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# Enrichment to 20% purity possible in 5 days



## Referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan will not be helpful: AKP

By Payman Yazdani

**TEHRAN** — M. Mehdi Aker, the deputy chief of the ruling Turkish Justice and Development Party (AKP), is of the opinion that a decision by the Iraqi Kurdistan Region to hold an independence referendum will not solve any problems.

"The IKBY's decision to set up an independence referendum will not solve any of the problems that the IKBY and Iraq face, but will deepen these problems," Aker tells the Tehran Times.

Aker also said the recent visit by Iranian Armed Forces Chief of Staff Mohammad Hossein Bagheri to Tur-

key was "useful" in terms of border security and campaign against terrorism.

Following is the text of the interview:

**■ What is the importance of the recent visit by the chairman of the Iranian armed forces to Turkey?**

A: The visit of Iranian Chief of General Staff Mohammad Bagheri to our country has been a useful visit to develop cooperation between Turkey and Iran, especially in areas of combating terrorism and border security.

This visit also provided an important opportunity for our region to assess the contributions of the two countries for security and stability. **→2**

## Trump vows U.S. will keep fighting in Afghanistan

**INTERNATIONAL** The United States President Donald Trump said the United States must continue fighting in Afghanistan to avoid the "predictable and unacceptable" results of a rapid withdrawal from the country where the U.S. has been at war for 16 years.

In a prime-time address to the nation on Monday evening - his first as commander-in-chief, Trump said his "original instinct was to pull out", alluding to his long-expressed view before becoming president that Afghanistan was an unsolvable quagmire requiring U.S. withdrawal.

But since taking office, Trump said, he had determined that withdrawing could create a vacuum that groups such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) could "instantly fill".

"I concluded that the security threats we face in Afghanistan and the broader region are immense," Trump said.

Trump warned that the approach would now be more pragmatic than idealistic. Security assistance to Afghanistan was "not a blank cheque" he said, warning he would not send the military to "construct democracies in faraway lands or create democracies in our own image". **→3**

## IATA: Global passenger demand reached 12-year high in H1

Growth in the global air passenger traffic market attained a 12-year high in the 2017 first half, as passenger traffic grew 7.9% compared to H1 2016 and the load factor hit a record 80.7%, according to IATA's June Air Passenger Market Analysis.

IATA attributed the year's robust start to an improving global economic backdrop and stimulus from lower airfares. The industry's annualized growth pace remains ahead of the average growth rate of both the past five (6.4%) and 10 years (5.5%), IATA said.

IATA observed, nevertheless, that the upward trend in passenger traffic is slowing from its robust movement (about 12%) at the end of 2016 to around 7% since February. Business confidence, as measured in the services purchasing managers' index (PMI), has flattened since January and airlines have cut back on discounted air fares (aka "demand stimulation") to about half of what they were in H1 2016, a trend likely to continue into the second half of 2017.

IATA's analysis showed that the Middle Eastern-North America international passenger market is showing the adverse effects of a "combination of factors including the recently lifted ban on personal electronic devices, as well as the wider negative stimulation from the travel ban that has now been implemented for certain countries."

During the first half of 2017, international traffic for Middle East carriers grew 7.3% (in contrast to 11% growth in H1 2016).

Through June 30, the greatest increases in international traffic demand were seen by Latin American carriers (up 9.4% year-over-year [YOY]) and African carriers (up 9.2% YOY). International travel within South America has rose 13% YOY, slightly offset by 0.2% drop in North-South America travel. In June, Latin American carriers saw a 9.7% rise in international traffic while capacity increased 9.1%; the load factor grew 0.4 points YOY to 82.1%.

(Source: atwonline.com)

## Economic theories detrimental to humanities in the West: Stuart Sim

By Jalal Heirannia

**TEHRAN** — Stuart Sim, a professor of critical theory from Northumbria University, says "the humanities help to create a climate of liberalism and pluralism, and this has many benefits in terms of a country's political development."

However, Sim tells the Tehran Times that the "domination of economic theories like neoliberalism is proving to be very detrimental to the humanities in Western countries."

Following is the full text of the interview:

**■ What is the relationship between the prosperity of the humanities and political development in a society?**

A: The humanities help to create a climate of liberalism and pluralism, and this has many benefits in terms of a country's political development. Respect for other opinions is critical if a society is not to dissolve into feuding factions, and the humanities promotes that outlook. The humanities are also open to change, to continually questioning beliefs and conventions, and this has an obvious beneficial effect in keeping a country open-minded and receptive to new ideas. Societies which refuse to change their beliefs and conventions – in response to intellectual, scientific, and technological advances, for example – tend to fall behind in terms of their neighbors.



**"The humanities continually question beliefs, and this has an obvious beneficial effect in keeping a country open-minded."**

**■ In which society the humanities grow better?**

A: The humanities tend to develop more successfully in secular societies, as can be seen in the way that they have grown to prominence in the West from the Renaissance onwards – and even more particularly, since the Enlightenment period in the 18th century, when the process of secularization speeded up very considerably. In principle, there is nothing to prevent the humanities developing in a religious

society, although they would be more suited to a pluralist religious society, with several religions co-existing on equal terms. Theocracies tend to be hostile to humanities subjects which start to explore too much into the prevailing religious belief, and it is in the nature of the humanities to do exactly that.

**■ Why are some countries advanced in terms of science and technology but not in the humanities?**

A: It is the advance of scientific knowledge that drives technological development, and every country in the world is dependent on that process to at least some extent. It is easier for governments to control scientific research than the work going on in the humanities, however, because the latter often challenges the prevailing ideology. It is also easier to demonstrate the economic benefits of science and technology than it is with the humanities. The humanities have traditionally been strong in the West, but governments are beginning to cut funding for humanities' study in the university system, claiming that they do not contribute significantly enough to their country's economic life.

The domination of economic theories like neoliberalism is proving to be very detrimental to the humanities in Western countries, which are failing to recognize the political and sociological benefits that the humanities can provide.



© Tehran Times/ Amin Berenjar

## North Khorasan the land of treasures of tribes

Following the separation of Khorasan province in the spring of 2014 into three provinces, the North Khorasan province was added to the country's administrative divisions with Boroujerd as its capital city. Despite suffering from deprivation and drought, the locals live in harmony with nature and seek livelihood through endeavors.

The province is considered among the lands of tribal treasures where its main residents are Farsi speaking population.

The most popular languages of the province are Farsi, Tati, Kurmanji, Turkmen, and Khorasani Turkic. Kurmanji people constitute the majority of the province's population.

## Erdogan vows to thwart any 'Kurdish state' in Syria

Recep Tayyip Erdogan Tuesday vowed Turkey would thwart any attempt by a Kurdish militia it deems "terrorists" to carve out a Kurdish state in northern Syria.

Ankara views the Kurdish Peoples' Protection Units (YPG) and the Kurdish Democratic Party (PYD) as a terror group. But the United States is closely allied with the groups' fighters in the battle against jihadists in Syria.

"We do not and will never allow a so-called state to be established by the PYD, YPG in northern Syria," Erdogan said in a speech in Ankara.

"They want to establish a terror corridor in northern Syria reaching the Mediterranean," the president said.

The Syrian Kurdish groups have two "cantons" in Syria's northeast as well as the Afrin region to the west.

Erdogan added that Turkey would continue to fight against terror organizations "wherever we find them", referring to the YPG which Turkey says is the Syrian affiliate of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The PKK is proscribed as a terror group by Turkey, the U.S. and the European Union.

It has waged an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984 during which over 40,000 people have been killed.

In August last year, Turkey launched a cross-border operation in northern Syria, aimed at clearing the border zone of both YPG fighters and extremists.

There has been speculation Ankara may be planning to extend an operation against the YPG to clear it from the town of Afrin, where Erdogan has said its presence is a "threat" for Turkey.

The president indicated on Aug. 5 that Turkey was planning to expand the operation with "new and important steps" but did not give further details.

Erdogan Monday said a joint operation with Iran against Kurdish militants which "pose a threat," including the PKK, is "always on the agenda."

He was speaking after a visit last week by the Iranian armed forces chief, General Mohammad Hossein Bagheri. Iranian security forces have also fought the PKK's affiliate, the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK). Both groups have rear bases in neighboring Iraq.

(Source: AP)

**MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS**



**Leader appoints General Dehghan as advisor**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has appointed former defense minister Brigadier General Hossein Dehghan as his advisor in the field of defense industry.

"Given your valuable experience in the field of defense, particularly its industry, I appoint you as advisor to the commander-in-chief in defense industry and armed forces assistance," Ayatollah Khamenei said in a decree issued on Monday.

Dehghan served as the defense minister from 2013 to 2017 during President Hassan Rouhani's first term. He was replaced by Brigadier General Amir Hatami.



**Expediency Council's Strategic Studies Center to be abolished**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Expediency Council's Research and Strategic Studies Center will be abolished soon, the council's secretary Mohsen Rezaei announced on Tuesday.

The center, established in 1989, is the research arm of the Expediency Council. The current head of organization is Ali Akbar Velayati who replaced Hassan Rouhani, the current president of Iran.

Rezaei said this will not be an end to the Expediency Council's strategic research as the studies will continue under the council's secretariat.



**Soldier killed in terror attack in southeast Iran**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — A soldier was killed on Tuesday morning after gunmen attacked a government building in a small town in south-east of Iran, Tasnim news agency reported.

Provincial police commander, General Mohammad Qanbari, said two unknown gunmen on a motorcycle opened fire at the local county office building in Pishin, a small town located in Sarbaz County in the southeastern province of Sistan-Balouchestan.

A soldier serving in the police was killed, Qanbari said, adding that the assailants have fled the scene.



**Lebanese president to visit Iran: Al Mayadeen**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Lebanese television channel Al Mayadeen on Tuesday announced that President Michel Aoun will soon visit Iran.

The announcement came after a visit by Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Jaber Ansari to Lebanon, during which he met with top Lebanese officials including president Aoun.

At the meeting, Aoun received President Hassan Rouhani's invitation for an official visit, saying he would travel to Tehran once diplomatic procedures are followed. He also highlighted the need to develop bilateral ties between Tehran and Beirut.



**Talks underway to unblock Twitter: minister**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian Minister of Communications and Information Technology Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi has said that negotiations were underway with Twitter to unblock the social media platform.

"(Twitter) has announced that it is prepared to negotiate to resolve problems," Iran newspaper quoted Azari Jahromi as saying on Tuesday.

"Considering the current situation there are grounds for such negotiation and interaction. Twitter is not an immoral environment needing to be blocked," he added.

Iran blocked Twitter, along with Facebook and YouTube, in 2009.



**No need for acting Tehran mayor: Moshen Hashemi**

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Moshen Hashemi, the only candidate for chairman of Tehran's new city council, has said that the 21-member council will not appoint an acting mayor for Tehran.

As the council has chosen Mohammad-Ali Najafi for mayor of Tehran, there's no need to appoint an acting mayor, Hashemi told Tasnim news agency on Tuesday.

He added that Najafi will be officially elected as Tehran's mayor at the same time the council elects its chairman and presiding board.

On 10 August, Najafi was unofficially elected as the new mayor of Tehran.

# Iranian official meets Hezbollah chief



Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Jaber Ansari (left) held talks on Tuesday with Hezbollah chief Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut on Tuesday.

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Jaber Ansari met on Tuesday with Seyyed Hassan Nasrallah, secretary general of the Lebanese Hezbollah movement, in Beirut.

The officials discussed the latest political development in the region, particularly the Syrian conflict.

Jaber Ansari, who started his tour of Lebanon on Monday, held talks with high ranking Lebanese officials including President Michel Aoun, Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri in the first day of his visit.

Jaber Ansari had announced that his visit to Lebanon was aimed at supporting the Lebanese national unity and coordinating campaign against terrorism.

During a meeting with a group of heads of various Lebanese factions on Tuesday, Jaber Ansari said that settling the Palestine issue is a priority for Iran.

He also said that continuation of crises in the region will only serve the interests of the Zionist regime of Israel.

The crises weaken the countries in the region, dwarf the Palestine issue and instead benefit Israel, he added.

He said that reaching agreement at regional level is the way out of the current crises.

Elsewhere, he said that Iran's policy is avoiding clashes among the regional countries.

Jaber Ansari also said that Iran has always tried to counter the expansionist policies of the Zionist regime.

## Iran can resume nuclear enrichment to 20% purity in 5 days: Salehi

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — Ali Akbar Salehi, the director of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, said on Tuesday that Iran can resume uranium enrichment to the purity of 20 percent in five days in the Fordow plant if necessary.

The remarks by the nuclear chief come as U.S. President Donald Trump has assigned, according to the Foreign Policy, a team of his close aides to assess Washington's withdrawal from the July 2015 nuclear deal, officially called the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

"Our first priority is to protect the

JCPOA, but not at any cost. If the other side stands by the JCPOA, we will stand by it. If they seek to sabotage it [the deal], we hope that would not happen, we will do something that will surprise them," Salehi, a nuclear physicist, told the IRIB, the national TV.

Based on the nuclear agreement, Iran agreed to put limits on its nuclear program in exchange for the lifting of economic and financial sanctions. The deal was signed between Iran, the European Union, Germany and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council including the United States. It went into ef-

fect in January 16, 2016.

Salehi said based on the nuclear deal many changes have been made to the Fordow plant, however, the changes are in a way that Iran can resume uranium enrichment to the level of 20 percent immediately.

Salehi added this warning is not something "hollow" and is based on the data that Iranian President Hassan Rouhani has.

He also said, "Political credibility of the U.S. will be tarnished if the JCPOA is violated."

Elsewhere, Salehi said that Iran has no limit in the area of research and develop-

ment in nuclear technology.

On August 15, Rouhani said that Iran will quit nuclear agreement "in hours" and return to the previous stage if sanctions are re-imposed on the country.

Rouhani's comments were referring to sanctions imposed by the U.S. Treasury Department on six Iran-based satellite companies on July 28 after Iran launched the Simorgh (Phoenix) satellite carrier rocket into space a day earlier.

Last month, the two houses of the U.S. Congress ratified non-nuclear sanctions against Iran. The sanctions were mainly targeted at Iran's missile capability.

## IRGC denies military operation with Turkey against PKK

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps has refuted the possibility of a joint military operation with Turkey against the PKK outside of the Iranian borders.

In the statement issued on Tuesday, the IRGC announced that it has no plan to conduct any operations outside Iran.

Nonetheless, the Guards will continue to confront any individuals or groups endeavoring to infiltrate into the country to commit terrorist attacks, the statement read.

On August 21, Turkey's Daily Sabah, on the background of positive remarks about a joint cross-border offensive, made by the officials of the both countries, estimated an increased likelihood of an Ankara-Tehran joint operation against the PKK and its branch in Iran known as PJAK.

Turkey has recently been trying to imply the existence of a unified front with Iran against the Kurds.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Monday that Turkey and Iran have discussed possible joint military action against Kurdish militant groups, after talks in Ankara

last week between the chief of staff of Iran's armed forces and Turkish leaders.

"Joint action against terrorist groups that have become a threat is always on the agenda. This issue has been discussed between the two military chiefs, and I discussed more broadly how this should be carried out," Erdogan said.

Iran has insisted on the need to respect the sovereignty of countries and refrained from using a harsh tone as Ankara's against Turkish, Iraqi, or Syrian Kurds.

## NASA astronaut: Iran attained sophisticated rocket

A former NASA astronaut has described Iran's most recent satellite-carrying rocket launch as a significant technological achievement.

Leroy Chiao, former NASA astronaut and International Space Station commander, characterized Tehran's latest move on July 27 as a proof of Iran's possession of sophisticated technology, which may be used either for civilian or military purposes.

"Rocket and missile capability is significant for any country. The ability to launch satellites into Earth's orbit means that a

country has attained sophisticated rockets that would be capable of being used as a weapon, as well. This is why such an achievement would be an important development," Leroy Chiao told Trend on Monday.

The United States immediately described Iran's rocket launch as "a provocative action" and imposed a new round of sanctions on six Iranian firms with ties to Tehran's ballistic-missile program.

In the meantime, Britain, France, Germany and the U.S. issued a joint statement on July 28, criticizing Iran's actions and claiming

that the test was a breach of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2231, which was adopted to endorse Iran's nuclear agreement (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) with the world powers in July of 2015.

Tehran, however, says the rockets do not violate the resolution, stating instead that the U.S. is trying to walk out of the JCPOA on account of Iran.

Iranian officials believe that the country's missile tests and rocket launches do not breach any UN resolution, as they are solely used for defense purposes and not de-

signed to carry any nuclear warheads.

In a tweet on July 28 Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said, "Iran is not & will not be developing nuclear weapons; so by definition cannot develop anything DESIGNED to be capable of delivering them."

In another tweet on the same day, he also said, "Every word of JCPOA carefully negotiated. Iran does not develop missiles that are 'DESIGNED' to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons'."

(Source: staff and agency)

## Iran attends Afghan Independence Day at ministerial level

**POLITICS TEHRAN** — On Monday evening, the embassy of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in Tehran held a ceremony to mark its Independence Day anniversary, where Iran's Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli attended.

Such high-ranking officials as Alaeddin Boroujerdi, chairman of the Majlis National Security and Foreign Policy Committee, and Ebrahim Rahimpour, the deputy foreign minister for Asia and Pacific affairs, also were present at the event.

Speaking at the ceremony, Rahmani Fazli, who also heads the Iranian side of a joint committee with Afghanistan, underlined Tehran's preparedness to help Afghanistan in the fight against terrorist groups.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran doesn't spare any efforts to help the Afghan government to annihilate the terrorists," he stated.

Noting that Iran has allocated nearly \$500 million to the reconstruction of Afghanistan in the past decade after the toppling of the Taliban regime, he said, "Tehran

is ready to play a more serious role in the process of development and reconstruction of Afghanistan in the future and in line with accompanying the international community and the regional states."

"Iran is ready to play a more important role, along with the international community and Afghanistan's neighbors, in reconstruction and development of the country," Rahmani Fazli stressed that Iran doesn't see any limit to the development of relations with neighbors, especially Afghanistan, and wants removal of all obstacles

to the expansion of trade, economic and investment ties to meet mutual interests.

Rahmani Fazli stated according to international organizations, Afghan citizens living in Iran have the best conditions compared to foreign nationals residing in other countries.

He also said that about 450,000 Afghans are attending Iranian schools and 17 thousand attending Iranian universities. "Many Afghan experts have been schooled in Iran and now can help build the future of their country," the Iranian minister said.

## Referendum in Iraqi Kurdistan will not be helpful: Turkey's AKP deputy chief

It is also a remarkable visit in terms of being the first visit made at the level of chief of general staff among our countries after many years.

The developments in our region require us to concentrate our consultations with our neighbors and regional countries at different levels and areas.

Mr. Bagheri's visit to our country will also be evaluated in this framework.

**Q: One of the issues discussed during Bagheri's visit was border cooperation. What can be the essence of this cooperation? Is the construction of wall by Turkey in the border with Iran part of this?**

A: Border security has various dimensions. The modular concrete wall we are build-

ing in the border with Iran is also an important project that will increase border security.

This project aims to combat terror effectively fight smuggling of people and goods. This issue has also come to the fore in the negotiations held during the visit.

The wall construction will contribute to the border security of both countries; it will benefit both Turkey and Iran.

**Q: Iran and Turkey both oppose Iraqi Kurdistan independence referendum, one of the issues discussed by the two sides during General Bagheri's visit. What joint measures can Iran and Turkey take to this end?**

A: Our two important countries, Turkey and Iran, are adversely affected by the unstable environment that has been going on for years in Iraq.



The IKBY's decision to set up an independence referendum will not solve any of the problems that the IKBY and Iraq face, but will deepen these problems.

In this context, we urge both the central government and IKBY leadership to resolve the problems between Baghdad and Arbil within the framework of the Iraqi Constitu-

tion in order to ensure that no more difficult problems arise in Iraq.

I think that the leadership of the IKBY should work for a united, prosperous, united and prosperous Iraq, ending the referendum decision, which could have very negative consequences.

**Q: How will the visit affect developments in Syria?**

A: The visit has given Iran, one of the three guarantors of the ceasefire initiative, will help accelerate the political process in order to find a final solution to the Syrian conflict.

We hope that the visit will contribute to the struggle that we support for the elimination of the conflict environment altogether by the arbitration of the declared truce in Syria.

# Trump vows U.S. will keep fighting in Afghanistan

Taliban: Afghanistan would become a 'graveyard' for the U.S.

➔ "We are not nation building again. We are killing terrorists," he said. Though his speech was billed as an announcement of his updated Afghanistan policy, Trump offered few specific details.

He did not provide the number of additional troops that would be sent to the war, though U.S. officials said before the speech they expect him to go along with a Pentagon recommendation for nearly 4,000 new troops.

Trump said the American people were "weary of war without victory".

Still, he insisted that "in the end, we will win".

## Tougher approach to Pakistan

Trump also laid out a tougher approach to the U.S. policy towards Pakistan which he accused of giving "safe haven to agents of chaos, violence and terror".

"We can no longer be silent about Pakistan's safe havens for terrorist organizations," Trump said, outlining the strategy in South Asia.

"Pakistan has much to gain from partnering with our effort in Afghanistan. It has much to lose by continuing to harbor criminals and terrorists."

Trump suggested that military and other aid to Washington's nuclear-armed ally is at stake.

"We have been paying Pakistan billions and billions of dollars at the same time they are housing the very terrorists that we are fighting," he said. "That will have to change, and that will change immediately."

Trump said the U.S. wanted India to help more with Afghanistan, especially in the areas of economic assistance and development.

A commander from the Taliban-allied Haqqani network told the AFP news agency that Trump's speech was proof of "a Crusade".

"His statement has proved that he wants to eliminate the entire Muslim [community]," he said.

## Open to Taliban deal

Trump also left the door open to an eventual political deal with the Taliban in his address.

"Someday, after an effective military effort, perhaps it will be possible to have a political settlement that includes elements of the Taliban in Afghanistan," he said.

"But nobody knows if or when that will ever happen," he added, before vowing that "America will continue its support for the Afghan government and military as they confront the Taliban in the field".

It was for the people of Afghanistan "to take ownership of their future," the president said.

"We are a partner and a friend, but we will not dictate to the Afghan people how to live or how to govern their



own complex society. We are not nation building again. We are killing terrorists."

## Taliban responds to Trump's Afghan strategy

Meantime, the Afghan Taliban has warned Trump is "wasting" American soldiers' lives after the U.S. president approved sending thousands more troops to the war-ravaged country.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said Afghanistan would become a "graveyard" for the U.S. on Tuesday after dismissing Trump's strategy as vague and offering "nothing new".

"If America doesn't withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, soon Afghanistan will become another graveyard for this superpower in the 21st century," he said.

In his first formal address to the U.S. as commander-in-chief, Trump backtracked from his election pledge to end America's longest war that has dragged on for nearly 16 years.

The U.S. currently has around 8,400 troops in the country, down from a peak of about 100,000 troops in 2010 and 2011, with around 5,000 from NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies assisting a much larger Afghan force in the war against the Taliban and other armed groups.

A senior Taliban commander told the AFP news agency that Trump was perpetuating the "arrogant behavior" of previous U.S. presidents, such as George Bush.

The war in Afghanistan, which began on October 7, 2001, after the September 11 attacks, has claimed the lives of more than 2,200 U.S. troops and cost

more than \$800 billion.

There is no official figure of the number of Afghan civilians killed but estimates range between 25,000 to 30,000. According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), at least 1,662 civilians were killed between January 1 and June 30 this year.

