia's decision to reopen the Salwa border crossing, also known as Abu Samrah, to Hajj pilgrims, but called it "politically motivated."

The key passage for Muslims on the annual Hajj pilgrimage has been closed since June in a major diplomatic crisis that saw Saudi Arabia and its regional allies cut relations with Qatar.

Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates cut their diplomatic ties with Qatar on June 5, accusing it of sponsoring terrorism and destabilizing the region. The Saudi-led bloc has also imposed sanctions against the country, including restrictions on Qatari aircraft using their airspace.

(Source: Press TV)

How to roll back fanaticism

8→ It means understanding there are no easy answers or malevolent conspiracies that can explain the big political questions or the existential problems. Progress is not made by crushing some swarm of malevolent foes; it's made by finding balance between competing truths — between freedom and security, diversity and solidarity. There's always going to be counter-evidence and mystery. There is no final arrangement that will end conflict, just endless searching and adjustment.

Modesty means having the courage to rest in anxiety and not try to quickly escape it. Modesty means being tough enough to endure the pain of uncertainty and coming to appreciate that pain. Uncertainty and anxiety throw you off the smug island of certainty and force you into the free waters of creativity and learning. As Kierkegaard put it, the "more original a human being is, the deeper is his anxiety."

Over the next few months I'm hoping to write several columns on why modesty and moderation are superior to the spiraling purity movements we see today. It seems like a good time for assertive modesty to take a stand.

(Source: The NYT)

Digging deep into human-carnivore conflicts in Iran

12→ That is why it is important to improve the quality of shepherds and dogs used for grazing. For example, in Golestan, cattle usually graze freely in forests without shepherds, which is the main reason for cattle getting killed by leopards in Golestan. On the other hand, sheep and goats are often (but not always) guarded, but shepherds and dogs cannot react efficiently even if they see a leopard attack. More shepherds should accompany sheep and goat flocks to improve their protection. The quality of guarding dogs is crucially important. Special attention should be paid to villages which are located close to the boundary of Golestan, as they experience higher losses from leopards.

■ What do you think of Iran's attempts in protecting wildlife? Which important steps must be taken in this regard?

A: Iran has a very good network of large reserves — national parks, wildlife refuges and protected areas. However, the Iranian reserves suffer from the same problems as protected areas in other developing countries. The major problem is poaching, and many areas do not have enough rangers to patrol and capture the criminals efficiently.

The second problem is overgrazing and deforestation, which are insufficiently managed in most of the Hyrcanian forest, even inside protected areas and wildlife refuges. The third problem is that reserves, even if they are large, become increasingly isolated because of intense human activities around them. Roads, crop fields, factories and other infrastructure separate protected areas and hinder free movements of animals. Many animals die on roads from car collisions (like in Golestan) and roads also provide easy access to poachers.

Of course, human development is essential and unavoidable, but we all need to think on how to enlarge existing protected areas, establish new protected areas and connect these areas with each other. We need serious involvement of Iranian scientists, NGOs and the government in studies of animal movements (especially in leopards, wolves and other wide-ranging species) in order to identify the key corridors and most important landscapes for protection.

Iran has a unique experience of establishing no-hunting areas, usually for five years. However, we do not know if this approach is cost-efficient and effective in practice. To know this, DOE and scientists should monitor populations of wildlife, especially ungulates and predators, before and after the no-hunting areas are established so that to see the difference. This is very important.

■ Are there any other important details you would like to add?

A: Our project was conducted in cooperation with the Persian Wildlife Heritage Foundation (PWHF), Department of Environment and the Golestan provincial office of environment. I would like to express my gratitude to these organizations and also to mention that our University of Göttingen has signed memoranda of understanding with Shahid Beheshti University and College of Environment in Karaj. We hope to enlarge and deepen our partnership with these and other universities in Iran. And, of course, we thank Iranian people for their openness and hospitality.

1→ Given the current situation in the region, another conflict or national breakdown is the last thing anyone needs. Therefore, both Iranian and Turkish officials strongly oppose this poll by insisting on the unitary structure of Iraq.

Another important topic discussed with Major General Baqeri was the common enemy of both countries: The PKK terrorist organization. The very same terrorist group goes by the name PJAK when operating in Iran. As a matter of fact, the U.S. has been supplying ammunition to the same terrorist group fighting in Syria, where they use the name PYD and the YPG is its armed wing. Even though the U.S. lists the PKK in their terrorist list, they distinguish the PYD/YPG groups, which serve the same agenda. In an interview in 2013, Osman Ocalan, the brother of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, stated the following:

"I founded the PYD, as I did PJAK (the PKK's Iranian arm). We did not use the word 'Kurdistan' in the party's title since we did not want to provoke the Syrian regime. The PYD is connected to the PKK, and acts upon on PKK orders. We founded the PYD in Qandil. We held the first general PYD congress in October 2003. We trained the cadres in Qandil."