While Trump has refused to offer detailed figures, senior White House officials said he had already authorized his James Mattis, the defense secretary, to deploy up to 3,900 more soldiers.

Prior to Trump's announcement, the Taliban had written an open letter warning him not to send more troops and calling for the complete withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan.

## Afghan ambassador to the U.S.: Trump's policy will lead to stability

The developments follow as Al Jazeera spoke to Hamdullah Mohib, the Afghan ambassador to the U.S., on the reaction from Kabul. Mohib said: we welcome Trump's decision. It was a result of intense deliberations that took into account both of our countries' needs and considerations.

It's the first time that such a tremendous amount of focus has been put on Afghanistan to succeed and we are grateful for this outcome.

Mohib also said we welcome Trump breaking of the silence over Pakistan sheltering and providing sanctuary to terrorists.

## Trump's new Afghanistan strategy wins praise from war hawks

Elsewhere, pro-war American pol-

iticians have commended Trump for making a commitment to a prolonged military presence in Afghanistan.

Trump's position was welcomed by Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham as well as House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, some of Trump's fiercest Republican critics.

McCain described the new strategy as a "big step in the right direction" but said it was "long overdue".

McCarthy had a similar reaction, saying Trump's strategy "will help produce a more secure, stable, and sovereign Afghanistan."

## Opposition hits back

Despite the outpouring of support from war hawks, Trump's opponents on both sides of the aisle blasted the decision.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said Trump had no idea "what he was getting into." She warned that the Republican commander-in-chief was basically "declaring an open-ended commitment of American lives with no accountability to the American people." Democratic Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio said Trump was putting extra pressure on the U.S. military forces and their families without "a plan to transfer power to the Afghan government or a plan to leave the country."

Republican Senator Rand Paul said the war in Afghanistan "has lost its purpose" and sending more troops there was a "terrible" idea.

Ohio's Republican Governor John Kasich also called for a reduction of troop levels in Afghanistan "without reigniting civil war in that country."

opposition lawmakers said.

Abbas told a delegation of Israeli lawmakers from Israel's left-wing Meretz party that he had proposed rolling back his month-old suspension of security coordination with Israel, according to a statement issued by the lawmakers.

Israeli authorities, however, didn't respond to the proposal, the Palestinian president told the lawmakers.

On July 21, Abbas announced that the Palestinian leadership would freeze all contact with Israel, as mass protests over new Israeli security measures at the al-Aqsa Mosque compound turned deadly.

On July 25, Israeli authorities removed metal detectors installed at the gates of the al-Aqsa Mosque compound, but kept surveillance cameras to monitor Muslim worshippers.

Palestinian officials rejected Israel's moves in occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem), saying Tel Aviv should lift all restrictions on the compound.

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

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

(Source: Press TV)

## China warns U.S. ahead of Taiwan defense minister's brief visit

China warned the United States on Tuesday against any military contacts with Taiwan ahead of brief visits by the self-ruled island's defense minister to the United States on his way to and from Central American allies.

The United States is Taiwan's main source of weapons and Taiwan has been pressing for sales of more advanced equipment to deal with the rapidly modernizing military of China, which claims Taiwan as its own.



Defense Minister Feng Shih-kuan would make brief transit stops in New York and Los Angeles on his Aug. 23-Sept. 8 trip, and had nothing else on his agenda in the United States, the ministry said.

Feng would visit Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and the Dominican Republic to "further deepen bilateral friendly relations", the ministry said in a statement.

Speaking in Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said China had noted the reports.

"China consistently insists on using the 'one China' principle in handling the issue of the Taiwan region's exchanges, and firmly opposes country's with which China has established relations conducting any type of official contact or military exchanges with Taiwan," Hua told reporters.

"Our position is clear and consistent. I believe the United States is extremely clear on this."

Taiwan presidents and other senior officials frequently stop over in the United States while visiting Taiwan's dwindling number of allies in Latin America and the Caribbean, always drawing China's ire.

Taiwan now only has official diplomatic ties with 20 countries. Panama dropped its diplomatic ties with Taiwan to instead recognize China in June. China says Taiwan is merely a province with no right to diplomatic ties with other countries.

The United States switched diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to China in 1979, acknowledging that China takes the position that there is "one China" and Taiwan is part of it. But the United States is also duty-bound by legislation to help the island defend itself. (Source: Reuters)

## Iraqi forces retake oil refinery, two villages in Tal Afar

Security forces in Iraq have retaken two villages and an oil refinery in the northern city of Tal Afar, where an operation is underway to liberate the city from the Daesh (ISIL) terrorists.

The commander of the Tal Afar Liberation Operation said in a brief statement on Tuesday that Iraqi forces had liberated the al-Kask oil refinery from the control of Daesh, Iraq's al-Sumaria news website reported.

Lieutenant General Abdul Amir Yarallah further said the villages of Tishtia and Tal al-Samn had been purged of the Takfiri terrorists.

A day earlier, Iraqi government forces had managed to retake five villages near Tal Afar. Members of the Counter-Terrorism Service (CTS) liberated the villages of Tal Rahal, Jabbara, Hussein Idris, Mullah, and Majid southwest of the city, which is located 63 kilometers west of Mosul, on Monday.

On Sunday, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi announced the commencement of the major offensive to liberate Tal Afar from Daesh.

In late June, Commander of Nineveh Liberation Operations Major General Najim Abdullah al-Jubouri said there were between 1,500 and 2,000 Daesh militants holed up in Tal Afar, and predicted a relatively easy victory for government forces in the operation as the terrorists were "worn out and demoralized." (Source: Press TV)

## Ex-Yemeni president stresses unity with Ansarullah against Saudi-led war

Yemen's former president Ali Abdullah Saleh says he will continue to cooperate with the Ansarullah (Houthi) movement in the country to counter the Saudi regime-led war on Yemen.

Saleh also said on Monday that the House of Saud regime had been targeting Yemen's sovereignty and independence with the military campaign, the Lebanon-based Al Mayadeen TV channel reported.

He also emphasized that the Yemeni nation would not surrender or accept any parties' dictates.

Saleh and the Ansarullah have been in alliance almost since the Saudi regime-led war began on their country in March 2015. The war was launched in an attempt to eliminate the Ansarullah and reinstall Saleh's Riyadh-friendly successor, Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, who resigned from office.

The Ansarullah fighters, allied Yemeni army factions, and forces loyal to Saleh have been jointly fighting back the Saudi-led invaders. The House of Saud regime has attained neither of its objectives despite spending billions of dollars on the war and enlisting the cooperation of dozens of its vassal states as well as some Western countries.

The Saudi regime-led war, which has been accompanied by a naval and aerial blockade on Yemen, has so far killed over 12,000 people in the impoverished state, left 70 percent of the country's 27 million population in desperate need of humanitarian aid, and caused the worst cholera outbreak in the world. (Source: Press TV)

## Abbas threatens to slowly cut funding to Gaza Strip over row with Hamas

Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas has threatened to gradually cut financial support to the impoverished Gaza Strip "by 100 percent" until the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas agrees to reconcile with his ruling Fatah Party.

The Palestinian leader made the remarks in a meeting with the Israeli politician Zehava Gal-On, the chairperson of the Israeli left-wing Meretz political party, in the occupied West Bank city of Ramallah on Monday.

"We transfer \$1.5 billion a year [to Hamas in Gaza]," Abbas further said, according to a statement released by his office later in the day. He added that he had already slashed 25 percent of that amount.

The Fatah, chaired by Abbas, and Hamas are at loggerheads over a number of issues, which ultimately led to a split in the Palestinian Authority in 2007. A year earlier, Hamas had won parliamentary elections and since June 2007 it has been ruling over the Gaza Strip. During the past decade the movement has refused to reconcile with the Fatah and the row between the two still persists.

The PA has recently been under fire for imposing "punitive measures" against the Gaza Strip to squeeze the Gaza-based Hamas to relinquish control of the enclave. Among a series of stiff economic sanctions over Hamas is the reduction of electricity payments to Gaza, prompt-



ing Israel to drastically cut its electricity supply to the coastal sliver to less than four hours a day.

Abbas further warned on Monday that Hamas's purported actions could drive a wedge between Gaza and the West Bank, adding that the absence of reconciliation between the two sides had created distrust in the Palestinian leadership.

The Gaza Strip has been under an Israeli siege since June 2007. The blockade has caused a decline in living standards as well as unprecedented unem-

ployment and poverty there.

Israel has also launched several wars on the Palestinian sliver, the last of which began in early July 2014. The last Israeli military aggression, which ended on August 26, 2014, killed nearly 2,200 Palestinians. Over 11,100 others were also wounded in the war.

## Tel Aviv ignored Abbas proposal on resuming security ties: Israeli lawmakers

Elsewhere, Abbas said Tel Aviv authorities have rejected his proposal on resuming security ties, a group of Israeli

## India to put Chabahar rail link on fast track

Questioning the seriousness of India's intent, Iran has sought a firm commitment from New Delhi that the construction of the \$1.6 billion rail link from Chabahar port will be taken up expeditiously, two people aware of the development said.

India has promised to remove hurdles to fast track the project, which will connect the port on the southern coast of the Persian Gulf nation to the eastern city of Zahedan on the border with Afghanistan.

The issue came up for discussion during the visit of minister for road transport and highways and shipping Nitin Gadkari to Iran for the swearing-in ceremony of Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, the two people said, requesting anonymity.

"The minister has ordered to take up the matter with IRCON (IRCON International Ltd, the state-run company to which the contact was given) on priority and sort out the matter," an Indian government official, one of the two cited above said.

India plans to develop the Chabahar port, which would give it access to landlocked Afghanistan and energy-rich Central Asia through its Jawaharlal Nehru and Kandla ports on the west coast, circumventing Pakistan.

But the agreement to build the 500-km rail link lapsed in April.

"During deliberations, the Iranian government asked the Indian delegation if it was serious about building the railway link as no efforts seem to have come up," said the second person, also an Indian government official.

(Source: *livemint.com*)

## These billions in deals can help Iran counter Trump

By **Ladane Nasseri**

It hasn't been the investment bonanza Iran hoped for, but the billions of dollars unlocked by its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers might help cushion the impact of any future U.S. assault on the accord.

The mood has shifted since this time last year, when following the January 2016 lifting of sanctions trade delegations crammed Tehran's hotels as investor interest peaked. Now, with President Donald Trump adding new sanctions and expressing frustration that his administration continues to find the Islamic Republic in compliance with the accord, the talk is of whether it can survive. Of critical importance will be the support flowing from other parties -- China, Russia, France, Germany and the U.K. -- whose companies have put up much of the money invested in Iran so far.

"There is pressure coming from the business establishment in these countries to maintain access to the Iranian market," said Sanam Vakil, an associate fellow at Chatham House's Middle East & North Africa Program in London. At the same time, most of their governments "recognize that marginalizing and isolating Iran is not in their interest," she said.

There's a lot at stake: Iran says it wants to sign oil and gas contracts worth as much as \$60 billion in the Iranian year that ends in March 2018. Here are some of the agreements -- final or preliminary -- reached in the last 18 months.

### Energy and power

- Total SA along with China National Petroleum Corp. signed a 20-year agreement valued at \$5 billion to develop phase 11 of the South Pars offshore gas field.

- South Korea's SK E&C signed a 1.6 billion euro (\$1.8 billion) preliminary agreement with National Iranian Oil Engineering and Construction Co. to upgrade the Tabriz refinery in north-west Iran.

- Turkey's Unit International signed a \$4.2 billion deal with Iran's energy ministry to build 7 natural gas plants throughout Iran.

- China's Sinopec reached a \$1.2 billion agreement with National Iranian Oil Refining and Distribution Co. on development of phase 1 of the Abadan refinery in southwest province of Khuzestan.

- Royal Dutch Shell Plc signed an agreement to assess three of Iran's largest oil and gas fields, including the Azadegan and Yadavaran oil fields near the Iraqi border.

### Transportation

- Renault SA signed a 660 million euro pact with the Industrial Development & Renovation Organization of Iran and Parto Negin Naseh Co., an importer of Renault products, to set up a joint venture and boost car manufacturing in Iran.

- Volkswagen AG reached an agreement with Iran's Mammut Khodro to sell two car models, marking the company's return to the Iranian market after more than a decade.

- PSA Peugeot Citroen and long-time partner Iran Khodro signed a joint venture contract to invest 400 million euros to upgrade their auto plant. The French company also signed an agreement with local manufacturer Saipa to invest 300 million euros in five years in manufacturing and R&D.

- Boeing Co. and Iran's Aseman airline signed a \$3 billion agreement for 30 737 Max jets; the U.S. company also struck a \$16.6 billion deal with national carrier Iran Air for 80 aircraft.

- ATR sealed a deal with Iran Air worth \$536 million for 20 ATR turboprop aircraft.

- Airbus Group SE signed off on a contract with Iran for 100 jetliners worth about \$19 billion at list prices.

- Alstom SA, the Industrial Development & Renovation Organization of Iran and Iranian Rail Industries Development reached a preliminary agreement to build train and metro cars.

- Russia's Transmashholding signed a \$3 billion with the Industrial Development & Renovation Organization of Iran to jointly produce railway carriages.

- Siemens AG signed a contract worth at least 1.5 billion euros to build rail coaches and upgrade tracks.

### Industries

- China's CREC reached an agreement valued at \$2 billion with Iran Aluminium Co., known as Iralco, to start operations at a unit in Markazi province, south of Tehran.

### Telecommunication

- MTN Group Ltd. agreed to buy a 49 percent stake in an Iranian state-owned internet provider for 540 million rand (\$40 million), it's also seeking to invest \$750 million in an Iranian fiber-optic project.

(Source: *Bloomberg*)

# Iran's daily gas exports hit 42mcm

**ENERGY TEHRAN** — National Iranian Gas Company (NIGC) Managing Director Hamid Araqi announced that the country's gas export has hit 42 million cubic meters (mcm) per day, Shana reported on Tuesday.

The official said Iran reached this amount of gas export after starting export to Iraq (in late June).

Referring to the NIGC's plans for the next Iranian calendar year (to begin on March 21, 2018), Araqi said exports to the neighboring countries will continue based on their contracts, while the amount of gas export and also target countries are planned to increase.

Iranian Deputy Oil Minister for International Affairs and Trading Amir-Hossein Zamaninia told IRNA in early July

that neighboring countries and India are Iran's top priority for gas exports and Europe is not one for now.

The deputy minister believes that since Europe receives gas even more than its demand, so for the time being it is not considered a good market for Iran.

"Of course as the country with the most natural gas reserves in the world we should have a long term plan for gaining some share in Europe's market," Zamaninia noted.

Iran has the world's largest natural gas reserves holding around 18 percent of total proven natural gas reserves globally, according to British Petroleum's (BP) Statistical Review of World Energy 2017 report.



## Rosneft inherits Essar oil's \$2.4b debt to Iran

**ENERGY TEHRAN** — Russian oil major Rosneft and its partners - global trader Trafigura and Russian fund UCP - sealed a \$12.9 billion deal with India's Essar oil on Monday based on which the Russian side purchased a 98.26 percent stake in the Indian company.

Consequently, based on the deal, Essar Oil's new owners will be responsible for repaying over €2 billion (\$2.4 billion) owed to Iran for past oil purchases.

According to Reuters, The deal is the biggest foreign acquisition ever in India, as well as Rus-



sia's largest outbound one. It also deepens Russian and Indian economic ties that stretch back to the Soviet era.

## Iran sells light crude oil at \$51.39 in a week

**ENERGY TEHRAN** — The price of Iran's light crude oil stood level at \$51.39 during the week ended on August 11, a range similar to the previous week, IRNA reported on Tuesday.

According to the report, the country has sold its light crude at \$48.94 on average since the beginning of 2017 up to August 11.

The prices for Iranian heavy crude were reported to be \$49.35 in the mentioned period, registering a 42-percent increase compared to the preceding week.

Meanwhile, with \$0.31 rise from its previous week, Organization of Pe-

roleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)'s basket price stood at \$50.22 per barrel in the mentioned week.

OPEC's basket price was reported \$49.77 on average since the beginning of 2017 until August 11.

In line with the country's new oil policies, alongside increasing the production, Iran is conducting new projects to make its crude oil more attractive for global oil markets.

The oil ministry is developing new technologies in crude oil mixing to make new blends suitable for different refineries all around the world.

Iran exported some 2.6 million barrels of crude oil in July.

## Ceylon tea: A journey to the land of green magic

By **Ebrahim Fallahi**

When earlier this month I got an invitation to attend the 150th anniversary of Ceylon tea industry in Sri Lanka, I didn't know much about the country.

Despite the fact that "Ceylon" has always been a very popular brand of tea among Iranians and the idea of Ceylon tea was very familiar to me, I was really surprised by how little I knew about "Ceylon" itself.

During my weeklong journey I learned so much about the country and its tea industry. I think I was really blessed to get such an invitation to the land of green magic.

What comes below is a description of the knowledge I acquired during the short but definitely fruitful visit. First and foremost, a look into the history and development of the tea industry in Sri Lanka.

### Part one: History of Ceylon tea

When in 1867, the 17-year-old Scottish merchant James Taylor arrived in Sri Lanka to establish his very first tea plantation in Kandy (a city in central Sri Lanka), he would have never even imagined that this small farm of his will be the foundation of a great industry in a not too far future.

Before the tea era, coffee was the main agricultural-industrialized food item being grown in the island by the British, but due to some fungal diseases it never reached the commercial production that they expected. There were also some herbs and fruits which served just as food and/or to some extent traded for other goods inside the island.

Short after starting the plantation, it was clear that the island was one of the best places on earth for growing tea. In 1872 Taylor established his first tea factory in Loolkandura estate (in Kandy) and one year later in 1873, the first shipment of Ceylon tea, a consignment of 10 kg, was sent to London.

Soon after, plantations near Kandy began switching from coffee to tea and Kandy became the first tea estate established on the island. Nowadays over 188,000



hectares or approximately 4 percent of the country's land area is covered with tea plantations.

The Island of Serendipity, with its unique geographical and climatic characteristics showcases special qualities which are authentic to different regions in the island and therefore at different altitudes and under different climatic conditions, the produced teas feature different characteristics. Nowadays, there are seven main regions that produce tea in Sri Lanka namely Uda Pussellawa, Sabaragamuwa, Ruhuna, Nuwara Eliya, Dimbula, Uva, and Kandy.

Since the altitude plays a crucial role in forming soil characteristics and hence tea quality, there is a general categorization for the tea produced on the island, on this basis there are three main types of tea grown in Sri Lanka; there are high-grown, mid-grown and low-grown teas.

Generally, low-grown tea mainly originates from southern Sri Lanka, these teas are grown in plantations



from sea level up to 2,000 ft (610 m), mid-grown tea is produced at elevations of 2,000 to 4,000 ft (610 to 1,219 m) and finally above 4000 ft is considered high-grown tea.

All the mentioned seven regions fall under these three categories based on their height above the sea level. The tea produced in Kandy and Uva is considered mid-grown, Nuwara Eliya, Uda Pussellawa and Dimbula tea is high grown and Sabaragamuwa and Ruhuna are considered low-grown regions.

Of course, it should be mentioned that currently according to the market demand, various types of tea could be blended to obtain the required flavor and color.

Tea cultivated in Sri Lanka goes through several processes to get ready for export or consumption. For commercial manufacture, generally two leaves and a bud on top of the plant which have the most flavor and aroma are plucked mostly by women. Sri Lanka is one of the few countries where each tea leaf is picked by hand rather than by machines.



They believe since the women's hands are more delicate than men so the tea leaves plucked by their hands will be addressed to less stress and consequently have a higher quality after value addition.

Ceylon tea undergoes strict quality and maintenance testing and research processes by the Tea Research Institute (TRI) of Sri Lanka and the Tea Analysis Laboratory both during the cultivation and after production. The laboratory conducts a variety of physical, chemical, microbial and quality tests on the tea before it enters auction to be sold and exported.

For the time being, Ceylon tea is exported to several countries all around the world and it is a very well-known brand among tea consumers especially in the Middle East.

Sri Lanka holds 18 percent of the global tea exports share and the country is at the time the biggest exporter of black tea in the world accounting for seven percent of the world's tea production. During 2016, the country exported 288.7 million kilograms (m/kg) of tea with a total value of about \$1.2 billion to the world markets.

According to Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC), the export value of Ceylon tea has contracted in last three years due to several reasons including macroeconomic instabilities and structurally lower oil prices in key export markets.

However, there has been some improvement in exports to non-traditional markets such as China lately; Sri Lanka is exporting about 7 million kg of black tea to China.

Sri Lanka recently celebrated the 150th anniversary of its tea industry which is marked by the establishment of the James Taylor's tea plantation. The celebration comes at a time when the removal of West-imposed sanctions on Iran once again brings back a main trade partner for Sri Lanka and this could be a turning point for Ceylon tea, helping it back to its top position in the world's black tea market.

(Photos: *Hurriyet/Hasim Sezgin Kiliç*)  
To be continued...

## China's 'big four' banks raise billions for Belt and Road deals: sources

**HONG KONG (Reuters)** — China's largest state-owned commercial banks are raising tens of billions of dollars to fund the country's Belt and Road investment push, according to people familiar with the matter, bolstering Beijing's ambitions as private capital pulls back.

The people said China Construction Bank Corp (CCB), the country's second-biggest bank by assets, was raising at least 100 billion yuan (11.6 billion pounds) for a fund to specifically finance

Belt and Road investment. The people added CCB was raising cash onshore and offshore, and has already been running roadshows with investors.

Bank of China (BOC), another major state bank, aims to raise around 20 billion yuan for a similar fund, according to two of the people.

The cash, raised via banks' private equity or other investment platforms, is part of a broader push sponsored

by China's central bank to use onshore yuan capital for offshore investments, including Belt and Road deals, according to one of the people.

The other two of China's "big four" banks - Industrial and Commercial Bank of China Ltd and Agricultural Bank of China Ltd - are considering similar fundraising plans, two of the people said.

The people could not be identified as they are not authorized to speak to the media.

The four banks and the People's Bank of China did not immediately respond to Reuters's requests for comment.

Chinese President Xi Jinping in May pledged a \$124 billion funding boost to help his plan to build a modern Silk Road, connecting China with new and old trading partners. He also said China would encourage financial institutions to expand their overseas yuan fund businesses to the tune of 300 billion yuan.

## The next oil price spike may cripple the industry

Two diametrically opposed views dominate the current debate about where the oil price is heading. On the one hand, there is the view that the price of oil will be "lower for longer", or even "lower forever", as the electrification of transport will eat away at oil demand more and more while, at the same time, technological innovation (shale in particular) will greatly increase economically recoverable resources. On the other hand, however, there is the view that the price of oil is set to explode, primarily due to underinvestment in the upkeep of brownfields, development of greenfields, and exploration for new resources.

Our view is that most likely, both will happen. How it is possible for the price of oil to go both up and not up, and what would that mean for the oil industry? We will explain.

### Why the price of oil actually isn't that low

Contrary to general perception, the current price of oil is not very low. In fact, at a little over \$50 per barrel, oil is trading slightly higher than its historic, inflation adjusted average of \$47 per barrel, which in and off itself calls into the question the "spike" view. If the period 2001 – 2014 was a clear historic abnormality, why should one expect the price to return those levels?

Furthermore, we agree with the people in the lower for longer / forever camp that electric vehicles (EVs) will eventually offer better overall value to consumers than internal combustion engine vehicles (ICEVs) can, and that this will have a big impact on oil demand. (In fact, we have been highlighting this threat to the energy industry in articles since 2015, for example here, here, here and here.) However, two important things need to be considered in this regard.

The first is that at present EVs do not yet outperform ICEVs comprehensively. While they offer a smoother ride, more passenger and storage space per square foot, and less noise and environmental pollution at a lower "cost of operation" (fuel and maintenance), in terms of "cost of ownership" EVs can yet compete with ICEVs. Excluding subsidies the difference is said to be about \$16,000



in the US, \$18,500 in Germany and \$13,200 in France, despite Tesla and GM reportedly selling their main EV models at a loss.

The second is that under the best of circumstances it will take the EV industry close to another decade to close this cost of ownership gap. (Why it is not a given that this will be achieved we explained here.)

Based on this, our assessment is that the electrification of transport will only slow down oil demand growth during the 2020s. It is after that, during the 2030s and 2040s, that the oil industry should expect to experience the really painful impacts.

### Why the price of oil could spike before that

That leaves the period until the end of the 2020s, during which we believe overall oil demand will continue to grow (albeit slower than before).

Supply forecasts developed on this basis hold that more 20 million barrels per day of new production will need to be brought on stream until 2026 for natural production declines and demand growth to be properly addressed. According to WoodMackenzie, only half that quantity can be delivered by projects that are currently underway. The other half will need to come from still-to-be-launched projects (Pre-FID). But, Wood-Mackenzie says, many of these still-to-be-launched projects are uneconomical at oil prices in the \$50s per barrel, meaning that they should not be expected to get the all-clear anytime soon. Since (non-U.S. shale) oilfield development projects can easily require 5 to 8 years to be completed, all this means that the seeds for a supply crunch in the period 2020 – 2022 are currently being sowed.

Of course, a number of things could

happen that would prevent such an oil supply crunch, and thus an oil price spike. For example, oil demand growth could turn out to be less than expected at present, as energy demand growth already disappointed in 2014, 2015 and 2016 and could well disappoint again in 2017. On the supply side, BP and Statoil have also proven that project re-engineering can slash substantial amounts of off greenfield development costs, as a consequence of which more projects could end up receiving the go-ahead than presently is held possible.

But again, other "risks" such as the U.S. shale "growth over profits" mindset coming to an end, support the oil price spike theory, which leads us to conclude that in all, a tightening of the global oil market is indeed the most realistic expectation for the near future.

### Why an oil price spike would be bad for the industry

If indeed the price of oil were to break through \$60 per barrel again during 2018, and spike in the years thereafter (\$80 per barrel? \$100 perhaps?), the "cost of operation" benefit of EVs would be strengthened further, closing (at least part of) the ICEV advantage in "cost of ownership". In other words, an oil price spike would speed up the electrification of transportation, in particular in the Passenger Vehicle segment, as a consequence of which oil demand would peak earlier – not towards the end of the 2020s but perhaps during the middle of the 2020s already.

Those with an interest in a long term future for the oil industry, such as the nations that own most of the oil still in the ground, therefore have an interest in preventing the oil price from going up too much. (Which in a way is ironic, since many of them are the ones working the hardest to push up the price.)

For a future oil price spike would not indicate a sign of recovery of the oil industry. It would more of a "last gasp" by the industry, establishing not much more than a last opportunity for those who do not own the lowest cost resources to offload their oil related assets for a favorable price.

(Source: oilprice.com)



### The 1st Invitation for Prequalification of EPC+F Contractors for Shiraz Metro Line 2



Shiraz Municipality (Shiraz Urban Railway Organization) intends to award a project based on Act No. 1068618 dated 02/03/2017 of Iran Planning & Management Org. with the following specifications to the companies qualified by Iran Planning & Management Org. observing Item C of Article 12 of tendering law approved by the parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2004 as well as the executive regulation of the aforesaid item (Act No. H33560T/84136 dated 8/10/2006 of the Board of Ministers) and the addendum No. H37194T/22225 dated 7/5/2007:

#### 1- Client - Name & Address:

Shiraz Municipality- Shiraz Urban Railway Organization, Dehbozorgi Shahidan Bridge, Shahid Avini St., Khabarnegar St., Shiraz, Iran. Post Code: 71936-89711  
Tel.: 071-36292111-15, Fax: 071-36272092

#### 2- Client's Consultant for Tender Procedure, Name & Address:

Mahab Ghodss – Rahsaz Tarh, J.V.  
No.17, Takharestan Alley, Vahid Dastgerdy St., Tehran, Iran. Post Code: 19187-81185

#### 3- Tender Subject:

Engineering, Procurement, Construction, Commissioning and Trial Operation of Shiraz Metro Line 2 via Foreign Financing under EPC+F contract with partnership of Iranian and international contractors so that minimum 65% of the work to be accomplished through the Iranian internal capacities. The project includes a subway line with the approximate length of 15 km and 13 stations consisting of tunnels, stations, parking and depot area, pavement, track-laying, specific equipment, etc. By and large, all activities required for the construction, operation and financing of Shiraz Metro Line 2 (except for the rolling stock procurement) are included in the contractor's responsibilities.

#### 4- Minimum Estimated Required Financing: about 550 million USD

#### 5- Location: Fars Province – Shiraz

#### 6- Construction Duration: 36 months

#### 7- Qualification Certificate of the Contractor and Consultant:

- Constitution of Iranian (to possess Grade I certificate of design and construction for rolling stock transportation with credible name record in SAJAR) and qualified foreign contractors
- Or constitution of contractors and consultants partnership group under the following (1) and (2) conditions:
  - (1) Constitution of Iranian (to possess Grade I certificate of construction for rolling stock transportation with credible name record in SAJAR) and qualified foreign contractors
  - (2) Consultant possessing Grade I certificate of consultancy services for rolling stock transportation or introduce a qualified foreign consultant

#### 8- Date, Deadline, Price and the Place to Receive the Qualification Documents:

The qualified companies may deposit 1,000,000 Rials in bank account no. 67879278/68 – SHEBA No. IR71012000000006787927868 – Mellat Bank – Vahid Dastgerdy Branch – in the name of Mahab Ghodss Consulting Engineering Co. within official hours since 26/08/2017 till 30/08/2017 to purchase/ receive the documents from the contract office of the aforesaid client's consultant. The qualification documents would only be submitted to the representatives having a credible letter of introduction from contractor company with authorized stamp and signature, mentioning the subject of tender.

#### 9- Date, Deadline and the Place to Submit the Qualification Documents:

Having received and studied the qualification documents, the contractors shall complete, stamp, sign and envelop the documents and submit them to the secretariat of the Client's Consultant and get a receipt until 14/10/2017, 4:00 p.m.

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## Failing all tests of the presidency

By Charles M. Blow

We are leaderless. America doesn't have a president. America has a man in the White House holding the spot, and wreaking havoc as he waits for the day when a real president arrives to replace him.

Donald Trump is many things — most of them despicable — but the leader of a nation he is not. He is not a great man. Hell, he isn't even a good man.

Donald Trump is a man of flawed character and a moral cavity. He cannot offer moral guidance because he has no moral compass. He is too small to see over his inflated ego.

Trump has personalized the presidency in unprecedented ways — making every battle and every war about his personal feelings. Did the person across the street or around the world say good or bad things about him? Does the media treat him fairly? Is someone in his coterie of corruption outshining him or casting negative light on him?

His interests center on the self; country be damned.

What some have always known about Trump, others are slowly coming to realize, and with great shock and horror. The presidency is revealing the essence of the man and that essence is dark.

What America saw clearly in Trump's disastrous handling of the violence in Charlottesville was a Nazi/white nationalist apologist if not sympathizer, a reactionary rage-aholic, a liar, and a person who has absolutely no sense or understanding of history.

### Accommodation of racists

By claiming that there were some "very fine people" among the extremists marching in Charlottesville, the president made a profound declaration: The accommodation of racists is his creed.

As Susan Bro, whose daughter, Heather Heyer, was killed in Charlottesville, said last week, "You can't wash this one away by shaking my hand and saying, 'I'm sorry.'" Heather Heyer was killed when James Alex Fields Jr. used a speeding car to mow down a crowd of protesters who had gathered to rebuke the Nazis and white nationalists.

According to The Chicago Tribune, one of Fields's high school teachers said he once "wrote a three-page homework paper that extolled Nazi ideology and the prowess of the Führer's armed forces," and that even before then, the teacher said, "he had been well aware of Fields's racist and anti-Semitic beliefs from private discussions he had with Fields during his junior year."

And even worse, The Tribune reported:

"At least four times when the boy was in the eighth and ninth grades, Florence police were summoned to his home, mostly by his frantic mother, Samantha Bloom, an I.T. specialist. It was just the two of them living together, and young James, among other incidents, was reported to have spat in her face, smacked her head with a phone and frightened her with a foot-long knife, according to records of the 911 calls. Neighbors, in interviews, similarly described a troubled youth who treated his mother cruelly."

This was no fine person, and no person who walked shoulder-to-shoulder with him is a fine person. There are no good Nazis. There are no good white nationalist accommodators. There are no good people who see racists and don't want to retch.

But somehow, the person we now call "president" saw what happened in Charlottesville, saw that a car had been used to kill Heyer, and still found it appropriate to say that there were bad people on "both sides."

He cleaned that up in a teleprompter speech, but the next day returned to the defense of the indefensible, this time with even more verve and venom.

He apparently felt that the media had unfairly condemned him for his original remarks and he was going to be the counter-puncher and strike back at the media. Again, it was all about him, not us. But when he lashed out at the media, the cameras were rolling. There were no prepared remarks. There was no teleprompter. Trump stood exposed and in the raw, the deepest, truest thoughts of his soul erupting from his face, and what came out were bitterness and bile.

He was not there to heal the nation or to uplift it. He was there for personal exoneration and redemption. He wasn't there to plead the case that America could rise on the wings of its better angels. He was there to defend the demons.

But, when one attempts to do a thing that can't be done — that shouldn't be done — one must employ the tools of deception: obfuscation, revisionism and flat-out lying.

Trump said that he had not initially condemned both sides because he wanted to wait to get all the facts, because that's what he likes to do. Lies.

On Saturday, when tens of thousands of protesters turned out to counter a small group of radical racists, Trump's first response was to tweet: "Looks like many anti-police agitators in Boston. Police are looking tough and smart! Thank you."

This man doesn't wait for facts. This man doesn't care about facts, or much else for that matter. He only cares about himself, his image and his positioning.

America is functioning, barely, without a functioning president. Trump is failing every test of the office. How frightening is that?

(Source: The NYT)

# For Trump's generals, this is personal

By Peter Bergen

The seriously deteriorating situation in Afghanistan -- and what to do about it -- is a deeply personal issue for Trump's top national security advisers and generals.

In the months after the 9/11 attacks, Trump's secretary of defense, retired Marine four-star General James Mattis, led the deepest assault from a ship in Marine Corps history near the key Taliban city of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

Trump's National Security Adviser Lt. General H.R. McMaster served in Afghanistan, leading an anti-corruption task force there in 2010.

Trump's top military adviser, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Marine Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, was the commanding general in Afghanistan in 2013.

And General John Kelly, the retired four-star Marine general who is now Trump's chief of staff, lost a son in Afghanistan, 29-year-old Marine 1st Lt. Robert Kelly who was killed by a landmine there in 2010.

Four days after his son's death, in a speech in St. Louis, Kelly said that the United States' war against terrorists will go on for a very long time. "The American military has handed our ruthless enemy defeat after defeat, but it will go on for years, if not decades, before this curse has been eradicated," he said at the time.

### A new strategy

So when it came to developing a new strategy for Afghanistan, the generals brought a degree of commitment to the longest war in U.S. history that their commander in chief, at least initially, did not share.

In 2013, for example, Trump tweeted, "Let's get out of Afghanistan. Our troops are being killed by the Afghanis we train and we waste billions there. Nonsense! Rebuild the USA."

The generals had a different view of what was at stake.

Generals Mattis, Kelly and Dunford have fought alongside each other since the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Then-Major General Mattis, then-Brigadier General Kelly and then-Colonel Dunford led the Marine force that went into Iraq in March 2003 during the initial U.S. invasion of the country.

All of them experienced the visceral sense that U.S. forces leaving Iraq at the end of 2011 helped pave the way for the collapse of the Iraqi army in the face of ISIS's campaign in Iraq in 2014.

None of them wanted the same scenario to play out in Afghanistan, where the Taliban is at its strongest point since 9/11 and a virulent local affiliate of ISIS has established itself.

These Marine generals also know how hard-fought were the battles in the southern Afghan province of Helmand, where 349 Marines died in a



Trump's national security advisers and generals with deep experience in Afghanistan had advised against the complete withdrawal that was Trump's first instinct and also against the notion of using contractors as substitutes for U.S. soldiers.

campaign that began there in 2009 and ended in 2014.

Now 300 Marines are back in Helmand because the Taliban have recently regained territory the Marines had seized there several years ago. The Taliban also control or contest about a third of the Afghan population, around ten million people.

Monday night President Trump delivered an unusual prime-time address from Fort Myer in Arlington, Virginia about what his Afghanistan and larger South Asia strategy will be.

The well-delivered, well-written and well-argued speech largely reflected the consensus views of the generals and of the American national security apparatus.

As President Trump conceded in the speech, "My original instinct was to pull out. And historically, I like following my instincts."

But Trump acknowledged that "a hasty withdrawal would create a vacuum for terrorists, including ISIS and Al Qaeda, would instantly fill just as happened before Sept. 11. And as we know, in 2011, America hastily and mistakenly withdrew from Iraq. As a result, our hard-won gains slipped back into the hands of terrorists."

Trump also had stern words for Pakistan, a common theme of the American military: "Pakistan often gives safe haven

to agents of chaos, violence and terror."

### The American commitment

Trump also made clear the American commitment to Afghanistan will be conditions based: "A core pillar of our new strategy is a shift from a time-based approach to one based on conditions. I've said it many times how counterproductive it is for the United States to announce in advance the dates we intend to begin or end military options."

This was an implicit criticism of the Obama administration's approach to Afghanistan. President Obama surged tens of thousands of additional U.S. troops into Afghanistan in 2009, but he also simultaneously announced their withdrawal date. The Trump administration isn't planning to repeat what it sees as a grave mistake.

But he also said, "America will work with the Afghan government as long as we see determination and progress. However, our commitment is not unlimited, and our support is not a blank check."

Trump's national security advisers and generals with deep experience in Afghanistan had advised against the complete withdrawal that was Trump's first instinct and also against the notion of using contractors as substitutes for U.S. soldiers.

Both these options were on the table as the Trump national security team dis-

cussed the options in Afghanistan.

Those options were being pushed, in part, by Trump's chief strategist Stephen Bannon, who was forced out of the White House on Friday.

Bannon didn't attend the final war cabinet meeting on Afghanistan that Trump hosted at Camp David on Friday.

A decision to use American contractors in battlefield roles would face a number of legal obstacles, not least that they would be subject to Afghan laws.

For these reasons, privatizing the Afghan war and outsourcing it to contractors or withdrawing completely were really non-starters during the war cabinet's deliberations on Afghanistan.

The United States' key strategic goal in Afghanistan is to prevent the country from being taken over by terrorist groups such as the Taliban, al-Qaeda and ISIS, allowing the country to be once again used as a launching pad for attacks against the United States and its allies, as it was on September 11, 2001.

So far, that goal has cost the lives of 2,403 American soldiers.

Trump's top national security advisers and generals understand both the stakes and the costs of the Afghan War well, because they have been personally deeply affected by it. In the end, Trump came around to their view.

(Source: CNN)

## Britain's one-sided special relationship with America

The UK has little to show for its flattery of President Trump

By Janan Ganesh

When Theresa May visited Washington in January, she mentioned the special relationship more times than her hosts spelt her name right in the official schedule. Fielding questions on President Donald Trump's refugee ban in Ankara later in the week, she equivocated and seemed to freeze. The prime minister was still six months from an electoral fall but history will record those back-to-back trips as the first telling clue to her inadequacies. But what, she is entitled to ask, was she meant to do? Once Britain voted to leave the EU — against her wishes, however quietly asserted — it could not contemplate a rupture with the U.S. president, too. There was something distasteful about the fringe Eurosceptic who cheered Trump's rise as a vindication of their cause, but something hard-headed as well.

If he saw a world tilting from globalist technocrats to sovereign nations, with Britain at the leading edge, the least we could do is humor him for the sake of a trade agreement. There was no shame in the UK's mission to profit from the Trump presidency. There is some shame, with eight months of evidence, in the pretense that it is going anywhere. Those Eurosceptic assumed two things of the new president: a coherent view of the outside world and the political wherewithal to impose it on a reluctant American establishment. Time has exposed both as wishful thoughts. His worldview is a farago of irreconcilable instincts: autarky but also commercial pragmatism; America-first but also action in Syria. The mix makes him hard to court, even for diplomats as steeped in ambiguities as the British. His one consistency — the worship of strength — does not help a medium-sized nation with a frail prime minister. Where there is coherence, it is of a nationalist strain that is not much easier to work with.

### Brexit's biggest admirers

Brexit's biggest admirers in the Trump team, says one member of May's cabinet, are also the keenest to screen



British diplomats always backed America's policy establishment to win in the end, if only because — unlike Brexit — the Trump presidency is time-limited and reversible.

America from trade. Where does that leave Britain and its neo-Elizabethan dream of seafaring commerce? You cannot eat a pat on the back. If the first of Britain's two bets flopped quickly, the second has taken a while. Last week, Pippa Malmgren, an official under President George W. Bush who now advises Liam Fox, the British trade secretary, said Trump "does not know how to operate the U.S. government". Her bluntness is corroborated by events: his loss of staff, the growing assertiveness of more conventional voices. British diplomats always backed America's policy establishment to win in the end, if only because — unlike Brexit — the Trump presidency is time-limited and reversible. But if we are in the first phase of a gradual restora-

tion of American orthodoxy, especially in foreign affairs, then Britain might be the one western nation with little to celebrate. It has nothing to show for its flattery of Trump, including that promised state visit to London, than some reputational damage. It will then also have to reckon with the pragmatism of old-fashioned U.S. statecraft without recourse to its own continental bloc. It will have to reckon with the America that put Britain on the naughty step when it invaded the Suez Canal.

The America that favored Bonn and then Berlin over London as its point of European contact as the cold war ended. The America that urged British commitment to the European project and did what it could to influence the referendum in favor of membership. The America that has sectoral interests in agriculture and industry that should bring Mr Fox out in a cold sweat. This is Britain's bind: Trump is not the cash cow that some had hoped, but the alternative is no soft touch either. We face a fight for relevance. If any good comes from this, it should be a loss of illusions: a willingness to see America as a normal country, not as a benefactor.

There is something creepier about the phrase "special relationship" than the asymmetry of its usage. It is the amount of store it puts in bloodlines, as though earthly differences must yield to shared ancestry. (Hence the term "cousins", again more common in Westminster than in Washington). The largest ethnic group in America are the Germans. If Angela Merkel, Germany's chancellor, built her Atlantic policy on that fact, we would question her grip on reason.

Yet Britain still makes a fuss of lineages that involve a small share of the American population. Some of the most stone-faced in their dealings with the British were Wasps: John Foster Dulles, Dean Acheson, George Bush senior. We hold a candle in the face of all these rebuffs. And we call the Americans emotional.

(Source: FT)

# The Saudi-Israeli Alliance

By Eric Zuesse

Two of the U.S. government's supposed allies are supposedly not allies of each other but enemies of each other, but, away from the glare of the 'news' media, they actually work together with each other to control, by means of their secret actual alliance with one-another, a substantial, if not the major, part of U.S. foreign policies — especially regarding Iran, Russia, Syria, Israel, Palestinians, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Turkey, but much else besides. These two secret allies of each other, who largely determine U.S. foreign policies, are the Saud family, and the government of Israel.

Saudi Arabia is a fundamentalist-Sunni dictatorship in which the royal Saud family actually own the country including its oil company, which is the world's largest, and in which country the nation's center of its Shia population is bombed to smithereens if and when that ruling family's appointed king gets the whim to do so, which he recently did — but the U.S. press didn't even report it, because 'Saudi Arabia is an ally of the United States.'

Israel is the apartheid regime of official Jews against official Palestinians (non-Jewish native Arabs in that land), and it's ruled on behalf of U.S. and American billionaires, some of whom aren't even Jewish themselves but merely far-rightwing American billionaires (some of whom call themselves liberals, even while they support their own selective type of racism). Those billionaires (regardless of their religion) own the 'news' media and most of the successful politicians, not only in Israel, but also in America. Some of them have dual citizenships, they're citizens simultaneously in both countries — something that shouldn't even be allowed, anywhere, because it means, by definition, split loyalties, which makes any such person an alien agent; and any refusal by such a person to cancel the other citizenship ought to be taken to constitute a hostile act. Every nation has legitimate national-security concerns — especially when a dual citizen is a billionaire and consequently far more powerful than a mere regular citizen is: the billionaire can buy favorable press-coverage for any political agent he chooses.

The Saud family and the Israeli government are deep allies of one-another, especially because both of them aim to conquer or destroy the Shia nation of Iran and Shia Muslims in general, such as in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon.

The alliance between the Saud family and the Israeli government has an enormous impact shaping U.S. foreign policies toward Iran and toward any ally of Iran such as Syria, and even toward allies of Iran, such as Russia (which is allied with Syria). Also affected, but to a lesser extent, are U.S. policies regarding allies and enemies of the countries that are within the circle of those nations of first concern; for example, Pakistan is very tightly allied with Saudi Arabia, while in the neighboring and increasingly fundamentalist-Hindu nation India, "educated, well off/cultured Hindus are falling easy victims to Islamophobia", and, as a result, "civil war for a Muslim-free India" is drawing closer, so that, even if today's tensions between Pakistan and India don't produce a war between those two, India could become more favorable toward Shiite Iran, because most of India's Muslims are Sunnis and thus are favorably inclined toward Saud-allied Pakistan, where the relatively few (Pew estimates at only 6% of Pakistan's Muslims are) Shiites have commonly complained of persecution that's by, or permitted by, the government. Thus, the internal Muslim, Sunni-v-Shiite, competition, has intensified not only Russia-v-U.S. tensions, but also India-v-Pakistan tensions. And, so, when the nation of Saudi Arabia was created in 1744 by an eternal pact between the Saud family and the Wahhab cler-



**Israel is the apartheid regime of official Jews against official Palestinians (non-Jewish native Arabs in that land), and it's ruled on behalf of U.S. and American billionaires**

gy to eliminate Shia Islam, that aggressive intent exists today, and is now clearly being spread even outside the Islamic world, and so it affects big-power relations, especially between U.S. and Russia.

Both the Saud family who own Saudi Arabia, and the Israeli aristocracy who control Israel's government, are obsessive in their shared hatred of Iran. (The origins and reasons behind those hatreds are vastly different in Israel than in the Saud family, but the hatreds have the same target: Shia. This shared obsession is sufficient in order to unite them.)

The Saud family have one essential tool to control the U.S. federal government, and it's their ally Israel's government, which controls the U.S. government to do everything possible to weaken if not obliterate Iran. Whereas European nations aren't rabidly anti-Iranian, the U.S. government is, and one big reason for that is Israel's control over the U.S. Congress, and over most of America's 'news' media.