In the last two months alone, the U.S. has supplied more than 1,000 trailer trucks of arms to these terrorist

Dani Alves’ aunt tragically drowns in Brazil

Dani Alves could miss Paris Saint-Germain’s clash with Toulouse after the star’s auntie drowned in a river.

The Brazilian full-back is believed to be heartbroken following the loss of Marlucia Francisca Ribeiro on Friday.

She was reportedly out doing her errands when she became unbalanced and fell into the Sa Francisco River in Juazeiro, northern Bahia, and ultimately lost her life.

The 34-year-old’s brother revealed the families devastation to news outlet Tiki Takas in their homeland.

He said: “My mother had a terrible time. It was a tremendous blow. “She did not sit well, but now she’s calmer. We went to the hospital because she suffered from blood pressure and felt bad.”

Alves’ mother, Lucia, also wrote on Instagram: “A lot of pain for losing my sister, my best friend and my partner.

“My world collapsed.”

The former Barcelona defender, who was recently joined at PSG by the world’s most-expensive player Neymar, was informed of the news yesterday.

Although he is not expected to return to South America, it remains to be seen whether he will be available for the Ligue 1 clash tomorrow. Alves, 34, has still not commented on the tragedy publicly.

He is expected to make a statement to confirm whether he will be making his home debut this weekend.

(Source: Sun)

Diego Costa to Liverpool if Philippe Coutinho leaves

LIVERPOOL are set to launch a stunning bid for Chelsea striker Diego Costa if Philippe Coutinho leaves for Barcelona, according to reports.

Barcelona remain determined to lure Coutinho away from Liverpool despite having three bids for the Brazilian rejected.

Over at Chelsea, meanwhile, Diego Costa remains the source of much discussion.

The Spain international is currently training alone in Brazil after Antonio Conte informed him via text message he was surplus to requirements.

Chelsea have ordered him back to train but Costa has responded by claiming he is being treated like a “criminal”.

The 28-year-old is desperate to return to former club Atletico Madrid, three years after he joined Chelsea from Diego Simeone’s side. But Spanish outlet Don Balon claims Liverpool are hopeful of convincing him to remain in the Premier League.

It is said Jurgen Klopp will seek to make marquee signings if and when Coutinho eventually joins Barcelona.

And with Costa’s Chelsea career dead in the water, the bulldozing centre-forward has emerged as a Klopp target.

Liverpool have already raided their Premier League rivals for one striker in the form of Dominic Solanke.

But, with the 19-year-old still raw and Daniel Sturridge constantly plagued by injuries, Costa is wanted to lead the Anfield line.

Everton have also been tipped to move for the ex-Atletico man.

(Source: Express)

Bayern Munich score penalty in historic video replay decision

In a historic decision by a football referee, Bayern Munich’s Polish striker Robert Lewandowski scored a penalty awarded by a video replay, as the Bavarian club opened the 2017/18 Bundesliga season with a 3-1 win over Bayer Leverkusen on Friday.

The video assistant referee system is being used for the first time in the Bundesliga this season and came into play for the first time to flag up a foul on Lewandowski in the penalty area during the second-half.

The Polish striker scored the penalty to put Bayern 3-0 up after new signings Germany defender Niklas Suele and France midfielder Corentin Tolisso scored with first-half headers.

Leverkusen deservedly pulled a goal back at 3-0 down when Swiss striker Admir Mehmedi finished a strong passage of play with a powerful shot that beat the Munich goalkeeper.

On a dramatic opening night, the start of the second half was also held up by 15 minutes as torrential rain swept the stadium.

Having won last season’s German league title — their fifth in a row — by 15 points, the thumping win in Munich suggests Bayern are keen to maintain their iron-grip on the Bundesliga title.

(Source: Eurosport)

Hoeness slams Barcelona’s Dembele pursuit as ‘the lowest class’

Bayern Munich president Uli Hoeness has hit out at Barcelona’s efforts to sign Ousmane Dembele from Borussia Dortmund.

The Catalans have had an offer reportedly worth €100m rejected by Dortmund but are believed to still be eager to sign the 20-year-old as a replacement for Neymar, who left for Paris Saint-Germain in a world-record €222m deal.

Dembele has been suspended by Dortmund after failing to report for training and is thought not to have been in contact with the club for the past week.

Team-mate Gonzalo Castro admitted on Friday that the squad have been stunned by Dembele’s behaviour, although he stressed that “we don’t know who is behind his actions or who leads him”.

Bayern have signed a number of players from Dortmund in recent years, including Mario Gotze, Robert Lewandowski and Mats Hummels, but Hoeness has described Barca’s attempts to bring Dembele to Camp Nou as “the lowest class”.