The control of the U.S. government that's exercised by Israel's government has been amply demonstrated in many ways:

In 1967, Israel unprovokedly attacked the USS Liberty, slaughtering 34 of our sailors and injuring 172 others; here, with my emphasized parts highlighted in boldface, is an excerpt from the long-suppressed official investigation into it:

**Findings Of The Independent Commission Of Inquiry Into The Israeli Attack On The USS Liberty**

1. That on June 8, 1967, after eight hours of aerial surveillance, Israel launched a two-hour air and naval attack against the USS Liberty, the world's most sophisticated intelligence ship, inflicting 34 dead and 172 wounded American servicemen (a casualty rate of seventy percent, in a crew of 294);

2. That the Israeli air attack lasted approximately 25 minutes, during which time unmarked Israeli aircraft dropped napalm canisters on the Liberty's bridge, and fired 30mm cannons and rockets into our ship, causing 821 holes, more than 100 of which were rocket-size; survivors estimate 30 or more sorties were flown over the ship by a minimum of 12 attacking Israeli planes which were jamming all five American emergency radio channels;

3. That the torpedo boat attack involved not only the firing of torpedoes, but the machine-gunning

of the Liberty's firefighters and stretcher-bearers as they struggled to save their ship and crew; the Israeli torpedo boats later returned to machine-gun at close range three of the Liberty's life rafts that had been lowered into the water by survivors to rescue the most seriously wounded;

4. That there is compelling evidence that Israel's attack was a deliberate attempt to destroy an American ship and kill her entire crew; evidence of such intent is supported by statements from Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Undersecretary of State George Ball, former CIA director Richard Helms, former NSA directors Lieutenant General William Odom, USA (Ret.), Admiral Bobby Ray Inman, USN (Ret.), and Marshal Carter; former NSA deputy directors Oliver Kirby and Major General John Morrison, USAF (Ret.); and former Ambassador Dwight Porter, U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon in 1967;

5. That in attacking the USS Liberty, Israel committed acts of murder against American servicemen and an act of war against the United States;

6. That fearing conflict with Israel, the White House deliberately prevented the U.S. Navy from coming to the defense of the Liberty by recalling Sixth Fleet military rescue support while the ship was under attack; evidence of the recall of rescue aircraft is supported by statements of Captain Joe Tully, Commanding Officer of the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga, and Rear Admiral Lawrence Geis, the Sixth Fleet carrier division commander, at the time of the attack; never before in American naval history has a rescue mission been cancelled when an American ship was under attack;

7. That although the Liberty was saved from almost certain destruction through the heroic efforts of the ship's Captain, William L. McGonagle (MOH), and his brave crew, surviving crewmembers were later threatened with "court-martial, imprisonment or worse" if they exposed the truth; and were abandoned by their own government;

8. That due to the influence of Israel's powerful supporters in the United States, the White House deliberately covered up the facts of this attack from the American people;

9. That due to continuing pressure by the pro-Israel lobby in the United States, this attack remains the only serious naval incident that has never been thoroughly investigated by Congress; to this day, no surviving crewmember has been permitted to officially and publicly testify about the attack;

10. That there has been an official cover-up without precedent in American naval history.

**The alliance between the Saud family and the Israeli government has an enormous impact shaping U.S. foreign policies toward Iran and toward any ally of Iran such as Syria**

## Catalonia Violence: Terrorism or False Flags?

By Stephen Lendman

Numerous earlier incidents in America and Europe reported as terrorism turned out to be false flags.

Was Catalonia violence in Barcelona and Cambrils more of the same? It's too soon to know, wise to be suspicious.

On Thursday, a white van, traveling at high speed, struck pedestrians and cyclists in Barcelona's Las Ramblas district, killing a dozen or more, injuring scores of others.

Conflicting reports left unclear if the driver was dead or alive, one report saying he fled on foot, another saying he was killed, regional police chief Josep Lluís Tàperó unable to confirm if he was shot dead.

Witnesses described panic and chaos. Hours later in Cambrils, a seaside resort town around 70 miles from Barcelona, a black Audi sedan rammed more pedestrians, one person killed, others injured.

Reports said five attackers were lethally shot by police. The Barcelona attack was the deadliest in Spain since explosions on four Madrid commuter trains left 192 dead, around 1,800 injured, a false



flag incident reported as terrorism.

An ISIS statement claiming responsibility for the Barcelona incident remains unverified. Yet it made headlines, likely getting most people to believe it. Anyone can call themselves ISIS and claim responsibility. The statement is meaningless.

Incidents like Barcelona, Cambrils and numerous similar earlier ones are used to

stoke fear, erode civil liberties, and justify unjustifiable aggression on targeted nations.

They're usually strategically timed for an intended purpose, designed to capture world headlines, conceal responsibility of the perpetrator, and point fingers at convenient patsies.

Passports or other IDs are usually found, automatically raising red flag sus-

picious of something not as reported.

Following an earlier false flag attack, a cartoon on independent media showed an individual dressed in black, a suicide jacket strapped to his chest, his finger on the triggering mechanism, saying "s..t, I forgot my passport" — mocking the absurdity of a criminal leaving identifying documents at the scene of the crime, making capture all the easier.

The 9/11 mother of all false flags revealed a treasure trove of information, showing what happened was other than the official narrative.

Most obvious was how could a handful of terrorists outwit America's 16 intelligence agencies, including sophisticated NSA eavesdropping on anyone or anything suspicious.

Discussing the Catalonia incidents, Michel Chossudovsky said

"(r)ports concerning the Barcelona attack, reveal exactly the same feature of passports and IDs left behind which occurred in Manchester, Paris, Nice, London, New York, and now Barcelona..."

Suspects are usually lethally shot, not arrested. Dead men tell no tales. The official narrative alone is reported, time and again proven false.

## Another Palestinian deported from U.S.: No homeland

By Barbara Nimri Aziz

Rasmea Odeh is either on a plane out of her country. Or she's in a federal holding cell in Detroit or New York awaiting deportation from the USA.

Odeh's departure marks the end of a bizarre life, yet one that can evoke admiration. As a young Palestinian Odeh fought against Israeli oppression. Now after a valiant legal battle with many supporters in this, her new homeland, she is departing (by force).

Some Americans may recall with satisfaction their support for Russian dissidents in the 1950s and 1960s when the Soviet Union exiled its critics. If they were not sent to Siberia, opponents of the USSR were denied residence in their own country, involuntarily banished. However much the U.S. and UK welcomed them and even lionized them, banishment is a hard punishment to bear. Today's Russia no longer metes out such penalties; which is not to say Russia is completely tolerant of dissent.

In the U.S., one hardly hears of Americans being banished from these hallowed shores. However rare, it does occur. Often Palestinian Americans are the target of this injustice, with Israeli authorities (somehow, usually) involved in legal cases brought against those Palestinians in US courts.



Perhaps the most widely publicized case is that of Professor Sami Al-Arian. Starting in 1993, after a long, noble struggle against false accusations, years in jail, support from a campaign determinedly led by his own family, continued harassment from the US government, Al-Arian finally succumbed and left the country in 2015. Before him, his associate Mazen Al-Najjar also spent years attempting to secure justice before he too was deported. [I myself interviewed both men on several occasions between 1993 and 2003 on Radio Tahrir. While Al-Arian's case is well documented, Al-Najjar's history is almost completely scrubbed from the public record.] Both men were brave advocates for U.S. justice and for Palestinian rights.

Rasmea Odeh's treatment is a troubling reminder that this happens to U.S. citizens who have never committed a crime in this country and never threatened anyone in the U.S.

Odeh is the latest Palestinian banished from this country. Now 69, she moved to the U.S. (where her father resided) and settled in the Chicago area in the 1990's. She was pressed to leave her home in the Occupied Territories like countless Palestinians over the past half century, dispossessed people who lost homes, family and hope. They left under duress in search of peace and dignity.

In 1994 Odeh applied for an immigration visa, later for U.S. citizenship. Unlike many immigrants, she dared to become a community leader. Any immigrant, whatever their background, who arrives here quickly learns to keep their head down, their mouth shut—civil rights-be-damned. Just join the American dream for a job and a house.

The long arm of Israeli injustice followed Odeh however, and perhaps because of her visibility, her earlier experience with Israeli authorities was disclosed. (Many years earlier, Odeh was convicted for involvement in an attack on Israelis. She was released after serving ten years in a prisoner exchange.) Her American crime? She'd failed to report that conviction in her immigration application, a serious oversight. So when her history came to light in 2013, U.S. authorities brought a charge of "immigration fraud" against Odeh. In her defense a major campaign was launched, and in 2015 the conviction was set aside. Forces determined to destroy her stepped up the attack however and she faced yet another trial, set for May 2017. Although there was considerable public support for her, in March, Rasmea's defense team advised a plea deal. She would serve no jail time, but her citizenship was revoked and she'd be deported. While this conclusion was hardly noted in the regular US press, the Jewish press, in USA and in Israel, hailed the decision, using the news to highlight her 1969 terrorism conviction and to draw attention to the ubiquitous threat of Palestinian terrorism.

Such tactics are part of the ever present Israeli campaign coursing through U.S. culture, a threat that smothers dissent, intimidates and drives academics out of the universities, and in response to the success of the BDS movement, is pressing ahead with S. 720, a bill in the U.S. Congress, to prohibit Americans who will not countenance Israeli injustice, from participating in any boycott of Israeli products and institutions.

All are reasons to support vocal critics including journalists, and American community leaders like Linda Sarsour.

There will always be funds for shelter-less and malnourished children in refugee camps. Today, in the face of stepped up Israeli surveillance and political pressures, immense courage is needed to pursue justice for Palestine and free speech on behalf of their rights. Many Americans (including journalists), nameless and known figures—Arabs and non-Arabs— have moved into obscurity after years of threats and intimidation. Somehow new champions emerge to continue a just cause.

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# How to prevent infections

A few simple precautions can help you avoid getting sick with an infectious disease

By Lisa Drayer

Infections are caused by microscopic organisms known as pathogens—bacteria, viruses, fungi, or parasites—that enter the body, multiply, and interfere with normal functions. Infectious diseases are a leading cause of illness and death in the United States and around the world. For certain people—particularly those with underlying illnesses like heart disease or cancer, those who have serious injuries, or those who are taking medications that weaken the immune system—it's more difficult to avoid getting sick with an infection. Living in an affluent country like the United States, the threat we face from deadly viruses, bacteria, and parasites can seem remote, but these infectious microbes are ever present among us, according to Dr. Michael Klompas, writing in the Harvard Medical School Special Health Report Viruses and Disease. Dr. Klompas is an infectious disease specialist at Harvard-affiliated Brigham and Women's Hospital. However, for most healthy people, following a few basic principles can go a long way in helping to prevent infections.

## Understanding how infections are transmitted can help you avoid getting sick

Not long ago, no one understood that infectious diseases were caused by tiny organisms that moved from person to person. Even now, although we know that microscopic living microbes cause disease, how they do so is not always obvious. But we do know that most microbes enter through openings in the body—our noses, mouths, ears, anuses, and genital passages. They can also be transmitted through our skin through insect or animal bites. The best way to prevent infections is to block pathogens from entering the body.

## Good hygiene: the primary way to prevent infections

The first line of defense is to keep



germs at bay by following good personal hygiene habits. Prevent infection before it begins and avoid spreading it to others with these easy measures.

- Wash your hands well. You probably wash your hands after using the bathroom, before preparing or eating food, and after gardening or other dirty tasks. You should also wash up after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; feeding or stroking your pet; or visiting or caring for a sick person. Wet your hands thoroughly. Lather up with soap or cleanser, and rub it into the palms and backs of your hands and your wrists. Be sure to clean your fingertips, under your nails and between your fingers. Rinse under running water. Dry your hands and wrists thoroughly.
- Cover a cough. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough, then dispose of it. If no tissue is

handy, cough or sneeze into your elbow rather than into your hands.

- Wash and bandage all cuts. Any serious cut or animal or human bite should be examined by a doctor.
- Do not pick at healing wounds or blemishes, or squeeze pimples.
- Don't share dishes, glasses, or eating utensils.
- Avoid direct contact with napkins, tissues, handkerchiefs, or similar items used by others.

## Practice good food-safety techniques to avoid getting sick

Although most cases of food-borne infection are not dangerous, some can lead to serious medical conditions, including kidney failure and meningitis. You can prevent infections by food-borne pathogens in your household by preparing and storing foods safely. The following precautions will help kill microbes that

are present in the food you buy and help you avoid introducing new microbes into your food at home:

- Rinse all meat, poultry, fish, fruits, and vegetables under running water before cooking or serving them.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after you handle raw meat.
- Separate raw foods and cooked foods. Don't use the same utensils or cutting boards with cooked meat that were used to prepare the raw meat without washing between uses.
- Cook foods thoroughly, using a meat thermometer to ensure that whole poultry is cooked to 180° F, roasts and steaks to 145° F, and ground meats to 160° F. Cook fish until it is opaque.
- Defrost foods only in the refrigerator or in the microwave.

(Source: [health.harvard.edu](http://health.harvard.edu))

## Bad to the bones: what to avoid for bone health

### 1. Too much salt

The more salt you eat, the more calcium your body gets rid of, which means it's not there to help your bones. Foods like breads, cheeses, chips, and cold cuts have some of the highest counts.

You don't have to cut salt out entirely, but aim for less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day.

### 2. Binge watching

It's fine to enjoy your favorite show. But it's way too easy to spend endless hours in front of a screen, nestled on your couch. When it becomes a habit to lounge, you don't move enough and your bones miss out.

Exercise makes them stronger. It's best for your skeleton when your feet and legs carry the weight of your body, which forces your bones and muscles to work against gravity.

### 3. Miles of bike rides

When you pedal to work or ride for hours on the weekend, your heart and lungs get stronger. Your bones? Not so much. Because it's not a weight-bearing activity, bike riding does not increase your bone density, unlike walks, runs, and hikes.

If you're an avid cyclist, you'll want to add some time in the weight room to your routine and mix it



up with activities like tennis, hiking, dancing, and swimming (the water's resistance helps your bones).

### 4. Too much time in your "cave"

Maybe you need to get out more. The body makes vitamin D in sunlight. Just 10-15 minutes several times a week could do it. But don't overdo it. Too much time in the sun can raise your risk of skin cancer. And there are some other catches, too.

Your age, skin color, the time of year, and where you live can make it harder to make vitamin D. So can sunscreen.

Add fortified cereals, juices, and milks (including almond, soy, rice, or other plant-based milks, as well as low-fat dairy) to your diet. And ask your doctor if you need a vitamin D supplement.

### 5. Overdoing some drinks

Too many cola-flavored sodas could harm your bones. While more research is needed, some studies have linked bone loss with both the caffeine and the phosphorous in these beverages. Other experts have suggested that the damage comes when you choose to have a soda instead of milk or other drinks that contain calcium. Too many cups of coffee or tea can also rob your bones of calcium.

### 6. Bowls of wheat bran with milk

What sounds healthier than 100% wheat bran? But when you eat it with milk, your body absorbs less calcium.

Don't worry about other foods, like bread, that might contain wheat bran. But if you're a fan of the concentrated stuff and you take a calcium supplement, allow at least 2 hours between the bran and your pill.

(Source: [webmd.com](http://webmd.com))

## To fight child obesity – let children play outdoors more with their friends

Obesity is an environmental issue not a disease. Children growing up in the 1950s and 1960s were not obese. Virtually all people over 60 (and many younger) remember walking to infant school without an adult. Most travelled unaccompanied from the age of five after being taken for a couple of weeks by a parent. Children would also be able to run around in their own street and go on errands at this age. In other words, they had daily healthy exercise at no cost in money or time to the government and their parents.

Since then, the car has increasingly dominated residential roads, which are therefore more dangerous. Parents sensibly react to the increased danger and keep their children penned in. This unhealthy trend predates mobile phones or computer games.

It is known from zoos that if mammals cannot run around outside their houses they get obese and display repetitive behaviour and poor mental health. Crucially, if their environment is improved – by enabling them to run around more freely – their health improves.

These facts have been knowingly ignored by most experts. Public Health England (PHE) recommends, as its main solution to child obesity, replacing sugar with sweeteners. And last week we heard it will be setting targets for food manufacturers to shrink pizzas, ready meals and burgers in a bid to reduce daily calorie intake.

Our children are being offered solutions that would not be acceptable for mammals in zoos. If zoo experts said that the main solution to obesity caused by being penned in was to replace some of the mammal's food with smaller portions of calorie-free synthetic food, there would be an outcry from animal lovers. Yet this is what PHE is doing.



The NHS offers tailored, personalised help to reduce risk of type 2 diabetes, including education on healthy eating and lifestyle, help to lose weight and bespoke physical exercise programmes – an expensive solution, which will reach relatively few people and divert resources from areas where treatment is needed.

Experts also constantly blame parents for not taking their children to the park or countryside more often. But most parents never did regularly take their children out to play. They didn't have to – their children played happily in the street.

## It is vital that children do play outdoors unsupervised, and not just for the exercise. They learn how to cope with life.

It is vital that children do play outdoors unsupervised, and not just for the exercise. In any game, children have to agree the rules for themselves, they have to play fairly (or the fun stops), they settle disputes, reach compromises, modify the rules when the situation changes (somebody joins or leaves). They learn how to cope with life. This is very sophisticated

personal development in which children acquire competences for life. These skills are unique to human beings. No number of computer games, exercise cartoons, Facebook activity etc can compensate for children's free play. No organised activities such as piano/swimming lessons, sports/dance clubs can give the same personal and social development. Parents who daily ferry their children from club to activity are clearly committed to their children, but these activities do not compensate for the lost benefits of play.

When advisers do proffer healthy lifestyle options, the advice they give is flawed. My research has shown that children and their parents want to play in sight of home as they have done for countless generations. To make things worse, transport experts seem to assume that children remain static except for getting to and from school. "Journeys" are only counted if they are, like adults, going to work, the supermarket or the golf club. The majority of children's transport is on foot, scooter or bicycle, consisting of short distances between home, friends' homes, back of the garages, green verges, or patches of public open space. On a well-designed housing area with 50 children who are able to play outside they would make more than 280,000 journeys each year. Yet these are ignored by town planners as they are usually less than 100 metres. A massive amount of healthy and non-polluting transport is ignored. School activities are of limited benefit as children only go to school half the days in the year. The other half are weekends and holidays, and in any case children always played out on school days as well.

If children play out, adults are more neighbourly and keep an eye out for one another's children. However, satnavs direct drivers down side roads to avoid congestion on busy roads, making side roads even more dangerous. We need a new designation for residential roads. Priority should be given to pedestrians to encourage healthy lifestyles and promote neighbourliness.

Leave it any longer and we will have another generation of parents who accept it is correct to keep children cooped up in the house.

(Source: [The Guardian](http://The Guardian))

## Does the pill prevent arthritis? New study suggests a link

Women who take the oral contraceptive pill are protected from going on to develop arthritis in later life, a new study suggests.

Scientists believe hormonal changes prompted by the pill may decrease the risk of suffering from the painful disease.

Research in Sweden found that using the common contraceptive method for seven or more years was associated with a 19 per cent lower chance of developing rheumatoid arthritis.

However, women who had stopped using the pill still appeared to benefit from a protective effect, enjoying a 13 per cent lower risk of the condition.

Rheumatoid arthritis, which usually develops between the ages of 40 and 50, affects more than 400,000 people in the UK.

It occurs when the body's immune system targets joints such as the wrists and ankles, causing painful swelling, and is twice as common in women as it is in men.

This has led scientists to suspect hormonal and reproductive factors may contribute to the underlying cause.

Researchers at the Karolinska Institute drew on data from 2,809 women with the disease and compared it with the medical records of 5,312 women randomly selected from the general



## Rheumatoid arthritis, which usually develops between the ages of 40 and 50, affects more than 400,000 people in the UK.

population.

They found that those who had used an oral contraceptive at any time had a lower risk of developing rheumatoid arthritis than those who had never done so.

Over time, rheumatoid arthritis can

damage the joints themselves as well as the nearby cartilage.

There is no cure for the condition, however the symptoms can be treated using medication and supportive therapies such as physiotherapy.

"In this large population-based study,

we were able to address these questions more thoroughly than has been possible before," the researchers wrote.

"Using the Pill for more than seven years - the average length of use among the study participants - was associated with a 19 per cent lower risk of developing arthritis."

"Further research is required to explore the biological mechanisms behind our findings."

The oral contraceptive pill contains artificial versions of the female hormones oestrogen and progesterone, which women produce naturally to prevent the ovary releasing an egg.

Pill usage declines steeply with age, from two-thirds of women aged 20 to 24, to 11 per cent of women in their late 40s.

There is no upper age limit beyond which healthy women should not take the pill, however those who smoke are advised not to take it above 35, according to the Family Planning Association, a sexual health charity.

Published in the *Annals of Rheumatic Diseases*, the study also sought to identify whether breastfeeding was associated with a lower risk of arthritis, as had been suspected, however no significant link was found.

(Source: [The telegraph](http://The telegraph))

## 10 hot titles of IT world

By Alireza Khorasani

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

**1** Chinese Super League plots foray into online soccer games with deal  
BEIJING China's top-flight soccer league has signed a deal with a local developer to produce online soccer games in its first foray into gaming as it searches for new sources of revenue.

**2** Taiwanese electronics manufacturer Foxconn on Monday said it plans to build three facilities in the U.S. state of Wisconsin for operation as early as next year, as part of a campus housing a \$10 billion liquid crystal display (LCD) factory due for 2020.

**3** CNN began streaming "The Update," a daily show on Snapchat featuring at least five news stories each episode from reporters and bureaus around the world, to attract younger viewers.  
CNN, NBC and other networks are creating more digital content to reach millennials, who increasingly get their news from social media.

**4** Uber Technologies Inc UBER.UL said it raised its Hong Kong minimum fares on Monday by as much as 80 percent following a review.  
The San Francisco-based technology company, which recently suspended its services for the second time in the neighboring Chinese city of Macau, told Reuters the price rises would benefit drivers as they pocketed most of the fares.

**5** Google might be planning a foil to smarter-than-usual headphones like Apple's AirPods or the Bragi Dash line. After some sleuthing inside the Google app, the team at 9to5Google has found references to headphones that would use Google Assistant to augment the usual physical controls. Nicknamed Bisto, they would let you hear and reply to notifications using your voice

**6** Now you can switch your WhatsApp status update to suit your mood. You can stitch photos and videos together to make it look like Snapchat -- or you can make it look more like its parent company's status updates. The chat application has updated its iOS and Android versions, giving it the ability to post text-based updates (with links, if you want) against colorful backgrounds, just like Facebook's.

**7** HTC cuts the price of its Vive VR headset to \$599.  
Virtual reality got a lot cheaper this summer. Oculus sliced the price of its Rift VR headset to \$399 in June, and now HTC has reduced the price of the competing Vive headset to \$599.

**8** Intel has a mysterious black Surface Book in its new processor video.  
As part of the launch, Intel has produced a promotional video of what to expect from the next processors, which will bring quad-core chips more broadly to laptops. MSPoweruser has spotted that the video includes what appears to be a black Surface Book.

**9** Ministers in the UK are considering creating an internet ombudsman to deal with complaints about hate crimes and are pressing ahead with proposals for a levy on social media companies to help pay for the policing of online offences.  
The ideas are being examined by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) before the release of an autumn green paper, which may be more radical than expected.

**10** Fujitsu is looking to offload its mobile operations as the Japanese information technology company faces stiff competition from bigger rivals in a highly lucrative mobile phone market, the Nikkei business daily reported.

## Google reveals official name of Android O

After hints and speculation of just what the "O" in Android O meant, Android Oreo is the official name.

Google announced the final name for Android 8.0 shortly after the eclipse ended in the US via a livestream from New York City.