Speaking on Eurosport ahead of Bayern’s opening Bundesliga win over Bayer Leverkusen on Friday, he said: “If Barcelona are behind it, then I have no respect for the club.

“Forcing a player to break a contract is the lowest class.”

Barca general manager Pep Segura suggested this week that deals for Dembele and Philippe Coutinho were close, although those claims were dismissed by Dortmund and Liverpool.

Ernesto Valverde’s side begin their Liga campaign against Real Betis on Sunday.

(Source: Four Four Two)

‘Destroyed’ Nadal returns to native Barcelona post-attack



“All my support to Barcelona and especially to the people that are suffering a lot, for all the families of the victims,”

Nadal said. “Just keep going and sorry for everything.”

Nadal, a 15-time Grand Slam champion,

won his 10th French Open title in June and enters the year’s final Grand Slam event, which starts August 28 in New York, thrilled at being back atop the rankings after knee injuries and setbacks since he was last number one back in July 2014.

“Amazing, positive news,” Nadal said. “Being number one after all the things I’ve been going through the last couple of years is something unbelievable, so for me it’s an amazing achievement to be back to that position.

“I’m very happy for that and in the last most important event of the season, I need to show why I am in that position now.

“So I’m going to work hard to show myself why I’m there. I’m going to try my best to play at the highest level possible in New York.”

Nadal plans to rest through the weekend, then resume workouts for the final week before the Flushing Meadows fortnight begins.

“I think I am practicing well. I’m going to give my best during this week of practice,” Nadal said. “I hope to be ready for New York.

“I believe that I did things well enough during the whole year to be ready to compete at the highest level of New York, so I’m looking forward to it.”

(Source: RFI)

Neymar can develop into ‘the best player in the world’ insists Unai Emery



Neymar can ‘become the best player in the world’ at Paris Saint-Germain, according to his coach Unai Emery.

The Brazilian has settled into life at his new club quickly following his world record £198million move from Barcelona earlier this month.

Neymar scored one and set up another for team-mate Edinson Cavani in his PSG debut last weekend – a 3-0 away win over Guingamp.

And Emery believes Neymar will go from strength to strength in Paris, where he can realise his personal ambitions of winning the Ballon d’Or while helping PSG ascend to greatness.

‘Neymar is a great player, one of the best in the world,’ Emery told reporters. ‘However, he is normal with the others in the dressing room and when he works.

‘All of the other players are great and they are happy that a player like Neymar is at PSG. That is something we all wanted.’

‘We want to develop along with Neymar and to help him to become the best player in the world,’ he added. ‘We will work towards that for him and he will work towards that for us. Together, we will become an even

greater team’.

Neymar’s attacking display caught the eye in his first appearance for PSG but Emery sought to praise the Brazil international for his defensive work against Guingamp.

‘Neymar adds something extra. He gives us pace, he links up well, his final pass and an ability to play at speed,’ said Emery. ‘He also gives us greater qualities, individual and collective, in attack and the creation of opportunities.

‘In his first match [the 3-0 win at Guingamp] Neymar responded by giving us what we wanted from him.

‘Tactically, he is capable of doing a lot of things in attack but also in defence over 90 minutes. He is capable of everything and is in beautiful physical condition.’

PSG signed full backs Dani Alves and Yuri Berchiche this window but the Parisiens sold Blaise Matuidi to Serie A champions Juventus for £18million earlier this week.

They face Toulouse at home on Sunday evening where they will be without injured duo Lucas Moura and Grzegorz Krychowiak – Marco Verratti is a doubt.

(Source: AFP)

Back of Barcelona’s shirts to carry name of city instead of player



The back of Barcelona’s shirts will feature the city rather than players’ names for Sunday’s game in homage to the victims of Thursday’s terrorist attack.

Thirteen people were killed and more than 100 injured when a driver in a white van mowed down pedestrians on La Rambla, a Barcelona boulevard popular with tourists and locals.

Barca announced hours after the attack that they would wear black armbands in Sunday’s La Liga opener against Real Betis, and on Friday revealed special shirts as well.

“Barcelona” will take the place of player’s names on the back of the shirts, with the hashtag #TotsSomBarcelona (“We’re all Barcelona”) on the chest next to the club crest.

Spain is holding three national days of mourning, while the weekend’s La Liga games will all feature a minute of silence before kickoff.

Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde said on the club’s website: “We would like to show our solidarity with the victims and their families in these difficult times. We are here to help in any way we can.”

Club president Josep Maria Bartomeu and directors Pau Vilanova and Maria Teixidor were among thousands of

people who attended a minute’s silence observed at 11 a.m. in the city’s Placa de Catalunya, near the scene of the attack. Spain’s King Felipe VI and Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy were also in attendance.