Android Oreo will begin rolling out to Google's Pixel, Pixel XL, Pixel C, Nexus 6P, Nexus 5X, and Nexus Player in the near future after carrier testing is complete. Other than "soon," Google did not provide an exact timetable for the release.

Google also announced it has been working with its device partners, and by the end of the year, the following companies will either launch new devices or upgrade existing devices to Android 8.0 Oreo: Essential, General Mobile, HMD Global Home of Nokia Phones, Huawei, HTC, Kyocera, LG, Motorola, Samsung, Sharp, and Sony.

The update includes many refinements and improvements to Android. A new Notification Channel feature will let users decide how intrusive different alerts from apps can be, and a new picture-in-picture mode makes it possible to video chat while multitasking on a device running Android Oreo.

(Source: zdnet)



# Why the alt-right can't build an alt-internet

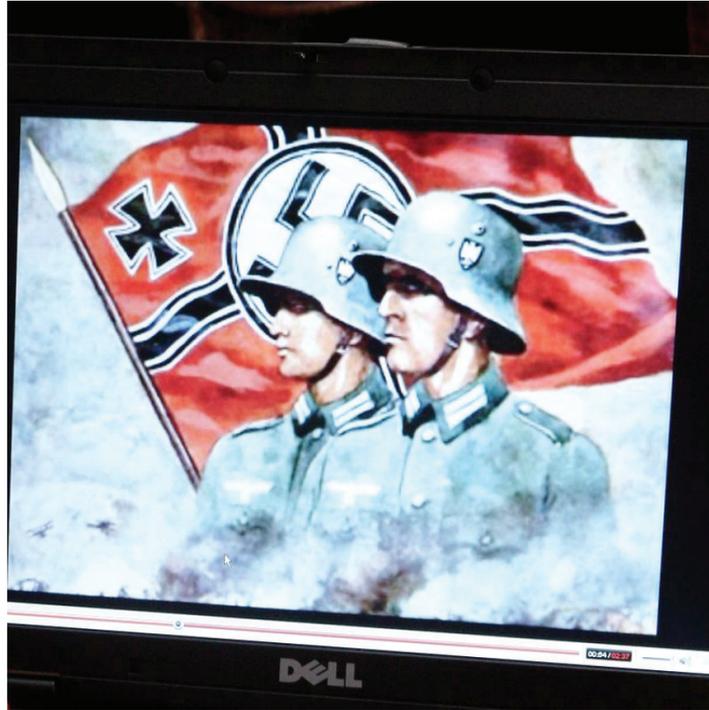
By Adi Robertson

After the August 12th hate rally in Charlottesville, online platforms that have long tolerated or ignored white supremacists are very publicly kicking them off. The crackdown spans a broad range of sites and apps, some of which are household names, like Uber, Facebook, and Spotify. But some of the most notable companies to purge their ranks are those we don't often consider: the web hosts, domain registrars, and other services that you need to put a website on the internet. Over the past week, GoDaddy, Cloudflare, and Google — to name a few — have been playing hot potato with the major neo-Nazi news site Daily Stormer, taking it offline several times as it's moved around the internet.

After being booted from Namecheap over the weekend, the Daily Stormer's status remains uncertain. But the white nationalist alt-right movement has experience running a "shadow economy" of sympathetic platforms, including crowdfunding sites like Rootbooks and social networks like Gab.

Now, some have started discussing alternatives for basic web services too. Entrepreneur Pax Dickinson, a former Business Insider CTO who recently founded far-right crowdfunding site CounterFund, called for a "full-blown Amazon-style infrastructure company" amid the bans. But running a series of independent services that are immune to outside political pressure is far harder and less rewarding than replacing GoFundMe or Twitter. In 2017, is it possible to build what is essentially a functioning, effective, alternative internet?

One of the biggest pressure points for anti-racist activists right now is domain registrars like GoDaddy, which sell addresses that point web users toward a site. While anyone can hook up a server to the internet, domain name sales are regulated by the multinational organization ICANN, which hands off management of generic top-level domains



(gTLDs) to organizations called registries. Registries can then sign contracts with ICANN-accredited registrars, which act as middlemen and sell domain names to the public.

Registrars need to be established companies that can demonstrate technical capability and financial stability. If they want to offer recognized domains extensions, they have to work with companies like Verisign, which controls the coveted .com TLD. Establishing a registry for a new TLD, meanwhile, is pretty much a non-starter right now: the last application period was in 2012, when applicants paid \$185,000 just to be evaluated. The next application period is tentatively slated for 2020. "It's not a situation where someone

can just set up shop overnight and start selling domain names," says Annemarie Bridy, a University of Idaho law school professor who recently published a paper on ICANN's content regulation policies. ICANN usually takes a hands-off approach to moderating registrars' content, and some registrars play host to unsavory spam and malware domains. But even if an alt-right registrar could get accredited, it probably wouldn't be a profitable business.

M. Barry Branagh of the Spamhaus Project, which maintains a list of the most frequently abused services, says that spammers sometimes run their own registrars just to mass-generate domain names. Niche political content would be

much less lucrative, and the vast majority of people — even ones with far-right sympathies — would have little reason to choose a small "free speech" registrar over more established alternatives. Even if such a registrar could ignore bad PR, activists could still lodge complaints with the registries, which ultimately control access to domains.

There are ways to bypass ICANN entirely. A site could use an alternative domain name system like Namecoin, for instance. It could advertise a numerical IP address rather than a link. The Daily Stormer set up shop on the free and decentralized Tor network, operating on the so-called dark web.

But at that point, you're not just independent, you're effectively walled off from the normal internet. There are plenty of technological ways to run a shadow net, says Nathan Freitas, a fellow at Harvard's Berkman Klein Center and leader of the open-source Guardian Project. "The question is, how willing is the audience to get to it? And is the point to allow their community to get to it, or the whole internet?"

Adopting these measures would make it easier for all groups, not just the alt-right, to secure a place within existing web infrastructure. It wouldn't, however, make it easier to step outside that infrastructure — which may be why Daily Stormer founder Andrew Anglin recently called for the US government to regulate ICANN, saying that frankly, he did not have the option to create his own internet. "It's very hard to roll your own stuff online," says Sauter.

In an ideal world, Sauter would like to see a mechanism that would bring more real democracy — not just anarchy or corporate dominance — to the online world. For now, there's really only one internet. In order to operate there, you've got to play by its rules. But after last week, those rules aren't as clear as they once seemed.

(Source: theverge)

## Elon Musk joins 100 tech chiefs warning UN about killer robots

Billionaire Elon Musk has added his voice to more than 100 tech leaders in a letter to the United Nations warning that "killer robots" could become weapons of terror.

Urging the UN to take action, 116 artificial intelligence leaders and robotics companies from across 26 countries signed the open letter.

Launching the International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence (IJCAI), the tech founders state: "Lethal autonomous weapons threaten to become the third revolution in warfare."

Automated tanks, drones and machine guns are among the weapons they fear could lead to an arms race — although the technology does not currently exist.

The memo urges the UN to ban the development and use of such "killer robots" and add them to a list of



"morally wrong weapons", which already includes lasers that blind and chemical weapons.

The co-founder of Google's DeepMind - Mustafa Suleyman - also signed the appeal.

The letter says: "Once developed, they will permit armed conflict to be fought at a scale greater than ever, and at timescales faster than humans can comprehend."

According to the UN's website, a group focused on robot weapons was set to meet on Monday, but the session has been cancelled and rescheduled for November.

Autonomous weapons already being worked on across the world include a fixed-place sentry gun being developed by the South Korean government; an unmanned combat aerial vehicle being developed in the UK by BAE Systems; robotic tanks being worked on in Russia and the US; and an autonomous warship that was launched in 2016 by the US.

(Source: Skynews)

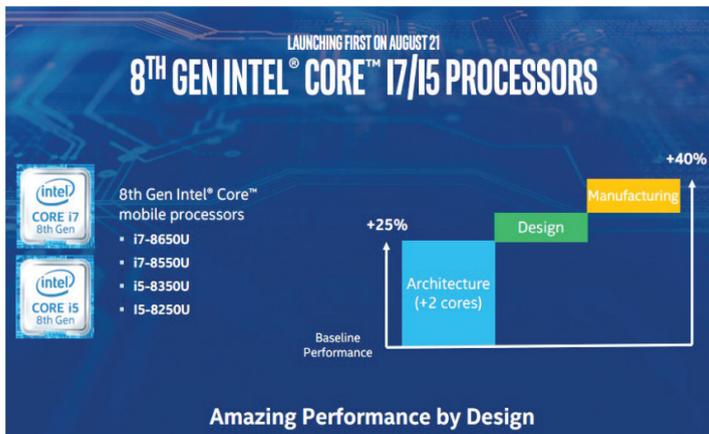
## Intel's 'New' 8th Generation Processors are Built on Kaby Lake

By Joel Hruska

Ever since Intel introduced the first-generation Core i7, it's followed a predictable series numbering. First-generation Core processors were codenamed Nehalem, second-generation CPUs were Sandy Bridge, followed by Ivy Bridge (3rd), Haswell, (4th) and so on. In each case, new chips — whether they were die shrinks or new architectures — were assigned a new product number. Today, with its 8th-generation chips, Intel is explicitly changing that policy. Unlike previous product generations, the 8th-generation launching today family will span multiple chip families built on 14nm+ (Kaby Lake), 14nm++ (Coffee Lake), and 10nm (Cannon Lake).

The four U-series chips Intel is launching today are fundamentally based on Kaby Lake with the same architecture, the same GPU, and almost the same capabilities. The one minor update to the GPU side of the equation is support for HDMI 2.0 and HDCP 2.2, without any need for third-party solutions. So what, exactly, is new about these chips? Two things: Larger core counts, and slightly higher clock speeds at maximum Turbo.

The table above shows how the new Core i7 chips compare against their 7th-generation predecessors at the 15W TDP. Intel is trading a significant amount of base clock speed for core counts, but the maximum turbo speed on these chips is still higher, in some cases, than the parts they replace. The new i5 CPUs aren't shown here, but they compare identically to the Core i7 mobile parts, with higher



turbo clocks, quad core configurations with Hyper-Threading, which is historically unusual in the i5 quad-core lineup. Intel doesn't put much emphasis on its quad-core i5s, but the 7th generation quad-cores didn't have Hyper-Threading at all. The new chips do.

Intel's mobile revamp mirrors product and price changes the company has already introduced.

For the past six years, Intel has followed the same basic processor philosophy: In mobile, dual-core processors were the norm at every level, with only a few quad-core / eight-thread chips available. These have always occupied the top of the product stack and typically been offered only in higher TDP brackets. These new chips change all that.

### Performance scaling still unknown

There's a bit of mixed messaging over how much performance these new cores will offer. According to Intel, it expects a 40% overall improvement, with 25% coming from the addition of two more cores. 'Design' and 'Manufacturing' also add to the total, albeit in smaller amounts. But that's actually less performance than we'd expect to see, given that doubling core counts from a dual CPU to a quad CPU can drive more than 25% improvement on its own in desktops. Most modern applications scale fairly well, up to four cores / eight threads, and while that's not an absolute, the 25% figure is still lower than expected.

There are several potential answers to this. One is that Intel is being conserva-

tive and publishing numbers it knows it can back up in virtually all circumstances. The other is that Intel has to pull its Turbo clocks down to stay within a 15W TDP. This would be directly implicated if the boost clocks on the 8th-generation CPUs drop significantly as core loads increase.

### What's Next for 8th-Gen Core?

Intel has announced that it will launch its next generation desktop processors "in fall," but those of you hoping to drop a six-core i5 or i2-thread i7 into an existing system are out of luck. The Coffee Lake refresh will require 300-series chipsets, and will not be backwards compatible with existing products. Given how little time it's been since Intel introduced Kaby Lake, the quick hop from the 200-series to the 300-series won't sit well with people who just upgraded to the 7700K, especially if the desktop 8th-generation cores make six cores available for the same price Intel used to charge for four.

Intel may not have great options here. Semiconductor designs and products tend to have longer lead times than the public is aware of; it's not unusual to see someone on LinkedIn who worked on a given product a year or more before it ships. Intel's 8th-generation Coffee Lake chips are undoubtedly aimed at plugging the hole chips like the 1600X blew in its product family. Kaby Lake would've been completed before much information on Ryzen was available, and Intel's various product shake-ups this year have been a response to it. AMD's Ryzen desktop family continues to sell well, with 7 SKUs in the Top 15 CPUs according to Amazon.

(Source: extremetech)

# Silk body sensors may help robots become more sensitive

Researchers from the Tsinghua University in China are turning to silk-based sensors to make wearable body sensors and monitoring systems more sensitive and flexible. The technology could also be used to make robots more sensitive to touch and temperature.

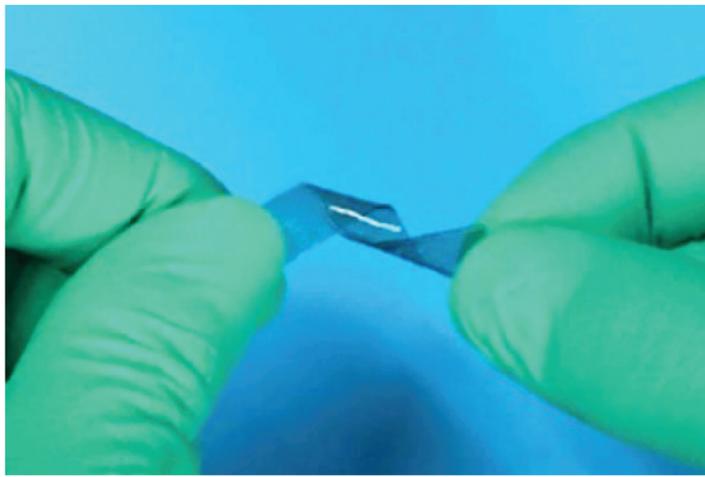
Silk is a natural fiber and has been regarded as one of the coveted fabrics in the world. It is stronger than steel and more flexible than nylon, according to a report by ScienceDaily.

"There is a whole world of possibilities for silk sensors at the moment. Silk is the ideal material for fabricating sensors that are worn on the body," said Dr. Yingying Zhang, a researcher on the team.

## Touch-sensitive robots

The report also mentioned Dr. Zhang suggesting how these sensors could one day go into making touch-sensitive robots that are a lot more realistic with them being able to "feel" temperature, humidity, and even sense difference in people's voices.

One of the uses that they team is looking at right now is remote monitoring of patients. Zhang added that silk sensors will help doctors keep track of patients through an integrated wireless system and the response time for can be a lot



**Silk is the ideal material for fabricating sensors that are worn on the body," says Dr. Yingying Zhang, a researcher on the team.**

more rapid.

Until now, sensors placed on the human body are made with semiconductors. While they have been proven to

be useful, they have other limitations. According to the report, strain sensors -- which measure the change in force -- cannot be reliably sensitive and stretch-

at the same time.

Silk, on the other hand, can be used to sidestep this problem say the researchers. Silk also has the advantage of being bio-compatible as well as lightweight. All these qualities, according to the report, make it an ideal candidate to make sensors.

## Major challenge

However, making sensors out of silk presents a major challenge as it is not a particularly good conductor of electricity -- a quality that is necessary to make sensors work.

Zhang and her team reportedly employed two different methods to solve this. First, they claim to have treated the silk fibers in an inert environment in high temperatures ranging from 1,112 degrees to 5,432 degrees Fahrenheit. This treating caused silk to gain N-doped carbon with graphitized particles, making it electrically conductive.

The second approach involved the team feeding graphene or carbon nanotubes to silkworms hoping to have these particles incorporated with the silk. While they say that it has resulted in some of the graphene reaching the silk, they are yet to make conductive silk this way. They are reportedly still working on this technique.

(Source: [ibtimes.co.uk](http://ibtimes.co.uk))

## Turning human waste into plastic, nutrients could aid long-distance space travel

Imagine you're on your way to Mars, and you lose a crucial tool during a spacewalk. Not to worry, you'll simply re-enter your spacecraft and use some microorganisms to convert your urine and exhaled carbon dioxide (CO2) into chemicals to make a new one.

That's one of the ultimate goals of scientists who are developing ways to make long space trips feasible.

The researchers presented their results at the 254th National Meeting & Exposition of the American Chemical Society (ACS).

### Solution lies with astronauts

The solution lies in part with the astronauts themselves, who will constantly generate waste from breathing, eating and using materials.

Unlike their friends on Earth, Blenner says, these spacefarers won't want to throw any waste molecules away. So he and his team are studying how to repurpose these molecules and convert them into products the astronauts need, such as polyesters and nutrients.

Some essential nutrients, such as omega-3 fatty acids, have a shelf life of just a couple of years, says Blenner, who is at Clemson University. They'll need to be made en route, beginning

a few years after launch, or at the destination.

### Biological system

Blenner's biological system includes a variety of strains of the yeast *Yarrowia lipolytica*. These organisms require both nitrogen and carbon to grow. Blenner's team discovered that the yeast can obtain their nitrogen from urea in untreated urine.

Meanwhile, the yeast obtain their carbon from CO2, which could come from astronauts' exhaled breath, or from the Martian atmosphere. But to use CO2, the yeast require a middleman to "fix" the carbon into a form they can ingest. For this purpose, the yeast rely on photosynthetic cyanobacteria or algae provided by the researchers.

One of the yeast strains produces omega-3 fatty acids, which contribute to heart, eye and brain health. Another strain has been engineered to churn out monomers and link them to make polyester polymers. Those polymers could then be used in a 3-D printer to generate new plastic parts.

Blenner's team is continuing to engineer this yeast strain to produce a variety of monomers that can be polymerized into different types of polyesters with a range of properties.

(Source: [EurekAlert](http://EurekAlert))

## Scientists say it's raining diamonds on Neptune and Uranus

Move over Jupiter and Saturn, a crap load of diamonds could be found in two of the most mysterious places in the Solar System: Uranus and Neptune. Researchers using the Linac Coherent Light Source at Stanford have demonstrated in the lab -- with one of the brightest sources of X-rays on the planet -- that the depths of these ice giants are perfect for the formation of diamonds.

"This (condition) will generate diamond precipitation inside such celestial bodies," Dominik Kraus, a researcher with Helmholtz-Zentrum Dresden-Rossendorf in Dresden and author on the paper told Gizmodo in an email. "This means that there is not necessarily a pure diamond core but certainly a large diamond envelope around the rocky cores that are supposed to exist inside Neptune and Uranus."

### Current thinking

On Jupiter and Saturn, the current thinking goes like this: when storms roll through clouds of methane molecules, lightning strikes cause carbon atoms to disassociate from their chemical bonds. When they collect in the air, you get clouds of soot which then sink into the lower atmosphere, being put under more and more pressure. That pressure is what squeezes the carbon into

graphite and then again into diamond. It's also under the effect of gravity, so it would truly fall to the middle of the planet as "diamond rain."

On Uranus and Neptune there could be a cloud layer where a sea of hot methane forms which then separates in a high pressure environment causing the resulting carbon to squeeze into diamond.

### Matter in extreme condition

Using a tool called the Matter in Extreme Condition instrument, the scientists shocked a thin polystyrene sheet with a laser blast which produced pressure of up to 150 gigapascals. That laser heated the material to about 6,000 Kelvin, which is very hot, but not hot enough to melt diamond. Since the polystyrene is a hydrocarbon polymer, it happily breaks up into its constituent hydrogen and carbon atoms which then are compressed. For an incredibly short moment, this causes nanodiamonds to form.

Because scientists are now able to reproduce an environment similar to the one located about 10,000 km in the interior of Neptune and Uranus, further research could show us if there are more stable options beyond diamond precipitation.

(Source: [Gizmodo](http://Gizmodo))

## Calling for Working Capital Facilities for Knowledge-Based Activities of Industrial and Mining Sector

Export Development Bank of Iran (EDBI) pays totally 1,200 billion rials facilities to provide working capital in industrial and mining sector in all regions out of National Development Fund of Iran (NDFI), the Public Relations Dept. of the bank reported.

The report put the value of the two contracts concluded between EDBI and NDFI for granting facilities and loans in mining and industrial sector at 600 billion rials each.

The interest rate for the loans paid to applicants in

mining and industrial sector stands at 12 percent (12%).

In addition, the report put the ceiling of facilities to be granted to legal and real entities in the mining and industrial sector at 100 and 20 billion rials respectively.

Granting facilities to the authorized legal entities is conditional on that the ratio of owner's equity to total assets of the company should not be less than 20 percent at the time of submitting request to the bank.

The authorized entities for taking advantage of facilities mentioned include real, legal, private, coopera-

tives and economic enterprises' entities affiliated to the nongovernmental public institutions.

Also, payment of facilities is authorized to the companies and associations that at least 80 percent of their stock partnership belongs to the real entities directly, the report added.

It should be noted that the associations and companies who cooperate with the foreign investors jointly are liable to receive these facilities, Public Relations Dept. of the bank ended.

## BMI Eyes Expanding Its Branch Offices in Neighboring Iraq

Bank Melli Iran (BMI) will increase the number of its branch offices in the cities of Najaf, Baghdad and Basra in Iraq, the Public Relations Department of the bank reported.

Given the above issue, BMI has taken giant strides in the field of offering quality banking services to its dear customers in neighboring Iraq.

Gholam-Reza Panahi Member of Board of Directors of the bank announced the above statement and said: "Customers and economic activists of the two countries can take advantage of outstanding services of the bank including opening account, draft and letters of credit (L/Cs), etc.

He, who is the Deputy Chief Executive of the bank for International and Currency Affairs, said: "Considering the good interaction and relationship between the two countries, this bank plans to develop its presence in neighboring Iraq in line with facilitating and offering quality banking services."



## CEO of Bank Pasargad Calls for Realizing Objectives of Resistance Economy

The 17th Applied-Scientific Resistance Economy Conference was held at the venue of Khatam University on Aug. 20 in the presence of outstanding university lecturers, economists, members of scientific associations, members of Iranian Management Association, experts and some university students.

It should be noted that this prestigious Conference was held at the initiative taken by the Iranian Management Association and University of Khatam jointly.

Dr. Majid Ghassemi Chief Executive of Bank Pasargad announced the above statement and said: "Effective steps should be taken in line with realizing objectives of resistance economy."

The Chairman of Board of Directors of Iranian Man-



agement Association also pointed to the scope of management in resistance economy and added: "The

scope of management in the resistance economy is the management of national security."

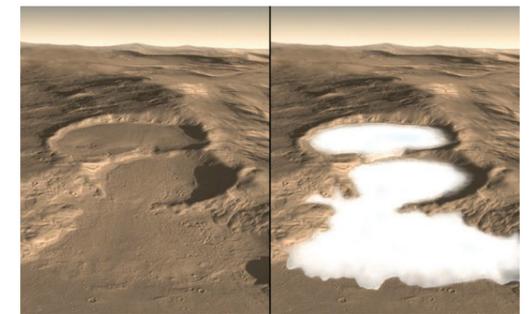
"Emergency management, continuity management, crisis management and security management are of four types of management related to the resistance economy," he maintained.

These four types of management take precedence over all other types of management and should be prioritized, he said, adding: "Therefore, even strategic management also be designed within the framework of acceptance of resistance economy's management."

In the end, Chancellor of University of Khatam stated: "As a matter of fact, resistance is the main factor for development of country."

## Nighttime forecast for Mars: Bursts of rapidly falling snow

The findings, published in the journal *Nature Geoscience*, could shed light on the dynamics of the planet's ancient climate -- and reveal that even today, Mars remains a more dynamic world than some scientists expected.