Espanyol, also based in Barcelona, published photographs of their squad linking arms in a circle to pay their respects.

Real Madrid posted a picture of their first-team squad holding a minute’s silence at their training base, with Catalan club Girona, Granada, Levante and Real Mallorca showing similar images.

A minute’s silence will also be observed before kick-off at the Nou Camp where flags are currently flying at half-mast.

“FC Barcelona wants to express its profound sorrow and utter disgust at the terrorist attack that has hit the heart of our city, la Rambla de Barcelona” the club said in a statement.

“The club wishes to send our support and thoughts to the victims, their families and friends as well as the people of Barcelona and its visitors.”

FC Barcelona’s players took to social media in the aftermath of Thursday’s attacks to express their condolences.

(Source: ESPN)

Former youth coach Frank Roper accused of abusing 31 young players

Thirty-one former footballers including England international Paul Stewart have accused former youth coach Frank Roper of historical sexual abuse,Sportsmail can reveal.

Several alleged victims have also begun legal proceedings against Blackpool, with whom Roper was closely associated in the 1980s.

Stewart, 52, has claimed that Roper, who died in Stockport in 1995, abused him on a daily basis for four years from the age of 11.

A Freedom of Information request revealed that 31 individuals have filed 35 accusations against Roper, a former football coach in the North West.

Sportsmail exposed Roper as a serial sexual predator last November. He exploited his power at renowned Manchester youth club Nova and enjoyed strong links with Blackpool.

Stewart, the former Tottenham, Liverpool and Manchester City striker, said: ‘It’s sad that so many came forward because it meant so many suffered.

‘People will see now how prolific he was, and hopefully the people who suffered will not feel as I have, that the police are only interested in the victims of others.

‘I’m not bothered that he won’t face justice, I never



came forward for that. But I’m gutted for those who have reported him and will not see him face justice.’

Roper warned Stewart, who started his career at Blackpool, never to tell anyone of the horrific ordeal or risk his family being killed.

Witnesses revealed how Roper abused children on expensive trips to the Far East, New Zealand and America.

Dino Nocivelli of Bolt Burdon Kemp Solicitors, representing several survivors, said: ‘The number of children who allegedly suffered sexual abuse at the hands of Frank Roper indicates he was a substantial threat to children.

‘What is even more worrying is that this is very likely to only be the tip of the iceberg — Frank Roper was associated with Blackpool for over a decade, he was granted frequent access to children as a result of this and the abuse is alleged to have taken place not just in England but also in Thailand and New Zealand.

‘I have been instructed by a number of survivors to pursue claims against Blackpool Football Club. A letter before claim has been sent on behalf of one of my clients to Blackpool setting out the abuse that my client suffered at the hands of Roper.

‘Blackpool have confirmed receipt of these papers and I am awaiting their response as to whether or not they admit responsibility for the acts of Roper’

A Greater Manchester Police spokesperson said: ‘We will continue to support any victims of non-recent sexual abuse and we are working with charities and partner organisations to help provide them with specialist support.

‘GMP will continue to inform victims of any updates regarding their complaints.

‘We understand that reporting such traumatic events is extremely difficult and we will continue to assist any victims in any way that we can.’

(Source: Daily Mail)

Iran aim for title at Goalball Asia Pacific Championships

S P O R T S Iran men and women's goalball teams will participate at the 2017 IBSA Goalball Asia Pacific Championships.

The Iranian men team will partake at the championships with the aim of winning the title, according to the coach.

The competition will be held in Bangkok, Thailand from 19-27 August.

A total of eight teams will vie for a place at next year's World Championships since the tournament serves as a qualifier for the 2018 IBSA Goalball World Championships which will take place between June 3 and June 9 in Malmo, Sweden.

Iran's men team have been drawn along with host Thailand, South Korea and Kazakhstan in Group A.

Group B consists of China, Japan, Iraq and Australia.

Iran will start the tournament with a match against Kazakhstan on Monday.

"We participate in the competition to win the title and book a place at the Goalball World Championships. That's why we are here," Iran coach Mehdi Nabati told Paralympic.ir.

"We are well-prepared for the event and I hope we can win the trophy that we so desire," he added.

The Iranian women team will also begin the tournament with China on Monday.

Goalball is one of the many sporting opportunities available to people who are blind or have low vision.



Ando's goal against Buriram among ACL quarterfinals' spectacular goals



S P O R T S With the AFC Champions League quarterfinals fast approaching, the-AFC.com takes a look back at eight key goals from the last fourteen editions of the last eight stage.

Ever since the quarterfinals were introduced at the 2004 tournament there have been some spectacular games and goals alike.

Andranik Teymourian from Esteghlal has scored one of the spectacular eight goals in the prestigious event.

Following stints in England and Qatar, Ando returned to his boyhood club Esteghlal and led them to the 2013 AFC Champions League semifinals.

In the second leg of the quarterfinals, Esteghlal were drawing 1-1 against Buriram United in Thailand until added time.

Step up Teymourian who received the ball some 40-metres out, nutmegged an opponent and unleashed an unstoppable piledriver into the top corner to give the Iranian side a 3-1 aggregate win.

Iran's Yazdani favorite to win gold at World Wrestling Championships



S P O R T S Hassan Yazdani from Iran is a favorite to win the gold medal at the 2017 World Wrestling Championships in Paris.

The Rio 2016 gold medalist at 74kg, 2015 world silver medalist at 70kg, will participate in the 86kg in Paris.

According to UWW, Georgian Vladimir Khinchegashvili and Turkey's Taka Akgul are favorites to win the

gold medal in in their respective weight categories.

According to the site, 2017 Asia champion Behnam Ehsanpour and 2016 world bronze medalist Moustafa Hosseinkhani are the dark horses at the 61kg and 70kg categories respectively in the competition.

The 2017 World Wrestling Championships will be held in Paris, France from August 20 to 28.

Chad Perris fulfils Fulham FC dream

It's been an eventful month for Chad Perris. The Australian sprinter not only won a medal at the World Para Athletics Championships in London, Great Britain, but also realised a lifelong dream off the track.

Unlike most of his compatriots, who support the biggest Premier League football teams, Perris has a lifelong passion for Fulham FC.

Following his bronze medal win in the men's 100m T13 at London 2017, the 25-year-old took some time off to watch his team play live at their home stadium for the first time together with his brother Kane.

"To be able to watch the club that I love was a great experience," said Perris. "Getting to go to the home ground and experiencing my first ever Fulham FC match was a great experience and something that I will cherish forever. The stadium was full. Hopefully, I will be able to go back many times and watch some more games."



"I did go a couple of years ago and watched a pre-season match but was unable to stay in the country for long enough to watch Fulham FC playing live in a League match."

Fulham FC currently plays in the Championship, the second division in English football. Perris managed to get to not one but three games during his holiday, seeing his team draw 1-1 with Norwich City, beat Wycombe 2-0 and

draw 1-1 against Reading.

"In that last game [v Reading], we got a man sent off in the first 30 seconds. When you got a red card that early in the match it is pretty tough to come back from. We managed to score a goal pretty late in the game to make it 1-1, which was pretty much a win. So we celebrated," he recalled.

Perris' passion for Fulham FC is in his blood as his great grandfather played

for the club in the late 1930s. "He played 114 games and scored one goal. When you are in a country like Australia where there is not a big football culture, they go for the big clubs everybody knows. But I stick with my family and go for them," said Perris.

"I have met quite a few Fulham FC fans in Australia. It is a sort of thing that if you meet someone who is a big club fan they are not able to speak much about it, they just say 'I follow this team, I don't know anything about it.'"

"But if you meet a Fulham fan, generally they all know something about the club. They know what they are talking about and it is always a good conversation."

As for the ongoing season, Perris is hoping the team can end up with in the top-two in the Championship and achieve promotion to the Premier League. "Being able to get there is a very possible thing to happen," he said with optimism.

(Source: Paralympic.org)

Olympic champion Schooling apologizes to Malaysians

KUALA LUMPUR (Reuters) — Singapore's Olympic champion Joseph Schooling has apologized to Malaysians for saying he was going to teach their swimmers a lesson at the South East Asian Games, which open on Saturday in Kuala Lumpur.

The 22-year-old, who won the city-state's first Olympic gold in the 100 meters butterfly in Rio last year, had told local media it would be "nice to go to Malaysia's backyard and teach them a thing or two."

"If I offended anyone, I do apologize... that wasn't my intention," Schooling said on his arrival in the Malaysian capital on Saturday.

"I'm really sorry for my comments and I definitely didn't mean it that way."



Schooling won nine gold medals at the last SEA Games in Singapore two years ago but will race in fewer events this year.

"I'll do my best in all of them. I'm just going to do my best and let the outcome speak for itself. We have two days to prepare so hopefully we'll put on a good performance in the Games," he added.

"It's definitely not like training for me. Every race my dad likes to say race fast and that actually holds a lot of ground. There are a lot of great swimmers in the South East Asian region so I gotta be the best as I can to make my country proud."

The 29th version of the biennial SEA Games continue until Aug. 30.

Iran attack too strong for China

Having suffered a narrow defeat at the start of their FIVB Men's U23 World Championship campaign against Argentina, world No.7 Iran rebounded with an impressive straight-sets win(15-12, 15-12, 15-8, 15-13) win against world No.17 China in pool B of the 2017 Men's U23 World championship at Cairo Stadium Complex in Cairo, Egypt on Saturday.