Today, the Red Planet seems dusty, rusty and dry, with an atmosphere that's about 100 times thinner than Earth's. But scientists say that early in its history, Mars probably looked a lot like Earth, with a thick atmosphere, puffy clouds and liquid water. That's part of why researchers study Mars -- to understand why our next-door neighbor ended up with such a different fate than that of our planetary home.

Even now, Mars has some thin clouds, as well as water-ice deposits on and beneath its surface. (It's cold enough to have carbon dioxide ice deposits too.) A laser instrument on NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander even discovered signs of actual snowfall, years ago. But many scientists figured that whatever the contribution made by snowfall, it was very slow, building up gradually over time.

But lead author Aymeric Spiga, a planetary scientist at the Laboratoire de Météorologie Dynamique in Paris, and his colleagues wondered if some other phenomenon was at work. Thanks to data from NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter and Mars Global Surveyor, they had noticed strange temperature patterns beneath the Martian water-ice clouds that hinted at a surprising amount of air movement in the atmosphere.

"It was like the temperature profiles were showing very strong mixing and were representative of very strong winds below the clouds, and it was at night," Spiga said. The understanding at the time, he added, "was that water-ice clouds on Mars were not supposed to create very strong winds, especially at night, and the winds at night were supposed to be very calm."

(Source: [LAT](http://LAT))

## Lifesaving smart fabric can detect and neutralize deadly nerve gas

As part of the fight against deadly chemical weapon attacks, researchers at the City College of New York have developed a new smart fabric that is capable of not only rapidly detecting nerve gas, but also of neutralizing it.

"We have modified cotton fabrics by attaching to them a very active catalytic phase," researcher Teresa Bandosz, professor of chemistry and chemical engineering, said.

The "prepared fabrics are able not only to protect well against the surrogate of a nerve agent by adsorbing and decomposing it to benign products but also -- by a visible color change -- to inform the user about the duration of the protection they provide."

The textile is made from cotton that has been infused with carbon nitride. According to Bandosz, the material could be used to fabricate a range of items, from suits to gloves to blankets. While she notes that it would probably be most likely to find a home in military clothing, it could also be used to create clothing aimed at the civilian population -- as a possible defense against terrorist activity or similar.

This is not the first time that we covered material that is able to change color when it's exposed to external materials. Last year, we wrote about three designer shirts which gradually change color in response to either carbon monoxide, pollution, or radioactivity. In the case of Bandosz's material, the color change is also visible and gradual -- but, unlike those other smart clothes, it can help dispel the effects of the thing it is designed to sense, rather than just alerting you to it. Further trials need to be done, but the results could be life-saving.

(Source: [Digital Trends](http://Digital Trends))

## Politician disses Hawking's research analysis

It's not a good idea to criticize a scientist's ability to do science if you're not that good at, say, science.

Climate scientists have borne the brunt of this in recent times, as some politicians have told them that they don't know what they're talking about.

On Friday, UK Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt gave Stephen Hawking -- of all scientists -- an F for his analysis of research.

Hawking, you see, had penned an article in *The Guardian* defending the UK's National Health Service. The NHS tries to ensure that, you know, people don't die in the streets when they're sick simply because they don't have enough money.

It's an imperfect system, but one, some would say, with a heart. Hawking said the service had saved his own life, since he was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in 1962. He said Hunt was trying to turn the NHS into a pure, American-style business. He added that the politician had "abused" and "cherry-picked" scientific research to support his politics.

Hunt, a member of the ruling rightish Conservative Party, took to Twitter to upbraid the famed physicist: "Stephen Hawking is brilliant physicist but wrong on lack of evidence 4 weekend effect. 2015 Fremantle study most comprehensive ever."

Please, I'd prefer not to get too deeply into the grimy details of the weekend effect. Essentially, it's the suggestion that patient care deteriorates at weekends, relative to weekdays.

(Source: [CNET](http://CNET))

## Tehran to host child upbringing conference

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — The 58th conference on health and life with a focus on child upbringing is scheduled to be held today at Eyyan-e Shams Hall, north Tehran.



Prominent academics, skilled experts, as well as renowned psychologists from across the country will deliver speeches at the event, ISNA quoted the conference's secretary Towhid Seif-Barqi as saying on Tuesday.

The conference is jointly arranged by Tehran University of Medical Sciences, Tehran Municipality, Association of Sport and Medicine, and Football Federation.

## NASA praises young British boy's 'great' rocket design

A budding four-year-old astronaut who sent NASA a letter asking it to build a rocket he designed was thrilled when the space agency replied with their own letter praising him.

Idris Hylton, who is now aged five, wrote directly to the organization urging it to make the craft and he even offered to fly it into space.

He also said he wanted to be given an astronaut license. Idris claimed his rocket would fly faster than any of NASA's ones.

His letter read: "To NASA, I made a letter for you to report about. This rocket is for you. Please make it and send it to an astronaut in space."

"I will fly my rocket to space for NASA. Please can I have an astronaut licence. From Idris, aged four."

His father Jamal Hylton, from St. Albans in Hertfordshire, said his son "went crazy" when the agency sent a formal letter back thanking Idris for his "great" design.

Kevin DeBruin, a systems engineer from the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, wrote: "Thank you very much for your design of your rocket, it's great!"

"Creating work like this is the start to a great future astronaut who can pilot a rocket. Keep it up!"

He added: "Working with outer space vehicles and equipment takes hard work and dedication. This means you have to be enthusiastic in school to try put forth your best effort every time."

"Continue your interest in outer space, rockets, and all aerospace related things! With your enthusiasm and hard work, hopefully you may contribute to one of NASA's many exciting programs in the future."

"Best of luck to you in your journey towards space!"

Hylton told Sky News: "Idris went crazy when it came through the post, phoned me at work shouting 'Dad, NASA replied'."

"We've read the letter together countless times and he's waiting to get back to school in September to show it to his teachers."

"The best thing is that he's now set on a career as an astronaut or engineer, and the letter from Kevin DeBruin has inspired him to believe it's possible."

He explained his son didn't get a response from NASA for several months after sending the letter to its Washington HQ.

But then Hylton tweeted the agency directly and DeBruin saw the tweet and asked for more details.

Hylton went on: "He responded to my son with a really motivational letter and NASA stickers."

Earlier this month, a nine-year-old boy received an encouraging response from NASA after he applied for a job at the agency.

(Source: news.sky.com)

## LEARN ENGLISH

### Daily Life - New Guy in Town

A: Oh, Armand, thank you for such a thoughtful invitation! It's really very nice of you to invite us over for dinner, don't you think so, Ellen?

B: Oh, yes of course! We'd love to come over. Can I bring anything?

C: No, don't worry about it; I'll take care of everything. I'll see you tonight. Come with an appetite... I know I will!

B: I don't want to go over to his place for dinner! She gives me the creeps! Why on earth did you accept?

A: Oh come on Ellen, it will be nice to get to know her. Besides, she's new to the neighborhood, and it would be rude to decline her invitation.

B: I guess so... You always rope me into things like this!

C: Ladies! Thank you for coming! You look beautiful... Please come in.

A: Oh Oh Armand! You are too kind!

B: How did I get myself into this...

**Key Vocabulary**  
**thoughtful:** showing concern for the needs and feelings of other people

**appetite:** a physical desire of food

**give the creeps:** make someone to feel scared and uncomfortable

**get to know:** start to know, become familiar with someone

**why on earth:** decline verb say you will not or cannot do something

**rope into:** convince someone to do something

**Supplementary Vocabulary**  
**make yourself at home:** polite way to ask guests to make themselves comfortable

**hospitable:** being a friendly and caring host to the guests

**potluck:** a party that requires everybody to bring food

**housewarming:** a party to celebrate moving into a new home

(Source: irlanguage.com)

# Iran's population ageing: statistics center

**SOCIETY** TEHRAN — The average age of Iranians has increased by 1.3 years over the past five years, the Statistical Center of Iran has said.

According to findings of the 2016 national population and housing census, the average age of Iranians increased to 31.1, IRIB reported.

The report added that the average age of women was 31.3 years, slightly higher than 30.9 years - the average age of men.

The index is also different in cities and villages, so that it is two years higher in urban areas compared to rural areas for both genders.

The average age is the total sum of all individuals' ages divided by the entire population of a country.

### Median age at 30 years

According to the statistics, the median age of the country stood at 30 years for both genders in 2016, up by three years compared to 2011.



Median age is the age that divides a population into two numerically equal groups - that is, half the people are younger than this age and half are older. It is a single index that summarizes the age distribution of a population.

In demographic studies, a population with a median age of 20 is considered young. If the index is between 20 and 30 the population is regarded as middle-aged and when it is 30 and over it is considered old.

## What are the causes of mal-temperament?



### ARTICLE

By Seyed Mahdi Mirghazanfari, MD, PhD

Generally, Mizaj represents the excess or lack of warmth and humidity in one's body and is classified into four categories- also called four qualities- of warmth, coldness, dryness and wetness.

Therefore, regarding which quality is more dominant the tempers are classified totally into nine categories of warm, cold, wet, dry, warm and dry, warm and wet, cold and dry, cold and wet, and moderate (when none of the qualities are dominant).

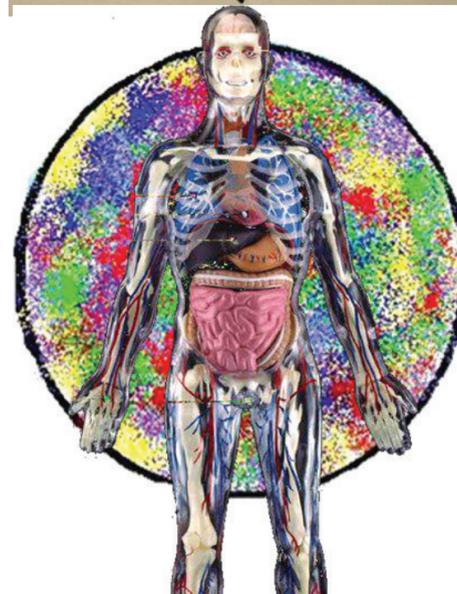
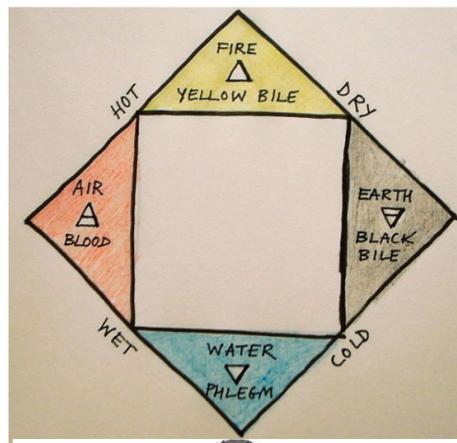
Mizaj is a spectrum, meaning that two persons might have warm Mizaj but one's Mizaj might be warmer than the other one. In fact, no two individuals have the exact same Mizaj.

As per Iranian-Islamic traditional medicine each individual is born with a specific temperament (Mizaj) which is referred to as "inherent" or "main" Mizaj. The best Mizaj for a person is the one that corresponds to the warmth and humidity the person is born with and should keep it within its normal range. Therefore, there are no good or bad Mizaj. All Mizaj are good provided that they remain unchanged (keeping the exact same amount of warmth and humidity one is born with); all body parts working properly and staying healthy is an indication of it.

Spoiling one's inherent or main Mizaj and moving towards excessive warmth, coldness, wetness or dryness, would undermine the persons' health. So one must take immediate action by recognizing the factors causing such symptoms and prevent them from developing.

In case one take no heed and keep on spoiling their Mizaj for long time mal-temperament or 'So-e-Mizaj' will occur and diseases start to develop in the body. Everyone, with any kinds of Mizaj, can be affected by mal-temperament; in other words- depending on their distinguishing Mizaj- they might suffer from excessive warmth, coldness, wetness or dryness.

To remain healthy, one should adopt the lifestyle that suits their Mizaj.



### Excessive warmth

There are cases when the patient is diagnosed with excessive warmth in their bodies. Here are reasons as to why someone might experience conditions caused by excessive warmth in their bodies:

- Heavy and fast exercise, intense activity, and getting too much high speed massage
- Great anger or happiness
- Being exposed to heat, either sun, or fire for a long time
- Consuming food stuff with warming characteristics or warm Mizaj such as date, pepper, etc.

• Clogged pores which reduce sweat

• Infection and infectious diseases which cause fever and excessive body heat

• Having a warm temperament, as people with warm Mizaj are more prone to be affected by warm Mizaj food stuff or warm environment than people with cold Mizaj

Fast heart rate, breaking out in pimple and mouth ulcers, and sleep deprivation are the side effects of excessive warmth.

### Excessive coldness

Some actions or consuming some food stuff can contribute to excessive coldness in the body:

- Lack of movement or not taking exercise
- Profound sadness and disturbing thoughts which lead to sleep deprivation and restlessness
- Intense mental or physical activity which will first increase the warmth but will ultimately result in nutrient deficiency and lack of warmth in the body
- Being in cold, dark and damp places
- eating, and drinking food stuff with cold Mizaj or rubbing cold ointments for long time
- Taking too many showers or baths which unclogs the pores, work up a sweat, and decrease the warmth in body

• Not eating much or going on starvation diet

• Overeating which slows digestion and decrease warmth in the stomach; poor digestive system would not efficiently convert food to energy, bad materials build up in body and the body would become cold

Unfortunately people with cold Mizaj can soon be affected by mal-temperament caused by excessive coldness by consuming food stuff with cold Mizaj.

## ENGLISH IN USE

### LEARN NEWS TRANSLATION

## Official reveals main reasons for Iran water crisis

The current water crisis in Iran is resulted from some specific reasons which are rooted in population growth and mismanagement, said the deputy energy minister for water resources planning.

The irregular population growth in Iran is one of the main reasons for substandard water consumption in the country, Hedayat Fahmi noted.

He named lack of efficient irrigation methods in agriculture and consumption patterns in industry as other reasons which contributed to the water crisis.

One cannot disregard climate change and economic approach toward water management as well, he said.

The money people pay for water consumption is far less than the expenses government pays for providing water, he explained.

He also pointed to deficiencies in water management and utilization system as main reasons for water shortage in the country.

### ENGLISH PROVERB

## Variety is the spice of life

**Explanation:** Doing a lot of different things makes life more interesting

**For example:** I have to work in the heat of Sudan one week and the cold of Alaska the next, but I suppose variety is the spice of life.

### PHRASAL VERB

## Work on

**Meaning:** improve or develop

**For example:** Scientists are working on genetically modified crops and foods.

### ENGLISH IDIOM

## Waiting in the wings

**Explanation:** If someone is waiting in the wings, they are waiting for an opportunity to take action, especially to replace someone else in their job or position

**For example:** There are many young actors waiting in the wings ready to show their talent.

## دلایل کم آبی ایران به روایت معاون وزیر نیرو

به گزارش روز سه شنبه ایرنا، «هدایت فهمی» معاون وزیر نیرو عوامل اصلی ایجاد بحران آب در کشور را بر شمرد.

یکی از علت های اساسی این بحران، افزایش جمعیت است که باعث مصرف به صورت بی رویه و خارج از استانداردهای جهانی شده.

بهره وری مصرف آب در بخش کشاورزی، اقتصادی، و صنعت بسیار پایین است.

وی از تغییر اقلیم به عنوان یکی دیگر از عوامل بحرانی شدن منابع آبی یاد کرد.

ساختار معیوب اقتصاد آب را به عنوان پنجمین علت بحرانی شدن منابع آبی کشور عنوان کرد به این معنی که پول دریافتی از مردم در ازای تأمین آب بسیار کمتر از مقداری است که از سوی دولت هزینه می‌شود.

ضعف ساختاری در سیستم های مدیریتی و بهره برداری را یکی دیگر از عوامل دانست.

# Mattis: ISIL caught in Iraq-Syria military vise

Expelled from their main stronghold in northern Iraq, ISIL (Daesh) militants are now trapped in a military vise that will squeeze them on both sides of the Syria-Iraq border, U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said.

Mattis arrived in the Iraqi capital on an unannounced visit Tuesday just hours after President Donald Trump outlined a fresh approach to the stalemated war in Afghanistan. Trump also has vowed to take a more aggressive, effective approach against Daesh in Iraq and Syria, but he has yet to unveil a strategy for that conflict that differs greatly from his predecessor's.

In Baghdad, Mattis was meeting with senior Iraqi government leaders and with U.S. commanders. He also planned to meet in Irbil with Massoud Barzani, leader of the semi-autonomous Kurdish region that has helped fight Daesh.

Mattis told reporters before departing from neighboring Jordan that the so-called Middle Euphrates River Valley - roughly from the western Iraqi city of al-Qaim to the eastern Syrian city of Der el-Zour - will be liberated in time, as Daesh gets hit from both ends of the valley that bisects Iraq and Syria.

"You see, ISIL is now caught in-between converging forces," he said, of the militant group that burst into western and northern Iraq in 2014 from Syria and held sway for more than two years. "So ISIL's days are certainly numbered, but it's not over yet and it's not going to be over any time soon."

Mattis referred to this area as "ISIL's last stand."

Unlike the war in Afghanistan, Iraq



Iraq's Defence Minister Erfan al-Hiyali (R), welcomes U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, in Baghdad, Iraq August 22, 2017.

offers a more positive narrative for the White House, at least for now. Having enabled Iraqi government forces to reclaim Daesh's prized possession of Mosul in July, the U.S. military effort is showing tangible progress and the Pentagon can credibly assert that momentum is on Iraq's side.

Brett McGurk, the administration's special envoy to the counter-Daesh coalition, credits the Trump administration for having accelerated gains against the militants. He said Monday that about one-third of all territory regained in Iraq and Syria since 2014 has been retaken in the last six or seven months.

"I think that's quite significant and partially due to the fact we're moving faster,

more effectively," as a result of Trump's delegation of battlefield authorities to commanders in the field, McGurk said. He said this "has really made a difference on the ground. I have seen that with my own eyes."

It seems likely that in coming months Trump may be in position to declare a victory of sorts in Iraq as Daesh fighters are marginalized and they lose their claim to be running a "caliphate" inside Iraq's borders. Syria, on the other hand, is a murkier problem, even as ISIL loses ground there against U.S.-supported local fighters and Russian-backed Syrian government forces.

The U.S. role in Iraq parallels Afghanistan in some ways, starting with the basic

tenet of enabling local government forces to fight rather than having U.S. troops do the fighting for them. That is unlikely to change in either country. Also, although the Taliban is the main opposition force in Afghanistan, a Daesh affiliate has emerged there, too. In both countries, U.S. airpower is playing an important role in support of local forces, and in both countries the Pentagon is trying to facilitate the development of potent local air forces.

An immediate worry is a Kurdish independence referendum to be held Sept. 25, which, if successful, could upset a delicate political balance in Iraq and enflame tensions with Turkey, whose own Kurdish population has fought an insurgency against the central government for decades. McGurk reiterated U.S. opposition to holding the Iraqi Kurdish referendum.

"We believe these issues should be resolved through dialogue under the constitutional framework, and that a referendum at this time would be really potentially catastrophic to the counter-ISIL campaign," McGurk told reporters in a joint appearance with Mattis before they flew to Iraq.

With the Iraqi military's campaign to retake the northern city of Tal Afar now under way, Mattis has refused to predict victory. He says generals and senior officials should "just go silent" when troops are entering battle.

"I'd prefer just to let the reality come home. There's nothing to be gained by forecasting something that's fundamentally unpredictable," he told reporters traveling with him over the weekend.

(Source: AP)

## Raqqa: U.S.-led strikes 'kill 100 civilians' in 48 hours

At least 100 civilians have been killed over the past 48 hours by the United States-led air strikes targeting fighters in Raqqa, the de-facto capital in Syria of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Daesh) terrorist outfit.

Residents told Al Jazeera on Tuesday that at least 100 civilians had been killed since Sunday, with 55 civilians killed in the eastern neighborhoods of Bedou and al-Sukhani on Monday.

Meanwhile, the Britain-based so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) put Monday's death toll at 42, including 19 children and 12 women, and said 27 were killed on Sunday - a two-day total of 69 people.

The deaths came on the second consecutive day of a ferocious bombing campaign in Raqqa, more than half of which has been captured by the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) battling ISIL, which is also known as ISIS.

"The tolls are high because the air strikes are hitting neighborhoods in the city center that are densely packed with civilians," SOHR director Rami Abdel Rahman told the AFP news agency.

Earlier this month, the aid group Doctors Without Borders (MSF/Médecins Sans Frontières) reported that food and medicine needed to treat the wounded were in short supply.

The U.S.-led coalition, which operates in both Syria and neighboring Iraq, says it takes all possible measures to avoid civilian casualties.

In August, it acknowledged the deaths of 624 civilians in its strikes in Syria and Iraq since 2014, but rights groups say the number is much higher.



The United Nations estimates there are up to 25,000 civilians trapped inside the city, with food and fuel supplies short and prohibitively expensive.

The UN's humanitarian point man for Syria, Jan Ege-land, has said ISIL-held territory in Raqqa city is now "the worst place" in the war-torn country.

■ **Russia says 200 ISIL fighters killed in Syria air raid**

Meantime, Russian fighter jets killed more than 200 ISIL terrorists in a recent air attack in Syria, the defense ministry said on Monday, as part of an intensified air campaign to help President Bashar al-Assad's forces drive the group from its major stronghold of Deir Az Zor.

The planes destroyed an armed convoy of at least 20 ISIL vehicles that were heading to Deir Az Zor, the ministry said in comments carried by state news agency TASS. It did not specify the date of the attack.

The SOHR confirmed that at least 70 fighters from ISIL were killed in a Russian air attack on a convoy in the

countryside west of Deir Az Zor on Friday.

This month alone, Russian fighter jets have flown 990 missions, destroying 40 armored vehicles, more than 100 trucks and killing about 800 ISIL terrorists, said Colonel General Sergei Rudskoi. Those casualties include more than 200 killed in the recent raid on the ISIL convoy.

Rudskoi said Syrian troops are meanwhile advancing from three directions to encircle Deir Az Zor city.

Syrian government forces control around half the city and a nearby airbase, both of which are besieged by ISIL terrorists. Rudskoi said terrorists fleeing the U.S.-backed offensives in the Iraqi city of Mosul and the Syrian city of Raqqa have poured into Deir Az Zor in recent months.

He said Syrian troops have also encircled Akerbat, an ISIL-held town in central Syria, and that Russian fighter jets have targeted ISIL convoys trying to flee the area for Deir Az Zor.

Russia has waged an air campaign in Syria since September 2015 aimed at helping the Syrian government forces defeat ISIL as well as Syrian rebel groups.

Rudskoi said the creation of de-escalation zones in Syria had helped the Russian military to focus on battling ISIL.

Under a plan approved in May by Russia, Turkey and Iran that applies to three areas of the country, the government and Syrian rebels have agreed to cease hostilities, halt government air raids and improve humanitarian access.

Russian military police are monitoring compliance at checkpoints around the three zones.

(Source: agencies)

## Boko Haram Nigerian child bombings this year are quadruple 2016's: UNICEF

Boko Haram militants in northeast Nigeria have sent out four times as many child suicide bombers this year as they used in all of 2016, the United Nations Children's Fund said on Tuesday.

Eighty-three children had been used as bombers since Jan. 1, 2017, UNICEF said. Of those, 55 were girls, mostly under 15 years old and 27 were boys. One was a baby strapped to a girl. Nineteen children were used last year, UNICEF said.

The Boko Haram insurgency, now in its eighth year, has claimed over 20,000 lives and forced more than two million people to flee their homes over eight years.

The frequency of suicide bomb attacks in northeastern Nigeria has increased in the past few weeks, killing at least 170 people

since June 1, according to a Reuters tally.

UNICEF, in a statement released on Tuesday, said it was "extremely concerned about an appalling increase in the cruel and calculated use of children, especially girls, as 'human bombs' in northeast Nigeria. The use of children in this way is an atrocity."

Boko Haram is trying to create a state in the Lake Chad region, which spans parts of Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon and Chad. It gained notoriety by abducting more than 200 girls from the northeast Nigerian town of Chibok in April 2014. Aid groups say it has kidnapped thousands more adults and children.

Children who escape are often held by authorities or ostracized by their commu-

nities and families. Nigerian aid worker Rebecca Dali, who runs an agency that offers counseling for those who were abducted, said children as young as four were among the 209 escapees her organization had helped since 2015.

"They (former abductees) are highly traumatized," Dali told Reuters on Monday at the United Nations in Geneva, where she received an award from the Sergio Vieira de Mello Foundation for her humanitarian work.

Her team, which includes former police officers, identified some returnees as having been trained as suicide bombers.

"There were two girls taught by Boko Haram to be suicide bombers ... The girls confirmed that they were taught that their life was not worth living, that if they die detonat-

ing the bomb and killing a lot of people, then their lives will be profitable," Dali said.

Some 450,000 children are also at risk of life-threatening malnutrition in 2017 by the end of the year in northeast Nigeria, UNICEF said.

Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said on Monday the country would "reinforce and reinvigorate" its fight against the group following the latest wave of attacks.

Analysts say the Boko Haram faction led by Abubakar Shekaru may have been paid ransom by the government to gain the release of 82 of the Chibok girls in May, which then was used to buy weapons and recruit fighters. The government did not disclose details of the negotiations.

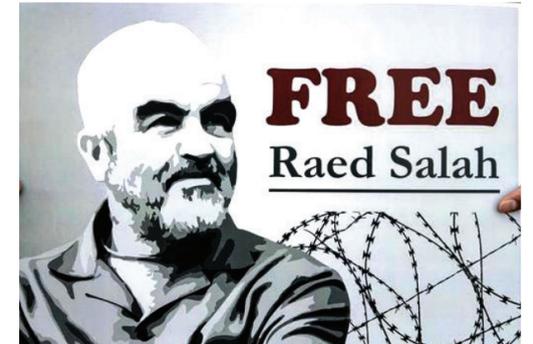
(Source: Reuters)

## Israel extends detention of Palestinian cleric over al-Aqsa Mosque protests

The Israeli regime has extended for several more days the detention of Sheikh Raed Salah, a cleric caught up in the developments ensuing from a crackdown on the al-Aqsa Mosque protests.

Salah's lawyer said on Monday that Israeli prosecutors had demanded a regime court to renew the cleric's remand until Thursday as charges were being prepared against him.

The 58-year-old cleric, who is residing in the pre-1967



Israeli-occupied territories, was arrested on August 15 over allegations of supporting terrorism. He was an active advocate of Palestinians who sought the removal of Israel's controversial security measures at the gates of the Noble Sanctuary (Haram al-Sharif/ Temple Mount) compound, which is home to the revered al-Aqsa Mosque.

The security measures, which came after the July 14 deadly shooting and killing of two Israeli policemen, sparked some unprecedented protests and sit-in gatherings in occupied East al-Quds (Jerusalem), the neighborhood where the al-Aqsa Mosque compound is located.

For around two weeks, worshippers heeded calls from Muslim clerics, including Salah, and refused to pass through metal detectors until the regime was forced to remove them.

People close to Salah said filing charges against the cleric, which the prosecutors said was planned, was a "political intimidation" intended to silence dissent.

Among the allegations Salah is facing is a sermon he gave after the July 14 incident. Khaled Zabarka, the lawyer of the cleric, said Salah was accused of "inciting violence and terrorism" as well as supporting an illegal organization.

Salah served nine months in Israeli jails on similar allegations before he was released in January.

Israel also outlawed his group, the Islamic Movement in Israel, in 2015 for allegedly stoking violence.

(Source: Press TV)

## Dubai TV airs 'fake news' about rallies, curfew in Doha

Dubai TV has aired a false report claiming anti-government demonstrations took place in Doha, Qatar, and alleged that troops - including soldiers from Turkey - sprayed tear gas at protesters.

Qatar's government press office on Tuesday dismissed the report as "fake news" in a statement sent to Al Jazeera, a day after the broadcast which has now been circulated online.



Monday's report by the Emirati channel came as the House of Saud regime, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain continue a blockade against their Persian Gulf neighbor, Qatar. The trio allege that Doha supports terrorism, claims Qatar strongly denies.

"This is just the latest example of fake news created by the blockading countries," Saif Al Thani, director of Qatar's government press office, told Al Jazeera.

"The blockading countries are becoming increasingly desperate in their efforts to isolate Qatar because the international community has not been fooled by the smear campaign. They are now continuing their focus on public opinion, they are spending millions on creating fake news."

In the broadcast, reporter Maryam Al Awadhi says: "Turkish troops have been deployed on key street intersections of Doha, Qatar, in response to demonstrations by Qatari citizens."

The Dubai TV presenter claimed to base her reporting on "sources within the Qatari opposition".

A "curfew" was imposed on several parts of Doha after Qatar and Turkish troops fired tear gas at protesters, the report incorrectly claimed.

A Qatari government official, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to media, told Al Jazeera: "It is obvious that this report is fiction and is part of a bucket of lies the blockading countries have been spreading against Qatar."

Earlier this week, Qatar filed a complaint with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) after a Dubai-based Saudi-owned channel, Al Arabia TV, aired a video animation showing a Qatar Airways passenger jet being shot down.

That video speculated that in the event of a Qatari civilian jet accidentally travelling through Saudi airspace - which was closed after the blockade was announced in June, the kingdom's air force would be covered by international law to bring down or even shoot down the civilian aircraft.

(Source: Al Jazeera)

## Daesh gathering in Syria's Dayr al-Zawr for last battle: Russia

The remaining members of the Daesh (ISIL) terrorist group are gathering in Syria's Dayr al-Zawr province for their last stand, says the Russian Defense Ministry.

"The remaining [terrorist] forces are heading there. According to our data, militants from Mosul [in Iraq] moved there and the most battle-ready units from Raqqa," said spokesman for the Russian General Staff, General Sergey Rudskoy. He noted that despite the fact that most of the terrorists had left Raqqa, the U.S.-backed SDF forces have still not been able to capture the city.

"Syrian government forces supported by Russian Aerospace forces are swiftly pushing from three directions towards Dayr al-Zawr at the moment. The foothold around the city is the last stronghold of terrorists

on Syrian soil," he added.

"The defeat of the main forces of the most odious terrorist group, Daesh, which intended to create a so-called 'caliphate,' will be completed with lifting the siege of Dayr al-Zawr," he added.

Rudskoy went on to note that Russian Air Force has considerably increased its operations against Daesh in August, boosting the number of sorties to 60-70 per day as the push for Dayr al-Zawr gains momentum.

"During the past five days, Russian planes made 316 sorties and carried out 819 strikes...All in all, in August, Russian Aerospace forces aviation made 990 sorties, [and] 2,518 airstrikes have been carried out on command posts, positions, stockpiles, transshipment bases

and camps. Forty armored vehicles, 106 gun trucks and up to 800 terrorists have been destroyed," noted.

Earlier in the day, the Russian defense ministry announced that its aircraft have eliminated more than 200 Daesh terrorists heading for Dayr al-Zawr.

Daesh controls most of oil-rich Dayr al-Zawr Province, but the terror outfit is under pressure from Syrian forces advancing from the west.

The Syrian soldiers control a pocket of the provincial capital, Dayr al-Zawr, which has been under siege by Daesh for two years. Dayr al-Zawr is one of the few remaining areas under the Daesh control as the terrorist group is losing ground in Raqqa, its de facto capital in Syria.

(Source: agencies)

## AC Milan sign Kalinic from Fiorentina

Fiorentina have confirmed that Nikola Kalinic has joined AC Milan.

The striker, who scored 15 Serie A goals last season, becomes Milan's 11th signing of the summer, joining on an initial loan deal with an obligation to buy.

Reports suggest the forward will cost Milan a total of €25million, made up of an initial €5m loan fee and €20m to make it permanent at the end of the season.

Big-spending Milan have already signed Leonardo Bonucci, Andre Silva, Andrea Conti, Hakan Calhanoglu, Mateo Musacchio, Ricardo Rodriguez, Lucas Biglia, Franck Kessie, Antonio Donnarumma and Fabio Borini this summer, as they attempt to challenge both at home and abroad.

Kalinic is set to wear the No.7 shirt at San Siro, and has signed a four-year contract.

The 29-year-old has had something of a nomadic career thus far, playing for Hajduk Split, Blackburn Rovers and Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk before joining Fiorentina. He has also played for Pula and Sibenik on loan.

He will compete with fellow new arrival Andre Silva for starting striker duties at Milan, with youngster Patrick Cutrone also still at the club. Vincenzo Montella's side, who have also been linked with the likes of Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Andrea Belotti and Diego Costa, allowed Carlos Bacca to join Villarreal on loan with an option to buy last week to facilitate Kalinic's arrival.

The Croatia international's transfer was sanctioned by Fiorentina after they completed the signing of striker Giovanni Simone from Genoa.

(Source: Goal)

## ATP chief hails Nadal's 'unprecedented' return to world number one

Rafael Nadal's return to the top of the world rankings is a testament to the Spaniard's longevity in the game and is as impressive as any of his career achievements, men's tennis chief Chris Kermode has said.

The 31-year-old Nadal became the world number one for the first time since July 2014 after replacing Britain's Andy Murray at the top spot on Monday.

"To regain the No. 1 ranking nine years after having first reached it is unprecedented," ATP president Kermode said in a statement. "Rafa has been setting records throughout his remarkable career and this one is as impressive as any. It shows incredible dedication and longevity, and we congratulate him on this amazing achievement."

Nadal, a 15-times grand slam winner, came back from a series of knee and wrist injuries to reach the Australian Open final and claimed a record 10th French Open title this season.

"Being No. 1 after all the things that I have been going through the last couple of years is something unbelievable, so (it) is, for me, an amazing achievement to be back to that position after three years," said Nadal.

Nadal has claimed four titles on tour this season, winning 49 matches and losing nine in a stellar 2017.

(Source: Reuters)

## Boris Becker named German federation 'head of tennis'

Six-time Grand Slam champion Boris Becker will be named as the German Tennis Federation's (DTB) first 'head of tennis,' according to AFP subsidiary SID.

The 49-year-old was declared bankrupt in June, but has been given the new role in which he will manage all German men's tennis and oversee the running of the Davis Cup team.

Former Fed Cup captain Barbara Rittner will become the head of women's tennis. Their appointments are set to be made official at a press conference in Frankfurt tomorrow.

"But on Wednesday there will be other surprises," Dirk Hordorff, DTB vice-president, told SID. Becker, who famously became the youngest ever men's Wimbledon champion at the age of 17 in 1985, will first try to help Germany avoid relegation from the Davis Cup World Group in their play-off against Portugal on September 15-17.

Becker had already reportedly expressed an interest in working with the DTB in February after ending his stint as coach of 12-time major winner Novak Djokovic.

(Source: Express)

## Azarenka will miss US Open over 'ongoing family situation'

Former world No. 1 Victoria Azarenka has withdrawn from this month's US Open because of an "ongoing family situation."

Azarenka, a two-time grand slam champion and twice a finalist at Flushing Meadows, released a statement on Thursday saying that she was not allowed to take her son Leo out of California while she and the father of her baby attempted to resolve legal issues.

On Monday, the 28-year-old Belarusian confirmed she would not be competing in the final major of the year.

She said: "I am sadly unable to compete in this year's US Open due to my ongoing family situation that I am working through."

"While I will dearly miss being in New York and playing in one of my favorite tournaments, where I have enjoyed some of the best moments in my career, I am already looking forward to being back next year."

Azarenka gave birth in December and returned to tennis in June, but shortly after competing at Wimbledon — her first major since becoming a mother — she and Leo's father separated.

Last week Azarenka said no-one should have to decide between a child and their career.

Japan's Misa Eguchi will take Azarenka's place in the main draw of the tournament which starts on August 28.

(Source: CNN)

# Hacker group reveal drug use in football and claim 150 players failed tests in 2015

The Fancy Bears hackers have targeted football by releasing a series of documents they claim show officials are 'lying' about the lack of doping in the game.

The Russian cyber espionage group has previously leaked documents showing therapeutic use exemptions (TUEs) handed to cyclists Chris Froome and Sir Bradley Wiggins. Their hack of the IAAF's computer system showed Sir Mo Farah was once under suspicion for doping offences.

Now, in a threatening message that suggests up to 200 footballers were 'caught doping' in 2016, the Fancy Bears allege that several big-name players used banned medication at the 2010 World Cup, including Argentina's Carlos Tevez and Juan Veron, Germany striker Mario Gomez and Dirk Kuyt of Holland.

The Fancy Bears message read: 'Greetings citizens of the world.'

'You can have a look at WADA documents revealing that more than 150 players were caught doping in 2015. The next year this number increased up to 200 athletes.'

'Today Fancy Bears' hack team is publishing the material leaked from various sources related to football. Football players and officials unanimously affirm that this kind of sport is free of doping. Our team perceived these numerous claims as a challenge and now we will prove they are lying.'

The message accompanies a link to three documents. The Fancy Bears claim that two of these show World Anti-Dop-



ing Agency statistics for failed drugs tests from labs around the world in both 2015 and 2016. The 'Lab Result Report Samples' are all anonymous.

The third document is entitled 'TUE and DoU Overview for the 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa' and contains the names of 25 players and the drugs they have allegedly been permitted to use while at the tournament.

Argentina have the most players on the

list with five members of their squad allegedly using medication during the event. Germany is the next highest with four. The two teams played each other in the quarter-finals, with Germany winning 4-0 before losing to Spain in the semis.

There are no England players on the list.

Tevez, Veron and team-mates Gabriel Heinze and Samuel Watter had declared their use of the steroid Betamethasone,

an anti-inflammatory that can be used to treat skin conditions, asthma and other conditions.

Striker Diego Milito had declared use of Salbutamol, Budesonide and Betamethasone, and was also given a TUE for Formoterol, an asthma medication.

Gomez, the Wolfsburg striker who played for Bayern Munich in 2010, had a TUE for Salbutamol, another drug that can be used to treat asthma.

Kuyt, who played for Liverpool at the time, was allegedly using Dexamethasone, a corticosteroid, to treat a root canal.

Italy are also affected by the leak, with striker Vincenzo Iaquinta allegedly given a TUE for Betamethasone and midfielder Mauro Camoranesi declaring use of Triamcinolone, a corticosteroid, and Xylocaine, an anaesthetic.

The other countries with players named on the list are Algeria, Chile, Ivory Coast, Greece, New Zealand, Slovakia, Slovenia and the USA.

The list of allegedly failed drug tests by footballers contains several from labs in London.

In 2015 three players tested positive for cocaine and one for ecstasy.

Fancy Bears previously hacked the IAAF's computer system and revealed documents that showed Farah was once under suspicion for doping offences.

In July the IAAF confirmed the documents released by the Russian hackers were authentic.

(Source: Mirror)

## Raikkonen staying at Ferrari in 2018



Kimi Raikkonen will be racing for Ferrari again next season after the Italian Formula One team announced on Tuesday a contract extension with the Finn for 2018.

The popular 2007 world champion, who will be 38 in October, would have been out of contract at the end of this year with plenty of rivals eyeing up his seat at the sport's most successful and glamorous team.

Raikkonen has not won a race since he was at Lotus in 2013, and is currently fifth in a championship led by German team mate Sebastian Vettel, who has won four of the season's 11 races to date.

Vettel is also out of contract at the end of the season and the short Ferrari statement did not mention him. However, he is expected to remain once a longer and more lucrative deal has been hammered out.

The timing of Ferrari's statement was earlier than expected, since the team have often made such announcements at their home Italian round at Monza which follows on from this weekend's Belgian Grand Prix.

They had also been tipped to confirm both drivers at the same time.

Vettel, a four times world champion with Red Bull, has also been linked in some media speculation to champions

Mercedes where Finland's Valtteri Bottas has yet to be confirmed for 2018.

By opting to keep Raikkonen, Ferrari have gone for an experienced driver who is still quick and who will not rock the boat in what is likely to be his final season. He first raced for Ferrari between 2007-9 and then returned in 2014.

He and Vettel get on well, with the German keen on him staying, and Raikkonen has shown his loyalty this season by accepting team orders to his detriment.

The Finn has twice finished second behind Vettel, in Monaco and Hungary, while also taking third place in Britain and Russia.

He started on pole position in Monaco in May, his first appearance at the front of the grid since June 2008, and has a strong track record at Belgium's Spa-Francorchamps where he was won four times.

His future was called into question in July, however, when Ferrari chairman Sergio Marchionne called him "a bit of a laggard".

"I think Kimi has got to show a higher level of commitment to the process," he had told reporters at the Austrian Grand Prix.

Marchionne has also emphasized that he wants Vettel to stay.

(Source: Reuters)

## Monaco ultras fire warning to Mbappe amid talk of PSG move



An official Monaco ultras group has hit out at Kylian Mbappe's reported wage demands and has encouraged the board to consider selling the striker for the good of the club.

The 18-year-old has been linked with a number of major European clubs during the transfer window but is rumored to be close to agreeing a move to Ligue 1 rivals Paris Saint-Germain.

Reports on Tuesday claimed that Mbappe has agreed a five-year contract worth €18million per year with Unai Emery's side, who are said to be trying to negotiate a deal that would see him join on a season-long loan before making a permanent move next year, in order for PSG to escape Financial Fair Play problems.

Mbappe will reportedly cost close to €140m if he does sign for the capital club, with Brazil international Lucas Moura potentially heading the other way.

The striker's future has cast a shadow over Monaco's pre-season and the beginning of their title defence and he was dropped from the squad for Friday's 1-0 win over Metz after reportedly clashing with team-mate Andrea Raggi in training.

The 'Ultras Monaco 1994' group has now called on the club to bring the speculation to an end, although they have

urged them not to sell Mbappe to a direct rival.

"It's been a few weeks since the season started and we've had some good results. We closely observe Monaco's news. Today, Ultras Monaco want to react to a case involving one of our players," the group said in a statement on Tuesday.

"In recent times, we have witnessed with surprise and indignation the fees revealed by the media regarding Mbappe's transfer, but also the wages demanded by the footballer to sign a new deal. We consider that no one player deserves so many millions of euros."

"We believe in popular football and values like the love for the shirt and respect for the club where you grew up. We cannot accept such behaviour and wage demands when he has not proved anything over a decade of matches at a professional level."

"We also want to remind Mbappe and his clan that no one player is above the institution of AS Monaco."

"We truly hope that our board will take the necessary decision to end this story if his wage demands are true, all the while considering that it is essential that they don't strengthen a rival team in the race for the title."

(Source: Sun)

## Messi is unsure about Barcelona future, claims Benedito

Lionel Messi is showing he is unsure about his future by not signing a new Barcelona contract, according to Agust Benedito.

The Argentina star agreed to a new four-year deal in July but has yet to put pen to paper, despite his current contract having less than a year to run.

Speculation has mounted that Messi could be tempted to leave Barca, with Manchester City reportedly prepared to activate his €300million release clause in order to reunite him with former boss Pep Guardiola.

Barca technical secretary Robert Fernandez has insisted it is a matter of time before Messi signs his extension, but Benedito, a former candidate for the club presidency, believes the 30-year-old has clear doubts around his decision.

"They've been leaving the renewal of Messi, the most important player, until the end... and with it still not signed, it's a concern," Benedito told Onda Cero and Radio Marca.

"Messi's case could be worse than Neymar's because, as things stand, from January 1, he's free."

"Messi has always wanted a competitive team and the



situation is a worry. [Barcelona president Josep Maria] Bartomeu said Messi had signed his renewal in June and that's not the case.

"Bartomeu has not been able to conclude Messi's renewal. If Messi hasn't signed the renewal, it's because he's

unsure."

Barca have largely endured a frustrating transfer window to date, losing Neymar for a world-record €222m fee to Paris Saint-Germain and facing defiance from Liverpool and Borussia Dortmund over top targets Philippe Coutinho and Ousmane Dembele.

Brazil international Paulinho was signed for €40m from Guangzhou Evergrande Taobao and Nice's Jean Seri is reportedly close to securing a move, but Benedito believes Barca's recruitment of midfielders underlines a sense of confusion over their transfer plans.

"The feeling given by the board is that they don't know what they're looking for in the market," said Benedito, who began a campaign to lodge a vote of no confidence against the club's directors in June. "There's a bit of disruption."

"It seems like Seri is coming and with him they'll have about 11 midfielders. We lose Neymar and we sign Paulinho."

(Source: FourFourTwo)

# Sweden Saman Ghoddos interested in wearing Iran jersey

**S P O R T S** Iranian-Swedish midfielder Saman Ghoddos has reportedly given the green light to Iran Football Federation to join Team Melli.

The 24-year-old, who scored for his side Östersund FK during Europa League qualification against Turkish giant Galatasaray, has played in two friendly matches for Sweden and scored a goal but he is still eligible to play for Iran.

Ghoddos has now applied for Iranian citizenship and it seems he is going to choose Iran national football team.

"There's nothing I can answer now. It's still 50-50 for me. But as I said before, there is only one national team that shows interest right now," Ghoddos said in an interview with SportExpressen.

"I will always love Sweden. I've grown up here. It is an honor to live here and to represent Sweden. At the same time, my parents are Iranian. I have Persian blood in my body. I love Iran too," said Ghoddos.

In December 2016, Ghoddos was called up by Sweden manager Janne Andersson for friendlies against Ivory Coast and Slovakia. He scored his first international goal for Sweden in a 6-0 win over Slovakia on 12 January 2017.

Ghoddos had already stated that in July he may accept an invitation to play for Carlos Queiroz's Iran.



## Iranian Greco-Roman wrestlers claim three bronzes at World C'ships

Iran Greco-Roman wrestlers claimed three bronze medals at the First Day of the World Wrestling Championships in Paris, France on Monday.

In the bronze medal bouts, Iran snared medals in three of the finals. Mohammadali Geraei was one point away from losing by technical fall to 2016 world silver medalist Daniel Catara from Moldova at 71kg.

Former world champion Saied Abdvali opened the bout with a go-behind takedown at 75kg and Kazbek Kilov from Belarus ended the bout with a slap for a two-point penalty and technical fall win Abdvali.

And at 85kg, Asian champion Hossein Nouri fashioned a 4-0 win over two-time junior world champ Islam



Azerbaijan's Islam Abbasov with a series of step-out points.  
(Source: unitedworldwrestling)

## Padideh stun Esteghlal at Azadi Stadium

**S P O R T S** TEHRAN – Esteghlal football team lost to Padideh 2-0 in Week 5 of Iran Professional League here at the Azadi Stadium on Tuesday.

Mohammad Ghazi gave the visiting team the lead in the 15th minute with a left-footed strike outside the box.

Soon after, Esteghlal put Padideh under pressure and created several opportunities but the strikers lacked of the cutting edge.

Hossein Mehrban extended the lead in the 72nd minute.

It's Esteghlal's third defeat in five matches.

The Iranian giants started the competition with a 1-0 loss to Sanat Naft.

Alireza Mansourian were held to a goalless draw by Esteghlal Khuzestan



and defeated tractor Sazi 1-0 in the following weeks.  
Esteghlal also lost to Saipa 1-0 in Week 4.