Iran surprised their opponent with massive attacks from all directions which wasn't tolerated by the Chinese defense.

With this victory, Iran improved their win- loss ratio to 1-1, while China dropped to the same score after they had a surprise victory over Turkey at the opening match.

The 2017 FIVB Volleyball Men's U-23 World Championship is the third edition of the international volleyball tournament and the world championship for men's national teams under the age of 23, organized by the sport's world governing body, FIVB.

(Source: FIVB)

Jordanian referee to officiate Persepolis v Al Ahli at ACL QF

Jordanian referee Adham Makhadmeh has been chosen to officiate the match between Islamic Republic of Iran's Persepolis and Al Ahli of Saudi Arabia in the 2017 AFC Champions League quarter-final clash.

The highly-anticipated match will be held at the Sultan Qaboos Stadium in Muscat, Oman on Tuesday.

The second leg will be held in Abu Dhabi, the UAE in September 12.

Makhadmeh, 30, has already officiated Iran and China match in the 2018 FIFA World Cup Asian qualifier at the Shenyang Olympic Sports Center Stadium in last year's September.

(Source: Tasnim)

Manchester United fire another four-goal salvo to dismiss Swansea

Manchester United's impressive start to the season continued with a 4-0 win over Swansea at the Liberty Stadium.

Goals from Paul Pogba, Romelu Lukaku, Anthony Martial and Eric Bailly gave Manchester United a 4-0 win over Swansea at the Liberty Stadium.

Swansea began without Gylfi Sigurdsson, now an Everton player while United were unchanged from the team that beat West Ham in their first match of the season.

Both Swansea and United hit the crossbar early in the first half, through Jordan Ayew and Phil Jones respectively, but Eric Bailly broke the deadlock in the last minute of normal time in the first half.

In the second half, two Henrikh Mkhitaryan assists set up Pogba for his third United goal and Pogba two minutes later, and Martial then added a fourth. United maintained their 100% record to the season to remain top of the league for now, with two clean sheets, after beating West Ham by the same margin last week.

(Source: Eurosport)

Zidane open to new Real Madrid arrivals before transfer window closes

Real Madrid boss Zinedine Zidane is open to further new signings before the transfer window closes on September 1.

LaLiga and European champions Madrid have been relatively quiet in the market in terms of arrivals, with youngsters Theo Hernandez and Dani Ceballos the only new players brought to the Santiago Bernabeu.

However, Madrid have generated close to €125million through the sales of Alvaro Morata, Danilo, Mariano Diaz, Diego Llorente, Burgui and the loan exit of James Rodriguez, and they have been consistently linked with a club-record swoop for Monaco star Kylian Mbappe.

Zidane is happy with the options at his disposal but is not ruling out the prospect of a late flurry of arrivals before the end of the month.

"I have a fantastic squad which can still be improved," he said on Saturday. "Until [the end of the window], anything can happen, here and abroad."

Madrid begin their title defence against Deportivo La Coruna on Sunday at the end of the week in which they claimed the Supercopa de Espana with a 5-1 aggregate win over Barcelona.

Zidane accepts Madrid have become an even bigger scalp for opponents given their success over the last two years and has urged his players not to allow their work-rate to drop.

(Source: Goal)

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NEWS IN BRIEF



Cyborg Film Festival
selects “Unveiling
Ceremony”, “Dark
Room”

A R T TEHRAN — “Unveiling Ceremony” by Mehdi Bustani and “Dark Room” by Ali Zarekar, both from Iran, will be screened in various sections of the Cyborg Film Festival in Italy.

“Unveiling Ceremony” has been selected for the short animation section and “Dark Room” will be competing in the short film category.

The festival will be held in three Italian regions. Umbria will host the festival from September 22 to 24, and Tuscany will hold it in on September 29. The event will be organized in Liguria from October 13 to 15.

British television
entertainer Bruce
Forsyth dies aged 89

LONDON (Reuters) — Veteran British television presenter and entertainer Bruce Forsyth, who appeared for decades on a string of Saturday night primetime shows, has died at the age of 89, the BBC reported on Friday.



TV presenter and entertainer Bruce Forsyth performs on the Avalon Stage at the Glastonbury music festival at Worthy Farm in Somerset, June 30, 2013. (Reuters/Olivia Harris)

Forsyth, one of Britain's best-known gameshow hosts, fronted television programs including “The Generation Game” and “Play Your Cards Right”. Most recently he presented dance contest “Strictly Come Dancing” for ten years until 2014.

BBC Director General Tony Hall described him as “one of the greatest entertainers our country has ever known”.

“He has delighted millions of people and defined Saturday night television for decades ... his warmth and his wit were legendary,” Hall said in a statement on Twitter.

“He had a remarkable chemistry with his audience - that’s what made him such an amazing professional and why he was so loved.”

The BBC reported Forsyth, who was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 2011, had been unwell for some time and had undergone keyhole surgery in 2015 after suffering two aneurysms.

“Predator” actor Sonny
Landham dead at 76

NEW YORK (AP) — Sonny Landham, the muscular action-movie actor who co-starred in “Predator” and “48 Hrs,” has died. He was 76.



In this Wednesday, June 25, 2008 file photo, actor Sonny Landham gestures during a news conference to announce his candidacy for the U. S. Senate as the Libertarian Party challenger to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell in Frankfort, Ky. (AP Photo/Ed Reinke, File)

Landham’s sister, Dawn Boehler, said the actor died from congestive heart failure Thursday at a Lexington, Kentucky, hospital. Landham was a brawny, deep-voiced actor and stunt man who played a bit part in Walter Hill’s 1979 street-gang thriller “The Warriors” before the director cast him as the trigger-happy criminal Billy Bear in 1982’s “48 Hrs.”

Landham, who was part Cherokee and Seminole, was perhaps most known for playing the Native American tracker Billy Sole in the 1987 Arnold Schwarzenegger film “Predator.”

Landham entered the movie business in the ‘70s. Later in life, he attempted brief and unsuccessful political campaigns.

He’s survived by his son, William, and daughter, Priscilla.

Social reform must start with
ourselves: actor Reza Kianian

A R T TEHRAN — Actor Reza Kianian is compared in his homeland with the legendary American actor Robert De Niro, but acting on stage and screen is not his sole concern: Kianian has been a social activist from the beginning of his career.

In his latest comments made before a collective bike ride organized in Tehran on Friday to promote clean air, he said, “We must begin social reform with ourselves.”

“I am a member of society and I suppose that no positive change will occur until we start a reform within ourselves,” noted Kianian who is the author of “These Nice People”, a book that features his diaries on his routine visits with ordinary people.

He said that people should not take a passive role in society and added that people can convince the authorities to follow them by their active role.

He has always been an active member of most campaigns for social rights and the environment.

In 2012, during the closing ceremony of the 4th Tehran Satire Festival that was attended by former Tehran mayor Mohammad-Baqer Qalibaf, Kianian criticized the air pollution in the city.

“Right now, I feel like all my insides have come up to my throat,” Kianian said.

“I want to tell Mr. Qalibaf... that there are many ways to kill. One way is that we make the children work so hard that it causes them to die. Another way is that we make the air be so polluted that it causes everyone to die!” he joked and added, “Who is responsible for the



Actor Reza Kianian takes part in a collective bike ride in Tehran on August 17, 2017 to promote clean air.

pollution?”

In 2015, he was one of the people signed a petition in collaboration with the Tehran Peace Museum to ask the United Nations to investigate the Mina disaster,

during which 2000 hajj pilgrims were crushed in a stampede in Mina during the hajj pilgrimage.

In September 2016, he joined a number of environmental activists who

launched the campaign “I Am Lake Urmia” to draw the world’s attention to Lake Urmia in northwestern Iran in an effort to save and restore it from environmental ruin.

“Weavers of Imagination” picked for
two intl. events

A R T TEHRAN — Iranian documentary filmmaker Mohammad-Sadeq Jafari’s “Weavers of Imagination” will compete in two festivals in India and the United States during September, Iran’s Documentary and Experimental Film Center (DEFC) announced on Saturday.

The film will first be screened at the Liftt India, a festival of literature, illusion, information, film, frame, television and theater awards, which is scheduled to be held in Lonavla, a region near Mumbai, from September 1 to 5.

The Norman Festival in Oklahoma, which will open on September 23, will screen the documentary.



A scene from “Weavers of Imagination”

A DEFC production, “Weavers of Imagination” tells the story of several blind carpet weavers who spend happy times when they get together.

Art for Peace Festival set for September

A R T TEHRAN — The Iranian Artists Forum will be playing host to the 5th Art for Peace Festival from September 12 to 21.

“The 5th edition of the festival will display works by artists from Iran and over 20 other countries,” the secretary of the event, Fereidun Farbud, said in a press release published on Saturday.

“A variety of artworks in the different categories of painting, photography, sculpture, graphic design, installation and video art will be showcased at the exhibit,” he

said.

“A special program has been arranged for the closing day of the festival on September 21, which is the International Day of Peace,” Farbud added.

A selection of artworks from previous editions of the festival was exhibited on the sidelines of the 34th session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva in March 2017.

The organizers honor an individual who has made a significant contribution to peace with a medal every year. The festival will run at different galleries of the forum.

Filmmaker Michael Moore says
Trump will ‘get us all killed’

NEW YORK (Reuters) — Documentary filmmaker Michael Moore is trading screen time for the stage in a one-man show now on Broadway that is a call to action over the current state of U.S. politics.