## Barcelona sue Neymar for breach of contract

Barcelona are suing Neymar for a breach of contract after the Brazilian left the club for Paris Saint-Germain earlier this month.

The Catalan club said on Tuesday they believe they are owed €8.5 million that was paid to the player as part of a renewal bonus when he signed a new contract last year.

In a statement released on Tuesday, Barca said they had passed the complaint on to the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF), having first filed the lawsuit in a Barcelona court on Aug. 11.

FC Barcelona have sent a claim to be made against Neymar for breach of contract to the RFEF for it to be passed on to the French Football Federation (FFF) and FIFA," the statement read.

"In the demand, the club claims back money paid as part of a renewal bonus based on the fact he has not fulfilled his contract. The amount is €8.5m in damages, plus an additional 10 percent in interest. The club also claims that PSG subsidise the amounts in the event that

the player cannot take responsibility.

"FC Barcelona have taken these steps in order to defend their own interests after Neymar rescinded his contract with the club just a few months after signing a renewal until 2021."

Neymar put pen to paper on a new five-year deal at Camp Nou last October and as well as the bonus he was paid at the time, he was due to receive another €26m this summer.

However, after his world record €222m transfer to PSG went through, club spokesman Josep Vives confirmed the club would not be making the payment as Neymar had not fulfilled his contractual duties.

"There were three conditions -- one, that the player didn't negotiate with another club before July 31; two, that he publicly expressed his decision to fulfil his contract; and three, the payment was to be made on Sept. 1 to ensure he didn't go to another club," Vives said.

"With these criteria not met, the club will not pay the renewal bonus. The money is no longer with a notary

but back with the club."

Neymar did not publicly say he was considering a move to PSG until Aug. 3, the day Barcelona terminated his contract and he signed for his new team.

Barcelona's claim comes just days after Neymar blasted the club's board.

"I do have something to say: That I am disappointed with them [the Barca directors]," Neymar said after PSG's win over Toulouse on Sunday.

"I spent four years there and was very happy. I began happy, spent four years happy and left happy. But not with them. For me, they shouldn't be in charge of Barca. Barca deserve much better, and everyone knows this.

"To see my former teammates unhappy makes me sad also, because I have many friends [there]. I hope that things get better for Barca. That they return to the team they were and become one that can compete with the others."

(Source: soccer.net)

## Liverpool need Southampton's Virgil van Dijk - Steven Gerrard

Steven Gerrard has urged Liverpool to do everything they can to sign Virgil van Dijk from Southampton this summer.

Liverpool were interested in Van Dijk earlier this summer before they released a statement apologising to Southampton amid tapping-up allegations.

The centre-back is keen to leave St. Mary's this summer after handing in a transfer request, but Southampton maintain he is not for sale.

"Yes [Van Dijk is a necessity]," former Liverpool captain Gerrard, now an academy coach at Anfield, said in his role as a BT Sport pundit. "For me, if you want to compete in the league and in the Champions League [Van Dijk is needed]."

"It's been well documented that we need two or three signings in."

After publicly expressing his desire to leave the club, Van Dijk has not featured in Southampton's first two matches of the season.

Despite Southampton closing in on the signing of Lazio's Wesley Hoedt, manager Mauricio Pellegrino recently said he wanted keep Van Dijk.

When asked if he wanted to add another centre-back to his squad even if Saints retain Van Dijk, Pellegrino

replied: "Yes, because as you know right now it's the position that we are in disadvantage."

"I think it's an area where we can improve with another player."

Meanwhile, Southampton chairman Ralph Krueger has explained why the Premier League side have taken their firm stance on the Netherlands international.

"It's about an overall much, much, much bigger picture -- a change of course for Southampton," he said. "We want to mature, we want to be a team that can profit from synergies that create a much more attractive football and a better product for the fans, and gives us a chance to get back into Europe."

"That's one player in this whole equation of 25 and it is the visible one, but for us it's the principle and it's the path and it's the statement we need to make to get to a new space as a club."

"We are very, very adamant about carrying this through."

Liverpool have routinely signed Southampton's best players in recent years, with Sadio Mane, Adam Lallana, Nathaniel Clyne and Dejan Lovren all making the switch from St. Mary's to Anfield.

(Source: ESPN)

## The IPC wins major international prize

Paralympic Movement's global governing body named as one of three laureates for prestigious LUI Che Woo Prize.

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) has been named as one of three laureates for the prestigious LUI Che Woo Prize – Prize for World Civilisation which was announced at a press conference in Hong Kong on Tuesday (22 August).

The Paralympic Movement's global governing body has been awarded the Positive Energy Prize for "its outstanding work in proactively encouraging Para athletes in celebration and competitive participation in sports, offering hope to people with an impairment, and changing society's long-held biases towards them. The IPC has successfully promoted harmony among diverse groups and radiated positive energy around the globe."

The citation of the LUI Che Woo Prize to the IPC reads:

"The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) is awarded the LUI Che Woo Prize 2017 in the Positive Energy category, with the Specific Area of Focus on "Promotion of Harmony among Diverse Groups".

"The IPC has had a tremendous positive impact by bringing together Para athletes from around the world in celebration and competitive participation

in sports. In doing so it has helped to change long-held biases towards people with an impairment and made the Paralympic Games a symbol of social inclusion and awareness.

"Founded in 1989, the IPC has transformed itself from a small disability sports organisation into one of the world's most widely respected sports organisations, making the Paralympic Games comparable to the Olympic Games. It is able to feature the world's best Para athletes, who have gone on to become global heroes. Its work has resulted in massive infrastructure improvements for people with an impairment, substantially increased funding for Paralympic sports, and major improvements in athlete training and performance.

"The IPC and the Paralympic Movement have inspired and offered hope to so many, making what was once perceived as impossible "possible", and in so doing generated enormous positive energy. Over the years, the Paralympic Games have dissolved barriers, making for a more inclusive society through achievement and excellence in sports, and celebrating the triumph of the human spirit over adversity and challenges."

(Source: Paralympic.org)

## Giants' WR Beckham suffers ankle sprain in preseason game

New York Giants wide receiver Odell Beckham Jr. suffered an ankle sprain after taking a heavy tackle in Monday's preseason game against Cleveland, the Giants said.

After catching a pass in the second quarter, the receiver was hit directly on his knee by Browns cornerback Brian Boddy-Calhoun. The speedy pass catcher limped off the field before heading to the locker room in pain.

The Giants said the 24-year-old suffered only an ankle sprain but would be evaluated further.

Beckham has reached the Pro Bowl in each of his first three seasons in the NFL, establishing himself as one of the league's most dangerous receivers.

The Giants kick off their season at Dallas on Sept. 11.

(Source: Reuters)

## CAS upholds life ban on former top officials for doping blackmail

**ZURICH (Reuters)** — Sports highest tribunal has upheld life bans on two top Russian athletics officials and the son of former world governing body president Lamine Diack for covering up an elite Russian athlete's positive dope test and blackmailing her over it.

Valentin Balakhnichen, the former head of the Russian athletics federation, and Alexei Melnikov, the country's former head distance coach, were banned by the IAAF (International Association of Athletics Federations) ethics commission in January last year.

Papa Massata Diack, a former marketing consultant to the IAAF, was also banned. All three denied any wrongdoing and subsequently appealed to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

"The IAAF Ethics Commission decision is confirmed and Valentin Balakhnichen, Alexei Melnikov and Papa Massata Diack remain banned for life from any involvement in the sport of athletics," said CAS in announcing its verdict on Monday.

"The panel concluded that on the evidence adduced, the charges established against Messrs Balakhnichen, Melnikov and Diack were established beyond reasonable doubt and the sanctions imposed should be upheld."

It said it would give a full reasoned decision at a later date.

The bans followed the previous year's World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) independent commission report that found a state-sponsored culture of doping in Russia and prompted the country's suspension from the sport.

The sanctions related primarily to the case of Russian former London marathon winner Liliya Shobukhova, who paid \$600,000 to have positive dope tests covered up.

## Ronaldo hit by 'terrible curse' for missing dad's funeral, witch doctor claims

Cristiano Ronaldo has unleashed "very powerful negative energies" by missing his dad's funeral, a witch doctor has claimed.

Fernando Nogueira, dubbed Fafe, claims the Real Madrid ace has been bewitched with a "terrible curse" after skipping the ceremony to play football.

The Portuguese shaman said because Ronaldo, 32, has been "weakened spiritually and psychologically" because he "did not say goodbye to his father".

Ronaldo skipped the funeral of his father, Jose Dinis Aveiro, 12 years ago to play a football match.

The four time FIFA Ballon d'Or winner was aged 20 when his dad, who battled with alcoholism, passed away.

Speaking to Flash, Fafe said: "Ronaldo has been weakened spiritually and psychologically.

"He missed the funeral of his father to play the same evening, and that unleashed a lot of energies.

"He did not say goodbye to his father when he was alive, and had not talked to him in a long time.

"There are things that weigh on our consciences.

"As bad as a father can be, missing his funeral unleashed very powerful negative energies."

Funnily enough Ronaldo's fortunes on the pitch have recently taken a turn for the worst.

The winger has been slapped with a five-match ban for pushing a referee during Real Madrid's 3-1 win over Barcelona last weekend.

Other troubles include beef with the Spanish authorities over his tax affairs.

But Fafe claims Ronaldo can change his luck – if he seeks treatment from a witch doctor.

He added: "If he or his family had a strong witch doctor to treat him it would be fine. If it fails nothing will be solved.

"I am happy to treat him for free. Ronaldo is the best player in the world and for him I would do it free of charge."

(Source: Daily Star)

## AFC club competitions attract C'estbon deal

The Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) club competitions continue to attract top level sponsors as C'estbon, China's leading brand of bottled water, has become the latest Official Supporter of the AFC's Club Programme.

The partnership will include exposure at the AFC's flagship club competitions, the AFC Champions League, the AFC Cup as well as the AFC Futsal Club Championship.

The announcement was made just before the kick-off of tonight's AFC Champions League quarter final between Shanghai SIPG and Guangzhou Evergrande and Dato' Windsor John, the AFC General Secretary, said: "The partnership reflects the continued appeal of the AFC's competitions.

"Our AFC Vision and Mission is to stage top class competitions and there is no doubt that the AFC Champions League fits into that category. It is one of the richest continental club competitions in the world."

(Source: AFC)

INTERNATIONAL DAILY  
www.tehrantimes.com

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▶ Subscription & Distribution Dept.: Tel: (+98 21) 43051603  
▶ www.eshterak.ir Distributor: Padideh Novin Co.  
Tel: 88911433  
▶ Webmaster: webmaster@tehrantimes.com  
▶ Printed at: Kayhan - ISSN: 1017-94

No. 18, Bimeh Alley, Nejatollahi St., Tehran, Iran  
P.O. Box: 14155-4843  
Zip Code: 1599814713



## Asghar Farhadi begins shooting new film in Spain

**A R T TEHRAN** — The Iranian two-time Oscar-winning director Asghar Farhadi started the shooting of his new film titled "Everybody Knows" in the Spanish capital of Madrid on Monday.



Iranian director Asghar Farhadi

Argentine star Ricardo Darin and the Oscar-winning Spanish couple, Javier Bardem and Penelope Cruz, are the main members of the cast, Farhadi announced in a post sent on his official Telegram channel on Tuesday.

Eduard Fernández Serrano, Bárbara Lennie, Elvira Mínguez, Inma Cuesta, Roger Casamajor and Ramón Barea, all from Spain, will also star in the \$12-13m project, which is being made as a French-Spanish-Italian co-production with Memento Films in France, Morena Films in Spain and Lucky Red in Italy.

The family drama and psychological thriller tells the story of Carolina who leaves Argentina to visit her family in Spain, but some unexpected accidents affect the visit.

The plot was developed four years ago before Farhadi began making his Oscar-winning drama "The Salesman". He wrote the script and it was translated into Spanish.

Pedro and Agustín Almodóvar's Madrid-based El Deseo will produce "Everybody Knows", which is Farhadi's second movie being shot in outside of his homeland. He directed "The Past" in Paris in 2012.

## "If You Go Away" wins award at Hollyshorts Film Festival

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian director Soheila Golestani's short film "If You Go Away" won the Best VR Award at the Hollyshorts Film Festival, which was held in Los Angeles from August 10 to 19.



The film is a love story about Syrian war refugees.

A couple forced to migrate because of war become separated from each other. The woman tries to fight against her destiny and get back to her husband.

Golestani made the 5-minute film using virtual reality techniques.

## 'Print' on Texas family wall is original Rockwell, sells for \$1.6 million

**DALLAS (Reuters)** — A Texas family who discovered their old Norman Rockwell work of baseball umpires was an authentic painting sold the work at auction for \$1.6 million, Heritage Auctions said on Monday.

The painting, an original study for the work called "Tough Call", shows three umpires pondering whether to halt a game as raindrops begin to fall. It became one of the best-known Rockwell illustrations after being published on the cover of the Saturday Evening Post in 1949.

Rockwell gave a signed copy to John "Beans" Reardon, a baseball umpire featured prominently in the work. Sandra Sprinkle, Reardon's granddaughter, later inherited the piece and put it above the mantle of her Dallas home for about a decade, it said.

After her death in 2015, her husband Gene Sprinkle sold the couple's home and moved to a retirement community, where his nephew took a look at the piece and noticed brush strokes.

"We always thought it was a print, but we hung it over our fireplace because it was signed by Norman Rockwell to Beans Reardon," Gene Sprinkle told Reuters by telephone on Monday.

Sprinkle, a 74-year-old retiree, said he agreed to let his nephew contact Dallas-based Heritage, which determined it was an original oil, painted as a study for the final version.

# Iran's "Colorful Dream of Silk Road" realized as Beijing book fair opens

**A R T TEHRAN** — The 24th Beijing International Book Fair opened today as Iran, the guest of honor, has selected the motto of "Iran, Colorful Dream of Silk Road" for its programs for the major Asian cultural event.

Dozens of cultural organizations, publishers and writers from Iran have arranged a wide variety of programs to represent Iran as a major part of the ancient route that once facilitated a cultural dialogue between the colorful cultures in many places in the world.

The Alhoda International Publishing Group, Saless, Candle and Fog, Farhang Moaser, and Qoqnus are among the publishing companies, which are displaying their latest offerings at the event.

Groups of Iranian writers are currently at the fair to promote their books and also attend various meetings arranged by the organizers.

Among the authors is Hushang Moradi Kermani, the children's writer whose works have been translated into several languages.

Elham Sadat Mirzania, the author of a Chinese-Persian dictionary, and Marzieh Soleimani, the translator of American Sinologist Herrlee Glessner Creel's "Chinese Thought, from Confucius to Mao Tsé-tung", are also in attendance at the fair.

Iran also plans to organize a festival of most acclaimed movies from Iranian filmmakers in Beijing during the book fair.

Six films, including Asghar Farhadi's Oscar-winning drama "The Salesman" and Abbas Kiarostami's "Shirin", have been selected to screen at the festival.

A number of Iranian cultural officials are also at the book fair for establishing close working relations with the participating international publishers and cultural organizations.



Iran is welcoming visitors at its pavilion located at the entrance of West Hall 2 of the New China International Exhibition Center (NCIEC). The Beijing International Book Fair will run until August 27.

## Tehran center to host Show of Hands Festival

**A R T TEHRAN** — Pianists from Iran and several European countries will come together at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center in September to perform solo improvisations during the Show of Hands Festival.

The festival will be organized by Tehran-based labels Hermes Records and Click Design and Innovation Group.

The event will begin with performances by Maziar Yunesi from Iran and Tord Gustavsen from Norway on September 13.

David Six from Austria, Wolfert Brederode from the Netherlands, Benedikt Jahnel from Germany and Francois Couturier from France will also perform during the event.

The festival will also showcase performances by Nik Bartsch and Colin Vallon, both from Switzerland, Stefano Battaglia from Italy and Peyman Yazdanian from Iran.

Iranian Pianists	European Pianists
۲۲ شهریور September 13	Maziar Yunesi Tord Gustavsen
۲۳ شهریور September 14	Wolfert Brederode David Six
۲۴ شهریور September 15	Peyman Yazdanian Benedikt Jahnel
۲۵ شهریور September 16	Nik Bartsch Colin Vallon
۲۶ شهریور September 17	Stefano Battaglia Francois Couturier
۲۷ شهریور September 18	Marcin Wasilewski Surprise Concert!

In addition, the Polish pianist Marcin Wasilewski will go on stage on the closing night on September 18.

The festival is scheduled to come to an end with a surprise performance whose details will be announced later.

## Iranian director making doc on Azerbaijan Black January

**A R T TEHRAN** — Iranian filmmaker Babak Minai is making a documentary about Black January, a violent crackdown in Baku in January 1990 during the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

"The idea to make a film entered my mind last year when I heard about the tragedy on a trip to the Azerbaijani capital of Baku," Minai told the Persian service of Tasnim on Tuesday.

On January 20, 1990, 150 unarmed civilians, including women and children, participating in a peaceful demonstration were killed by Soviet troops under orders from Mikhail Gorbachev.

In the documentary entitled "Black January", Minai will make a comparison between Black January and Tehran's Black Friday on September 8, 1978, during which dozens of people were killed in a demonstration against Iran's last monarch, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

He has made several trips to Azerbaijan over the past year to gather information



about the tragedy and also to meet some of the survivors of the incident.

"Black January" is scheduled to be screened at the 11th Cinema Verite, Iran's major international festival for documentary cinema, in December.

It will be also broadcast on Ofoq, IR-IB's channel for documentary films.

Among Minai's credits are "Sheikh Reza", "Mr. Seyyed Mehdi" and "Haj Marzuq".

## "Hitman's Bodyguard" nabs No. 1, "Logan Lucky" misfires

**LOS ANGELES (Variety)** — Without a superhero movie or new studio sequel in play, this weekend provided an opening for two smaller films to shine. But as the weekend draws to a close, one is beaming brighter than the other.

That title goes to Lionsgate's R-rated action comedy "Hitman's Bodyguard," which is firing off to \$21.6 million during its opening weekend at 3,377 locations. That's a solid opening, especially during a painful summer for the movie business and sleepy month of August. The final tally was fueled by an aggressive marketing push, and a trio of stars at the center -- Samuel L. Jackson as a notorious hitman, and Salma Hayek as hit equally threatening wife, and Ryan Reynolds as a bodyguard. The film comes courtesy of director Patrick Hughes ("The Expendables 3") and writer Tom O'Connor.

"The Hitman's Bodyguard" is generating great word of mouth among moviegoers," said Lionsgate's distribution president David Spitz. "It has a clear runway in the weeks

ahead, and we expect it to play well right into September."

Meanwhile, "Logan Lucky" -- a critical darling from Steven Soderbergh and Bleecker Street -- is sputtering. The heist comedy, which relied on an unconventional production and marketing strategy, looks to make \$8.1 million this weekend from 3,031 theaters. The film was partially funded through foreign pre-sales and partnering with Amazon for streaming rights. The story -- penned by Rebecca Blunt, who likely doesn't exist -- centers on a trio of siblings played by Channing Tatum, Riley Keough, and Adam Driver, who attempt to pull off a massive robbery. It's set at the Coca-Cola 600 NASCAR race.

Of the two, "Logan Lucky" fared better with critics, earning a 93% on Rotten Tomatoes, as opposed to "Hitman's Bodyguard", which has a 39%. But the roles are reversed when it comes to audience reception -- "Hitman's Bodyguard" has a B+ CinemaScore as opposed to "Logan Lucky's" B.

In the end, "Logan Lucky" will end up in third for the

weekend behind the second frame of "Annabelle: Creation." The latest in the "Conjuring" universe from Warner Bros. is targeting \$15.5 million from 3,542 locations. And "Dunkirk" will land in fourth behind "Logan Lucky" with an estimated \$6.7 million. The same studio has more cause to celebrate as "Wonder Woman" crosses \$800 million worldwide.

"Nut Job 2: Nutty by Nature" rounds out the top five this weekend with \$5.1 million.

Outside of the wide releases, TWC continues its gradual rollout for Taylor Sheridan's "Wind River." This weekend it looks to gross \$3 million from 694 locations, raising its total cume past \$4.1 million. And major acquisition at Sundance, "Patti Cake\$" is struggling to find an audience with \$66,000 from 14 locations.

Overall, the summer of hell continues: This season's box office has slipped to 13.3% behind last year at this point, according to data from ComScore, which also reports the 2017 box office is now pacing 5% behind 2016.

## Kesha thanks fans as "Rainbow" comeback debuts at top of Billboard

**LOS ANGELES (Reuters)** — Kesha scored top billing on the Billboard 200 chart with her comeback album "Rainbow," her first studio album in five years amid a bitter legal battle over her record contract.

The 30-year-old singer sold some 116,000 units of "Rainbow," according to data on Monday from Nielsen SoundScan, to give her the second-largest U.S. sales week of 2017 by a female singer after Katy Perry's "Witness."

The Billboard 200 chart tallies units from album sales, song sales (10 songs equal one album) and streaming activity (1,500 streams equal one album).

"I am so grateful and so lucky and ... at a loss for words. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. There were many days that my music was simply a coping tool, for my emotions," Kesha said in a message on her Facebook page on Monday.

"Rainbow" mixes Kesha's signature pop sounds of seven years ago with

raw, powerful songs in which she channels the frustration, hurt and anger she has felt during a lengthy court battle with her former producer, Dr. Luke, whom she accused of emotional and sexual abuse.

Dr. Luke denied the allegations and counter-sued for defamation. That case, and Kesha's battle to be released from a multi-album contract with Sony Music, is still making its way through the U.S. legal system, even as Kesha decided to release "Rainbow" through the Sony Music group.

"Rainbow" knocked rapper Kendrick Lamar's "Damn", which was released in April, back to second place on the Billboard 200, with another 43,000 units sold for the week.

On the digital song sales, Puerto Rican singer Luis Fonsi's global sensation "Despacito," featuring Justin Bieber, showed no signs of moving from No. 1, with another 83,000 copies sold.

## Prominent Russian theater director detained in embezzlement case

**MOSCOW (Reuters)** — A prominent Russian theater director who has lamented what he says is the lack of freedom and growing social conservatism in his country was detained on Tuesday and accused of embezzling state funds.

Russia's Investigative Committee said it suspected Kirill Serebrennikov of embezzling at least 68 million rubles (\$1.15 million) in state funds earmarked for an art project, it said in a statement.

Serebrennikov, art director at Moscow's avant-garde Gogol Centre theater, denies wrongdoing. He faces up to 10 years in jail if found guilty.

Dmitry Kharitonov, a lawyer for Serebrennikov, said his client was detained in St. Petersburg where he was working on a film about a Soviet rock star.

Serebrennikov, an award-winning director, has used his work to criticize the authorities in the past, lashing out at what he sees as the pernicious growing role of the state and church in Russian society.

His detention shocked his supporters and the arts world.

"The arrest of the director before a trial is a clearly excessive measure," wrote Alexei Kudrin, a liberal economist and former finance minister, on social media.

In May, investigators searched Serebrennikov's home and office and questioned him as a witness in an embezzlement case.

His lawyer could not immediately say if Serebrennikov's detention was linked to the same case or a different one. The accountant and general director of Serebrennikov's theater have already been accused of stealing state funds.

In July, the Bolshoi Theatre postponed the world premiere of Nureyev, an edgy ballet about the famous Russian dancer which was directed by Serebrennikov.

The TASS news agency reported that Russia's minister for culture had a long conversation with the Bolshoi before it announced it was postponing the premiere.