The show, “The Terms of My Surrender,” uses Moore’s satirical brand of humor to target U.S. President Donald Trump and encourage liberals to turn resentment over Trump and the Republican political agenda into actual resistance.

“This guy’s going to get us all killed. There’s nobody in charge. This man (Trump) has the nuclear codes,” Moore, 63, told Reuters Television in an interview on Thursday.

“I’m hoping somebody in the Pentagon is protecting us. Like, whatever’s in that nuclear briefcase it’s just some girlfriend’s phone number or something. I’m just hoping that it’s not the real numbers because we’re in desperate shape here,” said Moore, a longtime liberal and a harsh critic of Trump.

Moore’s show varies each night. On Tuesday, he invited the audience to board buses and join him after the performance in a wider protest under way outside Trump Tower on nearby Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, where the president had arrived a day earlier to stay at his high-rise home for the first time since taking office in January.

Moore, who won an Oscar in 2003 for his gun violence documentary “Bowling



Michael Moore speaks during an interview at the site of his one-man Broadway show at the Belasco Theatre in Manhattan, New York, U.S., August 17, 2017. (Reuters/Shannon Stapleton)

for Columbine,” said he had always wanted to bring the ideas from his films to a live theater audience.

“By the end of this run, 100,000 people would have seen the show. And each of them will tell 10 people things I said or did here tonight. That’s a million people I’ve reached through a Broadway show,” he said.

Moore said that far from being depressed by the actions of Trump and events in Washington in the two weeks since starting the show, he has drawn strength from his appearances.

“Every night, when I leave here, I feel like my soul has been healed a little, that I have less despair, that I’m a little bit more hopeful that we’re going to figure this out,” he said.

“The Terms of My Surrender” is scheduled to run at the Belasco Theatre in New York until Oct. 22.

Judge rejects bid by Polanski’s 1977
rape victim to end case

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — A Los Angeles judge on Friday rejected a request by the woman who was raped by director Roman Polanski 40 years ago to have the criminal case against him dismissed.

Superior Court Judge Scott Gordon ruled that Polanski remained a fugitive from justice and that the court could not dismiss a case “merely because it would be in the victim’s best interest.”

The ruling follows the first appearance in June in the case by Samantha Geimer, who was 13 years old when Polanski sexually assaulted her in Los Angeles in 1977.

The director, who admitted raping Geimer, spent 42 days in pre-trial custody. He then fled the United States, fearing a plea bargain with prosecutors would be overruled and that he would get a lengthy prison term.

The “Chinatown” director, who turned 84 on Friday, has never returned and numerous attempts by his lawyers to strike a deal without him spending more time in prison have failed.

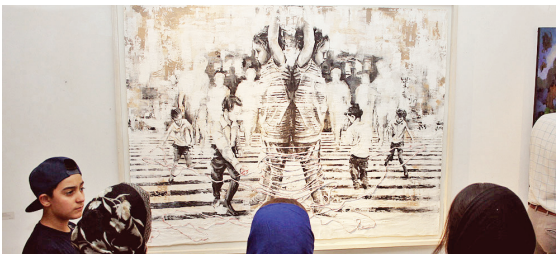
“The defendant in this matter stands as a fugitive and refuses to comply with court orders,” Gordon wrote.

Geimer went to Los Angeles Superior Court in June pleading for his case to be resolved, saying she had forgiven Polanski years ago and wanted the case put to rest “as an act of mercy to myself and my family.”



because Maryam, a socially committed, self-confident journalist, does not reciprocate his feelings. The badly injured young woman demands lex talionis – the law, applicable in Iran, of “an eye for an eye”.

“Inversion” is about three siblings, and masterfully features Tehran’s air pollution.



Art enthusiasts visit the 4th Art for Peace Festival at the Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran on September 16, 2016. (Artibition.net/Amir-Hossein Khalili)



Oscar-winning director Roman Polanski looks on as he attends a news conference in Krakow, Poland October 30, 2015.

(Agencja Gazeta/Mateusz Skwarczek)

Geimer, who has three sons and now lives in Hawaii, said in June that Polanski had apologized to her years ago, but that she continued to remain a victim because of media attention each time there was a new development in the case.

Gordon on Friday also rejected a request by Polanski’s attorney, Harland Braun, to unseal testimony about the 1977 plea deal. Braun had hoped to use the testimony to persuade European authorities to rescind the international arrest warrant against Polanski.

Two recent bids by the United States to extradite Polanski, from Switzerland and Poland, have failed.

Braun says Polanski wants to be able to travel freely and to visit the grave in the United States of his wife, Sharon Tate, who was murdered in Los Angeles by followers of Charles Manson in 1969.